

Have you ever imagined yourself climbing up a Pyramid? The smooth outer casing stones are mostly gone—you have seen a few of these in the *Vestibule*—or it would be an even more difficult task than it is now, as the rough blocks give some foothold to the scrambler. Two Arabs in flying white garments seize you by the arms, and push and pull you up the extra steep places, chattering in French and English whenever you stop to rest a moment, till at last you arrive, breathless, at the top where the point is now worn down to a platform large enough for several persons to stand and look down over the green and gold country below, over the wide river, and the chain of smaller pyramids.

Travellers can also be taken along the steep smooth passages that lead to the burial chambers, and a stifling, fearsome experience it is, to be in the heart of the huge mass, far away from the light of the sun, built, it is believed, solely to keep in safety the mummy laid to rest in it with such pomp and ceremony, with so many valuables of all kinds.

And who were the chief pyramid builders, you ask. The great pyramid higher than St. Paul's, with a base as large as Lincoln's Inn Fields, is believed to be the work of Khu-fu, of the IV. dynasty. You will remember his name, so easily copied (two birds, a slug, and a shaded circle) on the lists of kings we have so often looked at on the walls, and in the cases of scarabs. We can find it again in the *Vestibule* on the east of the tomb of Khu-fu-ankh, one of his high officials; he was a priest and "Clerk of the Works"; on its sides are prayers and names of many festivals. What a vision the words "Clerk of the Works" brings before us! Think of the busy scene caused by the building of a large church or new street, and then see in fancy the enormous numbers of men needed to get the huge blocks (floated on long

rafts down the Nile) into place, the array of task-masters and higher officials, organising and urging on the workers, while perhaps the Pharaoh himself and his family might be seated in state watching the progress of the desire of his heart.

The builder of the Second Pyramid was Kha-f-ra, whose name we can also easily distinguish in the lists of kings; but we can do more than this; we can stand before the cast of his life-like statue in the *Vestibule* and feel that we too are having an audience with the great Pharaoh, as did those who came into his presence so many centuries ago, to give reports of his buildings, and of the government of the country.

★ Look well at his speaking face, at his easily posed figure; notice the folds of his linen head-dress, the sacred serpent fixed in front; and the sort of kilt that he wears, allowing free display of the limbs so finely modelled. You must examine, too, the throne on which he sits, the arms ornamented with lions' heads, and on the sides a beautiful design, which you will like to copy, of the papyrus and lotus plants of upper and lower Egypt, knotted round the hieroglyph of union, emblematic of the joining together of the North and South kingdoms. You will find many variations of this subject on the monuments, and they help to explain the meaning of the expressions, double house, double kingdom, double crown.

Part of the tomb of Teta, the overseer of the pyramid of Kha-f-ra is almost within touch of the great king's hand, and all round in the little *Vestibule*, and just inside the *North Gallery* are memorials of the royal kinsmen and scribes, and other important persons who peopled the courts in that great and far off time. You cannot pass without smiling at that short, fat, good-natured looking man, standing just as he did in life in the times of the V.

dynasty to inspect his farms and staff. His keen eyes (those of the original statue are made with black crystal pupils, with a gleaming silver point to shew the light) are almost too real, and would no doubt have soon detected any neglect or cheating. A wonderful thing about this statue—remember it must be at least five or six thousand years old—is that when it was raised from the dust and rubbish in which it had long lain, the Arab diggers cried out, "The Sheik of the village!" So like is this old farmer-man, to the modern Egyptian of his class.

To find the builder of the third pyramid, we must mount the North West staircase, and stand by the case in the *First Room* which contains what are believed to be the remains of the battered coffin and mummy of Men-kau-ra. These remains were found in the third pyramid, and were wrecked at sea on the voyage to England; what lies before us is all that was recovered of the "just and merciful" king and his coffin.

Herodotus tells us that he gave liberty to the people; let us hope the "Father of History" is correct, but we must remember he visited Egypt more than three thousand years after the body of Men-kau-ra was hidden away, and the words were painted on the coffin which we can still read:— "Thy mother Nut, stretches herself over thee in her name of the vault of heaven; she granteth that thou mayest exist as a God by destroying all thine enemies, O King of the North and South, Men-kau-ra, living for ever."

These words come from a copy of the Book of the Dead, which was already very ancient when Men-kau-ra ruled over Egypt.

We must look again at the scarabs, and read the names, Khu-fu, Kha-f-ra Men-kau-ra, and many others made up of Ka, neb, nefer, ra, all of the times of the great pyramid builders.

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Their beautiful alabaster and stone vases are in the *Third and Fourth Rooms*: especially interesting is the handsome funeral stand of a priest and libationer of Khu-fu; you can easily distinguish the figure with a vase overhead, out of which the libation seems to be pouring of itself. Look up too the complete set of beautiful alabaster vessels of the "chief reader," Atena; his head-rest and green stone bowl, and slab for holding paint or ointment—seven kinds—would make fine illustrations for the thirty-third or thirty-second centuries, also the bronze models of tools found in the same tomb.

Many of the amulets worn in life, or laid on the mummy for the sake of magical protection, also date from these early times and will make good illustrations for the empty pages. As you copy them, think of the prayers which were written on them, or recited over them, and the comfort the mourners felt in the belief that the dear dead were thereby kept safely. The Buckle of Isis, protected them from every form of evil; the Serpent's Head kept them from being bitten by snakes in the under world, the Two Plumes were to make them enjoy light and air; the Cartouche was to make sure that their names would not be blotted out; the Pillow was to prevent their heads being carried away; the Papyrus Sceptre was to help them to regain the youth and vigour they had lost. Do not overlook the Two Fingers; you might sketch them in the thirty-fourth century to remind you of king Pepi I., of whom it is written "that he hath gone quickly into heaven by means of the Two Fingers of the God of the ladder." It was Horus who is said to have stretched out his two fingers to help his father up the ladder from earth to heaven.

And now, after examining the earliest of the portrait statues, shall we turn back some eight centuries before Khu-fu to the forty-fifth century, and here write the name

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of Menes, called the first historical king of Egypt, the first king of the North and South. There is reason to believe he may have lived many centuries earlier. His cartouche in the lists and on the scarabs is a simple one to draw; it is said that he built a huge dam across the Nile to divert the stream so as to make a better and safer position for his new capital, Memphis.

Year by year more discoveries are being made about these first dynasty kings and *what went before*, for even in the times of Menes, forty or fifty centuries B.C., we have not yet reached the "Very Beginnings." On the shelves near the outer coffins of Sen and Khuatop, are pictures of a king named Narmer, killing, and then inspecting his enemies; his sandal bearer is an interesting person, named Ur-hen; you can match the sandals he is carrying in the cases you have already seen. There are also very animated companies of most curious looking monsters; do not miss the one standing up like a man, with a very long "front-tail," as well as a back one. Some of these will be most attractive in the pre-historic pages of your book, as well as the sketches of boats and animals on a vase; the animals might have been drawn from any Noah's Ark, in any nursery of the twentieth century, A.D.

No doubt, every time that you have been into the *First Room*, you have wondered at the Prehistoric Man in his model grave opposite Men-kau-ra. We have at last reached his times. For long centuries, even before the age of Menes, he lay undisturbed in his cramped sandy grave, covered over securely by large boulders. He and his people, evidently believed there was a Life to follow the short one he had led by the banks of the Nile, for see the stone implements for his use, and the simple pots which still hold the dust of funeral offerings.

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Can you feel any kinship with this very old elder brother, with fair skin, and light hair, tapering fingers unused to hard work, lying there in hope of a rising again? He lay like that, on the edge of the desert all through the centuries during which we have watched the multitudes of rich and poor passing up and down the long narrow country, farming and building, sorrowing and rejoicing, just as real human beings as we are ourselves, with just the same wishes and difficulties and feelings.

But perhaps you will say—"We have seen the children's toys and dolls, the shoes they wore, the mirrors that reflected their faces, the furniture of their houses, the belongings of their parents, but the portraits in stone, and in the pictures, are so stiff, so unreal, we cannot imagine the people alive and warm and speaking."

There is much truth in this, the Egyptian sculptures are for the most part stiff and expressionless, while those light-as-air sea maidens of the Nereid Monument (just behind Rameses II.) might well be your partners in the dance; the sad mother Demeter makes you wish to tread softly lest you disturb her grief; you can make friends with the Tanagra maidens. There are many explanations given to account for this difference; one is this, that the Greeks looked upon their models as a whole, as they saw them, and reproducing their impressions, made their spirit live in marble. The Egyptians worked on each detail of feature and limb by itself and then put them together as certain rules and customs dictated. Look for instance at any of the profiles in sculpture or painting, and notice how the eye is drawn as an eye, full front, and then put into the face already made up in profile of nose, mouth and chin, regardless of how it looked. So too with the feet and legs, one stiffly before the other;

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they are drawn as legs and arranged on the completed body according to rule, but not to walk with.

Sometimes the artists flung away the bands that fettered their powers, and studied nature instead of following what was considered a correct and reverent expression of it, and then we get speaking likenesses like those in the *Vestibule*, and living action on the pictured walls of the tombs. It is difficult for us to understand and enter into the feelings of the Egyptians in this matter; there was the intense reverence for religion and the gods, and the belief that the Pharaoh was one with the gods, and could do no wrong. A large part of the artists' work was portraits of the gods and kings, for which the priests laid down certain rules of style, to express their solemn and unapproachable nature. It would have seemed too familiar, indeed, irreverent, to use any easy everyday methods, and so arose this holding back, this keeping to old ways which cramped the art of the Nile for thousands of years. So do not be discouraged by the Egyptian stiffness, but try to feel that the man, woman, child, animal, are really there behind a sort of veil; and when you go to Egypt, you can see labourers in the fields, and in the villages, with such a strong family likeness to their far away ancestors, that as you watch them use their limbs in active work, or gaze with interest around them, you will almost feel as if the stiff and expressionless faces and forms here before us in stone and fresco had come to life again.

Perhaps you have noticed in turning over the leaves of your note-book, that we have made no entries during the thousand years or so between the Exodus and the visit of Herodotus. Shall we now try to bridge over these years? On the whole, it was a sad time in which Egypt was steadily declining and becoming less prosperous and

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happy, though here and there we shall find great names that shine out in the gathering darkness.

Rameses III. did his best in the thirteenth century to keep up the glory of his great name-sake; his face looks a strong one in the photograph of his mummy in the *First Room*, and his prowess shown on the walls of his great temple (see the photograph stand) might well make the nations round "tremble as the mountain goats before a bull who stamps with his foot, strikes with his horns, and makes the mountains shake as he rushes on whatever opposes him!" He had a gentler side too, one likes to hear that "over the whole land of Egypt he planted trees and shrubs to give the inhabitants rest under their cool shade."

We have often noticed how prominent were the priests of Egypt, how great and rich were the temples of the gods they served; at last the day came, when the high-priest passed from being next in power to the king, to be king himself, and a dynasty of priest-kings followed. The mummies and coffins of the priests, priestesses, door-keepers, incense bearers, prophets, scribes, give us some idea of the importance of a great religious college. The coffin cases are generally beautifully painted, and amongst the faces on them, we can figure to ourselves that some are portraits, as that of the priestess, Katebet; notice the breastplate, scarab, ushabti figure, on her mummy, and also that of the incense bearer, Hu-en-amen with the inlaid eyes. You will recognise many of the paintings of gods and scenes from the *Book of the Dead*.

In the case of blue glaze which is one of the glories of the museum in colour, you will find a few ushabtiu figures of the families of these kings; perhaps Solomon's Egyptian wife was the daughter of a priest-king.

Later, from a dynasty of foreigners, a man of action stands out: the Bible calls him Shishak—you remember

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him as the friend of Jeroboam? He entered Jerusalem and stripped the beautiful new temple—so like in plan and construction to those by the Nile—of its treasures. We can find a gold ring, with his name in the *Fourth Room* and also a pair of black lion-headed goddesses in the *South Gallery*. Reminders of his son Osorkon are close by; he was not the only king of Egypt who cut his own cartouche on other people's work. Of these times when the kingdom was breaking up into petty states, we have no important remains, nothing flourished, the outlook became darker and more and more hopeless, till at last, in the eighth century, during the rule of another dynasty of foreigners, the Ethiopians, the storm burst. The great kings whose names and forms we shall get to know quite well, in the Assyrian galleries, now attacked Egypt on her own frontier, and led vast armies from the land between the rivers, over the prostrate Syria, towards the Bridge of Nations. One tragedy of the times you know already, the mysterious destruction of Sennacherib's army at a most critical moment. Later his son over-ran Egypt from the mouths of the Nile to the Island of Philae many times in a few years; no rest then under the shady trees; the harvests were spoiled, the people starving, and fighting, and being carried away captive. Temples and cities and old monuments were ruined and allowed to fall into decay.

It is the conquerors who tell us all this, as they relate their dreadful deeds with pride, and describe the articles they carried away. We can find some like them in the *Third and Fourth Rooms*. That "roll of fine linen," for instance, inscribed with king Pianki's name; those "alabaster jars and vases," one bears the name of Shabaka; those "statues of the gods," those "gold and silver, turquoise and ivory treasures of centuries," which

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lie here in numbers before our eyes, all represent the spoils of the Assyrian conquerors.

Egypt revived for a little under the kings who made Sais, their capital, especially the two Psemtheks, and Nekau, and we have several examples of the fine and delicate work of this time; notice the draughtsmen of Nekau in the Toy Case. But in spite of all efforts and the help from Greek soldiers, the country was ravaged again from end to end, and had to submit to the Eastern empire till that too fell under the new great power that arose in Asia—the Persians. In the *Southern Gallery* there is a cast of the tomb of a queen of Egypt of these bitter times; her body was burnt by the mad Persian king, who turned the religion of the country into cruel ridicule, and did much to make the rule of his countrymen hated in the land. The Egyptians thought it a good opportunity to revolt when the news came of Marathon; it was between the second and third revolts that Herodotus saw Egypt, saw the mighty Nile, the battlefields, the great monuments, in his quest for information to set down in his history of the Persian Wars.

And now will you slowly go round the galleries many times more, and as you mark off the names of the "Sons of the Sun" that you know (it is not always easy to hear and remember names at the moment of introduction, is it?) look again at the treasures that hail from their times, and re-call as you go the pictures which they suggested. Will the favourite one be this? A widely flowing river, by whose brink a woman's figure stands out against the sky, as she gazes with tear-filled eyes at a little cradle of lotus flowers, hidden amongst the water reeds. Or if that is too sad, you will perhaps choose to see the procession of the richly dressed princess who leans from her fine carrying-chair, surrounded by her bearers and her maidens, to look at the babe held up to her, in his bed

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that really *was* a little boat. Or again, is it the fresh scent of the lotus flowers held by the guests at the gay parties, that comes to you across the centuries? of from further back still, do you catch the soft patter of Ankhu's feet?

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE AND ILLUSTRATION.

- The Morning Lands of History*, by Price Hughes.
- Eber's *Egypt*.
- Manners and Customs of Ancient Egyptians*, by Wilkinson.
- Guide Books (see Chapter VII.).

CHAPTER X.

BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA.

PART I.

"FROM UNDER THE DUST OF AGES."

WE have already stopped many times to look in wonder at the huge man-headed bulls and lions, on our way to the Egyptian and Greek galleries. We have compared and contrasted them with the other monsters of our acquaintance, the Egyptian Sphinx, the Greek Centaur. The number of their legs—those legs that show the great treading-down power of the bull or lion—has puzzled us till we understood that the sculpture is a sort of double relief which had to look well from both side and front, and so a fifth was added for appearance's sake. The rows and rows of near flat curls add also to the effect, as well as the well-tied sash round the strong-looking body. The great eagles' wings, suggest swiftness that cannot be tired, and towering high above us is the head which endows the monster with the intelligence and wisdom of a man. These man-headed monsters once stood at the gateways which led into the royal palaces of Assyria, and were looked upon as the "guardians of the footsteps of the kings who made them."

Before seeking out the story of these footsteps, and of much else that came before and after, all told in vivid language and pictures on the remains in the *Assyrian* and *Babylonian Rooms* in the British and other Museums,

let us first look well at the maps in the *Nimroud Gallery*, close to the bulls.

There is the Bridge of Nations, in the south-west corner, leading from the country of one great river, towards the countries of two mighty streams, the Euphrates and the Tigris. Trace their courses from the mountains in the north, noticing how far westwards the Euphrates flows in its journey to the Persian Gulf. As you see, Babylonia, with its capital, Babylon on the Euphrates, lies nearest to the head of the Gulf, and Assyria with its capital, Nineveh on the Tigris, lies further north.

Babylonia was the older kingdom, which sent out colonies up the two great rivers to found cities and states. Later, these became not only independent under one king, but strong enough to conquer the mother country.

Next let us glance at the names of some of the neighbours of these countries on the two rivers. Beginning on the east side there is Persia, Elam, Media; to the west are the countries of the Hittites, the Syrians and the Canaanites, part of whose land was conquered by the Israelites when they came out of Egypt. The map shows us further, that a great wedge of desert pushes up between the Euphrates and the strip of sea-board countries near the Mediterranean. This wedge of desert kept the nations on the banks of the Nile and those on the Euphrates and Tigris apart for many centuries. Armies could not pass by a direct way from one to the other, but had to travel by two sides of a triangle and to force the key of the route where the desert was narrowest about Karkemish, the capital of the Hittites, and so reach the upper waters of the Euphrates.

As you think over this you will understand what is meant when these countries lying in the highway that connected the great powers are called "buffer states";

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all through the years of conflict these buffer states were the scene of perpetual war; now conquered first by Egypt, then by Assyria; now rebelling, now in league one against another.

The Bible history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, relates a great deal of all this, and on Egyptian monuments are found accounts of wars with these nations of Western Asia. We have already seen that these Egyptian accounts could not be read till the key was found to unlock the mysteries of the hieroglyphic writing, and this so lately as last century. The monuments themselves however, to a great extent, have stood on the banks of the Nile for thousands of years in the brilliant sunshine for all to see. How different has been the case with the countries in the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris! They are mentioned in the Bible, and old travellers and historians have left scattered notices of them through the centuries—here and there—but the cities and their contents were no longer to be seen; only the echoes of the story of their wonder and greatness survived.

Now if you travel in those countries to-day, what will strike your eye most? The great mounds—rising to varying heights above the dreary sandy plains in the south, as well as in the more hilly country of the north. Sometimes villages are built on these mounds, sometimes crops are raised on their tops, sometimes they are gay with wild flowers. It was only last century that people began in earnest to seek to find out what those mounds were, and what they contained. Do you guess? The mounds—you can see some fine models of them at the Louvre—are the graves in which the cities, temples, palaces, of Babylonia and Assyria have been buried and forgotten for some two thousand years. Can you fancy the excitement of the first explorers as the “dust of ages” was laboriously cleared away from the ruins that

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lay beneath? When the head of the winged bull emerged, the Arab diggers were terror-struck and fled to their village, thinking some dreadful monster had been roused to make an end of them; later they came to the conclusion that the English were taking it home for “their queen and the rest of the unbelievers” to worship!

It is not easy to understand how a country once thickly peopled, and dotted over with flourishing cities, two of them believed to have been larger than London, could become so desolate and forgotten. To begin with much of the building was set on great platforms of bricks and earth, so as to be out of reach of the river floods. Then the buildings themselves were chiefly made of sun-dried bricks, which would easily turn back again into the clay of which they were made, and the roofs were supported on wooden beams and pillars. So when the conquerors set fire to the doomed city, the roofs and brick walls fell in, and the heavy rains, season after season, gradually covered all up with mud and clay. As to the inhabitants many were killed or taken prisoners, or settled elsewhere, and as wave after wave of new-comers passed over the land, each knew less and less of its once powerful owners in the centuries that were gone.

Now let us glance round to see the sort of remains that have come to us from the mounds.

Besides the “guardians of the path of the king,” we have the sculptured slabs which once lined the walls of their palaces, set out in the *Nimroud Gallery*, so called from the mound of Nimroud, the site of the ancient city of Calah, about twenty miles south of Nineveh. Many more of these slabs are to be seen in the *Assyrian Saloon* and also in the *Nineveh Gallery*, from the mound of Kou-yun-jik, part of the ancient site of Nineveh itself.

Besides these “pictures,” there are numberless little clay tablets, like cakes of soap, both in the *Nineveh*

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Gallery, and in the *Babylonian and Assyrian Room* upstairs. Some are oblong, some round, all are covered with writing, as are also the barrel-shaped, and many sided large cylinders in the upper room. Here you will also find a large collection of cylinder seals, like long stone beads—you will remember similar ones amongst the Egyptian treasures—which were generally used to make an impression on the soft clay of the tablets. Round the walls are all sorts of stone and clay objects, as well as a few larger statues and memorials, standing out in the rooms.

Perhaps you are thinking these are not nearly so interesting as the mummies and personal belongings of the Egyptians; but wait a moment! A scratched stone in a Highland glen may not seem very interesting, till the wondrous story of the ice age shows us the plough which made the scratches. A chipped flint looks dull enough till we can imagine it back in the hands of the man who made and used it. So, from the stiff, and often confused looking illustrations on the slabs and cylinder seals; from the writing on clay tablets and cylinders, that looks so much like random digs, or at best, un-ending combinations of arrow-headed or wedge-shaped lines, we can gather a glowing story full of unexpected wonders.

The story is a long one, as long as that of Egypt, and it will lead us into the very presence of great kings whose names and deeds are already known to us. Visions of centuries of prosperous farming, and great wealth will pass before our eyes, as well as those of the desolation of war, and the excitement of the hunt.

The contents of great libraries too are open to our gaze, safe in the cases, though the shelves that once held them, and the walls of their original home, have been lying in ashes for thousands of years.

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Now when the mounds were first explored, the writing to be found on the newly-found monsters, slabs, cylinders, and tablets was still a mystery, though many scholars had been earnestly at work for years trying to unravel it from various inscriptions that had been found in the countries round.

In a wall-case in the *Babylonian and Assyrian Room*, are not only casts of many of these inscriptions, but specimens of the paper squeezes—they look like the raised writing for the blind—made from a very important inscription in three languages, which could not be carried away from the spot like the Rosetta stone, because it is cut high up on a great rock, at Behistun in Persia. When the dauntless traveller and scholar arrived at the Rock to get his copy, he found his ladders were too short; so he had himself lowered by a rope from the top. Then followed months and months of hard patient study. No one knew even one of the three languages, as had been the case with the Rosetta stone, only others like one of them, and derived from the same stock. Success came at last, and now it is possible to get grammar and dictionary, and set to work to study and read cuneiform or wedge-shaped writing and so receive the message across the centuries, left on the clay and stone as the old king said, “for future ages, for all time.”

In the beginning this writing was a series of pictures, like the Egyptian hieroglyphs; the earliest signs for instance, for a fork, an arrow, a comb, a bird, a fish, are easily distinguishable. This was the invention of the old inhabitants of the land between the rivers called Sumerians and Akkadians, before the Babylonians settled there, and as time went on the writing gradually became more stiff and wedge-like and was used to express the language not only of the Babylonians and Assyrians, but of nearly all their neighbours, from Syria on the west, to Persia on the

east, just as Roman letters are now used nearly all over Europe.

For a long time, when the Babylonians had settled down amongst the older inhabitants the languages were spoken side by side, as French and Flemish are in Belgium now. When this ceased, about B.C. 2000, the memory of the older tongues was kept up in the literature of the country, more or less till the end of its history, much as we use Latin and Greek now. Hence in the cases of tablets you will find constant reference made to the Sumerian and Akkadian languages, with translations into Babylonian and Assyrian, and many "spelling books," "grammars," and "dictionaries," for those who had to learn the dead languages. The men with shaved heads in the sculptures are of the older race. There is a most quaint Sumerian person of high rank, with folded hands in the upper room—the Babylonians and Assyrians were famous (like the bulls) for fine beards and heads of hair.

The gods of the Sumerians were also kept in memory through the ages, such as Ishtar, the great giver of victory in war, the sun and moon gods, and those of the earth, sky and sea.

Some of the very earliest of the Babylonian relics in this room are the stone sockets, in which the pivot of the gates turned, also memorial tablets belonging to the governors or kings of the states which later were united under one ruler. You will notice how different the inscription writing on these is from that on the Rock of Behistun, chiselled out some 4000 years later. A few of them are dated 4500 B.C., about which time some place the first historical king of Egypt, though many think he was at least a thousand years earlier. One of them dated 2500 has on it the name of a king of Ur, which name at once brings to mind the calling of Abraham from this very

city, Ur of the Chaldees, where he lived with his family. The bricks inscribed with the name of this king come from the temples he built to the sun and moon gods. Numerous other bricks of this and later date, record much building of temples as well as restorations of older ones, also the cutting of a great canal. We are hereby reminded that the making of bricks, where stone was scarce and the best clay very plentiful, was one of the chief industries in a country of great builders. A flood of light is cast upon the life of the times which may have been near those of Abraham, by the clay tablets in the table cases. Fortunately for later generations, these have been practically indestructible; they are the letters, annals, business documents, as well as what we call books, all written on finely prepared clay, when moist, with a three-edged stylus, and then hardened by heat of sun or fire. Many of the tablets are still almost perfect, in spite of occasional dampness, the destruction of the cities and temples by fire, and the long burial in the mounds.

Examine the labels slowly. There are deeds relating to buying, selling, and letting house property, gardens, fields and plantations; others which show how slaves were bought or hired; how children were adopted; how money was borrowed. Many letters from kings to their officials refer to the making and cleaning of the canals which crossed the country between the rivers, storing water to use on the land, and making it so fertile, that it produced two crops a year, "the land of the double Spring-time," and became a great corn-growing country, and very rich. Many orders refer to sending stores of all kinds to Babylon, clothes to wear, dates, oil, and other necessaries. There is a very interesting one from the great king Khammurabi, whose name you might enter in the twenty-second century. There are many of his tablets on view, but this particular one gives directions about felling trees

to use in smelting metal. Other tablets deal with the protection of fishing rights; of arrangements for the transport of sheep and lambs, and for the shearing. Another gives orders for sending images of the gods and goddesses from one place to another. As one reads on, one is carried back right into the old life, its bustle and worries are so real. One feels almost breathless as one realises how much it all mattered—four thousand years ago—how they had to rush about, clean out canals in three days, find extra shepherds in great haste for the shearing; travel night and day to obey the king's behest; and on all sides were the agitations of gaining and losing money, of going to law, and the ever present terror of offending the great king.

The circular tablets are chiefly lists of fields and estates with their measurements. Very often the boundaries of these fields became changed from the flooding of the rivers. There are many interesting boundary stones in the wall cases of different periods. The large square tablets are chiefly accounts concerning wages—for men, women and children—also particulars about grain and wool for purposes of the revenue. All this commerce must needs have been carried on by many people, whose relations to each other had to be settled by good laws—Khammurabi was the great law giver, it is said of him, that he “established the heart of the country in righteousness.” Look well at the cast of the pillar on which his great code of laws—the oldest in the world, some say—is inscribed. There is his portrait on the top receiving the laws from the sun god. He set up the original of this pillar in Babylon, and copies of it in other cities, so that if any one felt aggrieved at any loss or bad treatment, he could go and find out the law bearing on his case.

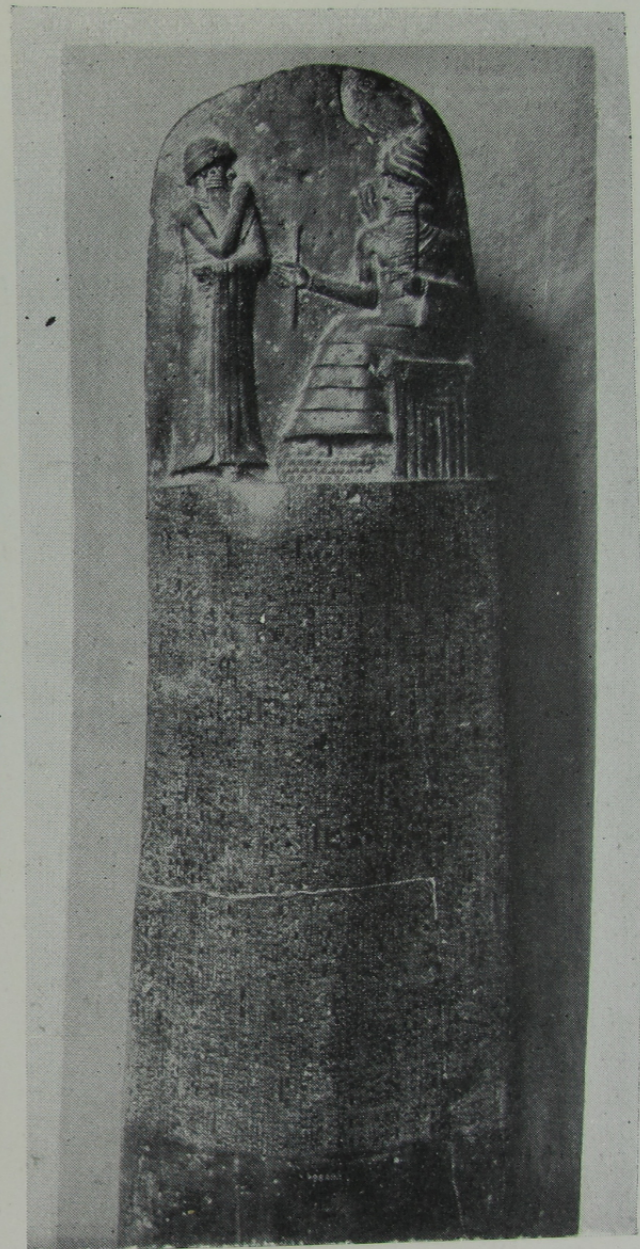
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Statue of Ashur-nazir-pal.
S.W. Palace of Nimroud—page 160.



Winged man-headed Lion.
N.W. Palace of Nimroud—page 146.



Cast of a basalt Stele inscribed with the
"Code of Laws" of Khammurabi, King of
Babylon. Original in the Louvre—page 154.
W. A. Mansell & Co.

Photos by

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But Khammurabi's pillar was not found in Babylon, but in Susa, one of the most ancient cities of Elam and Persia. It was an Elamite king who carried it there, about a thousand years after Khammurabi had set it up. He stored it in his "Museum," where he exhibited other treasures from Babylonia. You will be interested to notice the space he had cleared at the bottom, by erasing several sections of the code. Here he meant to engrave his own name and great deeds, as he has done on five other defaced monuments.

We will now turn over several century pages of our note-book, during which trade and agriculture flourished, and the population grew larger, and colonies were constantly going out from Babylonia northwards, till in the eighteenth century we can write "Assyria became a separate kingdom." During the centuries which followed, the kings of Egypt were gradually getting more and more power over the nations that dwelt about the high road to Assyria. Thothmes III.—you have his name in the seventeenth century, he who set up Cleopatra's Needle—was one of them, also the manly queen Hat-shep-su, who sent her fleets to the Land of Punt and who built a most magnificent temple.

In the fifteenth century we come to the names of two Egyptian kings, who not only exacted tribute from the "buffer states," but over-ran the country of the two rivers itself. Both these kings were called Amen-ophis; one the husband; the other the son, of a lady from Western Asia—Queen Thi. Amenophis III. hunted lions very successfully in Mesopotamia as you will remember is set forth in his large seal; a hundred and two lions killed by his own hand in ten years. Amenophis IV. was so much influenced by his mother, that he adopted the religion of her country and built a fine new city, with a temple and a palace in which to carry it out, and changed

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his name from "the favourite of Amen," to that of "the splendour of the Sun's rays." You can imagine how angry all this made the powerful priests of Amen.

Now amongst the ruins of his city, not far from the old tombs at Beni-Hasan, were found numbers of letters and despatches in cuneiform writing, on the familiar clay tablets. These are to be seen, at least some of them, in a table case in the *Babylonian and Assyrian Room*, headed Tell-el-Amarna tablets; this being the Arab name of a village close by.

These letters are from kings of Babylonia and Assyria, also from governors of various provinces, and give a graphic picture of the relations between the kings of Egypt and Western Asia in the fifteenth century B.C. Translations of many are to be seen in the case and are most interesting reading. Some refer to the sending of Mesopotamian princesses as wives for the Egyptian kings, and beg for an Egyptian princess in return. Then there is a great deal about gifts of all kinds, chariots, horses, much gold, also a gold and ivory throne, even a statue of a goddess. There is much complaint when equally handsome presents are not sent in return. Many of the despatches speak of rebellions and beg for troops and arms and corn for food. One governor says he is shut up "like a bird in a cage"; another, that he is "stricken with fear."

These tablets all show us how much coming and going there was at this time over the Bridge of Nations; a constant passing of couriers and scribes, presents and provisions, soldiers and bridal processions.

Ever since Assyria had become independent, there had been perpetual quarrels, chiefly about the boundaries of the two kingdoms. At last, soon after the beginning of the thirteenth century, Assyria conquered Babylonia, and managed to remain the ruling power, with occasional

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reverses for over six hundred years. The Assyrians were more energetic and better fighters than the Babylonians, who were very successful in commerce and agriculture, and as devoted to learning as the old Sumerians had been before them. We must remember that the climate of the hilly, northern kingdom was more bracing than that of the low plain to the south, between the slow winding rivers, which were often flooded.

Towards the end of the twelfth century you already have a note telling of the removal of the slab engraved with Khammurabi's code, from Babylon to Susa. King David is believed to have lived about this time, and beside his name you can write that of Tiglath Pileser I., a mighty old Assyrian king, who tells us on his cylinders in the *Babylonian and Assyrian Room* of his prowess in war—the countries he conquered, the spoil he took, including images of the gods. There is a picture on a later relief shewing a procession of captured gods, who look rather like Guy Faux aloft on his chair. Tiglath Pileser I. was a great hunter too, he specially mentions leopards; and when he visited the Phœnicians, the great sailors and traders of the old world, he even "mounted" a ship and went for an excursion on the Mediterranean. Unfortunately the name of the monster of the deep that he succeeded in killing is erased from the relief—perhaps it was a dolphin?

In one of the following centuries you might sketch the earliest known map of the world—such a small world! There is Babylon in the centre, and the ocean round the edge; the two great rivers are also shewn, with the mountains at their source, and the swamps at their mouth. In the same table-case as this clay map, is part of a plan of Babylon, showing the position of the "great gate of the sun god," also several chronicle tablets giving the names of Babylonian kings. The worship of the sun

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god is beautifully shown on the celebrated Tablet from the Temple of Sippar. There is the god himself seated on a throne in a shrine, holding symbols of eternity. Notice the palm trunk column before him, and the disk of the sun, held up by ropes, and the priest leading the king to worship. It must have been a gorgeous temple with its gold and lapis lazuli, a fit setting for the fine garments of the priests. The tablet gives an account of the restoration of this ancient temple by a king of Babylon in the ninth century, just about the time when the daughter kingdom was entering the period of its greatest power and glory. It lasted for three hundred years, and during that time, there are at least six or seven kings, whose names (rather difficult at first sight), whose bearded faces, whose "doughty deeds," will become perfectly familiar to us, as we look again and again at the relics from their times.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE AND ILLUSTRATION.

Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities, 1/-.
Harmsworth's History of the World, Parts I. & IV., 7d. each.

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CHAPTER XI.

ASSYRIA AND BABYLONIA.

PART II.

THE "FOOTSTEPS" OF SEVEN GREAT KINGS OF ASSYRIA.

DURING the three hundred years when Assyria was at the height of its greatness, about fifteen kings ruled one after the other at Nineveh. Of these, there are seven well represented in the Museum, and most of the seven appear in the Bible story of the Jewish Monarchy.

Perhaps you would like to begin by writing the names of these seven kings in the century pages of your notebook. Our last entry was the sketch of the Babylonian king worshipping in the shrine of the sun-god, in the city of Sippar. This was near the beginning of the ninth century B.C. ASHUR-NAZIR-PAL was king of Assyria at this time. His son and successor was SHALMANESER II., about the middle of the ninth century. A hundred years later arose the powerful king, TIGLATH PILESER, and in the last quarter of the eighth century, SARGON, "the son of no-one," usurped the throne. His son SENNACHERIB followed at the end of the eighth century, and his reign, and that of his son ESARHADDON, and of his grandson ASHUR-BANI-PAL covered the seventh century.

Just inside the *Nimroud Gallery* is a relief showing a religious ceremony which was performed each year by the king in person, connected with the fertilising of the date palm. Above the king presenting a sort of cone, is a small figure in a winged circle; the small figure is that of a man finished off with feathers from the waist.

This is the emblem of the god Ashur, after whom the country was named, as well as so many of its kings.

Ashur-nazir-pal means, Ashur protects his son; Esarhaddon, means Ashur has given a brother; Ashur-bani-pal, means Ashur creates a son. This god Ashur was looked upon as the father and chief of the gods, and is often represented as hovering over the kings in battle, as giving them the victory, and as demanding the punishment of the vanquished.

All round us in the *Nimroud Gallery* are the remains brought from the palace of Ashur-nazir-pal, and the temple to the war god Adar. They were dug out of the mound of Nimroud, the grave of the ancient city of Calah, twenty miles south of Nineveh. Let us look first at the statue of Ashur-nazir-pal, with his fine curled beard, his fringed robe hanging to his feet, of which only the toes show, straight to the front. You can distinguish an inscription on his breast; it gives particulars of his names and titles. This is the only perfect royal Assyrian statue in the Museum. There are many other portraits in relief of this son of Ashur; some are standing at ease, as on the slab that relates his most important conquests; others shew him on the march in mountainous country or passing over rivers with his army, or receiving tribute. Do not miss the vivid picture of the soldiers swimming on inflated skins—there is a relief on which they are shewn blowing them out ready to start, as one does with an air-ball—the king's chariot is ferried over on a boat, and the sensible horses are swimming behind. Like most of the Assyrian kings, Ashur-nazir-pal found his chief recreation in hunting, and we see him on the reliefs pouring libations to the gods over dead bulls and lions. The fish gods, and eagle-headed divinities are fearsome objects, and must have looked more remarkable still in the days of Ashur-nazir-pal and his attendants, if we are right in

believing the reliefs were all blazing with colour when they were new and fresh. It makes one think of our own blue dragons and red lions! Can you imagine the stately procession as the great king passed by the guardians of his footsteps? He could not have moved quickly in such stiff garments; besides, as the umbrella and fly-slappers remind us, it was often hot. The musicians with the stringed instruments—did they sound like zithers?—heralded the arrival in the court lined with these slabs before us. Some idea of the details of the palace may be gathered from the cases in the middle of the gallery. The bronze and iron objects are very interesting, such as the bells, the ornamental feet of a throne, the head of the ugly demon of the south-west wind, the hot dry wind that destroyed the crops, and was so trying to health. Many of the ivory objects show relations with Egypt; especially the sceptre we have seen so often in the hands of Osiris; the cartouche of the "Rising Sun"; the Egyptian ladies' heads amongst those that illustrate the fashions in Assyrian hair dressing.

Amongst the beautiful bronze repoussé bowls are some with very fine designs, and especially interesting is the one with hawk-headed lions wearing Egyptian crowns. Those of later date remind us that the palace of Ashur-nazir-pal was not the only one at Calah. His son Shalmaneser II., about the middle of the ninth century also built a palace there, close to his father's. One wonders how he found time for building, for he was always at war, till at last he was master of nearly all western Asia.

Let us first look at his famous black obelisk, in the *Nimroud Central Saloon*, close to the bull and lion from his father's palace. The pictures and writing inscribed by Shalmaneser on his obelisk give an account of the expeditions he made during his reign of thirty-one years. There are exciting pictures of the tribute brought by the

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conquered peoples in five rows of sculptures. Dromedaries, buffaloes, elephants, apes, horses, figure amongst the animals; gold, silver, lead, copper, ivory and fine garments, amongst the treasures. It is the second row that interests us most, for here is shown the tribute of Jehu, king of Israel—bowls, dishes, cups and other vessels of gold.

Another king of Israel, Ahab, is mentioned as one of the allies of a king of Hamath, who had rebelled against Assyria, on the stele of Shalmaneser close by. On this is a figure of the king in relief. To find another most important work of Shalmaneser II. we must go down to the *Assyrian Saloon* in the basement where the famous metal coverings of the gates made in cedar or some other wood, are shown in a case by themselves. The bands are eight feet long by one foot wide, and record the battles and conquests of the king who set them up. Amongst the most interesting are the pictures showing the march to the source of the Tigris, and the carving of the image of a king upon a rock. There are also scenes in the Assyrian camp, in one of which the soldiers seem to be amusing themselves with some game.

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About a century later than Shalmaneser II. lived the Tiglath Pileser^{III}, who is known in the Bible by his Babylonian name of Pul. He was one of the most warlike of the Assyrian kings, and recovered some of the ground lost by those who reigned just before him. There is an inscription inside the doorway leading to the basement, recording his conquests in what may be called cuneiform large hand; these characters are the largest known, and are very easy to examine. Following on, are slabs showing the king standing with one foot on the neck of a prostrate foe; also his assault on a city, the gods of which are being borne off in procession. Near the black obelisk of Shalmaneser II. is a picturesque wall slab from the palace

cuneus
- a wedge

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of Tiglath Pileser, showing the flocks and herds being driven off by the conquerors, and the women and children being taken away from the city in a cart. When Ahaz of Judah asked the Assyrian king to help him against his enemies, it ended in the Israelite tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, being carried away into captivity by the Assyrians.

At the end of this century, the Assyrian king Sargon came into actual conflict with the Egyptians, whom he defeated, after taking Samaria and sending its inhabitants to settle in another part of his empire. What heart-breaking trouble and pain this policy of transplanting conquered peoples must have given in those days. Torn from their country and all their belongings, whole bodies of exiles were settled in foreign lands amongst strangers. Many no doubt, during the long and wearisome journey were grieving for dear ones killed in terrible fighting, such as we shudder to look at on the slabs. The siege of Samaria lasted three years; think what that must have meant in the way of starvation and misery, followed by the fatigues of travel, lonely exile, and the bitter thought that strangers, sent from other parts of the empire, were living in their old homes, and cultivating their fields. The Israelites felt it perhaps more keenly than others, because they loved their own country so passionately, and most of them hated to be mixed up with people who worshipped many false gods, instead of the one great Jehovah. "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Zion." The wailing dirge still echoes across the centuries.

722

Sargon was a great builder as well as warrior. His chief palace was at Khorsabad, a few miles north-west of Nineveh. Most of the sculptures of this king are at the Louvre, because the French explorers were first in the field at this place. The great man-headed bulls in the

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Assyrian Transept come from the gateways of Sargon's palace. You will notice the clearly-cut inscriptions upon them, which tell of his great deeds. His portrait on a slab close by shows him talking to his officials.

In the *Babylonian and Assyrian Room* on the upper floor, is a large cylinder inscribed with the history of Sargon's reign; it stands between the records of his predecessor Ashur-nazir-pal, and those of his own famous son Sennacherib, so well known to us in Bible story. We have already written his name at the end of the eighth century. For more than twenty strenuous years he fought in many campaigns, and not only built the grandest palace ever seen at Nineveh, but repaired the works of the kings who had gone before him.

The remains of the great palace of Sennacherib were dug out of the group of mounds, called by the modern Arab name, Kou-yun-jik—probably from the number of sheep feeding upon them. If you study the plan of the excavations in the *Nimroud Gallery*, you will see where Kou-yun-jik lies, also the shape of the city of Nineveh within its ancient walls, and how a tributary of the Tigris runs through it. You will notice another mound called Nebi Yunus, where the prophet Jonah is said to have been buried; there is a mosque built on the mound now. One of the palaces of Sennacherib lies buried in this mound, the other, as we have seen, in Kou-yun-jik.

We can examine many of the slabs from this palace in the *Kou-yun-jik Gallery*. On one side are the reliefs which show Sennacherib's work as a builder, and here we can see for ourselves how the great palaces were set up.

Notice first the making of the mound, used as a platform. There are files of men mounting with loads of stones, bricks, earth, which they fling down, and then hasten back with empty baskets to refill and bring up again. Taskmasters with sticks stand over every gang.

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As in Egypt the cry ever is "The stick is in my hand, be ye not idle!"

Next, disentangle from the crowds of workers, the long ropes by which a sledge is pulled along over rollers, with wedges of stone and a powerful lever, worked by pulleys, to ease its passage. What is that on the sledge? Nothing less than one of the great winged bulls, being dragged towards the doorway it was henceforth to guard and adorn. He is only in the rough at present, having been so far shaped in the quarry from whence he has come by boat, just as the great blocks of marble and stone were brought down the Nile for the buildings on its banks. What a scene of hard labour, bustle, heat, oppression, it all brings before us! There are the pictures of the marshy country—how do we know it is marshy? look out for the eels!—where the great blocks of stone are shown on rafts formed of the trunks of trees lashed together. There is the maze of workmen carrying saws and hatchets, rollers, coils of rope, all sorts of materials. One seems almost to feel the strain and desperate tugging at the ropes by the captives and slaves under the lash of the overseers. There are numbers of soldiers too at hand to keep order, and to act as a guard to the king, himself superintending from his car. Over his head runs the inscription—"Sennacherib, king of multitudes, king of Assyria, had the bull and colossi—divinities which had been made in the land of the Baladon, for the palace of his lordship, which is within Nineveh—set up with joy."

Notice the king's patterned cap, his tunic adorned with rosettes; also the pompous state in which his grand car is drawn along, and the fine umbrella with its trimmed draperies, the feathered fly-flaps, and the maces; what a brilliant patch of colour the gorgeous chariot and bright clothing of the king and his surrounding courtiers must have been in the sunshine!

These bulls were believed to represent supernatural beings set up doors of palaces to prevent entrance of evil spirits

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The want of perspective in the drawing of all these slabs make them as difficult to understand as Chinese pictures, but persevere; try to make out the rivers and the marshes, with the disturbed animals amongst the reeds—the nine little pigs, answering to their mother's grunting, are most life-like. Look too at the rafts and boats, some like British coracles of wicker covered with skins; the men fishing, and drawing up water in pails. Try as you gaze to hear the babel of sound, the rumbling of the heavy sledge, the shouting of orders, the trampling of the weary workers all in the dust and heat—can you distinguish the man clapping his hands, and another blowing his horn as signals to "heave-ho" all together?

When Sir Henry Layard removed the great bulls from Nineveh some twenty-six centuries later he found that three hundred men were needed to pull the cart on which one was placed. Many and great were the difficulties to be overcome in bringing the monsters from the Tigris to the Thames!

Other slabs in the *Kou-yun-jik Gallery* show Sennacherib at war; storming fortresses, taking captives, receiving tribute. It is a relief to turn from these crowded pictures to those at the end of the gallery in which we watch a procession of beautifully kept horses, most likely on the road between the river and the royal stables. Look at their cropped manes, with tuft in front, their tails tied up in a loop; many of them are unshod, the prancing one is full of life, and all look thoroughly intelligent and as if kindly treated.

There are some more sculptures of Sennacherib's time in the *Assyrian Saloon*, beside those of Tiglath Pileser or Pul, which show the siege, assault and capture of the city of Lachish. The king is there on his throne, receiving the account of the siege from his officers. Above his head run the lines—"Sennacherib, king of hosts, king of

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Assyria, sat upon his throne of state, and the spoil of the city of Lachish passed before him." It was after this success that Sennacherib sent a threatening message to Hezekiah, king of Judah, by his officers, his Tartan and Rabshakeh, chief generals, such as stand before him at Lachish. Two years before, the Assyrian king had laid siege to Jerusalem, after taking many cities and captives, and Hezekiah was thankful to give him all the gold and silver he could take from the temple to purchase safety. Later, encouraged by Egypt, Hezekiah refused the promised tribute, so Sennacherib had two to punish—Tirhakah of Egypt and the king of Judah. You know the tragic story which followed. Sennacherib, with his army flushed with victory at Lachish, was resting near the frontiers of Egypt. He was on the eve of a great battle with the Egyptians, after which he hoped to utterly crush Hezekiah. The battle was never fought, for a great disaster overtook the Assyrians in the night; some think it was a sudden attack of plague. The Bible says "the Angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 men." The remnant crept miserably home. The famous eight-sided cylinder in the upper room, which contains nearly five hundred lines of close writing, tells of many of Sennacherib's expeditions. It is worth while to read the long description on the label, it gives an insight into the style of the court historians. Although many particulars of victories are given, and of splendid tribute, even of shutting up Hezekiah like a caged bird in Jerusalem; the mysterious loss of a fine army on the brink of further conquests is not mentioned.

There are several other cylinders that give the account of Sennacherib's wars and buildings.

Close to them are the cylinders of his son Esar or Ashur-haddon, describing conquests, expeditions, subjugations, and other details of war, also the building of a

new palace at Nineveh, and the re-building of the great temple and the two walls of Babylon. You will remember that it was Esar-haddon who took Manasseh prisoner to Babylon, which at this time was well under the power of the Assyrians. One is glad to know that Esar-haddon let his prisoner go home again.

For the portrait of Esar-haddon we must return to the *Kou-yun-jik Gallery* where there is a cast from a bas relief cut in the rock, in Syria close to the pass near Beyrout, on the ancient highway of the nations. Rameses II. left three tablets on this rock in the fourteenth century, when he passed that way; Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, also "cut their names" there to tell of their presence so far from home. You will notice on Esar-haddon's relief the royal cap, and the group of sacred symbols on a level with his head, amongst them the circle of Ashur, without the feathered man.

Esar-haddon was the third of the kings whose palaces were found buried in the ruins of Calah—in the mound Nimroud. You will remember that the others were Ashur-nazir-pal and Shalmaneser. Another splendid palace built by Esar-haddon still lies buried at Nineveh, under the mound called after the prophet Jonah.

The two great nations, the one on the banks of the Nile, and the other on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, came to very close quarters in this reign. Esar-haddon conquered the Delta lands, and later when Tirhakah revolted, one of the first things his son and successor had to do was to restore the Assyrian power in Egypt. It is sad to think of the industrious and prosperous valley of the Nile brought so low. Cities and temples were plundered, the crops trampled down, and the people lived in misery and want as the terrors of war raged round them.

Ashur-bani-pal reigned for forty years in the latter half of the seventh century, during which time Assyria rose to its greatest height of power. All round the compass, the generals pushed their conquests. The slabs in the *Kou-yun-jik Gallery* show the terrible methods of warfare in the case of the Elamites. Ashur-bani-pal winds up the account of the victory with these words—"With the cut-off head of Te-umman (the leader of the Elamites) the road to Arbela, I took with joy." In perhaps the only domestic scene in all the sculptures, Ashur-bani-pal is shown reclining on a couch in Eastern fashion, in the palace garden, drinking wine with his queen who sits on a high throne-chair with a footstool. The head of Te-umman hangs on one of the trees close by! There are many other slabs in the *Assyrian Saloon* that illustrate the life of the last of the great kings of Assyria. Look at those showing wars against the Arabians, Egyptians, Babylonians. The camp scenes are very life-like, especially that one of the horses drinking. Children do not often come into pictures on the slabs, but you can find one drinking from a skin of water, another riding on a man's shoulder, others led by the hand.

Ashur-bani-pal seems to have been even fonder of hunting than of war, and the slabs that show him at his favourite "sport" of killing, are in the finest style of Assyrian art that has come down to us.

"I, Ashur-bani-pal, king of hosts, king of Assyria, whom Ashur and Belit have endowed with might, slew four lions. The powerful bow of Ishtar, the lady of battle, over them I held, and I poured out a libation over them." So had Ashur-nazir-pal some two hundred years before, as we saw in the *Nimroud Gallery*. But Ashur-bani-pal went beyond lions and bulls; wild horses and asses, harmless deer and goats all gave him the excitement of pursuit. See the processions of beaters,

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and men carrying nets and stakes; you can almost feel the great powerful dogs straining against the leash, and judge of the weight of the dead lion carried by six or more men. Do not miss the cages in which the lions were brought to the field, and then let out by a man raising the bars from the top. Lions in the seventh century B.C. seem to have become more scarce than when Amenophis III. killed his hundred and two lions in the fifteenth!

You can find many subjects for illustrations in your book in the *Assyrian Saloon*. Will you choose the Arabs' tents, the pretty grey wild asses, the goat with the kids, the rough mastiffs—the name of one of these is "Tearer of the Foe"—the royal boat with high prow like a Viking's, the lion's cage? Perhaps you will try to picture Ashur-bani-pal passing over the pavement from his palace with the beautiful lotus flower and bud border. He must be tall and strong, with a broad face, wide-awake eyes, a straight nose, long and wavy hair. And the mouth? What will you expect from what you have seen of his life and character? He looks always well and carefully "groomed," with hair and beard perfumed and curled, and one of his state costumes is thus described: A high mitre of white wool striped with blue. A wide band, ornamented with rosettes in golden thread, holds it in place upon the forehead, the two ends being tied behind, fall upon the neck. The short sleeved dress is of very deep blue, embroidered with rosettes in red cotton; it is fastened round the waist by a wide sash, edged at the ends by a fringe decorated with glass beads, the designs on the heavily embroidered vest which completes the gorgeous array, being minute copies of those we saw in the *Nimroud Gallery* of the king adoring the sacred trees, and struggling with lions. We must add the necklet and armlets of solid gold, and the umbrella with wide ends like a pugaree, to make the sketch complete.

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Boats on the Tigris. Part of a marble slab recording the building of Sennacherib's Palace—page 166.



Lions let out of cage. Part of a marble slab recording hunting expeditions of Ashur-bani-pal—page 170.



Fugitives swimming to a fortress on inflated skins. Part of a marble slab recording campaigns of Ashur-razir-pal—page 160.

Photos by

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But Ashur-bani-pal was more than a great warrior, sportsman and dandy, he was a great lover and collector of books. So had been his father, Esar-haddon, his grandfather, Sennacherib, his great grandfather Sargon, and during the hundred years that this powerful family had ruled Assyria, they had founded and enriched libraries in the palaces they built. In the middle of the *Kou-yun-jik Gallery* are table cases in which are shown some of the most precious and wonderful "books," from the Royal library at Nineveh. They are of the same shape and kind as some of the documents we have already looked at in the upper room, being cakes of prepared clay, written upon with a specially shaped stylus when moist, and then baked hard in an oven. Listen to the words which nearly every important tablet in this library bears upon it. "From the Palace of Ashur-bani-pal, king of hosts, king of Assyria, who putteth his trust in the gods who have bestowed upon him ears which hear, and eyes which see. I have inscribed upon tablets the noble products of the work of the scribe—and have arranged them in classes; I have revised them, and I have placed them in my palace, that I, even I, the ruler who knoweth the light of Ashur, the king of the gods, may read them." He finishes with the Assyrian equivalent for "Steal not this book for fear of shame, for in it is the owner's name"—Ashur-bani-pal.

The ancient cities of Babylonia and Assyria had long possessed libraries, and the king sent scribes to make copies for him; he also had lists of words and signs drawn up, together with copies of the old Accadian "classics," with translations in the Assyrian of his day. You can trace the marks of fire which has scorched but not destroyed the books, and can see how often they are broken, most likely by falling from the shelves of wood,

on which they were arranged, when the fire consumed the library in which they were stored.

But you are longing perhaps to sample and dip into the books to find out what they are about. In the first table case we have the famous creation tablets, believed to be copied from far more ancient ones. They give an account of the creation of the world, like in many respects to that given in the Book of Genesis. If you read the labels, you will hear of the great water-deep when the heavens and the earth were not, and there were no plants. You will hear too of the creation of the stars and the appointment of the moon to determine the days, and so on up to the crowning creation of Man. Listen to the instructions which Marduk, the champion of the gods, gave to the first man:—

“Thy heart shall be pure before thy God, for that is what is due to him, thou shalt pray, thou shalt make supplication, and bow low to the earth, early in the morning. Speak no evil against thy friend and neighbour.”

In this case too is the thrilling fairy story or legend, perhaps one of the oldest in the world, of the exploits of a hero named Gilgamish, which somewhat remind one of those of Heracles. On his way to the mountain of the sunset, Gilgamish passes trees laden with precious stones instead of fruit, and a scorpion man and his wife. A sailor—are you thinking of Sinbad?—comes to the rescue and helps him and his friend to cross the sea, and then he hears the story of the Flood and the Ark, the swallow and the raven, from the man who was saved when all the rest of the world were drowned.

Children find it hard enough to learn the twenty-six signs, small and capital, with which we write now; the cuneiform signs used by the Assyrians numbered nearly six hundred. In the second table case are lists of them,

some in three columns, some in four, with the old languages and their translations and explanations with grammatical examples.

Next, we come to some of the history books of the collection, and familiar names such as those of Sargon, Tiglath Pileser, Sennacherib, meet our eye.

Numerous letters about public and private affairs follow. One is called the “will” of Sennacherib, another is a letter to Ashur-bani-pal respecting the transport of some “colossi” on boats. Many relate to the treatment of the sick, and the calling in of doctors. In one a lady is spoken of as grievously ill, and unable to eat. The treatment of those times sounds very extraordinary to us. In one case the priest casts into the fire various objects, including a pod of garlic, a date, a palm frond. The idea seems to have been that illness was caused by being bewitched, and so all sorts of means are employed to get rid of the danger by charms and prayers. Some of the prayers to the gods are very beautiful; especially so is the Accadian hymn to the moon-god. It ends up with these words “Among the gods, thy brethren, there is none who is like unto thee, O thou king of kings, whose judgments are inscrutable, and whose divinity is unsurpassed.” One can linger with enjoyment for hours in this library of long ago, gaining glimpses into the daily life of the far past which set us thinking and wondering.

Amongst the bricks from the buildings of the kings of Assyria—in the upper room, are many belonging to Ashur-bani-pal; there are also some fine cylinders of this king, one, a ten-sided one, gives an account of his birth and education, his campaigns and buildings. The stone stele sculptured with the figure of his twin brother, whom he made viceroy of Babylon, opens up a tragic story of the middle of the seventh century B.C., which ended in a

palace in flames, in which the owner perished rather than surrender to the brother against whom he had revolted.

How little Ashur-bani-pal, in his magnificence, could have imagined, that within thirty years of his death, near the end of this seventh century, his great kingdom which stretched from the Sea of the Rising to the Sea of the Setting Sun—the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean—would all fall apart, and his splendid palace and library be burnt in the destruction of his capital, Nineveh, after a siege of two years.

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Helps to the Study of the Bible.

Nineveh and its Palaces, Bonomi.

Harmsworth's History of the World, Parts II. and XIII.

Destruction of Sennacherib's Army, Byron.

Ancient Egypt and Assyria, Maspero.

CHAPTER XII.

BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA.

PART III.

“Red of the Dawn!

Godless fury of peoples, and Christless frolic of kings,
And the bolt of war dashing down upon cities and blazing farms,
For Babylon was a child new-born, and Rome was a babe in arms,
And London and Paris and all the rest are as yet but in leading-strings.”

IN a case in the *Babylonian and Assyrian Room* on the upper floor there lies a brown and dusty skull, the fractures of which show that its owner met with a violent death. That skull is believed to have belonged to the soldier on guard in the palace of the Assyrian king, when Nineveh fell. Lurid flashes of flame light up the awful scene across the twenty-five centuries that have passed away from then to now, as we watch the fire destroying what the enemies cannot take away. And after the crackling and roaring of the fire, the shouts of the soldiers, the bitter cries of the despairing and terrified crowds of rich and poor as they watch the destruction of the great city—their home—there comes the desolate silence. The pomp and splendour, the busy human life, the fine buildings with magnificent adornments and treasures are all swept away, and rain and flood, storm and wind, settle the ruins into the burial mounds of dust and clay which have kept them safely till these later days.

“This is the rejoicing city, which dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart ‘I am, and there is none beside me.’ How is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in.” (Zephaniah). The allies who overthrew

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Nineveh were Nabopolassar, an Assyrian general holding a command in Babylonia, and the Medes, a race of people from the east who were the fore-runners of the Persians, and who were much connected with them by conquest and marriage. As the Medes destroyed and plundered the rest of the cities of Assyria in the same way as the capital, the country never rose again; it disappeared from history. You have in the eighteenth century B.C. page of your note-book, the entry, "Assyria became a separate kingdom," and in the centuries that followed you have many of the names of the kings of the sculptured reliefs and the tablets. Now, towards the end of the seventh century, we must write "Nineveh and the Assyrian empire destroyed."

Nabopolassar became the first king of the Second Babylonian monarchy, which lasted about a hundred years. Let us first find in the upper room the clay cones of this king on which are told the story of his restoration of a temple at Babylon, and the cutting of a canal from the Euphrates to the city of Sippar, the Sun God. You will look again at the tablet showing the Babylonian king of the ninth century worshipping in the beautiful shrine. The inscription on the clay cone of Nabopolassar describes how the sides of the canal were made of bricks set in pitch, and this canal is believed to have been but a restoration of one that was cut by the great law-giver Khammurabi about fifteen hundred years before. The tablets of Nabopolassar relate to the sale of land, and various kinds of loans, as do so many of the tablets of this second Babylonian empire, especially those of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, whose name comes at the end of the seventh century. His tablets are deeply interesting; there is one about the dowry of the bride Khamma, and the promises of her father that it shall be paid; the sale of a female slave and her baby; lists of accounts, and endless business documents to do with the

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sale of houses and estates. All these are very much like those of the older Babylonian empire, which we have already seen, and as an example of the way in which the far past was ever copied and borne in mind, we must look at the weight next to the cones of Nabopolassar. The inscription upon it says that it is an exact copy of a weight made by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon from B.C. 604 to B.C. 561, after the standard fixed by Dungi, king of Babylon, B.C. 2,500!

But this is not the only link with the far past. Nebuchadnezzar was a great builder and restorer of temples and palaces, as well as an enthusiastic business man and agriculturalist, and the cast of the celebrated inscription kept in the *East India House* reminds us of the mounds at Birs Nimrûd near Babylon, the traditional site of the Tower of Babel. Nebuchadnezzar tells us that "a king of olden time had built a famous tower of great height but he did not complete its head. Since that time the earthquake and the thunder had dispersed its sun-dried clay; the bricks of the casing had been split, and the earth of the interior had been scattered in heaps."

This tower, which may have been the far-famed Tower of Babel itself, Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt in seven stories, each faced with tiles of a different bright colour, such as we can see here in the museum cases.

There is much more that is interesting in the *India House* Inscription, such as accounts of the travels of Nebuchadnezzar through distant lands and over mountain ranges, and lists of the precious things he brought to Babylon. Then follow details of his great buildings—the walls of Babylon, hundreds of temples and shrines for the gods. "I love thy habitation on high," he says in his prayer to Marduk, "even as I love mine own dear life." The series of barrel-shaped cylinders, and the inscriptions on the bronze doorstep and numberless bricks

bearing his name and titles, all confirm and add to his reputation as a builder. His name is very familiar to us in Bible History, where we hear of his wars against Egypt and the Jews; in the course of the latter wars he took Jerusalem, seized and blinded the king, and carried the nation into captivity. Perhaps about this time the young Hebrew boy Daniel was taken to Babylon. We know the story of his long and adventurous life there, for the Book of Daniel carries us right into the huge city, and gives us vivid glimpses of the great king and the ways of his court. Read again the story of the brave resistance to the summons to worship the Golden Image—was it in the likeness of one of the Assyrian and Babylonian monsters we know by sight? Try to hear the music of the band of ringing instruments, many of them having Greek names, because even then there was commerce between the two countries. Try, too, to feel the flare of intense heat of the fiery furnace, as the “Three Children” are thrown in. Was the furnace used for drying the bricks, so largely made and used for the immense building works in this country where stone was so scarce? Try, too, to picture the intense pride of the king as he walked in his palace and said “Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” And then, imagine the sudden loss of reason, when the dreadful madness of believing himself a beast of the field came upon him, so that he wandered out alone—eating grass.

Daniel acted as regent during his illness and lived through the times of Nabonidus who followed. The cylinders of this king describe many building operations and are of special value in settling the dates of the ancient history of Babylonia as far back as the thirty-eighth century. Great was his satisfaction in finding monuments of Burnaburiash, one of the writers of the Tell-el-Amarna

letters, a thousand years before his day, of Khammurabi—the maker of laws and canals—a thousand years (nearly) before Burnaburiash, and of Sargon I., a thousand years earlier than Khammurabi. Perhaps the satisfaction of Nabonidus was all the greater because renowned builders such as Esarhaddon and Nebuchadnezzar had sought for these monuments in vain. From the tablets of Nabonidus we can gather that the busy prosperous life was still going on in the carefully cultivated and watered fields in Babylonia, for we have lists of shepherds, husbandmen, gardeners, as well as numerous documents about the sale and transfer of land. Nabonidus made his son Belshazzar governor of Babylon.

Perhaps you have seen a picture of Belshazzar’s Feast, for artists have more than once taken as a subject this most dazzling and exciting scene. A feast of a thousand guests in a magnificent hall, loud laughter and revelry at its height, while wine is being drunk out of the sacred vessels which belonged to the Jewish Temple.

Suddenly there flashes familiar words on the palace walls. The terrified feasters cannot imagine what these names of the four common weights of the Babylonian market—such as our lbs., oz., dwts.—can mean. Daniel himself, the chief of the College of Wise Men, must come and explain it to Belshazzar and his company. “The kingdom has been weighed in the scales and found wanting; it shall pass to the Medes and Persians” is the solemn answer.

penney weights

Outside the walls, a great army of hardy warriors, who ride well, speak the truth, drink water not wine, have been closing in on the careless city, and while the noisy feast goes on are silently turning aside the course of the river that runs through it.

That night the Persians entered the city, Belshazzar was killed, and Babylonia passed to Persian rule under Cyrus.

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The baked clay cylinder of Cyrus, king of Babylonia, B.C. 538, and a tablet amongst the other historical annals of the kingdom, give an account of his entry with his Persians. From them we learn that he entered the city of Babylon without battle and without fighting, and that he spared Babylon tribulation. We want to read all the notes that are given in the cases, and then as we pass from one to another of the business tablets, belonging to the times of the Persian kings, we realise that life in the country went on just as it did before the conquest. There are the same sort of documents relating to dowries, debts, and loans; a loan of 3,000 bunches of onions sounds a large order! There are also the same sales of slaves and land, with special references to date plantations, and the apprenticeship of slaves to learn trades such as weaving and stone-cutting, and also for providing garments for the deities. Does this last make you think of the work of the Athenian girls for Athene? Cyrus was especially favourable to the Jewish exiles he found in Babylonia, and at the end of the seventy years' captivity he sent a caravan of about 50,000 of them up the Euphrates valley and across the desert under Zerubbabel, to seek their old homes, and rebuild the Temple. It is thought that they cheered the long weary march of some three or four months with the beautiful strains of their national music, perhaps Psalm lxxxiv., for once more, as hopeful and free men they could happily sing the songs of Sion, which had been impossible to them as they wept by the waters of Babylon.

The wise and brave Daniel, now a very old man, was one of those who stayed behind, and to this time belongs the story of the den of lions when the Great Darius had ascended the throne, after the short reign of the mad Cambyses, who wrought such havoc in Egypt and in his own family.

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We have many reminders of Darius in the Museum. There is a cylinder seal such as might have been used to seal Daniel's prison for the night, with the name of Darius in three languages, Persian, Scythic or Median, and Babylonian, and the national god of the Persians hovering over the king hunting in his chariot, as the Assyrian Ashur hovered over Ashur-nazir-pal and his successors. Then there are the casts of many important inscriptions of his times and later, including the Squeezes from the Rock of Behistun, engraved as we have seen on the face of a very high cliff, well out of reach, even of the scholars who wished to unravel the mystery of the arrow-headed writing with their help. The name of Darius, as on the cylinder seal, is in the three languages of the chief peoples over whom he ruled. The scene cut in the rock at Behistun, showing Darius receiving the submission of ten chiefs with ropes round their necks, is very fine, and the hovering god above is so distinct that it would make a good illustration for the end of the sixth century in the note-book. Darius who did much for trade and security in his wide dominions by settling the coinage and establishing good roads, reigned from B.C. 521 to 483.

This latter date brings us to that wonderful fifth century B.C., already so full of names and drawings in our note-books. As you will see from your entries it was during the middle years of this century that we wandered by the Nile, listening to the pleasant chat of Herodotus, the Father of History, who has also much to say about the Persians and mighty Babylon, with walls fifteen miles square, pierced by a hundred brazen gates; he shows us too the busy quays on the Euphrates, the wonderful hanging gardens, the brilliant temples and palaces. For, as you will remember, it was the history of the wars between the Greeks and Persians that he set out to write, while the

events of that great world-struggle between East and West were still fresh in men's minds.

The struggle began in the reign of Darius with differences between the Greek Colonies in Asia Minor and the Persian ruler to whom they owed taxes and service. When the Athenians sympathized with their countrymen across the blue sea of many islands and helped them burn an important town, Darius burst out in a rage. "The Athenians, who are they? Great Jove, grant me vengeance on the Athenians!"

The echoes of the struggle that followed in the first years of the fifth century B.C. still make our hearts beat, our eyes shine as we read of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis. Darius, with ten times as many Persians as there were Greeks, was utterly routed at Marathon; his son Xerxes, who succeeded him, at Salamis; Thermopylæ, where the Spartans were killed to a man, was for the Greeks a defeat greater than any victory. In the museum we can find a deed of partnership of the reign of Xerxes, next to numerous deeds of his father's reign; there are also a few fragments of alabaster vases inscribed with his names and titles.

When his vast host—from two to five millions—failed to spread over Europe, as it would have done but for gallant little Greece, Xerxes retired to his capital at Susa, and it is here that the Bible History, if Xerxes be Ahasuerus, admits us to an audience with the hero of the ivory throne, and the fetters for the unruly Hellespont. He had always favoured the Jews, and we can see how much influence they had in the Story of Esther, the beautiful Jewess he made his wife.

Artaxerxes his son, had a Jewish cup-bearer, Nehemiah, whom he sent with Ezra to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and teach the people the Law of God. There are a few deed tablets of Artaxerxes next those of his father and

grandfather. During the time of confusion and plots that followed the death of this Artaxerxes I., when the great empire of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, that stretched from India to Ethiopia was slowly breaking up, a body of Greek soldiers, employed by one brother against another, was led into the very heart of the country, to Babylon itself. When the fortune of war failed them, the leader of their long weary homeward journey through an unfriendly country, was led by a young Athenian, Xenophon. The story of their sufferings and hardships by the way, how they were borne, their shouts of joy when seeing at last, shining below them, the waters of the Black Sea, is all related by Xenophon, in one of the best known books of ancient times. You can write the name of the author, and the title of the book *The Retreat of the 10,000 Greeks*, at the beginning of the fourth century, and find a soldier of the times from the frieze of the Nereid or Mausoleum tomb for an illustration.

Through the first part of this fourth century, the quarrels amongst the States of Greece, were preparing the way for the rise of the kingdom of Macedon, which about B.C. 333 brings us face to face with Alexander, the world conqueror. In the course of a few years what was known of Europe, Africa, Asia, fell before him. He defeated Darius III. in more than one battle, and after the death of the Persian king, became monarch of the East. Perhaps, there is no picture in all the romantic story more thrilling than the meeting of the conqueror with the widow and children of the man whose splendour was now his. When we gazed at Alexander's face—the bust in the *Ephesus Room*, the coins in the *Room of Greek and Roman life*—we thought of him chiefly as the conqueror of Egypt, the founder of Alexandria. As we look at him again—remembering how Caracalla is said to have been proud to imitate the turn of his head—we stand

confused and overwhelmed at the thought of his triumphs in Asia, his magnificence and mad folly. He died at Babylon, eight years after the battle of Arbela, in which the Old Persian empire came to an end.

There are many centuries lying between Alexander's days and ours, during which the modern nations of Europe, Germany, France, England, and the rest, have been born and have grown to what they are now. It is a long and intricate story, how these centuries of growth in the West have passed chiefly in decay in the land of Two Rivers in the East.

The few illustrative objects in the Museum are but as stepping stones here and there with which to bridge the stream of time, as waves of conquest passed by, nations rose and fell, and misrule, neglect, ignorance, brought the once cultivated land, well watered by canals carefully kept up, back to its first desert state.

Perhaps, you would like to find a few of these stepping stones, for the sake of future study. To the second century B.C. belong the tablets referring to star-gazing, one of which served as a reading book for students; they remind us of the Wise Men of the East led by a bright star to Bethlehem a little later. Parthian earthenware coffins, and some smaller bronze and clay objects, vases, cups, lamps, will give subjects for illustration in the centuries between the Greek and Roman occupations. Portraits of the rulers can be found amongst the coins belonging to the time of the Decline of Art.

The Roman necklaces of carnelian, crystal and other beads date from the centuries when the dwellers in the eastern countries were fellow subjects with the ancient Britons under the world-empire of Rome.

Of special interest are the medicine bowls dating from the third century B.C. to the fourth A.D. Fancy reciting

with the doctor when one is ill, the text round a bowl of water, immediately before or after drinking it!

From the Sassanian or New Persian period—from the third to the seventh centuries A.D.—we have bronze helmets and inlaid silver bracelets, rings, and cut gems, adorned with lions, bulls, and winged horses, and some with named portraits.

The beautiful copy of the Koran in the *Gallery of Collections to illustrate different Religions* will remind us of the great power of the followers of Mahomet after the sixth century A.D. They are still paramount in the lands of the Two Rivers.

"Red of the Dawn!
Is it turning a fainter red? So be it, but when shall we lay
The ghost of the Brute that is walking and haunting us yet, and be free?
In a hundred, a thousand winters? Ah, what will *our* children be?
The men of a hundred thousand, a million summers away!"

Tennyson.

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