CHALDEA

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CHAPTER II. CLIMATE AND PRODUCTION

"Ager totius Asiae fertilissimus."--PLIN. H. N. vi. 26.

Lower Mesopotamia, or Chaldaea, which lies in the same latitude with Central China, the Punjab, Palestine, Marocco, Georgia, Texas, and Central California, has a climate the warmth of which is at least equal to that of any of those regions. Even in the more northern part of the country, the district about Baghdad, the thermometer often rises during the summer to 120 deg. of Fahrenheit in the shade; and the inhabitants are forced to retreat to their _serdabs_ or cellars, where they remain during the day, in an atmosphere which, by the entire exclusion of the sun's rays, is reduced to about 100 deg. Lower down the valley, at Zobair, Busrah, and Mohammrah, the summer temperature is still higher; and, owing to the moisture of the atmosphere, consequent on the vicinity of the sea, the heat is of that peculiarly oppressive character which prevails on the sea-coast of Hindustan, in Ceylon, in the West Indian Islands, at New Orleans, and in other places whose situation is similar. The vital powers languish under this oppression, which produces in the European a lassitude of body and a prostration of mind that wholly unfit him for active duties. On the Asiatic, however, these influences seem to have little effect. The Cha'b Arabs, who at present inhabit the region, are a tall and warlike race, strong-limbed, and muscular; they appear to enjoy the climate, and are as active, as healthy, and as long-lived as any tribe of their nation. But if man by long residence becomes thoroughly inured to the intense heat of these regions, it is otherwise with the animal creation. Camels sicken, and birds are so distressed by the high temperature that they sit in the date-trees about Baghdad, with their mouths open, panting for fresh air.

The evils proceeding from a burning temperature are augmented in places under the influence of winds, which, arising suddenly, fill the air with an impalpable sand, sometimes circling about a point, sometimes driving with furious force across a wide extent of country. The heated particles, by their contact with the atmosphere, increase its fervid glow, and, penetrating by the nose and mouth, dry up the moisture of the tongue, parch the throat, and irritate or even choke the lungs. Earth and sky are alike concealed by the dusty storm, through which no object can be distinguished that is removed many yards; a lurid gleam surrounds the traveller, and seems to accompany him as he moves: every landmark is hid from view; and to the danger of suffocation is added that of becoming bewildered and losing all knowledge of the road. Such are the perils encountered in the present condition of the country. It may be doubted, however, if in the times with which we are here concerned the evils just described had an existence. The sands of Chaldaea, which are still progressive and advancing, seem to have reached it from the Arabian Desert, to which they properly belong: year by year the drifts gain upon the alluvium, and threaten to spread over the whole country. If we may calculate the earlier by the present rate of progress, we must conclude that anciently these shifting sands had at any rate not crossed the Euphrates.

If the heat of summer be thus fierce and trying, the cold of winter must be pronounced to be very moderate. Frost, indeed, is not unknown in the country: but the frosts are

only slight. Keen winds blow from the north, and in the morning the ground is often whitened by the congelation of the dew; the Arabs, impatient of a low temperature, droop and flag; but there is at no time any severity of cold; ice rarely forms in the marshes; snow is unknown; and the thermometer, even on the grass, does not often sink below 30 deg. The Persian kings passed their winter in Babylon, on account of the mildness of the climate; and Indian princes, expelled from the Peninsula, are wont, from a similar cause, to fix their residence at Busrah or Baghdad. The cold of which travellers speak is relative rather than positive. The range of the thermometer in Lower Chaldoea is perhaps 100 deg., whereas in England it is scarcely 80 deg., there is thus a greater difference between the heat of summer and the cold of winter there than here; but the actual greatest cold--that which benumbs the Arabs and makes them fall from their horses--is no more than we often experience in April, or even in May.

The rainy season of Chaldaea is in the winter time. Heavy showers fall in November, and still more in December, which sensibly raise the level of the rivers. As the spring advances the showers become lighter and less frequent; but still they recur from time to time, until the summer sets in, about May. From May to November rain is very rare indeed. The sky continues for weeks or even months without a cloud; and the sun's rays are only tempered for a short time at morning and at evening by a gray mist or haze. It is during these months that the phenomenon of the mirage is most remarkable. The strata of air, unequally heated, and therefore differing in rarity, refract the rays of light, fantastically enlarging and distorting the objects seen through them, which frequently appear raised from the ground and hanging in mid-air, or else, by a repetition of their image, which is reflected in a lower stratum, give the impression that they stand up out of a lake. Hence the delusion which has so often driven the traveller to desperation--the "image of a cool, rippling, watery mirror," which flies before him as he advances, and at once provokes and mocks his thirst.

The fertility of Chaldaea in ancient times was proverbial.

"Of all countries that we know," says Herodotus, "there is none that is so fruitful in grain. It makes no pretension, indeed, of growing the fig, the olive, the vine, or any other tree of the kind; but in grain it is so fruitful as to yield commonly two hundred-fold, and when the production is at the greatest, even three hundred-fold. The blade of the wheat-plant and of the barley-plant is often four fingers in breadth. As for the millet and the sesame, I shall not say to what height they grow, though within my own knowledge; for I am not ignorant that what I have already written concerning the fruitfulness of Babylonia must seem incredible to those who have not visited the country." Theophrastus, the disciple of Aristotle, remarks--"In Babylon the wheat-fields are regularly mown twice, and then fed off with beasts, to keep down the luxuriance of the leaf; otherwise the plant does not run to ear. When this is done, the return, in lands that are badly cultivated, is fifty-fold; while, in those that are well farmed, it is a hundred-fold." Strabo observes--"The country produces barley on a scale not known elsewhere, for the return is said to be three hundred-fold. All other wants are supplied by the palm, which furnishes not only bread, but wine, vinegar, honey, and meal." Pliny follows Theophrastus, with the exception that he makes the return of the wheat-crop, where the land is well farmed, a hundred and fifty-fold. The wealth of the region was strikingly exhibited by the heavy demands which were made upon it by the Persian kings, as well as by the riches which, notwithstanding these demands, were accumulated in the hands of those who administered its government. The money-tribute paid by Babylonia and Assyria to the Persians was a thousand talents of silver (nearly a quarter of a million of our money) annually; while the tribute in kind

was reckoned at one third part of the contributions of the whole empire. Yet, despite this drain on its resources, the government was regarded as the best that the Persian king had to bestow, and the wealth accumulated by Babylonian satraps was extraordinary. Herodotus tells us of a certain Tritanteechmes, a governor, who, to his own knowledge, derived from his province nearly two bushels of silver daily! This fortunate individual had a "stud of sixteen thousand mares, with a proportionate number of horses." Another evidence of the fertility of the region may be traced in the fear of Artaxerxes Mnemon, after the battle of Cunaxa, lest the Ten Thousand should determine to settle permanently in the vicinity of Sittace upon the Tigris. Whatever opinion may be held as to the exact position of this place, and of the district intended by Xenophon, it is certain that it was in the alluvial plain and so contained within the limits of the ancient Chaldaea.

Modern travellers, speaking of Chaldaea in its present condition, express themselves less enthusiastically than the ancients; but, on the whole, agree with them as to the natural capabilities of the country. "The soil," says one of the most judicious, "is extremely fertile, producing great quantities of rice, dates, and grain of different kinds, though it is not cultivated to above half the degree of which it is susceptible." "The soil is rich," says another, "not less bountiful than that on the banks of the Egyptian Nile." "Although greatly changed by the neglect of man," observes a third, "those portions of Mesopotamia which are still cultivated, as the country about Hillah, show that the region has all the fertility ascribed to it by Herodotus." There is a general recognition of the productive qualities of the district, combined with a general lamentation over the existing neglect and apathy which allow such gifts of Nature to run to waste. Cultivation, we are told, is now the exception, instead of the rule. "Instead of the luxuriant fields, the groves and gardens of former times, nothing now meets the eye but an arid waste." Many parts of Chaldaea, naturally as productive as any others, are at present pictures of desolation. Large tracts are covered by unwholesome marshes, producing nothing but enormous reeds; others lie waste and bare, parched up by the fierce heat of the sun, and utterly destitute of water; in some places, as has been already mentioned, sand-drifts accumulate, and threaten to make the whole region a mere portion of the desert.

The great cause of this difference between ancient and modern Chaldaea is the neglect of the water-courses. Left to themselves, the rivers tend to desert some portions of the alluvium wholly, which then become utterly unproductive; while they spread themselves out over others, which are converted thereby into pestilential swamps. A well-arranged system of embankments and irrigating canals is necessary in order to develop the natural capabilities of the country, and to derive from the rich soil of this vast alluvium the valuable and varied products which it can be made to furnish.

Among the natural products of the region two stand out as pre-eminently important-the wheat-plant and the date-palm. [PLATE IV., Fig. 2.] According to the native tradition, wheat was indigenous in Chaldaea; and the first comers thus found themselves provided by the bountiful hand of Nature with the chief necessary of life. The luxuriance of the plant was excessive. Its leaves were as broad as the palm of a man's hand, and its tendency to grow leaves was so great that (as we have seen) the Babylonians used to mow it twice and then pasture their cattle on it for awhile, to keep down the blade and induce the plant to run to ear. The ultimate return was enormous; on the most moderate computation it amounted to fifty-fold at the least, and often to a hundred-fold. The modern oriental is content, even in the case of a rich soil, with a tenfold return.

The date-palm was at once one of the most valuable and one of the most ornamental

products of the country. "Of all vegetable forms," says the greatest of modern naturalists, "the palm is that to which the prize of beauty has been assigned by the concurrent voice of nations in all ages." And though the date-palm is in form perhaps less graceful and lovely than some of its sister species, it possesses in the dates themselves a beauty which they lack. These charming yellow clusters, semi-transparent, which the Greeks likened to amber, and moderns compare to gold, contrast, both in shade and tint, with the green feathery branches beneath whose shade they hang, and give a richness to the landscape they adorn which adds greatly to its attractions. And the utility of the palm has been at all times proverbial. A Persian poem celebrated its three hundred and sixty uses. The Greeks, with more moderation, spoke of it as furnishing the Babylonians with bread, wine, vinegar, honey, groats, string and ropes of all kinds, firing, and a mash for fattening cattle. The fruit was excellent, and has formed at all times an important article of nourishment in the country. It was eaten both fresh and dried, forming in the latter case a delicious sweetmeat. The wine, "sweet but headachy," was probably not the spirit which it is at present customary to distil from the dates, but the slightly intoxicating drink called _lagby_ in North Africa, which may be drawn from the tree itself by decapitating it, and suffering the juice to flow. The vinegar was perhaps the same fluid corrupted, or it may have been obtained from the dates. The honey was palm-sugar, likewise procurable from the sap. How the groats were obtained we do not know; but it appears that the pith of the palm was eaten formerly in Babylonia, and was thought to have a very agreeable flavor. Ropes were made from the fibres of the bark; and the wood was employed for building and furniture. It was soft, light and easily worked; but tough, strong and fibrous.

The cultivation of the date-palm was widely extended in Chaldaea, probably from very early times. The combination of sand, moisture, and a moderately saline soil, in which it delights, was there found in perfection, more especially in the lower country, which had but recently been reclaimed from the sea. Even now, when cultivation is almost wholly laid aside, a thick forest of luxuriant date-trees clothes the banks of the Euphrates on either side, from the vicinity of Mugheir to its embouchure at the head of the Persian Gulf. Anciently the tract was much more generally wooded with them. "Palm-trees grow in numbers over the whole of the flat country," says one of the most observant and truthful of travellers--Herodotus. According to the historians of Julian, a forest of verdure extended from the upper edge of the alluvium, which he crossed, to Mesene, and the shores of the sea. When the Arabian conquerors settled themselves in the lower country, they were so charmed with the luxuriant vegetation and the abundant date-groves, that they compared the region with the country about Damascus and reckoned it among their four earthly paradises. The propagation of the date-palm was chiefly from seed. In Chaldaea, however, it was increased sometimes from suckers or offshoots thrown up from the stem of the old tree; at other times by a species of cutting, the entire head being struck off with about three feet of stem, notched, and then planted in moist ground. Several varieties of the tree were cultivated; but one was esteemed above all the rest, both for the size and flavor of the fruit. It bore the name of "Royal," and grew only in one place near Babylon.

Beside these two precious products, Chaldaea produced excellent barley, millet, sesame, vetches and fruits of all kinds. It was, however, deficient in variety of trees, possessing scarcely any but the palm and the cypress. Pomegranates, tamarisks, poplars, and acacias are even now almost the only trees besides the two above mentioned, to be found between Samarah and the Persian Gulf. The tamarisk grows chiefly as a shrub along the rivers, but sometimes attains the dimensions of a tree, as in the case of the

"solitary tree" still growing upon the ruins of Babylon. The pomegranates with their scarlet flowers, and the acacias with their light and graceful foliage, ornament the banks of the streams, generally intermingled with the far more frequent palm, while oranges, apples, pears, and vines are successfully cultivated in the gardens and orchards.

Among the vegetable products of Chaldaea must be noticed, as almost peculiar to the region, its enormous reeds. [PLATE V.] These, which are represented with much spirit in the sculptures of Sennacherib, cover the marshes in the summer-time, rising often to the height of fourteen or fifteen feet. The Arabs of the marsh region form their houses of this material, binding the stems of the reeds together, and bending them into arches, to make the skeleton of their buildings; while, to form the walls, they stretch across from arch to arch mats made of the leaves. From the same fragile substance they construct their _terradas_ or light boats, which, when rendered waterproof by means of bitumen, will support the weight of three or four men.

In mineral products Chaldaea was very deficient indeed. The alluvium is wholly destitute of metals, and even of stone, which must be obtained, if wanted, from the adjacent countries. The neighboring parts of Arabia could furnish sandstone and the more distant basalt; which appears to have been in fact transported occasionally to the Chaldaean Cities. Probably, however, the chief importation of stone was by the rivers, whose waters would readily convey it to almost any part of Chaldaea from the regions above the alluvium. This we know to have been done in some cases, but the evidence of the ruins makes it clear that such importation was very limited. The Chaldaeans found, in default of stone, a very tolerable material in their own country; which produced an inexhaustible supply of excellent clay, easily moulded into bricks, and not even requiring to be baked in order to fit it for the builder. Exposure to the heat of the summer sun hardened the clay sufficiently for most purposes, while a few hours in a kiln made it as firm and durable as freestone, or even granite. Chaldaea, again, yielded various substances suitable for mortar. Calcareous earths abound on the western side of the Euphrates towards the Arabian frontier; while everywhere a tenacious slime or mud is easily procurable, which, though imperfect as a cement, can serve the purpose, and has the advantage of being always at hand. Bitumen is also produced largely in some parts, particularly at Hit, where are the inexhaustible springs which have made that spot famous in all ages. Naphtha and bitumen are here given forth separately in equal abundance; and these two substances, boiled together in certain proportions, form a third kind of cement, superior to the slime or mud, but inferior to lime-mortar. Petroleum, called by the Orientals _mumia_, is another product of the bitumen-pits.

The wild animals indigenous in Babylonia appear to be chiefly the following:--the lion, the leopard, the hyeena, the lynx, the wild-cat, the wolf, the jackal, the wild-boar, the buffalo, the stag, the gazelle, the jerboa, the fox, the hare, the badger, and the porcupine. The Mesopotamian lion is a noble animal. Taller and larger than a Mount St. Bernard dog, he wanders over the plains their undisputed lord, unless when an European ventures to question his pre-eminence. The Arabs tremble at his approach, and willingly surrender to him the choicest of their flocks and herds. Unless urged by hunger, he seldom attacks man, but contents himself with the destruction of buffaloes, camels, dogs, and sheep. When taken young, he is easily tamed, and then manifests considerable attachment to his master. In his wild state he haunts the marshes and the banks of the various streams and canals, concealing himself during the day, and at night wandering abroad in search of his prey, to obtain which he will approach with boldness to the very skirts of an Arab encampment. His roar is not deep or terrible, but like the

cry of a child in pain, or the first wail of the jackal after sunset, only louder, clearer and more prolonged. Two varieties of the lion appear to exist: the one is maneless, while the other has a long mane, which is black and shaggy. The former is now the more common in the country; but the latter, which is the fiercer of the two, is the one ordinarily represented upon the sculptures. The lioness is nearly as much feared as the lion; when her young are attacked, or when she has lost them, she is perhaps even more terrible. Her roar is said to be deeper and far more imposing than of the male.

The other animals require but few remarks. Gazelles are plentiful in the more sandy regions; buffaloes abound in the marshes of the south, where they are domesticated, and form the chief wealth of the inhabitants; troops of jackals are common, while the hyaena and wolf are comparatively rare; the wild-boar frequents the river banks and marshes, as depicted in the Assyrian sculptures [PLATE VI., Fig. 1]; hares abound in the country about Baghdad; porcupines and badgers are found in most places--leopards, lynxes, wild-cats, and deer, are somewhat uncommon.

Chaldaea possesses a great variety of birds. Falcons, vultures, kites, owls, hawks and crows of various kinds, francolins or black partridges, pelicans, wild-geese, ducks, teal, cranes, herons, kingfishers, and pigeons, are among the most common. The sand-grouse (Pterocles arenarius) is occasionally found, as also are the eagle and the bee-eater. Fish are abundant in the rivers and marshes, principally barbel and carp, which latter grow to a great size in the Euphrates. Barbel form an important element in the food of the Arabs inhabiting the Affej marshes, who take them commonly by means of a fish-spear. In the Shat-el-Arab, which is wholly within the influence of the tides, there is a species of goby, which is amphibious. This fish lies in myriads on the mud-banks left uncovered by the ebb of the tide, and moves with great agility on the approach of birds. Nature seems to have made the goby in one of her most freakish moods. It is equally at home in the earth, the air, and the water; and at different times in the day may be observed swimming in the stream, basking upon the surface of the tidal banks, and burrowing deep in the mud.

The domestic animals are camels, horses, buffaloes, cows and oxen, goats, sheep, and dogs. The most valuable of the last mentioned are grayhounds, which are employed to course the gazelle and the hare. The camels, horses, and buffaloes are of superior quality; but the cows and oxen seem to be a very inferior breed. The goats and the sheep are small, and yield a scanty supply of a somewhat coarse wool. Still their flocks and herds constitute the chief wealth of the people, who have nearly forsaken the agriculture which anciently gave Chaldaea its pre-eminence, and have relapsed very generally into a nomadic or semi-nomadic condition. The insecurity of property consequent upon bad government has in a great measure caused this change, which render; the bounty of Nature useless, and allows immense capabilities to run to waste. The present condition of Babylonia gives a most imperfect idea of its former state, which must be estimated not from modern statistics, but from the accounts of ancient writers and the evidences which he country itself presents. From them we conclude that this region was among the most productive upon the face of the earth, spontaneously producing some of the best gifts of God to man, and capable, under careful management, of being made one continuous garden.

CHAPTER III. THE PEOPLE.

"A mighty nation, an ancient nation."--JEREM. v. 15.

That the great alluvial plain at the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris was among the countries first occupied by man after the Deluge, is affirmed by Scripture, and generally allowed by writers upon ancient

history. Scripture places the original occupation at a time when language had not yet broken up into its different forms, and when, consequently, races, as we now understand the term, can scarcely have existed. It is not, however, into the character of these primeval inhabitants that we have here to inquire, but into the ethnic affinities and characteristics of that race, whatever it was, which first established an important kingdom in the lower part of the plain--a kingdom which eventually became an empire. According to the ordinary theory, this race was Aramaic or Semitic. "The name of Aramaeans, Syrians, or Assyrians," says Niebuhr, "comprises the nations extending from the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris to the Euxine, the river Halys, and Palestine. They applied to themselves the name of Aram, and the Greeks called them Assyrians, which is the same as Syrians(?). Within that great extent of country there existed, of course, various dialectic differences of language; and there can be little doubt but that in some places the nation was mixed with other races." The early inhabitants of Lower Mesopotamia, however, he considers to have been pure Aramaeans, closely akin to the Assyrians, from whom, indeed, he regards them as only separate politically.

Similar views are entertained by most modern writers. Baron Bunsen, in one of his latest works, regards the fact as completely established by the results of recent researches in Babylonia. Professor M. Muller, though expressing himself with more caution, inclines to the same conclusion. Popular works, in the shape of Cyclopaedias and short general histories, diffuse the impression. Hence a difficulty is felt with regard to the Scriptural statement concerning the first kingdom in these parts, which is expressly said to have been Cushite or Ethiopian. "And _Cush begat Nimrod:_ (he began to be a mighty one in the earth; 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." According to this passage the early Chaldaeans should be Hamites, not Semites--Ethiopians, not Aramaans; they should present analogies and points of connection with the inhabitants of Egypt and Abyssinia, of Southern Arabia and Mekran, not with those of Upper Mesopotamia, Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine. It will be one of the objects of this chapter to show that the Mosaical narrative conveys the exact truth--a truth alike in accordance with the earliest classical traditions, and with the latest results of modern comparative philology.

It will be desirable, however, before proceeding to establish the correctness of these assertions, to examine the grounds on which the opposite belief has been held so long and so confidently. Heeren draws his chief argument from the supposed character of the language. Assuming the form of speech called Chaldee to be the original tongue of the people, he remarks that it is "an Aramaean dialect, differing but slightly from the proper Syriac." Chaldee is known partly from the Jewish Scriptures, in which it is used occasionally, partly from the Targums (or Chaldaean paraphrases of different portions of the Sacred Volume), some of which belong to about the time of the Apostles. and partly from the two Talmuds, or collections of Jewish traditions, made in the third and fifth centuries of our era. It has been commonly regarded as the language of Babylon at the time of the Captivity, which the Jews, as captives, were forced to learn, and which thenceforth took the place of their own tongue. But it is extremely doubtful whether this is a true account of the matter. The Babylonian language of the age of Nebuchadnezzar is found to be far nearer to Hebrew than to Chaldee, which appears therefore to be misnamed, and to represent the western rather than the eastern Aramaic. The Chaldee argument thus falls to the ground: but in refuting it an admission has been made which may be thought to furnish

fully as good proof of early Babylonian Semitism as the rejected theory.

It has been said that the Babylonian language in the time of Nebuchadnezzar is found to be far nearer to Hebrew than to Chaldee. It is, in fact, very close indeed to the Hebrew. The Babylonians of that period, although they did not speak the tongue known to modern linguists as Chaldee, did certainly employ a Semitic or Aramaean dialect, and so far may be set down as Semites. And this is the ground upon which such modern philologists as still maintain the Semitic character of the primitive Chaldaeans principally rely. But it can be proved from the inscriptions of the country, that between the date of the first establishment of a Chaldaean kingdom and the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the language of Lower Mesopotamia underwent an entire change. To whatever causes this may have been owing--a subject which will be hereafter investigated--the fact is certain; and it entirely destroys the force of the argument from the language of the Babylonians at the later period.

Another ground, and that which seems to have had the chief weight with Niebuhr, is the supposed identity or intimate connection of the Babylonians with the Assyrians. That the latter people were Semites has never been denied; and, indeed, it is a point supported by such an amount of evidence as renders it quite unassailable. If, therefore the primitive Babylonians were once proved to be a mere portion of the far greater Assyrian nation, locally and politically, but not ethnically separate from them, their Semitic character would thereupon be fully established. Now that this was the belief of Herodotus must be at once allowed. Not only does that writer regard the later Babylonians as Assyrians--"Assyrians of Babylon," as he expresses it--and look on Babylonia as a mere "district of Assyria," but, by adopting the mythic genealogy, which made Ninus the son of Belus, he throws back the connection to the very origin of the two nations, and distinctly pronounces it a connection of race. But Herodotus is a very weak authority on the antiquities of any nation, even his own; and it is not surprising that he should have carried back to a remote period a state of things which he saw existing in his own age. If the later Babylonians were, in manners and customs, in religion and in language, a close, counterpart of the Assyrians, he would naturally suppose them descended from the same stock. It is his habit to transfer back to former times the condition of things in his own day. Thus he calls the inhabitants of the Peloponnese before the Dorian invasion "Dorians," regards Athens as the second city in Greece when Creesus sent his embassies, and describes as the ancient Persian religion that corrupted form which existed under Artaxerxes Longimanus. He is an excellent authority for what he had himself seen, or for what he had laboriously collected by inquiry from eye witnesses; but he had neither the critical acumen nor the linguistic knowledge necessary for the formation of a trust worthy opinion on a matter belonging to the remote history of a distant people. And the opinion of Herodotus as to the ethnic identity of the two nations is certainly not confirmed by other ancient writers. Berosus seems to have very carefully distinguished between the Assyrians and the Babylonians or Chaldaeans, as may be seen even through the doubly-distorting medium of Polyhistor and the Armenian Eusebius. Diodorus Siculus made the two nations separate and hostile in very early times. Pliny draws a clear line between the "Chaldaean races," of which Babylon was the head, and the Assyrians of the region above them. Even Herodotus in one place admits a certain amount of ethnic difference; for, in his list of the nations forming the army of Xerxes, he mentions the Chaldaeans as serving with, but not included among, the Assyrians.

The grounds, then, upon which the supposed Semitic character of the ancient Chaldaeans has been based, fail, one and all; and it remains to consider whether we have data

sufficient to justify us in determinately assigning them to any other stock.

Now a large amount of tradition--classical and other--brings Ethiopians into these parts, and connects, more or less distinctly, the early dwellers upon the Persian Gulf with the inhabitants of the Nile valley, especially with those upon its upper course. Homer, speaking of the Ethiopians, says that they were "divided," and dwelt "at the ends of earth, towards the setting and the rising sun." This passage has been variously apprehended. It has been supposed to mean the mere division of the Ethiopians south of Egypt by the river Nile, whereby some inhabited its eastern and some its western bank. Again it has been explained as referring to the east and west coasts of Africa, both found by voyagers to be in the possession of Ethiopians, who were "divided" by the vast extent of continent that lay between them. But the most satisfactory explanation is that which Strabo gives from Ephorus, that the Ethiopians were considered as occupying all the south coast both of Asia and Africa, and as "divided" by the Arabian Gulf (which separated the two continents) into eastern and western-Asiatic and African. This was an "old opinion" of the Greeks, we are told; and, though Strabo thinks it indicated their ignorance, we may perhaps be excused for holding it that it might not improbably have arisen from real, though imperfect, knowledge.

The traditions with respect to Memnon serve very closely to connect Egypt and Ethiopia with the country at the head of the Persian Gulf. Memnon, King of Ethiopia, according to Hesiod and Pindar, is regarded by 'Eschylus as the son of a Cissian woman, and by Herodotus and others as the founder of Susa. He leads an army of combined Susianians and Ethiopians to the assistance of Priam, his father's brother, and, after greatly distinguishing himself, perishes in one of the battles before Troy. At the same time he is claimed as one of their monarchs by the Ethiopians upon the Nile, and identified by the Egyptians with their king, Amunoph III., whose statue became known as "the vocal Memnon." Sometimes his expedition is supposed to have started from the African Ethiopia, and to have proceeded by way of Egypt to its destination. There were palaces, called "Memnonia," and supposed to have been built by him, both in Egypt and at Susa; and there was a tribe, called Memnones, near Meroe. Memnon thus unites the Eastern and the Western Ethiopians; and the less we regard him as an historical personage, the more must we view him as personifying the ethnic identity of the two races.

The ordinary genealogies containing the name of Belus point in the same direction, and serve more definitely to connect the Babylonians with the Cushites of the Nile. Pherecydes, who is an earlier writer than Herodotus, makes Agenor, the son of Neptune, marry Damno, the daughter of Belus, and have issue Phoenix, Isaea, and Melia, of whom Melia marries Danaus, and Isaea Aegyptus. Apollodorus, the disciple of Eratosthenes, expresses the connection thus:--"Neptune took to wife Libya (or Africa), and had issue Belus and Agenor. Belus married Anchinoe, daughter of Nile, who gave birth to AEgyptus, Danaus, Cepheus, and Phineus. Agenor married Telephassa, and had issue Europa, Cadmus, Phoenix, and Cilix." Eupolemus, who professes to record the Babylonian tradition on the subject, tells us that the first Belus, whom he identifies with Saturn, had two sons, Belus and Canaan. Canaan begat the progenitor of the Phoenicians (Phoenix?), who had two sons, Chum and Mestraim, the ancestors respectively of the Ethiopians and the Egyptians. Charax of Pergamus spoke of AEgyptus as the son of Belus. John of Antioch agrees with Apollodorus, but makes certain additions. According to him, Neptune and Lybia had three children, Agenor, Belus, and Enyalius or Mars. Belus married Sida, and had issue AEgyptus and Danaus; while Agenor married Tyro, and became the father

of five children--Cadmus, Phoenix, Syrus, Cilix, and Europa.

Many further proofs might be adduced, were they needed, of the Greek belief in an Asiatic Ethiopia, situated somewhere between Arabia and India, on the shores of the Erythraean Sea. Herodotus twice speaks of the Ethiopians of Asia, whom he very carefully distinguishes from those of Africa, and who can only be sought in this position. Ephorus, as we have already seen, extended the Ethiopians along the whole of the coast washed by the Southern Ocean. Eusebius has preserved a tradition that, in the reign of Amenophis III., a body of Ethiopians migrated from the country about the Indus, and settled in the valley of the Nile. Hesiod and Apollodorus, by making Memnon, the Ethiopian king, son of the Dawn (Greek) imply their belief in an Ethiopia situated to the east rather than to the south of Greece. These are a few out of the many similar notices which it would be easy to produce from classical writers, establishing, if not the fact itself, yet at any rate a full belief in the fact on the part of the best informed among the ancient Greeks.

The traditions of the Armenians are in accordance with those of the Greeks. The Armenian Geography applies the name of Cush, or Ethiopia, to the four great regions, Media, Persia, Susiana or Elymais, and Aria, or to the whole territory between the Indus and the Tigris. Moses of Chorene, the great Armenian historian, identifies Belus, King of Babylon, with Nimrod; while at the same time he adopts for him a genealogy only slightly different from that in our present copies of Genesis, making Nimrod the grandson of Cush, and the son of Mizraim. He thus connects, in the closest way, Babylonia, Egypt, and Ethiopia Proper, uniting moreover, by his identification of Nimrod with Belus, the Babylonians of later times who worshipped Belus as their hero-founder, with the primitive population introduced into the country by Nimrod.

The names of Belus and Cush, thus brought into juxtaposition, have remained attached to some portion or other of the region in question from ancient times to the present day. The tract immediately east of the Tigris was known to the Greeks as Cissia or Cossaea, no less than as Elymais or Elam. The country east of Kerman was named Kusan throughout the Sassanian period. The same region is now Beloochistan, the country of the Belooches or Belus, while adjoining it on the east is Cutch, or Kooch, a term standing to Cush is Belooch stands to Belus. Again, Cissia or Cossaea is now Khuzistan, or the land of Khuz a name not very remote from Cush; but perhaps this is only a coincidence.

To the traditions and traces here enumerated must be added, as of primary importance, the Biblical tradition, which is delivered to us very simply and plainly in that precious document the "Toldoth Beni Noah," or "Book of the Generations of the Sons of Noah," which well deserves to be called "the most authentic record that we possess for the affiliation of nations." "The sons of Ham," we are told, "were Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan . . . . And Cush begat Nimrod . . . . And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." Here a primitive Babylonian kingdom is assigned to a people distinctly said to have been Cushite by blood, and to have stood in close connection with Mizraim, or the people of Egypt, Phut, or those of Central Africa, and Canaan, or those of Palestine. It is the simplest and the best interpretation of this passage to understand it as asserting that the four races--the Egyptians, Ethiopians, Libyans, and Canaanites--were ethnically connected, being all descended from Ham; and further, that the primitive people of Babylon were a subdivision of one of these races, namely of the Cushites or Ethiopians, connected in some degree with the Canaanites, Egyptians, and Libyans, but still more closely with the people which dwelt anciently upon the Upper Nile.

The conclusions thus recommended to us by the consentient primitive traditions of so many races, have lately received most important and unexpected confirmation from the results of linguistic research. After the most remarkable of the Mesopotamian mounds had yielded their treasures, and supplied the historical student with numerous and copious documents bearing upon the history of the great Assyrian and Babylonian empires, it was determined to explore Chaldaea Proper, where mounds of less pretension, but still of considerable height, marked the sites of a number of ancient cities. The excavations conducted at these places, especially at Niffer, Senkereh, Warka, and Mugheir, were eminently successful. Among their other unexpected results was the discovery, in the most ancient remains, of a new form of speech, differing greatly from the later Babylonian language and presenting analogies with the early language of Susiana, as well as with that of the second column of the Achoemenian inscriptions. In grammatical structure this ancient tongue resembles dialects of the Turanian family, but its vocabulary has been pronounced to be "decidedly Cushite or Ethiopian;" and the modern languages to which it approaches the nearest are thought to be the Mahra of Southern Arabia and the Galla of Abyssinia. Thus comparative philology appears to confirm the old traditions. An Eastern Ethiopia instead of being the invention of bewildered ignorance, is rather a reality which henceforth it will require a good deal of scepticism to doubt; and the primitive race which bore sway in Chaldaea Proper is with much probability assigned to this ethnic type. The most striking physical characteristics of the African Ethiopians were their swart complexions, and their crisp or frizzled hair. According to Herodotus the Asiatic Ethiopian: were equally dark, but their hair was straight and not frizzled. Probably in neither case was the complexion what we understand by black, but rather a dark red-brown or copper color, which is the tint of the modern Gallas and Abyssinians, as well as of the Cha'b and Montefik Arabs and the Belooches. The hair was no doubt abundant; but it was certainly not woolly like that of the negroes. There is a marked distinction between the negro hair and that of the Ethiopian race, which is sometimes straight, sometimes crisp, but never woolly. This distinction is carefully marked in the Egyptian monuments, as is also the distinction between the Ethiopian and negro complexions; whence we may conclude that there was as much difference between the two races in ancient as in modern times. The African races descended from the Ethiopians are on the whole a handsome rather than an ugly people; their figure is slender and well shaped; their features are regular, and have some delicacy; the forehead is straight and fairly high; the nose long, straight, and fine, but scarcely so prominent as that of Europeans; the chin is pointed and good. [PLATE VI., Fig. 2.]

The principal defect is in the mouth, which has lips too thick and full for beauty, though they are not turned out like a negro's. We do not possess any representations of the ancient people which can be distinctly assigned to the early Cushite period. Abundant hair has been noticed in an early tomb; and this in the later Babylonians, who must have been descended in great part from the earlier, was very conspicuous; but otherwise we have as yet no direct evidence with respect to the physical characteristics of the primitive race. That they were brave and warlike, ingenious, energetic, and persevering, we have ample evidence, which will appear in later chapters of this work; but we can do little more than conjecture their physical appearance, which, however, we may fairly suppose to have resembled that of other Ethiopian nations.

When the early inhabitants of ChaldAea are pronounced to have belonged to the same race with the dwellers upon the Upper Nile, the question naturally arises, which were the

primitive people, and which the colonists? Is the country at the head of the Persian Gulf to be regarded as the original abode of the Cushite race, whence it spread eastward and westward, on the one hand to Susiana, Persia Proper, Carmania, Gedrosia, and India itself; on the other to Arabia and the east coast of Africa? Or are we to suppose that the migration proceeded in one direction only--that the Cushites, having occupied the country immediately to the south of Egypt, sent their colonies along the south coast of Arabia, whence they crept on into the Persian Gulf, occupying Chaldaea and Susiana, and thence spreading into Mekran, Kerman, and the regions bordering upon the Indus? Plausible reasons maybe adduced in support of either hypothesis. The situation of Babylonia, and its proximity to that mountain region where man must have first "increased and multiplied" after the Flood, are in favor of its being the original centre from which the other Cushite races were derived. The Biblical genealogy of the sons of Ham points, however, the other way; for it derives Nimrod from Cush, not Cush from Nimrod. Indeed this document seems to follow the Hamites from Africa--emphatically "the land of Ham"--in one line along Southern Arabia to Shinar or Babylonia, in another from Egypt through Canaan into Syria. The antiquity of civilization in the valley of the Nile, which preceded by many centuries that even of primitive Chaldaea, is another argument in favor of the migration having been from west to east; and the monuments and traditions of the Chaldaeans themselves have been thought to present some curious indications of an East African origin. On the whole, therefore, it seems most probable that the race designated in Scripture by the hero-founder Nimrod, and among the Greeks by the eponym of Belus, passed from East Africa, by way of Arabia, to the valley of the Euphrates, shortly before the opening of the historical period.

Upon the ethnic basis here indicated, there was grafted, it would seem, at a very early period, a second, probably Turanian, element, which very importantly affected the character and composition of the people. The _Burbur_ or _Akkad,_ who are found to have been a principal tribe under the early kings, are connected by name, religion, and in some degree by language, with an important people of Armenia, called _Burbur_ and _Urarda,_ the Alarodians (apparently) of Herodotus. It has been conjectured that this race at a very remote date descended upon the plain country, conquering the original Cushite inhabitants, and by degrees blending with them, though the fusion remained incomplete to the time of Abraham. The language of the early inscriptions, though Cushite in its vocabulary, is Turanian in many points of its grammatical structure, as in its use of post-positions, particles, and pronominal suffixes; and it would seem, therefore, scarcely to admit of a doubt that the Cushites of Lower Babylon must in some way or other have become mixed with a Turanian people. The mode and time of the commixture are matters altogether beyond our knowledge. We can only note the fact as indicated by the phenomena, and form, or abstain from forming, as we please, hypotheses with respect to its accompanying circumstances.

Besides these two main constituents of the Chaldaean race, there is reason to believe that both a Semitic and an Arian element existed in the early population of the country. The subjects of the early kings are continually designated in the inscriptions by the title of _kiprat-arbat,_ "the four nations," or _arba lisun,_ "the four tongues." In Abraham's time, again, the league of four kings seems correspondent to a fourfold ethnic division, Cushite, Turanian, Semitic, and Arian, the chief authority and ethnic preponderance being with the Cushites. The language also of the early inscriptions is thought to contain traces of Semitic and Arian influence; so that it is at least probable that the "four tongues" intended were not mere local dialects, but distinct languages, the representatives respectively of the four great families of human speech.

It would result from this review of the linguistic facts and other ethnic indications, that the Chaldaeans were not a pure, but a very mixed people. Like the Romans in ancient and the English in modern Europe, they were a "colluvio gentium omnium," a union of various races between which there was marked and violent contrast. It is now generally admitted that such races are among those which play the most distinguished part in the world's history, and most vitally affect its progress.

With respect to the name of Chaldaean, under which it has been customary to designate this mixed people, it is curious to find that in the native documents of the early period it does not occur at all. Indeed it first appears in the Assyrian inscriptions of the ninth century before our era, being then used as the name of the dominant race in the country about Babylon. Still, as Berosus, who cannot easily have been ignorant of the ancient appellation of his race, applies the term Chaldaean to the primitive people, and as Scripture assigns Ur to the Chaldees as early as the time of Abraham, we are entitled to assume that this term, whenever it came historically into use, is in fact no unfit designation for the early inhabitants of the country. Perhaps the most probable account of the origin of the word is that it designates properly the inhabitants of the ancient capital, Ur or Hur-Khaldi being in the Burbur dialect the exact equivalent of Hur, which was the proper name of the Moon-God, and Chaldaeans being thus either "Moon-worshippers," or simply "inhabitants of the town dedicated to, and called after, the Moon." Like the term "Babylonian," it would at first have designated simply the dwellers in the capital, and would subsequently have been extended to the people generally.

A different theory has of late years been usually maintained with respect to the Chaldaeans. It has been supposed that they were a race entirely distinct from the early Babylonians--Armenians, Arabs, Kurds, or Sclaves --who came down from the north long after the historical period, and settled as the dominant race in the lower Mesopotamian valley. Philological arguments of the weakest and most unsatisfactory character were confidently adduced in support of these views; but they obtained acceptance chiefly on account of certain passages of Scripture, which were thought to imply that the Chaldaeans first colonized Babylonia in the seventh or eighth century before Christ. The most important of these passages is in Isaiah. That prophet, in his denunciation of woe upon Tyre, says, according to our translation,--"Behold the land of the Chaldaeans this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness; they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he brought it to ruin;" or, according to Bishop Lowth, "Behold the land of the Chaldaeans. This people was of no account. (The Assyrians founded it for the inhabitants of the desert, they raised the watch-towers, they setup the palaces thereof.) This people hath reduced her and shall reduce her to ruin." It was argued that we had here a plain declaration that, till a little before Isaiah's time, the Chaldaeans had never existed as a nation. Then, it was said, they obtained for the first time fixed habitations from one of the Assyrian kings, who settled them in a city, probably Babylon. Shortly afterwards, following the analogy of so many Eastern races, they suddenly sprang up to power. Here another passage of Scripture was thought to have an important bearing on their history. "Lo! I raise up the Chaldaeans," says Habakkuk, "that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves; their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as an eagle that hasteth to eat; they shall come all for violence; their faces shall

nip as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them; they shall deride every stronghold; they shall heap dust and take it." The Chaldaeans, recent occupants of Lower Mesopotamia, and there only a dominant race, like the Normans in England or the Lombards in North Italy, were, on a sudden, "raised" elevated from their low estate of Assyrian colonists to the conquering people which they became under Nebuchadnezzar.

Such was the theory, originally advanced by Gesenius, which, variously modified by other writers, held its ground on the whole as the established view, until the recent cuneiform discoveries. It was, from the first, a theory full of difficulty. The mention of the Chaldaeans in Job, and even in Genesis, as a well-known people, was in contradiction to the supposed recent origin of the race. The explanation of the obscure passage in the 23d chapter of Isaiah, on which the theory was mainly based, was at variance with other clearer passages of the same prophet. Babylon is called by Isaiah the "_daughter_ of the Chaldaeans," and is spoken of as an ancient city, long "the glory of kingdoms," the oppressor of nations, the power that "smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke." She is "the lady of kingdoms," and "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency." The Chaldaeans are thus in Isaiah, as elsewhere generally in Scripture, the people of Babylonia, the term "Babylonians" not being used by him; Babylon is their chief city, not one which they have conquered and occupied, but their "daughter"--"the beauty of their excellency;" and so all the antiquity and glory which is assigned to Babylon belong necessarily in Isaiah's mind to the Chaldaeans. The verse, therefore, in the 23d chapter, on which so much has been built, can at most refer to some temporary depression of the Chaldaeans, which made it a greater disgrace to Tyre that she should be conquered by them. Again, the theory of Gesenius took no account of the native historian, who is (next to Scripture) the best literary authority for the facts of Babylonian history. Berosus not only said nothing of any influx of an alien race into Babylonia shortly before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, but pointedly identified the Chaldaeans of that period with the primitive people of the country. Nor can it be said that he would do this from national vanity, to avoid the confession of a conquest, for he admits no fewer than three conquests of Babylon, a "Midian, an Arabian, and an Assyrian." Thus, even apart from the monuments, the theory in question would be untenable. It really originated in linguistic speculations, which turn out to have been altogether mistaken.

The joint authority of Scripture and of Berosus will probably be accepted as sufficient to justify the adoption of a term which, if not strictly correct, is yet familiar to us, and which will conveniently serve to distinguish the primitive monarchy, whose chief seats were in Chaldaea Proper (or the tract immediately bordering upon the Persian Gulf), from the later Babylonian Empire, which had its head-quarters further to the north. The people of this first kingdom will therefore be called Chaldaeans, although there is no evidence that they applied the name to themselves, or that it was even known to them in primitive times.

The general character of this remarkable people will best appear from the account, presently to be given, of their manners, their mode of life, their arts, their science, their religion, and their history. It is not convenient to forestall in this place the results of almost all our coming inquiries. Suffice it to observe that, though possessed of not many natural advantages, the Chaldaean people exhibited a fertility of invention, a genius, and an energy which place them high in the scale of nations, and more especially in the list of those descended from a Hamitic stock. For the last 3000 years the world has been mainly indebted for its advancement to the Semitic and Indo-European races; but it

was otherwise in the first ages. Egypt and Babylon--Mizraim and Nimrod--both descendants of Ham--led the way, and acted as the pioneers of mankind in the various untrodden fields of art, literature, and science. Alphabetic writing, astronomy, history, chronology, architecture, plastic art, sculpture, navigation, agriculture, textile industry, seem, all of them, to have had their origin in one or other of these two countries. The beginnings may have been often humble enough. We may laugh at the rude picture-writing, the uncouth brick pyramid, the coarse fabric, the homely and ill-shapen instruments, as they present themselves to our notice in the remains of these ancient nations; but they are really worthier of our admiration than of our ridicule. The first inventors of any art are among the greatest benefactors of their race; and the bold step which they take from the unknown to the known, from blank ignorance to discovery, is equal to many steps of subsequent progress. "The commencement," says Aristotle, "is more than half of the whole." This is a sound judgment; and it will be well that we should bear it in mind during the review, on which we are about to enter, of the language, writing, useful and ornamental art, science, and literature of the Chaldaeans. "The child is father of the man," both in the individual and the species; and the human race at the present day lies under infinite obligations to the genius and industry of early ages.