Babylonia

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Chapter 2. Climate and Production

The Babylonian Empire, lying as it did between the thirtieth and thirty-seventh parallels of north latitude, and consisting mostly of comparatively low countries, enjoyed a climate which was, upon the whole, considerably warmer than that of Media, and less subject to extreme variations. In its more southern parts-Susiana, Chaldea (or Babylonia Proper), Philistia, and Edom---the intensity of the summer heat must have been great; but the winters were mild and of short duration. In the middle regions of Central Mesopotamia, the Euphrates valley, the Palmyrene, Coele-Syria, Judaea, and Phoenicia, while the winters were somewhat colder and longer, the summer warmth was more tolerable. Towards the north, along the flanks of Masius, Taurus, and Amanus, a climate more like that of eastern Media prevailed, the summers being little less hot than those of the middle region, while the winters were of considerable severity. A variety of climate thus existed, but a variety within somewhat narrow limits. The region was altogether hotter and drier than is usual in the same latitude. The close proximity of the great Arabian desert, the small size of the adjoining seas, the want of mountains within the region having any great elevation, and the general absence of timber, combined to produce an amount of heat and dryness scarcely known elsewhere outside the tropics.

Detailed accounts of the temperature, and of the climate generally, in the most important provinces of the Empire, Babylonia and Mesopotamia Proper, have been already given, and on these points the reader is referred to the first volume. With regard to the remaining provinces, it may be noticed, in the first place, that the climate of Susiana differs but very slightly from that of Babylonia, the region to which it is adjacent. The heat in summer is excessive, the thermometer, even in the hill country, at an elevation of 5000 feet, standing often at 107 deg. Fahr. in the shade. The natives construct for themselves serdaubs, or subterranean apartments, in which they live during the day, thus somewhat reducing the temperature, but probably never bringing it much below 100 degrees. They sleep at night in the open air on the flat roofs of their houses. So far as there is any difference of climate at this season between Susiana and Babylonia, it is in favor of the former. The heat, though scorching, is rarely oppressive; and not infrequently a cool, invigorating breeze sets in from the mountains, which refreshes both mind and body. The winters are exceedingly mild, snow being unknown on the plains, and rare on the

mountains, except at a considerable elevation. At this time, however--from December to the end of March--rain falls in tropical abundance; and occasionally there are violent hail-storms, which inflict serious injury on the crops. The spring-time in Susiana is delightful. Soft airs fan the cheek, laden with the scent of flowers; a carpet of verdure is spread over the plains; the sky is cloudless, or overspread with a thin gauzy veil; the heat of the sun is not too great; the rivers run with full banks and fill the numerous canals; the crops advance rapidly towards perfection; and on every side a rich luxuriant growth cheers the eye of the traveler.

On the opposite side of the Empire, in Syria and Palestine, a moister, and on the whole a cooler climate prevails. In Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon there is a severe winter, which lasts from October to April; much snow falls, and the thermometer often marks twenty or thirty degrees of frost. On the flanks of the mountain ranges, and in the highlands of Upper and Coele-Syria, of Damascus, Samaria, and Judea, the cold is considerably less; but there are intervals of frost; snow falls, though it does not often remain long upon the ground; and prolonged chilling rains make the winter and early spring unpleasant. In the low regions, on the other hand, in the _Shephelah_, the plain of Sharon, the Phoenician coast tract, the lower valley of the Orontes, and again in the plain of Esdraelon and the remarkable depression from the Merom lake to the Dead Sea, the winters are exceedingly mild; frost and snow are unknown; the lowest temperature is produced by cold rains and fogs, which do not bring the thermometer much below 40 deg.. During the summer these low regions, especially the Jordan valley or Ghor, are excessively hot, the heat being ordinarily of that moist kind which is intolerably oppressive. The upland plains and mountain flanks experience also a high temperature, but there the heat is of a drier character, and is not greatly complained of; the nights even in summer are cold, the dews being often heavy; cool winds blow occasionally, and though the sky is for months without a cloud, the prevailing heat produces no injurious effects on those who are exposed to it. In Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon the heat is of course still less; refreshing breezes blow almost constantly; and the numerous streams and woods give a sense of coolness beyond the markings of the thermometer.

There is one evil, however, to which almost the whole Empire must have been subject. Alike in the east and in the west, in Syria and Palestine, no less than in Babylonia Proper and Susiana, there are times when a fierce and scorching wind prevails for days together--a wind whose breath withers the herbage and is unspeakably depressing to man. Called in the east the Sherghis, and in the west the Khamsin, this fiery sirocco comes laden with fine particles of heated sand, which at once raise the temperature and render the air unwholesome to breathe. In Syria these winds occur commonly in the spring, from February to April; but in Susiana and Babylonia the time for them is the height of summer. They blow from various quarters, according to the position, with respect to Arabia, occupied by the different provinces. In Palestine the worst are from the east, the direction in which the desert is nearest; in Lower Babylonia they are from the south; in Susiana from the west or the north-west. During their continuance the air is darkened, a lurid glow is cast over the earth, the animal world pines and droops, vegetation languishes, and, if the traveler cannot obtain shelter, and the wind continues, he may sink and die under its deleterious influence.

The climate of the entire tract included within the limits of the Empire was probably much the same in ancient times as in our own days. In the low alluvial plains indeed near the Persian Gulf it is probable that vegetation was anciently more abundant, the date-palm being cultivated much more extensively then than at present; and so far it might appear reasonable to conclude that the climate of

that region must have been moister and cooler than it now is. But if we may judge by Strabo's account of Susiana, where the climatic conditions were nearly the same as in Babylonia, no important change can have taken place, for Strabo not only calls the climate of Susiana "fiery and scorching," but says that in Susa, during the height of summer, if a lizard or a snake tried to cross the street about noon-day, he was baked to death before accomplishing half the distance. Similarly on the west, though there is reason to believe that Palestine is now much more denuded of timber than it was formerly, and its climate should therefore be both warmer and drier, yet it has been argued with great force from the identity of the modern with the ancient vegetation, that in reality there can have been no considerable change. If then there has been such permanency of climate in the two regions where the greatest alteration seems to have taken place in the circumstances whereby climate is usually affected, it can scarcely be thought that elsewhere any serious change has been brought about.

The chief vegetable productions of Babylonia Proper in ancient times are thus enumerated by Berosus. "The land of the Babylonians," he says, "produces wheat as an indigenous plant," and has also barley, and lentils, and vetches, and sesame; the banks of the streams and the marshes supply edible roots, called gongoe, which have the taste of barley-cakes. Palms, too, grow in the country, and apples, and fruit-trees of various kinds. Wheat, it will be observed, and barley are placed first, since it was especially as a grain country that Babylonia was celebrated. The testimonies of Herodotus, Theophrastus, Strabo, and Pliny as to the enormous returns which the Babylonian farmers obtained from their corn lands have been already cited. No such fertility is known anywhere in modern times; and, unless the accounts are grossly exaggerated, we must ascribe it, in part, to the extraordinary vigor of a virgin soil, a deep and rich alluvium; in part, perhaps, to a peculiar adaptation of the soil to the wheat plant, which the providence of God made to grow spontaneously in this region, and nowhere else, so far as we know, on the whole face of the earth.

Besides wheat, it appears that barley, millet, and lentils were cultivated for food, while vetches were grown for beasts, and sesame for the sake of the oil which can be expressed from its seed. All grew luxuriantly, and the returns of the barley in particular are stated at a fabulous amount. But the production of first necessity in Babylonia was the date-palm, which flourished in great abundance throughout the region, and probably furnished the chief food of the greater portion of the inhabitants. The various uses to which it was applied have been stated in the first volume, where a representation of its mode of growth has been also given.

In the adjoining country of Susiana, or at any rate in the alluvial portion of it, the principal products of the earth seem to have been nearly the same as in Babylonia, while the fecundity of the soil was but little less. Wheat and barley returned to the sower a hundred or even two hundred fold. The date-palm grew plentifully, more especially in the vicinity of the towns. Other trees also were common, as probably konars, acacias, and poplars, which are still found scattered in tolerable abundance over the plain country. The neighboring mountains could furnish good timber of various kinds; but it appears that the palm was the tree chiefly used for building. If we may judge the past by the present, we may further suppose that Susiana produced fruits in abundance; for modern travelers tell us that there is not a fruit known in Persia which does not thrive in the province of Khuzestan.

Along the Euphrates valley to a considerable distance--at least as far as Anah (or Hena)--the character of the country resembles that of Babylonia and Susiana, and the products cannot have been very different. About Anah the date-palm begins to fail, and the olive first

makes its appearance. Further up a chief fruit is the mulberry. Still higher, in northern Mesopotamia, the mulberry is comparatively rare, but its place is supplied by the walnut, the vine, and the pistachio-nut. This district produces also good crops of grain, and grows oranges, pomegranates, and the commoner kinds of fruit abundantly.

Across the Euphrates, in Northern Syria, the country is less suited for grain crops; but trees and shrubs of all kinds grow luxuriantly, the pasture is excellent, and much of the land is well adapted for the growth of cotton. The Assyrian kings cut timber frequently in this tract; and here are found at the present day enormous planes, thick forests of oak, pine, and ilex, walnuts, willows, poplars, ash-trees, birches, larches, and the carob or locust tree. Among wild shrubs are the oleander with its ruddy blossoms, the myrtle, the bay, the arbutus, the clematis, the juniper, and the honeysuckle; among cultivated fruit-trees, the orange, the pomegranate, the pistachio-nut, the vine, the mulberry, and the olive. The adis, an excellent pea, and the Lycoperdon, or wild potato, grow in the neighborhood of Aleppo. The castor-oil plant is cultivated in the plain of Edlib. Melons, cucumbers, and most of the ordinary vegetables are produced in abundance and of good quality everywhere.

In Southern Syria and Palestine most of the same forms of vegetation occur, with several others of quite a new character. These are due either to the change of latitude, or to the tropical heat of the Jordan and Dead Sea valley, or finally to the high elevation of Hermon, Lebanon, and Anti-Lebanon. The date-palm fringes the Syrian shore as high as Beirut, and formerly flourished in the Jordan valley, where, however, it is not now seen, except in a few dwarfed specimens near the Tiberias lake. The banana accompanies the date along the coast, and even grows as far north as Tripoli. The prickly pear, introduced from America, has completely neutralized itself, and is in general request for hedging. The fig mulberry (or true sycamore), another southern form, is also common, and grows to a considerable size. Other denizens of warm climes, unknown in Northern Syria, are the jujube, the tamarisk, the elasagnus or wild olive, the gum-styrax plant (_Styrax officinalis_), the egg-plant, the Egyptian papyrus, the sugar-cane, the scarlet mistletoe, the solanum that produces the "Dead Sea apple" (_Solanum Sodomceum_), the yellow-flowered acacia, and the liquorice plant. Among the forms due to high elevation are the famous Lebanon cedar, several oaks and juniper, the maple, berberry, jasmine, ivy, butcher's broom, a rhododendron, and the gum-tragacanth plant. The fruits additional to those of the north are dates, lemons, almonds, shaddocks, and limes.

The chief mineral products of the Empire seem to have been bitumen, with its concomitants, naphtha and petroleum, salt, sulphur, niter, copper, iron, perhaps silver, and several sorts of precious stones. Bitumen was furnished in great abundance by the springs at Hit or Is, which were celebrated in the days of Herodotus; it was also procured from Ardericca (Kir-Ab), and probably from Earn Ormuz, in Susiana, and likewise from the Dead Sea. Salt was obtainable from the various lakes which had no outlet, as especially from the Sabakhab, the Bahr-el-Melak, the Dead Sea, and a small lake near Tadmor or Palmyra. The Dead Sea gave also most probably both sulphur and niter, but the latter only in small quantities. Copper and iron seem to have been yielded by the hills of Palestine. Silver was perhaps a product of the Anti-Lebanon.

It may be doubted whether any gems were really found in Babylonia itself, which, being purely alluvial, possesses no stone of any kind. Most likely the sorts known as Babylonian came from the neighboring Susiana, whose unexplored mountains may possess many rich treasures. According to Dionysius, the bed of the Choaspes produced numerous agates, and it may well be that from the same quarter came that "beryl more

precious than gold," and those "highly reputed sard," which Babylon seems to have exported to other countries. The western provinces may, however, very probably have furnished the gems which are ascribed to them, as amethysts, which are said to have been found in the neighborhood of Petra, alabaster, which came from near Damascus, and the cyanus, a kind of lapis-lazuli, which was a production of Phoenicia. No doubt the Babylonian love of gems caused the provinces to be carefully searched for stones; and it is not improbable that they yielded besides the varieties already named, and the other unknown kinds mentioned by Pliny, many, if not most, of the materials which we find to have been used for seals by the ancient people. These are, cornelian, rock-crystal, chalcedony, onyx, jasper, quartz, serpentine, sienite, hematite, green feldspar, pyrites, loadstone, and amazon-stone.

Stone for building was absent from Babylonia Proper and the alluvial tracts of Susiana, but in the other provinces it abounded. The Euphrates valley could furnish stone at almost any point above Hit; the mountain regions of Susiana could supply it in whatever quantity might be required; and in the western provinces it was only too plentiful. Near to Babylonia the most common kind was limestone; but about Had-disah on the Euphrates there was also a gritty, silicious rock alternating with iron-stone, and in the Arabian Desert were sandstone and granite. Such stone as was used in Babylon itself, and in the other cities of the low country, probably either came down the Euphrates, or was brought by canals from the adjacent part of Arabia. The quantity, however, thus consumed was small, the Babylonians being content for most uses with the brick, of which their own territory gave them a supply practically inexhaustible.

The principal wild animals known to have inhabited the Empire in ancient times are the following: the lion, the panther or large leopard, the hunting leopard, the bear, the hyena, the wild ox, the buffalo (?), the wild ass, the stag, the antelope, the ibex or wild goat, the wild sheep, the wild boar, the wolf, the jackal, the fox, the hare, and the rabbit. Of these, the lion, leopard, bear, stag, wolf, jackal, and fox seem to have been very widely diffused, while the remainder were rarer, and, generally speaking, confined to certain localities. The wild ass was met with only in the dry parts of Mesopotamia, and perhaps of Syria, the buffalo and wild boar only in moist regions, along the banks of rivers or among marshes. The wild ox was altogether scarce; the wild sheep, the rabbit, and the hare, were probably not common.

To this list may be added as present denizens of the region, and therefore probably belonging to it in ancient times, the lynx, the wildcat, the ratel, the sable, the genet, the badger, the otter, the beaver, the polecat, the jerboa, the rat, the mouse, the marmot, the porcupine, the squirrel, and perhaps the alligator. Of these the commonest at the present day are porcupines, badgers, otters, rats, mice, and jerboas. The ratel, sable, and genet belong only to the north; the beaver is found nowhere but in the Khabour and middle Euphrates; the alligator, if a denizen of the region at all exists only in the Euphrates.

The chief birds of the region are eagles, vultures, falcons, owls, hawks, many kinds of crows, magpies, jackdaws, thrushes, blackbirds, nightingales, larks, sparrows, goldfinches, swallows, doves of fourteen kinds, francolins, rock partridges, gray partridges, black partridges, quails, pheasants, capercailzies, bustards, flamingoes, pelicans, cormorants, storks, herons, cranes, wild-geese, ducks, teal, kingfishers, snipes, woodcocks, the sand-grouse, the hoopoe, the green parrot, the becafico, the locust-bird, the humming-bird (?), and the bee-eater. The eagle, pheasant, capercailzie, quail, parrot, locust-bird, becafico, and humming-bird are rare; the remainder are all tolerably common. Besides these, we know that in ancient times

ostriches wore found within the limits of the Empire, though now they have retreated further south into the Great Desert of Arabia. Perhaps bitterns may also formerly have frequented some of the countries belonging to it, though they are not mentioned among the birds of the region by modern writers.

There is a bird of the heron species, or rather of a species between the heron and the stork, which seems to deserve a few words of special description. It is found chiefly in Northern Syria, in the plain of Aleppo and the districts watered by the Koweik and Sajur rivers. The Arabs call it Tair-el-Raouf, or "the magnificent." This bird is of a grayish-white, the breast white, the joints of the wings tipped with scarlet, and the under part of the beak scarlet, the upper part being of a blackish-gray. The beak is nearly five inches long, and two thirds of an inch thick. The circumference of the eye is red; the feet are of a deep yellow; and the bird in its general form strongly resembles the stork; but its color is darker. It is four feet high, and covers a breadth of nine feet when the wings are spread. The birds of this species are wont to collect in large flocks on the North Syrian rivers, and to arrange themselves in several rows across the streams where they are shallowest. Here they squat side by side, as close to one another as possible, and spread out their tails against the current, thus forming a temporary dam. The water drains off below them, and when it has reached its lowest point, at a signal from one of their number who from the bank watches the proceedings, they rise and swoop upon the fish, frogs, etc., which the lowering of the water has exposed to view.

Fish are abundant in the Chaldean marshes, and in almost all the fresh-water lakes and rivers. The Tigris and Euphrates yield chiefly barbel and carp; but the former stream has also eels, trout, chub, shad-fish, siluruses, and many kinds which have no English names. The Koweik contains the Aleppo eel (_Ophidium masbacambahis_), a very rare variety; and in other streams of Northern Syria are found lampreys, bream, dace, and the black-fish (_Macroptero-notus niger_), besides carp, trout, chub, and barbel. Chub, bream, and the silurus are taken in the Sea of Galilee. The black-fish is extremely abundant in the Bahr-el-Taka and the Lake of Antioch.

Among reptiles may be noticed, besides snakes, lizards, and frogs, which are numerous, the following less common species--iguanas, tortoises of two kinds, chameleons, and monitors. Bats also were common in Babylonia Proper, where they grew to a great size. Of insects the most remarkable are scorpions, tarantulas, and locusts. These last come suddenly in countless myriads with the wind, and, settling on the crops, rapidly destroy all the hopes of the husbandman, after which they strip the shrubs and trees of their leaves, reducing rich districts in an incredibly short space of time to the condition of howling wildernesses. If it were not for the locust-bird, which is constantly keeping down their numbers, these destructive insects would probably increase so as to ruin utterly the various regions exposed to their ravages.

The domestic animals employed in the countries which composed the Empire were, camels, horses, mules, asses, buffaloes, cows and oxen, goats, sheep, and dogs. Mules as well as horses seem to have been anciently used in war by the people of the more southern regions-by the Susianians at any rate, if not also by the Babylonians. Sometimes they were ridden; sometimes they were employed to draw carts or chariots. They were spirited and active animals, evidently of a fine breed, such as that for which Khuzestan is famous at the present day. The asses from which these mules were produced must also have been of superior quality, like the breed for which Baghdad is even now famous, The Babylonian horses are not likely to have been nearly so good; for this animal does not flourish in a climate which is at once moist and hot. Still, at any rate under

the Persians, Babylonia seems to have been a great breeding-place for horses, since the stud of a single satrap consisted of 800 stallions and 16,000 mares. If we may judge of the character of Babylonian from that of Susianian steeds, we may consider the breed to have, been strong and large limbed, but not very handsome, the head being too large and the legs too short for beauty.

The Babylonians were also from very early times famous for their breed of dogs. The tablet engraved in a former volume, which gives a representation of a Babylonian hound, is probably of a high antiquity, not later than the period or the Empire. Dogs are also not infrequently represented on ancient Babylonian stones and cylinders. It would seem that, as in Assyria, there were two principal breeds, one somewhat clumsy and heavy, of a character not unlike that of our mastiff, the other of a much lighter make, nearly resembling our greyhound. The former kind is probably the breed known as Indian, which was kept up by continual importations from the country whence it was originally derived.

We have no evidence that camels were employed in the time of the Empire, either by the Babylonians themselves or by their neighbors, the Susianians; but in Upper Mesopotamia, in Syria, and in Palestine they had been in use from a very early date. The Amalekitos and the Midianites found them serviceable in war; and the latter people employed them also as beasts of burden in their caravan trade. The Syrians of Upper Mesopotamia rode upon them in their journeys. It appears that they were also sometimes yoked to chariots, though from their size and clumsiness they would be but ill fitted for beasts of draught.

Buffaloes were, it is probable, domesticated by the Babylonians at an early date. The animal seems to have been indigenous in the country, and it is far better suited for the marshy regions of Lower Babylonia and Susiana than cattle of the ordinary kind. It is perhaps a buffalo which is represented on an ancient tablet already referred to, where a lion is disturbed in the middle of his feast off a prostrate animal by a man armed with a hatchet. Cows and oxen, however, of the common kind are occasionally represented on the cylinders , where they seem sometimes to represent animals about to be offered to the gods. Goats also appear frequently in this capacity; and they were probably more common than sheep, at any rate in the more southern districts. Of Babylonian sheep we have no representations at all on the monuments; but it is scarcely likely that a country which used wool so largely was content to be without them. At any rate they abounded in the provinces, forming the chief wealth of the more northern nations.

Chapter 3. The People

"The Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation."--Habakkuk. 1. 6.

The Babylonians, who, under Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar, held the second place among the nations of the East, were emphatically a mixed race. The ancient people from whom they were in the main descended--the Chaldeans of the First Empire--possessed this character to a considerable extent, since they united Cusbite with Turanian blood, and contained moreover a slight Semitic and probably a slight Arian element. But the Babylonians of later times--the Chaldeans of the Hebrew prophets--must have been very much more a mixed race than their earlier namesakes--partly in consequence of the policy of colonization pursued systematically by the later Assyrian kings, partly from the direct influence exerted upon them by conquerors. Whatever may have been the case with the Arab dynasty, which bore sway in the country from about B.C. 1546 till B.C. 1300, it is certain that the Assyrians conquered Babylon about B.C. 1300, and almost certain that they established an Assyrian family upon the throne of Nimrod, which held for some considerable time the actual sovereignty of

the country. It was natural that under a dynasty of Semites, Semitic blood should flow freely into the lower region, Semitic usages and modes of thought become prevalent, and the spoken language of the country pass from a Turanian or Turano-Cushite to a Semitic type. The previous Chaldean race blended, apparently, with the new comers, and people was produced in which the three elements--the Semitic, the Turanian, and the Cushite--held about equal shares. The colonization of the Sargonid kings added probably other elements in small proportions, and the result was that among all the nations inhabiting Western Asia there can have been none so thoroughly deserving the title of a "mingled people" as the Babylonians of the later Empire.

In mixtures of this kind it is almost always found that some one element practically preponderates, and assumes to itself the right of fashioning and forming the general character of the race. It is not at all necessary that this formative element should be larger than any other; on the contrary, it may be and sometimes is extremely small; for it does not work by its mass, but by its innate force and strong vital energy. In Babylonia, the element which showed itself to possess this superior vitality, which practically asserted its pre-eminence and proceeded to mold the national character, was the Semitic. There is abundant evidence that by the time of the later Empire the Babylonians had become thoroughly Semitized; so much so, that ordinary observers scarcely distinguished them from their purely Semitic neighbors, the Assyrians. No doubt there were differences which a Hippocrates or an Aristotle could have detected--differences resulting from mixed descent, as well as differences arising from climate and physical geography; but, speaking broadly, it must be said that the Semitic element, introduced into Babylonia from the north, had so prevailed by the time of the establishment of the Empire that the race was no longer one sui generis, but was a mere variety of the well-known and widely spread Semitic type.

We possess but few notices, and fewer assured representations, from which to form an opinion of the physical characteristics of the Babylonians. Except upon the cylinders, there are extant only three or four representations of the human forms by Babylonian artists, and in the few cases where this form occurs we cannot always feel at all certain that the intention is to portray a human being. A few Assyrian bas-reliefs probably represent campaigns in Babylonia; but the Assyrians vary their human type so little that these sculptures must not be regarded as conveying to us very exact information. Though cylinders are too rudely executed to be of much service, and they seem to preserve an archaic type which originated with the Proto-Chaldeans. If we might trust the figures upon them as at all nearly representing the truth, we should have to regard the Babylonians as of much slighter and sparer frames than their northern neighbors, of a physique in fact approaching to meagerness. The Assyrian sculptures, however, are far from bearing out this idea; from them it would seem that the frames of the Babylonians were as brawny and massive as those of the Assyrians themselves, while in feature there was not much difference between the nations. Foreheads straight but not high, noses well formed but somewhat depressed, full lips, and a well-marked rounded chin, constitute the physiognomy of the Babylonians as it appears upon the sculptures of their neighbors. This representation is not contradicted by the few specimens of actual sculpture left by themselves. In these the type approaches nearly to the Assyrian, while there is still, such an amount of difference as renders it tolerably easy to distinguish between the productions of the two nations. The eye is larger, and not so decidedly almond-shaped; the nose is shorter, and its depression is still more marked; while the general expression of

the countenance is altogether more commonplace.

These differences may be probably referred to the influence which was exercised upon the physical form of the race by the primitive or Proto-Chaldean element, an influence which appears to have been considerable. This element, as has been already observed, was predominantly Cushite; and there is reason to believe that the Cushite race was connected not very remotely with the negro. In Susiana, where the Cushite blood was maintained in tolerable purity--Elymseans and Kissians existing side by side, instead of blending together--there was, if we may trust the Assyrian remains, a very decided prevalence of a negro type of countenance, as the accompanying specimens, carefully copied from the sculptures, will render evident. The head was covered with short crisp curls; the eye was large, the nose and mouth nearly in the same line, the lips thick. Such a physiognomy as the Babylonian appears to have been would naturally arise from an intermixture of a race like the Assyrian with one resembling that which the later sculptures represent as the main race inhabiting Susiana.

Herodotus remarks that the Babylonians wore their hair long; and this remark is confirmed to some extent by the native remains. These in general represent the hair as forming a single stiff and heavy curl at the back of the head (No. 3). Sometimes, however, they make it take the shape of long flowing locks, which depend over the back (No. 1), or over the back and shoulders (No. 4), reaching nearly to the waist. Occasionally, in lieu of these commoner types, to have one which closely resembles the Assyrian, the hair forming a round mass behind the head (No. 2), on which we can sometimes trace indications of a slight wave. The national fashion, that to which Herodotus alludes, seems to be represented by the three commoner modes. Where the round mass is worn, we have probably an Assyrian fashion, which the Babylonians aped during the time of that people's pre-eminence.

Besides their flowing hair, the Babylonians are represented frequently with a large beard. This is generally longer than the Assyrian, descending nearly to the waist. Sometimes it curls crisply upon the face, but below the chin depends over the breast in long, straight locks. At other times it droops perpendicularly from the cheeks and the under lip.15 Frequently, however, the beard is shaven off, and the whole face is smooth and hairless.

The Chaldean females, as represented by the Assyrians, are tall and large-limbed. Their physiognomy is Assyrian, their hair not very abundant. The Babylonian cylinders, on the other hand, make the hair long and conspicuous, while the forms are quite as spare and meager as those of the men.

On the whole, it is most probable that the physical type of the later Babylonians was nearly that of their northern neighbors. A somewhat sparer form, longer and more flowing hair, and features less stern and strong, may perhaps have characterized them. They were also, it is probable, of a darker complexion than the Assyrians, being to some extent Ethiopians by descent, and inhabiting a region which lies four degrees nearer to the tropics than Assyria. The Cha'ab Arabs, the present possessors of the more southern parts of Babylonia, are nearly black; and the "black Syrians," of whom Strabo speaks, seem intended to represent the Babylonians.

Among the moral and mental characteristics of the people, the first place is due to their intellectual ability. Inheriting a legacy of scientific knowledge, astronomical and arithmetical, from the Proto-Chaldeans, they seem to have not only maintained but considerably advanced these sciences by their own efforts. Their "wisdom and learning" are celebrated by the Jewish prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel; the Father of History records their valuable

inventions; and an Aristotle was not ashamed to be beholden to them for scientific data. They were good observers of astronomical phenomena, careful recorders of such observations, and mathematicians of no small repute. Unfortunately, they mixed with their really scientific studies those occult pursuits which, in ages and countries where the limits of true science are not known, are always apt to seduce students from the right path, having attractions against which few men are proof, so long as it is believed that they can really accomplish the end that they propose to themselves. The Babylonians were astrologers no less than astronomers; they professed to cast nativities, to expound dreams, and to foretell events by means of the stars; and though there were always a certain number who kept within the legitimate bounds of science, and repudiated the astrological pretensions of their brethren, yet on the whole it must be allowed that their astronomy was fatally tinged with a mystic and unscientific element.

In close connection with the intellectual ability of the Babylonians was the spirit of enterprise which led them to engage in traffic and to adventure themselves upon the ocean in ships. In a future chapter we shall have to consider the extent and probable direction of this commerce. It is sufficient to observe in the present place that the same turn of mind which made the Phoenicians anciently the great carriers between the East and West, and which in modern times has rendered the Jews so successful in various branches of trade, seems to have characterized the Semitized Babylonians, whose land was emphatically "a land of traffic," and their chief city "a city of merchants."

The trading spirit which was thus strongly developed in the Babylonian people led naturally to the two somewhat opposite vices of avarice and over-luxuriousness. Not content with honorable gains, the Babylonians "coveted an evil covetousness," as we learn both from Habakkuk and Jeremiah. The "shameful custom" mentioned by Herodotus, which required as a religious duty that every Babylonian woman, rich or poor, highborn or humble, should once in her life prostitute herself in the temple of Beltis, was probably based on the desire of attracting strangers to the capital, who would either bring with them valuable commodities or purchase the productions of the country. The public auction of marriageable virgins had most likely a similar intention. If we may believe Curtius, strangers might at any time purchase the gratification of any passion they might feel, from the avarice of parents or husbands.

The luxury of the Babylonians is a constant theme with both sacred and profane writers. The "daughter of the Chaldeans" was "tender and delicate," "given to pleasures," apt to "dwell carelessly." Her young men made themselves "as princes to look at--exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads,"--painting their faces, wearing earrings, and clothing themselves in robes of soft and rich material. Extensive polygamy prevailed. The pleasures of the table were carried to excess. Drunkenness was common. Rich unguents were invented. The tables groaned under the weight of gold and silver plate. In every possible way the Babylonians practiced luxuriousness of living, and in respect of softness and self-indulgence they certainly did not fall short of any nation of antiquity.

There was, however, a harder and sterner side to the Babylonian character. Despite their love of luxury, they were at all times brave and skilful in war; and, during the period of their greatest strength, they were one of the most formidable of all the nations of the East. Habakkuk describes them, drawing evidently from the life, as "bitter and hasty," and again as "terrible and dreadful--their horses' hoofs swifter than the leopard's, and more fierce than the evening wolves." Hence they "smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke"--they "made the earth to tremble, and did shake kingdoms"--they

carried all before them in their great enterprises, seldom allowing themselves to be foiled by resistance, or turned from their course by pity. Exercised for centuries in long and fierce wars with the well-armed and well-disciplined Assyrians, they were no sooner quit of this enemy, and able to take an aggressive attitude, than they showed themselves no unworthy successors of that long-dominant nation, so far as energy, valor, and military skill constitute desert. They carried their victorious arms from the shores of the Persian Gulf to the banks of the Nile; wherever they went, they rapidly established their power, crushing all resistance, and fully meriting the remarkable title, which they seem to have received from those who had felt their attacks, of "the hammer of the whole earth."

The military successes of the Babylonians were accompanied with needless violence, and with outrages not unusual in the East, which the historian must nevertheless regard as at once crimes and follies. The transplantation of conquered races--a part of the policy of Assyria which the Chaldeans adopted--may perhaps have been morally defensible, notwithstanding the sufferings which it involved. But the mutilations of prisoners, the weary imprisonments, the massacre of non-combatants, the refinement of cruelty shown in the execution of children before the eyes of their fathers--these and similar atrocities, which are recorded of the Babylonians, are wholly without excuse, since they did not so much terrify as exasperate the conquered nations, and thus rather endangered than added strength or security to the empire. A savage and inhuman temper is betrayed by these harsh punishments--a temper common in Asiatics, but none the less reprehensible on that account--one that led its possessors to sacrifice interest to vengeance, and the peace of a kingdom to a tiger-like thirst for blood. Nor was this cruel temper shown only towards the subject nations and captives taken in war. Babylonian nobles trembled for their heads if they incurred by a slight fault the displeasure of the monarch; and even the most powerful class in the kingdom, the learned and venerable "Chaldeans," ran on one occasion the risk of being exterminated, because they could not expound a dream which the king had forgotten. If a monarch displeased his court, and was regarded as having a bad disposition, it was not thought enough simply to make away with him, but he was put to death by torture. Among recognized punishments were cutting to pieces and casting into a heated furnace. The houses of offenders were pulled down and made into dunghills. These practices imply a "violence" and cruelty beyond the ordinary Oriental limit; and we cannot be surprised that when final judgment was denounced against Babylon, it was declared to be sent, in a great measure, "because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land-of the city, and all that dwelt therein."

It is scarcely necessary to add that the Babylonians were a proud people. Pride is unfortunately the invariable accompaniment of success, in the nation, if not in the individual; and the sudden elevation of Babylon from a subject to a dominant power must have been peculiarly trying, more especially to the Oriental temperament. The spirit which culminated in Nebuchadnezzar, when, walking in the palace of his kingdom, and surveying the magnificent buildings which he had raided on every side from the plunder of the conquered nations, and by the labor of their captive bands, he exclaimed, "Is not the great Babylon which I have built by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?"--was rife in the people generally, who, naturally enough, believed themselves superior to every other nation upon the earth. "I am, and there is none else beside me," was the thought, if not the speech, of the people, whose arrogance was perhaps somewhat less offensive than that of the Assyrians, but was quite as intense and as deep-seated.

The Babylonians, notwithstanding their pride, their cruelty, their covetousness, and their love of luxury, must be pronounced to have been, according to their lights, a religious people. The temple in Babylonia is not a mere adjunct of the palace, but has almost the same pre-eminence over other buildings which it claims in Egypt. The vast mass of the Birs-i-Nimrud is sufficient to show that an enormous amount of labor was expended in the erection of sacred edifices; and the costly ornamentation lavished on such buildings is, as we shall hereafter find, even more remarkable than their size. Vast sums wore also expended on images of the gods, necessary adjuncts of the religion; and the whole paraphernalia of worship exhibited a rare splendor and magnificence. The monarchs were devout worshippers of the various deities, and gave much of their attention to the building and repair of temples, the erection of images, and the like. They bestowed on their children names indicative of religious feeling, and implying real faith in the power of the gods to protect their votaries. The people generally affected similar names--names containing, in almost every case, a god's name as one of their elements. The seals or signets which formed almost a necessary part of each man's costume were, except in rare instances, of a religious character. Even in banquets, where we might have expected that thoughts of religion would be laid aside, it seems to have been the practice during the drinking to rehearse the praises of the deities.

We are told by Nicolas of Damascus that the Babylonians cultivated two virtues especially, honesty and calmness. Honesty is the natural, almost the necessary virtue of traders, who soon find that it is the best policy to be fair and just in their dealings. We may well believe that this intelligent people had the wisdom to see their true interests, and to understand that trade can never prosper unless conducted with integrity and straightforwardness. The very fact that their trade did prosper, that their goods were everywhere in request, is sufficient proof of their commercial honesty, and of their superiority to those tricks which speedily ruin a commerce.

Calmness is not a common Oriental virtue. It is not even in general very highly appreciated, being apt to strike the lively, sensitive, and passionate Eastern as mere dullness and apathy. In China, however, it is a point of honor that the outward demeanor should be calm and placid under any amount of provocation; and indignation, fierceness, even haste, are regarded as signs of incomplete civilization, which the disciples of Confucius love to note in their would-be rivals of the West.

We may conceive that some similar notion was entertained by the proud Babylonians, who no doubt regarded themselves as infinitely superior in manners and culture, no less than in scientific attainments, to the "barbarians" of Persia and Greece. While rage boiled in their hearts, and commands to torture and destroy fell from their tongues, etiquette may have required that the countenance should be unmoved, the eye serene, the voice low and gentle. Such contrasts are not uncommonly seen in the polite Mandarin, whose apparent calmness drives his European antagonist to despair; and it may well be that the Babylonians of the sixth and seventh centuries before our era had attained to an equal power of restraining the expression of feeling. But real gentleness, meekness, and placability were certainly not the attributes of a people who were so fierce in their wars and so cruel in their punishments.