PARTHIA

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Author [1]

Canon George Rawlinson (23 November 1812 – 7 October 1902) was a 19th-century English scholar, historian, and Christian theologian. He was born at Chadlington, Oxfordshire, and was the younger brother of Sir Henry Rawlinson.

Having taken his degree at the University of Oxford (from Trinity College) in 1838, he was elected to a fellowship at Exeter College, Oxford, in 1840, of which from 1842 to 1846 he was fellow and tutor. He was ordained in 1841, was Bampton lecturer in 1859, and was Camden Professor of Ancient History from 1861 to 1889.

In his early days at Oxford, he played cricket for the University, appearing in five matches between 1836 and 1839 which have since been considered to have been first-class.

In 1872 he was appointed canon of Canterbury, and after 1888 he was rector of All Hallows, Lombard Street. In 1873, he was appointed proctor in Convocation for the Chapter of Canterbury. He married Louisa, daughter of Sir RA Chermside, in 1846.

His chief publications are his translation of the History of Herodotus (in collaboration with Sir Henry Rawlinson and Sir John Gardiner Wilkinson), 1858–60; The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World, 1862–67; The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy (Parthian), 1873; The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy (Sassanian), 1875; Manual of Ancient History, 1869; Historical Illustrations of the Old Testament, 1871; The Origin of Nations, 1877; History of Ancient Egypt, 1881; Egypt and Babylon, 1885; History of Phoenicia, 1889; Parthia, 1893; Memoir of Major-General Sir HC Rawlinson, 1898. His lectures to an audience at Oxford University on the topic of the accuracy of the Bible in 1859 were published as the apologetic work The Historical Evidences of the Truth of the Scripture Records Stated Anew in later years. He was also contributor to the Speaker's Commentary, the Pulpit Commentary, Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, and various similar publications. He was the author of the article "Herodotus" in the 9th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica.

[1] Wikipedia, *George Rawlinson*

CHAPTER I. Geography of Parthia

The broad tract of desert which, eastward of the Caspian Sea, extends from the Mougbojar hills to the Indian Ocean, a distance of above 1500 miles, is interrupted about midway by a strip of territory possessing features of much beauty and attraction. This strip, narrow compared to the desert on either side of it, is yet, looked at by itself, a region of no inconsiderable dimensions, extending, as it does from east to west, a distance of 320, and from north to south of nearly 200 miles. The mountain chain, which running southward of the Caspian, skirts the great plateau of Iran, or Persia, on the north, broadens out, after it passes the south-eastern corner of the sea, into a valuable and productive mountain-region. Four or five distinct ranges here run parallel to one another, having between them latitudinal valleys, with glens transverse to their courses. The sides of the valleys are often well wooded; the flat ground at the foot of the hills is fertile; water abounds; and the streams gradually collect into rivers of a considerable size.

The fertile territory in this quarter is further increased by the extension of cultivation to a considerable distance from the base of the most southern of the ranges, in the direction of the Great Iranic desert. The mountains send down a number of small streams towards the south; and the water of these, judiciously husbanded by means of reservoirs and _kanats_, is capable of spreading fertility over a broad belt at the foot of the hills; which, left to nature, would be almost as barren as the desert itself, into which it would, in fact, be absorbed.

It was undoubtedly in the region which has been thus briefly described that the ancient home of the Parthians lay. In this neighborhood alone are found the geographic names which the most ancient writers who mention the Parthians connect with them. Here evidently the Parthians were settled at the time when Alexander the Great overran the East, and first made the Greeks thoroughly familiar with the Parthian name and territory. Here, lastly, in the time of the highest Parthian splendor and prosperity, did a province of the Empire retain the name of Parthyene, or Parthia Proper; and here, also, in their palmiest days, did the Parthian kings continue to have a capital and a residence.

Parthia Proper, however, was at no time coextensive with the region described. A portion of that region formed the district called Hyrcania; and it is not altogether easy to determine what were the limits between the two. The evidence goes, on the whole, to show that, while Hyrcania lay towards the west and north, the Parthian country was that towards the south and east, the valleys of the Ettrek and Gurghan constituting the main portions of the former, while the tracts east and south of those valleys, as far as the sixty-first degree of E. longitude, constituted the latter.

If the limits of Parthia Proper be thus defined, it will have nearly corresponded to the modern Persian province of Khorasan. It will have extended from about Damaghan (long. 54 deg. 10') upon the west, to the Heri-rud upon the east, and have comprised the modern districts of Damaghan, Shah-rud, Sebzawar, Nishapur, Meshed, Shebri-No, and Tersheez. Its length from east to west will have been about 300 miles, and its average width about 100 or 120. It will have contained an area of about 33,000 square miles, being thus about equal in size to Ireland, Bavaria, or St. Domingo.

The character of the district has been already stated in general terms; but some further particulars may now be added. It consists, in the first place, of a mountain and a plain region--the mountain region lying towards the north and the plain region towards the south. The mountain region is composed of three main ranges, the Daman-i-Koh, or Hills of the Kurds, upon the north, skirting the great desert of Rharaem, the Alatagh and Meerabee mountains in the centre; and the Jaghetai or Djuvein range, upon the south, which may be regarded as continued in the hills above Tersheez and Khaff. The three ranges are parallel, running east and west, but with an inclination, more or less strong, to the north of west and the south of east. The northern and central ranges are connected by a water-shed, which runs nearly east and west, a little to the south of Kooshan, and separates the head streams of the Ettrek from those of the Meshed river. The central and southern ranges are connected by a more decided, mountain line, a transverse ridge which runs nearly north and south, dividing between the waters that flow westward into the Gurghan, and those which form the river of Nishapur. This conformation of the mountains leaves between the ranges three principal valleys, the valley of Meshed towards the south-east, between the Kurdish range and the Alatagh and Meerabee; that of Miyanabad towards the west, between the Alatagh and the Jaghetai; and that of Nishapur towards the south, between the eastern end of the Jaghetai and the western flank of the Meerabee. As the valleys are three in number, so likewise are the rivers, which are known

respectively as the Tejend, or river of Meshed, the river of Nishapur, and the river of Miyanabad.

The Tejend, which is the principal stream of the three, rises from several sources in the hills south of Kooshan, and flows with a south-easterly course down the valley of Meshed, receiving numerous tributaries from both sides, until it reaches that city, when it bends eastward, and, finding a way through the Kurdish range, joins the course of the Heri-rud, about long. 01 deg. 10'. Here its direction is completely changed. Turning at an angle, which is slightly acute, it proceeds to flow to the west of north, along the northern base of the Kurdish range, from which it receives numerous small streams, till it ends finally in a large swamp or marsh, in lat. 39 deg., long. 57 deg., nearly. The entire length of the stream, including only main windings, is about 475 miles. In its later course, however, it is often almost dry, the greater portion of the water being consumed in irrigation in the neighborhood of Meshed.

The river of Nishapur is formed by numerous small streams, which descend from the mountains that on three sides inclose that city. Its water is at times wholly consumed in the cultivation of the plain; but the natural course may be traced, running in a southerly and south-westerly direction, until it debouches from the hills in the vicinity of Tersheez. The Miyanabad stream is believed to be a tributary of the Gurghan. It rises from several sources in the transverse range joining the Alatagh to the Jaghetai, the streams from which all flow westward in narrow valleys, uniting about long. 57 deg. 35'. The course of the river from this point to Piperne has not been traced, but it is believed to run in a general westerly direction along the southern base of the Alatagh, and to form a junction with the Gurghan a little below the ruins of the same name. Its length to this point is probably about 200 miles.

The elevation of the mountain chains is not great. No very remarkable peaks occur in them; and it may be doubted whether they anywhere attain a height of above 6000 feet. They are for the most part barren and rugged, very scantily supplied with timber, and only in places capable of furnishing a tolerable pasturage to flocks and herds. The valleys, on the other hand, are rich and fertile in the extreme; that of Meshed, which extends a distance of above a hundred miles from north-west to south-east, and is from twenty to thirty miles broad, has almost everywhere a good and deep soil, is abundantly supplied with water, and yields a plentiful return even to the simplest and most primitive cultivation. The plain about Nishapur, which is in length from eighty to ninety miles, and in width from forty to sixty, boasts a still greater fertility.

The flat country along the southern base of the mountains, which ancient writers regard as Parthia, par excellence, is A strip of territory about 300 miles long, varying in width ac cording to the labor and the skill applied by its inhabitants to the perfecting of a system of irrigation. At present the _kanats_, or underground water-courses, are seldom carried to a distance of more than a mile or two from the foot of the hills; but it is thought that anciently the cultivation was extended considerably further. Ruined cities dispersed throughout the tract sufficiently indicate its capabilities, and in a few places where much attention is paid to agriculture the results are such as to imply that the soil is more than ordinarily productive. The salt desert lies, however, in most places within ten or fifteen miles of the hills; and beyond this distance it is obviously impossible that the "Atak" or "Skirt" should at any time have been inhabited.

It is evident that the entire tract above described must have been at all times a valuable and much coveted region. Compared with the arid and inhospitable deserts which adjoin it upon the north and south, Khorasan, the ancient Parthia and Hyrcania, is a terrestrial Paradise. Parthia, though scantily

wooded, still produces in places the pine, the walnut, the sycamore, the ash, the poplar, the willow, the vine, the mulberry, the apricot, and numerous other fruit trees. Saffron, asafoetida, and the gum ammoniac plant, are indigenous in parts of it. Much of the soil is suited for the cultivation of wheat, barley, and cotton. The ordinary return upon wheat and barley is reckoned at ten for one. Game abounds in the mountains, and fish in the underground water-courses. Among the mineral treasures of the region may be enumerated copper, lead, iron, salt, and one of the most exquisite of gems, the turquoise. This gem does not appear to be mentioned by ancient writers; but it is so easily obtainable that we can scarcely suppose it was not known from very ancient times.

The severity of the climate of Parthia is strongly stated by Justin. According to modern travellers, the winters, though protracted, are not very inclement, the thermometer rarely sinking below ten or eleven degrees of Fahrenheit during the nights, and during the daytime rising, even in December and January, to 40 deg. or 50 deg.. The cold weather, however, which commences about October, continues till nearly the end of March, when storms of sleet and hail are common. Much snow falls in the earlier portion of the winter, and the valleys are scarcely clear of it till March. On the mountains it remains much longer, and forms the chief source of supply to the rivers during the spring and the early summer time. In summer the heat is considerable, more especially in the region known as the "Atak;" and here, too, the unwholesome wind, which blows from the southern desert, is felt from, time to time as a terrible scourge. But in the upland country the heat is at no time very intense, and the natives boast that they are not compelled by it to sleep on their house-tops during more than one month in the year.

The countries by which Parthia Proper was bounded were the following: Chorasmia, Margiana, Aria, Sarangia, Sagartia, and Hyrcania.

Chorasmia lay upon the north, consisting of the low tract between the most northerly of the Parthian mountain chains and the old course of the Oxus. This region, which is for the most part an arid and inhospitable desert, can at no time have maintained more than a sparse and scanty population. The Turkoman tribes which at the present day roam over the waste, feeding their flocks and herds alternately on the banks of the Oxus and the Tejend, or finding a bare subsistence for them about the ponds and pools left by the winter rains, represent, it is probable, with sufficient faithfulness, the ancient inhabitants, who, whatever their race, must always have been nomads, and can never have exceeded a few hundred thousands. On this side Parthia must always have been tolerably safe from attacks, unless the Cis-Oxianian tribes were reinforced, as they sometimes were, by hordes from beyond the river.

On the north-east was Margiana, sometimes regarded as a country by itself, sometimes reckoned a mere district of Bactria. This was the tract of fertile land upon the Murg-ab, or ancient Margus river, which is known among moderns as the district of Merv. The Murg-ab is a stream flowing from the range of the Paropamisus, in a direction which is a little east of north; it debouches from the mountains in about lat. 36 deg. 25', and thence makes its way through the desert. Before it reaches Merv, it is eighty yards wide and five feet deep, thus carrying a vast body of water. By a judicious use of dykes and canals, this fertilizing fluid was in ancient times carried to a distance of more than twenty-five miles from the natural course of the river; and by these means an oasis was created with a circumference of above 170, and consequently a diameter of above fifty miles. This tract, inclosed on every side by deserts, was among the most fertile of all known regions; it was especially famous for its vines, which grew to such a size that a

single man could not encircle their stems with his two arms, and bore clusters that were a yard long. Margiana possessed, however, as a separate country, little military strength, and it was only as a portion of some larger and more populous territory that it could become formidable to the Parthians.

South of Margiana, and adjoining upon Parthia toward the east, was Aria, the tract which lies about the modern Herat. This was for the most part a mountain region, very similar in its general character to the mountainous portion of Parthia, but of much smaller dimensions. Its people were fairly warlike; but the Parthian population was probably double or triple their number, and Parthia consequently had but little to fear in this quarter.

Upon the south-east Parthia was bordered by Sarangia, the country of the Sarangae, or Drangae. This appears to have been the district south of the Herat valley, reaching thence as far as the Hamoon, or Sea of Seistan. It is a country of hills and downs, watered by a number of somewhat scanty streams, which flow south-westward from the Paropamisus to the Hamoon. Its population can never have been great, and they were at no time aggressive or enterprising, so that on this side also the Parthians were secure, and had to deal with no formidable neighbor.

Sagartia succeeded to Sarangia towards the west, and bordered Parthia along almost the whole of its southern frontier. Excepting in the vicinity of Tebbes and Toun (lat. 34 deg., long. 56 deg. to 58 deg.), this district is an absolute desert, the haunt of the gazelle and the wild ass, dry, saline, and totally devoid of vegetation. The wild nomads, who wandered over its wastes, obtaining a scanty subsistence by means of the lasso, were few in number, scattered, and probably divided by feuds. Southern Parthia might occasionally suffer from their raids; but they were far too weak to constitute a serious danger to the mountain country.

Lastly, towards the west and the north-west, Parthia was bordered by Hyrcania, a region geographically in the closest connection with it, very similar in general character, but richer, warmer, and altogether more desirable. Hyrcania was, as already observed, the western and north-western portion of that broad mountain region which has been described as intervening between the eastern shores of the Caspian and the river Arius, or Heri-rud. It consisted mainly of the two rich valleys of the Gurghan and Ettrek, with the mountain chains inclosing or dividing them. Here on the slopes of the hills grow the oak, the beech, the elm, the alder, the wild cherry; here luxuriant vines spring from the soil on every side, raising themselves aloft by the aid of their stronger sisters, and hanging in wild festoons from tree to tree; beneath their shade the ground is covered with flowers-of various kinds, primroses, violets, lilies, hyacinths, and others of unknown species; while in the flat land at the bottom of the valleys are meadows of the softest and the tenderest grass, capable of affording to numerous flocks and herds an excellent and unfailing pasture. Abundant game finds shelter in the forests, while towards the mouths of the rivers, where the ground is for the most part marshy, large herds of wild boars are frequent; a single herd sometimes containing hundreds. Altogether Hyrcania was a most productive and desirable country, capable of sustaining a dense population, and well deserving Strabo's description of it as "highly favored of Heaven." The area of the country was, however, small, probably not much exceeding one half that of Parthia Proper; and thus the people were not sufficiently numerous to cause the Parthians much apprehension.

The situation and character of Parthia thus, on the whole, favored her becoming an imperial power. She had abundant resources within herself; she had a territory apt for the production of a hardy race of men; and she had no neighbors of sufficient strength to keep her down, when she once developed the

desire to become dominant. Surprise has been expressed at her rise. But it is perhaps more astonishing that she passed so many centuries in obscurity before she became an important state, than that she raised herself at last to the first position among the Oriental nations. Her ambition and her material strength were plants of slow growth; it took several hundreds of years for them to attain maturity: when, however, this point was reached, the circumstances of her geographical position stood her in good stead, and enabled her rapidly to extend her way over the greater portion of Western Asia.

CHAPTER II. Their Ethnic character and connections.

The Parthians do not appear in history until a comparatively recent period. Their name occurs nowhere in the Old Testament Scriptures. They obtain no mention in the Zendavesta. The Assyrian Inscriptions are wholly silent concerning them. It is not until the time of Darius Hystaspis that we have trustworthy evidence of their existence as a distinct people. In the inscriptions of this king we find their country included under the name of Parthva or Parthwa among the provinces of the Persian Empire, joined in two places with Sarangia, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, and Sogdiana, and in a third with these same countries and Sagartia. We find, moreover, an account of a rebellion in which the Parthians took part. In the troubles which broke out upon the death of the Pseudo-Smerdis, B.C. 521, Parthia revolted, in conjunction (as it would seem) with Hyrcania, espousing the cause of that Median pretender, who, declaring himself a descendant of the old Median monarchs, set himself up as a rival to Darius. Hytaspes, the father of Darius, held at this time the Parthian satrapy. In two battles within the limits of his province he defeated the rebels, who must have brought into the field a considerable force, since in one of the two engagements they lost in killed and prisoners between 10,000 and 11,000 men. After their second defeat the Parthians made their submission, and once more acknowledged Darius for their sovereign.

With these earliest Oriental notices of the Parthians agree entirely such passages as contain any mention of them in the more ancient literature of the Greeks. Hecatseus of Miletus, who was contemporary with Darius Hystaspis, made the Parthians adjoin upon the Chorasmians in the account which he gave of the geography of Asia. Herodotus spoke of them as a people subject to the Persians in the reign of Darius, and assigned them to the sixteenth satrapy, which comprised also the Arians, the Sogdians, and the Chorasmians. He said that they took part in the expedition of Xerxes against Greece (B.C. 480), serving in the army on foot under the same commander as the Chorasmians, and equipped like them with bows and arrows, and with spears of no great length. In another passage he mentioned their being compelled to pay the Persian water tax, and spoke of the great need which they had of water for the irrigation of their millet and sesame crops.

It is evident that these notices agree with the Persian accounts, both as to the locality of the Parthians and as to the fact of their subjection to the Persian government. They further agree in assigning to the Parthians a respectable military character, yet one of no very special eminency. On the ethnology of the nation, and the circumstances under which the country became an integral part of the Persian dominions, they throw no light. We have still to seek an answer to the questions, "Who were the Parthians?" and "How did they become Persian subjects?"

Who were the Parthians? It is not until the Parthians have emerged from obscurity and become a great people that ancient authors trouble themselves with inquiries as to their ethnic character and remote antecedents. Of the first writers who take the subject into their consideration, some are content to say that the Parthians were a race of Scyths, who

at a remote date had separated from the rest of the nation, and had occupied the southern portion of the Chorasmian desert, whence they had gradually made themselves masters of the mountain region adjoining it. Others added to this that the Scythic tribe to which they belonged was called the Dahse; that their own proper name was Parni, or Aparni; and that they had migrated originally from the country to the north of the Palus Maeotis, where they had left the great mass of their fellow tribesmen. Subsequently, in the time of the Antonines, the theory was started that the Parthians were Scyths, whom Sesostris, on his return from his Scythian expedition, brought into Asia and settled in the mountain-tract lying east of the Caspian.

It can scarcely be thought that these notices have very much historical value. Moderns are generally agreed that the Scythian conquests of Sesostris are an invention of the Egyptian priests, which they palmed on Herodotus and Diodorus. Could they be regarded as having really taken place, still the march back from Scythia to Egypt round the north and east of the Caspian Sea would be in the highest degree improbable. The settlement of the Parthians in Parthia by the returning conqueror is, in fact, a mere duplicate of the tale commonly told of his having settled the Colchians in Colchis, and is equally worthless. The earlier authors, moreover, know nothing of the story, which first appears in the second century after our era, and as time goes on becomes more circumstantial.

Even the special connection of the Parthians with the Dahse, and their migration from the shores of the Palus Mteotis, may be doubted. Strabo admits it to be uncertain whether there were any Dahse at all about the Mseotis; and, if there were, it would be open to question whether they were of the same race with the Dahse of the Caspian. As the settlement of the Parthians in the country called after their name dated from a time anterior to Darius Hystaspis, and the Greeks certainly did not set on foot any inquiries into their origin till at least two centuries later, it would be unlikely that the Parthians could give them a true account. The real groundwork of the stories told seems to have been twofold. First, there was a strong conviction on the part of those who came in contact with the Parthians that they were Scyths; and secondly, it was believed that their name meant "exile." Hence it was necessary to suppose that they had migrated into their country from some portion of the tract known as Scythia to the Greeks, and it was natural to invent stories as to the particular circumstances of the migration.

The residuum of the truth, or at any rate the important conviction of the ancient writers, which remains after their stories are sifted, is the Scythic character of the Parthian people. On this point, Strabo, Justin, and Arrian are agreed. The manners of the Parthians had, they tell us, much that was Scythic in them. Their language was half Scythic, half Median. They armed themselves in the Scythic fashion. They were, in fact, Scyths in descent, in habits, in character.

But what are we to understand by this? May we assume at once that they were a Turanian people, in race, habits, and language akin to the various tribes of Turkomans who are at present dominant over the entire region between the Oxus and the Parthian mountain-tract, and within that tract have many settlements? May we assume that they stood in an attitude of natural hostility to the Arian nations by which they were surrounded, and that their revolt was the assertion of independence by a down-trodden people after centuries of subjection to the yoke of a stranger? Did Turan, in their persons, rise against Iean after perhaps a thousand years of oppression, and renew the struggle for predominance in regions where the war had been waged before, and where it still continues to be waged at the present day?

Such conclusions cannot safely be drawn from the mere fact that the Scythic character of the Parthians is asserted in the strongest

terms by the ancient writers. The term "Scythic" is not, strictly speaking, ethnical. It designates a life rather a descent, habits rather than blood. It is applied by the Greeks and Romans to Indo-European and Turanian races indifferently, provided that they are nomads, dwelling in tents or carts, living on the produce of their flocks and herds, uncivilized, and, perhaps it may be added, accustomed to pass their lives on horseback. We cannot, therefore, assume that a nation is Turanian simply because it is pronounced "Scythic." Still, as in fact the bulk of those races which have remained content with the nomadic condition, and which from the earliest times to the present day have led the life above described in the broad steppes of Europe and Asia, appear to have been of the Turian type, a presumption is raised in favor of a people being Turanian by decided and concordant statements that it is Scythic. The presumption may of course be removed by evidence to the contrary; but, until such evidence is produced it has weight, and constitutes an argument, the force of which is considerable.

In the present instance the presumption raised is met by no argument of any great weight; while on the other hand it receives important confirmation from several different quarters. It is said, indeed, that as all, or almost all, the other nations of these parts were confessedly Arians (e.g. the Bactrians, the Sogdians, the Chorasmians, the Margians, the Arians of Herat, the Sagartians, the Sarangians, and the Hyrcanians), it would be strange if the Parthians belonged to a wholly different ethnic family. But, in the first place, the existence of isolated nationalities, detached fragments of some greater ethnic mass, embodied amid alien material, is a fact familiar to ethnologists; and, further, it is not at all certain that there were not other Turanian races in these parts, as, for instance, the Thamanasans. Again, it is said that the Parthians show their Arian extraction by their names; but this argument may be turned against those who adduce it. It is true that among the Parthian names a considerable number are not only Arian, but distinctly Persian--e.g., Mith-ridates, Tiridates, Artabanus, Orobazus, Rhodaspes--but the bulk of the names have an entirely different character. There is nothing Arian in such appellations as Amminapes, Bacasis, Pacorus, Vonones, Sinnaces, Abdus, Abdageses, Gotarzes, Vologeses, Mnasciras, Sanatroeces; nor anything markedly Arian in Priapatius, Himerus, Orodes, Apreetseus, Ornos-pades, Parrhaces, Vasaces, Monesis, Exedares. If the Parthians were Arians, what account is to be given of these words? That they employed a certain number of Persian names is sufficiently explained by their subjection during more than two centuries to the Persian rule. We are also distinctly told that they affected Persian habits, and desired to be looked upon as Persians. The Arian names borne by Parthians no more show them to be Arians in race than the Norman names adopted so widely by the Welsh show them to be Northmen. On the other hand, the non-Arian names in the former case are like the non-Norman names in the latter, and equally indicate a second source of nomenclature, in which should be contained the key to the true ethnology of the people.

The non-Arian character of the Parthians is signified, if not proved, by the absence of their name from the Zendavesta. The Zendavesta enumerates among Arian nations the Bactrians, the Sogdians, the Margians, the Hyrcanians, the Arians of Herat, and the Chorasmians, or all the important nations of these parts except the Parthians. The Parthian country it mentions under the name of Nisaya or Nisaea, implying apparently that the Parthians were not yet settled in it. The only ready way of reconciling the geography of the Zendavesta with that of later ages is to suppose the Parthians a non-Arian nation who intruded themselves among the early Arian settlements, coming probably from the north, the great home of the Turanians.

Some positive arguments in favor of the Turanian origin of the Parthians may be based upon their names. The Parthians affect, in their names, the termination -ac or -ah, as, for instance, in Arsac-es, Sinnac-es, Parrhaces, Vesaces, Sana-trseces, Phraataces, etc.--a termination which characterizes the primitive Babylonian, the Basque, and most of the Turanian tongues. The termination -geses, found in such names as Volo-geses, Abda-geses, and the like, may be compared with the -ghiz of Tenghiz. The Turanian root annap, "God," is perhaps traceable in Amm-inap-es. If the Parthian "Chos-roes" represents the Persian "Kurush" or Cyrus, the corruption which the word has undergone is such as to suggest a Tatar articulation.

The remains of the Parthian language, which we possess, beyond their names, are too scanty and too little to be depended on to afford us any real assistance in settling the question of their ethnic character. Besides the words surena, "Commander-in-chief," and Jcarta or Jcerta, "city," "fort," there is scarcely one of which we can be assured that it was really understood by the Parthians in the sense assigned to it. Of these two, the latter, which is undoubtedly Arian, may have been adopted from the Persians: the former is non-Arian, but has no known Turanian congeners.

If, however, the consideration of the Parthian language does not help us to determine their race, a consideration of their manners and customs strengthens much the presumption that they were Turanians. Like the Turkoman and Tatar tribes generally, they passed almost their whole lives on horseback, conversing, transacting business, buying and selling, even eating on their horses. They practised polygamy, secluded their women from the sight of men, punished unfaithfulness with extreme severity, delighted in hunting, and rarely ate any flesh but that which they obtained in this way, were moderate eaters but great drinkers, did not speak much, but yet were very unquiet, being constantly engaged in stirring up trouble either at home or abroad. A small portion of the nation alone was free; the remainder were the slaves of the privileged few. Nomadic habits continued to prevail among a portion of those who remained in their primitive seats, even in the time of their greatest national prosperity; and a coarse, rude, and semi-barbarous character attached always even to the most advanced part of the nation, to the king, the court, and the nobles generally, a character which, despite a certain varnish of civilization, was constantly showing itself in their dealings with each other and with foreign nations. "The Parthian monarchs," as Gibbon justly observes, "like the Mogul (Mongol) sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors, and the imperial camp was frequently pitched in the plain of Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris." Niebuhr seems even to doubt whether the Parthians dwelt in cities at all. He represents them as maintaining from first to last their nomadic habits, and regards the insurrection by which their empire was brought to an end as a rising of the inhabitants of towns--the Tadjiks of those times--against the Ilyats or wanderers, who had oppressed them for centuries. This is, no doubt, an over statement; but it has a foundation in fact, since wandering habits and even tent-life were affected by the Parthians during the most flourishing period of their empire.

On the whole, the Turanian character of the Parthians, though not absolutely proved, appears to be in the highest degree probable. If it be accepted, we must regard them as in race closely allied to the vast hordes which from a remote antiquity have roamed over the steppe region of upper Asia, from time to time bursting upon the south, and harassing or subjugating the comparatively unwarlike inhabitants of the warmer countries. We must view them as the congeners of the Huns, Bulgarians, and Comans of the ancient world; of the Kalmucks, Ouigurs, Usbegs, Eleuts, etc., of the present day. Perhaps their nearest representatives will be, if we look to their

primitive condition at the founding of their empire, the modern Turkomans, who occupy nearly the same districts; if we regard them in the period of their great prosperity, the Osmanli Turks. Like the Turks, they combined great military prowess and vigor with a capacity for organization and government not very usual among Asiatics. Like them, they remained at heart barbarians, though they put on an external appearance of civilization and refinement. Like them, they never to any extent amalgamated with the conquered races, but continued for centuries an exclusive dominant race, encamped in the countries which they had overrun.

The circumstances under which the Parthians became subjects of the Persian empire may readily be conjectured, but cannot be laid down positively. According to Diodorus, who probably followed Ctesias, they passed from the dominion of the Assyrians to that of the Medes, and from dependence upon the Medes to a similar position under the Persians. But the balance of evidence is against these views. It is, on the whole, most probable that neither the Assyrian nor the Median empire extended so far eastward as the country of the Parthians. The Parthians probably maintained their independence from the time of their settlement in the district called after their name until the sudden arrival in their country of the great Persian conqueror, Cyrus. This prince, as Herodotus tells us, subdued the whole of Western Asia, proceeding from nation to nation, and subjugating one people after another. The order of his conquests is not traceable; but it is clear that after his conquest of the Lydian empire (about B.C. 554) he proceeded eastward, with the special object of subduing Bactria.43 To reach Bactria, he would have to pass through, or close by, Parthia. Since, as Herodotus says, "he conquered the whole way, as he went," we may fairly conclude that on his road to Bactria he subjugated the Parthians. It was thus, almost certainly, that they lost their independence and became Persian subjects. Competent enough to maintain themselves against the comparatively small tribes in their near neighborhood, the Chorasmians, Hyrcanians, Arians of Herat, Bactrians, and Sagartians, it was not possible for them to make an effectual resistance to a monarch who brought against them the entire force of a mighty empire. Cyrus had, it is probable, little difficulty in obtaining their submission. It is possible that they resisted; but perhaps it is more probable that their course on this occasion was similar to that which they pursued when the Macedonian conqueror swept across these same regions. The Parthians at that period submitted without striking a blow. There is no reason to believe that they caused any greater trouble to Cyrus.

When the Persian empire was organized by Darius Hystaspis into satrapies, Parthia was at first united in the same government with Chorasmia, Sogdiana, and Aria. Subsequently, however, when satrapies were made more numerous, it was detached from these extensive countries and made to form a distinct government, with the mere addition of the comparatively small district of Hyrcania.40 It formed, apparently, one of the most tractable and submissive of the Persian provinces. Except on the single occasion already noticed, when it took part in a revolt that extended to nearly one-half the empire, it gave its rulers no trouble; no second attempt was made to shake off the alien yoke, which may indeed have galled, but which was felt to be inevitable. In the final struggle of Persia against Alexander, the Parthians were faithful to their masters. They fought on the Persian side at Arbela; and though they submitted to Alexander somewhat tamely when he invaded their country, yet, as Darius was then dead, and no successor had declared himself, they cannot be taxed with desertion. Probably they felt little interest in the event of the struggle. Habit and circumstance caused them to send their contingent to Arbela at the call of the Great King; but when the Persian cause was evidently lost, they felt it needless to make further sacrifices. Having no hope of

establishing their independence, they thought it unnecessary to prolong the contest. They might not gain, but they could scarcely lose, by a change of masters.

CHAPTER III. Condition of Western Asia under the earlier Seleucidae.

The attempt of Alexander the Great to unite the whole civilized world in a single vast empire might perhaps have been a success if the mind which conceived the end, and which had to a considerable extent elaborated the means, had been spared to watch over its own work, and conduct it past the perilous period of infancy and adolescence. But the premature decease of the great Macedonian in the thirty-third year of his age, when his plans of fusion and amalgamation were only just beginning to develop themselves, and the unfortunate fact that among his "Successors" there was not one who inherited either his grandeur of conception or his powers of execution, caused his scheme at once to collapse; and the effort to unite and consolidate led only to division and disintegration. In lieu of Europe being fused with Asia, Asia itself was split up. For nearly a thousand years, from the formation of the great Assyrian empire to the death of Darius Codomannus, Western Asia, from the Mediterranean to Affghanistan, or even to India, had been united tinder one head, had acknowledged one sovereign. Assyria, Media, Persia, had successively held the position of dominant power; and the last of the three had given union, and consequently peace, to a wider stretch of country and a vaster diversity of peoples than either of her predecessors. Under the mild yoke of the Achaemenian princes had been held together for two centuries, not only all the nations of Western Asia, from the Indian and Thibetan deserts to the AEgean and the Mediterranean, but a great part of Africa also, that is to say, Egypt, north-eastern Libya, and the Greek settlements of Cyrene and Barca. The practical effect of the conquests of Alexander was to break up this unity, to introduce in the place of a single consolidated empire a multitude of separate and contending kingdoms. The result was thus the direct opposite of the great conqueror's design, and forms a remarkable instance of the contradiction which so often subsists between the propositions of man and the dispositions of an overruling Providence.

The struggle for power which broke out almost immediately after his death among the successors of Alexander may be regarded as having been brought to a close by the battle of Ipsus. The period of fermentation was then concluded, and something like a settled condition of things brought about. A quadripartite division of Alexander's dominions was recognized, Macedonia, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Syria (or south-western Asia) becoming thenceforth distinct political entities. Asia Minor, the kingdom of Lysimachus, had indeed less of unity than the other three states. It was already disintegrated, the kingdoms of Bithynia, Pontus, and Cappadocia, subsisting side by side with that of Lysimachus, which was thus limited to western and south-western Asia Minor. After the death of Lysimachus, further changes occurred; but the state of Pergamus, which sprang up this time, may be regarded as the continuation of Lysimachus's kingdom, and as constituting from the time of Eumenes I. (B.C. 263) a fourth power in the various political movements and combinations of the Graeco-Oriental world.

Of the four powers thus established, the most important, and that with which we are here especially concerned, was the kingdom of Syria (as it was called), or that ruled for 247 years by the Seleucidae. Seleucus Nicator, the founder of this kingdom, was one of Alexander's officers, but served without much distinction through the various compaigns by which the conquest of the East was effected. At the first distribution of provinces (B.C. 323) among Alexander's generals after his death, he received no share; and it was not until B.C. 320, when upon the death of

Perdiccas a fresh distribution was made at Triparadisus, that his merits were recognized, and he was given the satrapy of Babylon. In this position he acquired a character for mildness and liberality, and made himself generally beloved, both by his soldiers and by those who were under his government. In the struggle between Antigonus and Eumenes (B.C. 317-316), he embraced the side of the former, and did him some good service; but this, instead of evoking gratitude, appears to have only roused in Antigonus a spirit of jealousy. The ambitious aspirant after universal dominion, seeing in the popular satrap a possible, and far from a contemptible, rival, thought it politic to sweep him out of his way; and the career of Seleucus would have been cut short had he not perceived his peril in time, and by a precipitate flight secured his safety. Accompanied by a body of no more than fifty horsemen, he took the road for Egypt, escaped the pursuit of a detachment sent to overtake him, and threw himself on the protection of Ptolemy.

This event, untoward in appearance, proved the turning-point in Seleucus's fortunes. It threw him into irreconcilable hostility with Antigonus, while it brought him forward before the eyes of men as one whom Antigonus feared. It gave him an opportunity of showing his military talents in the West, and of obtaining favor with Ptolemy, and with all those by whom Antigonus was dreaded. When the great struggle came between the confederate monarchs and the aspirant after universal dominion, it placed him on the side of the allies. Having recovered Babylon (B.C. 312), Seleucus led the flower of the eastern provinces to the field of Ipsus (B.C. 301), and contributed largely to the victory, thus winning himself a position among the foremost potentates of the day. By the terms of the agreement made after Ipsus, Seleucus was recognized as monarch of all the Greek conquests in Asia, with the sole exceptions of Lower Syria and Asia Minor.

The monarchy thus established extended from the Holy Land and the Mediterranean on the west, to the Indus valley and the Bolor mountain-chain upon the east, and from the Caspian and Jaxartes towards the north, to the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean towards the south. It comprised Upper Syria, Mesopotamia, parts of Cappadocia and Phrygia, Armenia, Assyria, Media, Babylonia, Susiana, Persia, Carmania, Sagartia, Hyrcania, Parthia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Aria, Zarangia, Arachosia, Sacastana, Gedrosia, and probably some part of India. Its entire area could not have been much less than 1,200,000 square miles. Of these, some 300,000 or 400,000 may have been desert; but the remainder was generally fertile, and comprised within its limits some of the very most productive regions in the whole world. The Mesopotamian lowland, the Orontes valley, the tract between the Caspian and the mountains, the regions about Merv and Balkh, were among the richest in Asia, and produced grain and fruits in incredible abundance. The rich pastures of Media and Armenia furnished excellent horses. Bactria gave an inexhaustible supply of camels. Elephants in large numbers were readily procurable from India. Gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, tin, were furnished by several of the provinces, and precious stones of various kinds abounded. Moreover, for above ten centuries, the precious metals and the most valuable kinds of merchandise had flowed from every quarter into the region; and though the Macedonians may have carried off, or wasted, a considerable quantity of both, yet the accumulations of ages withstood the drain, and the hoarded wealth which had come down from Assyrian, Babylonian, and Median times was to be found in the days of Seleucus chiefly within the limits of his Empire.

The situation which nature pointed out as most suitable for the capital of a kingdom having the extension that has been here indicated was some portion of the Mesopotamian valley, which was at once central and fertile. The empire of Seleucus

might have been conveniently ruled from the site of the ancient Nineveh, or from either of the two still existing and still flourishing cities of Susa and Babylon. The impetus given to commerce by the circumstances of the time rendered a site near the sea preferable to one so remote as that of Nineveh, and the same consideration made a position on the Tigris or Euphrates more advantageous than one upon a smaller river. So far, all pointed to Babylon as the natural and best metropolis; and it was further in favor of that place that its merits had struck the Great Conqueror, who had designed to make it the capital of his own still vaster Empire. Accordingly Babylon was Seleucus's first choice; and there his Court was held for some years previously to his march against Antigonus. But either certain disadvantages were found to attach to Babylon as a residence, or the mere love of variety and change caused him very shortly to repent of his selection, and to transfer his capital to another site. He founded, and built with great rapidity, the city of Seleucia upon the Tigris, at the distance of about forty miles from Babylon, and had transferred thither the seat of government even before B.C. 301. Thus far, however, no fault had been committed. The second capital was at least as conveniently placed as the first, and would have served equally well as a centre from which to govern the Empire. But after Ipsus a further change was made--a change that was injudicious in the extreme. Either setting undue store by his newly-acquired western provinces, or over-anxious to keep close watch on his powerful neighbors in those parts, Lysimachus and Ptolemy, Seleucus once more transferred the seat of empire, exchanging this time the valley of the Tigris for that of the Orontes, and the central position of Lower Mesopotamia for almost the extreme western point of his vast territories. Antioch arose in extraordinary beauty and magnificence during the first few years that succeeded Ipsus, and Seleucus in a short time made it his ordinary residence. The change weakened the ties which bound the Empire together, offended the bulk of the Asiatics, who saw their monarch withdraw from them into a remote region, and particularly loosened the grasp of the government on those more eastern districts which were at once furthest from the new metropolis and least assimilated to the Hellenic character. Among the causes which led to the disintegration of the Seleucid kingdom, there is none that deserves so well to be considered the main cause as this. It was calculated at once to produce the desire to revolt, and to render the reduction of revolted provinces difficult, if not impossible. The evil day, however, might have been indefinitely delayed had the Seleucid princes either established and maintained through their Empire a vigorous and effective administration, or abstained from entangling themselves in wars with their neighbors in the West, the Ptolemies and the princes of Asia Minor.

But the organization of the Empire was unsatisfactory. Instead of pursuing the system inaugurated by Alexander and seeking to weld the heterogeneous elements of which his kingdom was composed into a homogeneous whole, instead of at once conciliating and elevating the Asiatics by uniting them with the Macedonians and the Greeks, by promoting intermarriage and social intercourse between the two classes of his subjects, educating the Asiatics in Greek ideas and Greek schools, opening his court to them, promoting them to high employments, making them feel that they were as much valued and as well cared for as the people of the conquering race, the first Seleucus, and after him his successors, fell back upon the old simpler, ruder system, the system pursued before Alexander's time by the Persians, and before them perhaps by the Medes--the system most congenial to human laziness and human pride--that of governing a nation of slaves by means of a class of victorious aliens. Seleucus divided his empire into satrapies, seventy-two in number. He bestowed the office of satrap on none but

Macedonians and Greeks. The standing army, by which he maintained his authority, was indeed composed in the main of Asiatics, disciplined after the Greek model; but it was officered entirely by men of Greek or Macedonian parentage. Nothing was done to keep up the self-respect of Asiatics, or to soften the unpleasantness that must always attach to being governed by foreigners. Even the superintendence over the satraps seems to have been insufficient. According to some writers, it was a gross outrage offered by a satrap to an Asiatic subject that stirred up the Parthians to their revolt. The story may not be true; but its currency shows of what conduct towards those under their government the satraps of the Seleucidae were thought, by such as lived near the time, to have been capable.

It would, perhaps, have been difficult for the Seleucid princes, even had they desired it, to pursue a policy of absolute abstention in the wars of their western neighbors. So long as they were resolute to maintain their footing on the right bank of the Euphrates, in Phrygia, Cappadocia, and upper Syria, they were of necessity mixed up with the quarrels of the west. Could they have been content to withdraw within the Euphrates, they might have remained for the most part clear of such entanglements; but even then there would have been occasions when they must have taken the field in self-defence. As it was, however, the idea of abstention seems never to have occurred to them. It was the fond dream of each "Successor" of Alexander that in his person might, perhaps, be one day united all the territories of the great Conqueror. Seleucus would have felt that he sacrificed his most cherished hopes if he had allowed the west to go its own way, and had contented himself with consolidating a great power in the regions east of the Euphrates.

And the policy of the founder of the house was followed by his successors. The three Seleucid sovereigns who reigned prior to the Parthian revolt were, one and all, engaged in frequent, if not continual, wars with the monarchs of Egypt and Asia Minor. The first Seleucus, by his claim to the sovereignty of Lower Syria, established a ground of constant contention with the Ptolemies; and though he did not prosecute the claim to the extent of actual hostility, yet in the reign of his son, Antiochus I., called Soter, the smothered quarrel broke out. Soter fomented the discontent of Cyrene with its subjection to Egypt, and made at least one expedition against Ptolemy Philadelphus in person (B.C. 264). His efforts did not meet with much success; but they were renewed by his son, Antiochus II., surnamed "the God", who warred with Philadelphus from B.C. 260 to B.C. 250, contending with him chiefly in Asia Minor. These wars were complicated with others. The first Antiochus aimed at adding the kingdom of Bithynia to his dominions, and attacked successively the Bythynian monarchs, Zipcetas and Nicomedes I. (B.C. 280-278). This aggression brought him into collision with the Gauls, whom Nicomedes called to his aid, and with whom Antiochus had several struggles, some successful and some disastrous. He also attacked Eumenes of Pergamus (B.C. 263), but was defeated in a pitched battle near Sardis. The second Antiochus was not engaged in so great a multiplicity of contests; but we hear of his taking a part in the internal affairs of Miletus, and expelling a certain Timachus, who had made himself tyrant of that city. There is also some ground for thinking that he had a standing quarrel with the king of Media Atropatene. Altogether it is evident that from B.C. 280 to B.C. 250 the Seleucid princes were incessantly occupied with wars in the west, in Asia Minor and in Syria Proper, wars which so constantly engaged them that they had neither time nor attention to spare for the affairs of the far east. So long as the Bactrian and Parthian satraps paid their tributes, and supplied the requisite quotas of troops for service in the western wars, the Antiochi were content. The satraps were left to manage affairs at their own discretion; and it

is not surprising that the absence of a controlling hand led to various complications and disorders.

Moreover, the personal character of the second Antiochus must be taken into account. The vanity and impiety, which could accept the name of "Theus" for a service that fifty other Greeks had rendered to oppressed towns without regarding themselves as having done anything very remarkable, would alone indicate a weak and contemptible morale, and might justify us, did we know no more, in regarding the calamities of his reign as the fruit of his own unfitness to rule an empire. But there is sufficient evidence that he had other, and worse, vices. He was noted, even among Asiatic sovereigns, for luxury and debauchery; he neglected all state affairs in the pursuit of pleasure; his wives and male favorites were allowed to rule his kingdom at their will; and their most flagrant crimes were neither restrained nor punished. Such a character could have inspired neither respect nor fear. The satraps, to whom the conduct of their sovereign could not but become known, would be partly encouraged to follow the bad example, partly provoked by it to shake themselves free of so hateful and yet contemptible a master.

It was, probably, about the year B.C. 256, the fifth of the second Antiochus, when that prince, hard pressed by Philadelphus in the west, was also, perhaps, engaged in a war with the king of Atropatene in the north, that the standard of revolt was first actually raised in the eastern provinces, and a Syrian satrap ventured to declare himself an independent sovereign. This was Diodotus, satrap of Bactria a Greek, as his name shows. Suddenly assuming the state and style of king he issued coins stamped with his own name, and established himself without difficulty as sovereign over the large and flourishing province of Bactria, or the tract of fertile land about the upper and middle Oxus. This district had from a remote antiquity been one with special pretensions. The country was fertile, and much of it strong; the people were hardy and valiant; they were generally treated with exceptional favor by the Persian monarchs; and they seem to have had traditions which assigned them a pre-eminence among the Arian tribes at some indefinitely distant period. We may presume that they would gladly support the bold enterprise of their new monarch; they would feel their vanity flattered by the establishment of an independent Bactria, even though it were under Greek kings; and they would energetically second him in an enterprise which gratified their pride, while it held out to them hopes of a career of conquest, with its concomitants of plunder and glory. The settled quiet which they had enjoyed under the Achaemenide and the Seleucidae was probably not much to their taste; and they would gladly exchange so tame and dull a life for the pleasures of independence and the chances of empire.

It would seem that Antiochus, sunk in luxury at his capital, could not bring himself to make even an effort to check the spirit of rebellion, and recover his revolted subjects. Bactria was allowed to establish itself as an independent monarchy, without having to undergo the ordeal of a bloody struggle. Antiochus neither marched against Diodotus in person, nor sent a general to contend with him. The authority of Diodotus was confirmed and riveted on his subjects by an undisturbed reign of eighteen years before a Syrian army even showed itself in his neighborhood.

The precedent of successful revolt thus set could not well be barren of consequences. If one province might throw off the yoke of its feudal lord with impunity, why might not others? Accordingly, within a few years the example set by Bactria was followed in the neighboring country of Parthia, but with certain very important differences. In Bactria the Greek satrap took the lead, and the Bactrian kingdom was, at any rate at its commencement, as thoroughly Greek as that of the Seleucidae. But in Parthia Greek rule

was from the first cast aside. The natives rebelled against their masters. An Asiatic race of a rude and uncivilized type, coarse and savage, but brave and freedom-loving, rose up against the polished but effeminate Greeks who held them in subjection, and claimed and established their independence. The Parthian kingdom was thoroughly anti-Hellenic. It appealed to patriotic feelings, and to the hate universally felt towards the stranger. It set itself to undo the work of Alexander, to cast out the Europeans, to recover to the Asiatics the possession of Asia. It was naturally almost as hostile to Bactria as to Syria, although danger from a common enemy might cause it sometimes to make a temporary alliance with that kingdom. It had, no doubt, the general sympathy of the populations in the adjacent countries, and represented to them the cause of freedom and autonomy.

The exact circumstances under which the Parthian revolt took place are involved in much obscurity. According to one account the leader of the revolt, Arsaces, was a Bactrian, to whom the success of Diodotus was disagreeable, and who therefore quitted the newly-founded kingdom, and betook himself to Parthia, where he induced the natives to revolt and to accept him for their monarch. Another account, which is attractive from the minute details into which it enters, is the following:--"Arsaces and Tiridates were brothers, descendants of Phriapites, the son of Arsaces. Pherecles, who had been made satrap of their country by Antiochus Theus, offered a gross insult to one of them, whereupon, as they could not brook the indignity, they took five men into counsel, and with their aid slew the insolent one. They then induced their nation to revolt from the Macedonians, and set up a government of their own, which attained to great power." A third version says that the Arsaces, whom all represent as the first king, was in reality a Scythian, who at the head of a body of Parnian Dahce, nomads inhabiting the valley of the Attrek (Ochus), invaded Parthia, soon after the establishment of Bactrian independence, and succeeded in making himself master of it. With this account, which Strabo seems to prefer, agrees tolerably well that of Justin, who says that "Arsaces, having been long accustomed to live by robbery and rapine, attacked the Parthians with a predatory band, killed their satrap, Andragoras, and seized the supreme authority." As there was in all probability a close ethnic connection between the Dahae and the Parthians, it would be likely enough that the latter might accept for a king a chieftain of the former who had boldly entered their country, challenged the Greek satrap to an encounter, and by defeating and killing him freed them--at any rate for the time--from the Greek yoke. An oppressed people gladly adopts as chief the head of an allied tribe if he has shown skill and daring, and offers to protect them from their oppressors.

The revolt of Arsaces has been placed by some as early as the year B.C. 256. The Bactrian revolt is assigned by most historians to that year; and the Parthian, according to some, was contemporary. The best authorities, however, give a short interval between the two insurrections; and, on the whole, there is perhaps reason to regard the Parthian independence as dating from about B.C. 250. This year was the eleventh of Antiochus Theus, and fell into the time when he was still engaged in his war with Ptolemy Philadelphus. It might have been expected that when he concluded a peace with the Egyptian monarch in B.C. 249, he would have turned his arms at once towards the east, and have attempted at any rate the recovery of his lost dominions. But, as already stated, his personal character was weak, and he preferred the pleasures of repose at Antioch to the hardships of a campaign in the Caspian region. So far as we hear, he took no steps to re-establish his authority; and Arsaces, like Diodotus, was left undisturbed to consolidate his power at his leisure.

Arsaces lived, however, but a short time after obtaining the crown. His authority was

disputed within the limits of Parthia itself; and he had to engage in hostilities with a portion of his own subjects. We may suspect that the malcontents were chiefly, if not solely, those of Greek race, who may have been tolerably numerous, and whose strength would lie in the towns. Hecatompylos, the chief city of Parthia, was among the colonies founded by Alexander; and its inhabitants would naturally be disinclined to acquiesce in the rule of a "barbarian." Within little more than two years of his coronation, Arsaces, who had never been able to give his kingdom peace, was killed in battle by a spear-thrust in the side; and was succeeded (B.C. 247) by his brother, having left, it is probable, no sons, or none of mature age.

Tiridates, the successor of Arsaces, took upon his accession his brother's name, and is known in history as Arsaces II. The practice thus begun passed into a custom, each Parthian monarch from henceforth bearing as king the name of Arsaces in addition to his own real appellation, whatever that might be. In the native remains the assumed name almost supersedes the other; but, fortunately, the Greek and Roman writers who treat of Parthian affairs, have preserved the distinctive appellations, and thus saved the Parthian history from inextricable confusion. It is not easy to see from what quarter this practice was adopted; perhaps we should regard it as one previously existing among the Dahan Scyths.

If the Parthian monarchy owed its origin to Arsaces I., it owed its consolidation, and settled establishment to Arsaces II., or Tiridates. This prince, who had the good fortune to reign for above thirty years, and who is confused by many writers with the actual founder of the monarchy, having received Parthia from his brother, in the weak and unsettled condition above described, left it a united and powerful kingdom, enlarged in its boundaries, strengthened in its defences, in alliance with its nearest and most formidable neighbor, and triumphant over the great power of Syria, which had hoped to bring it once more into subjection. He ascended the throne, it is probable, early in B.C. 247, and had scarcely been monarch a couple of years when he witnessed one of those vast but transient revolutions to which Asia is subject, but which are of rare occurrence in Europe. Ptolemy Euergetes, the son of Philadelphus, having succeeded to his father's kingdom in the same year with Tiridates, marched (in B.C. 245) a huge expedition into Asia, defeated Seleucus II. (Callinicus) in Syria, took Antioch, and then, having crossed the Euphrates, proceeded to bring the greater part of Western Asia under his sway. Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylonia, Susiana, Persia, Media, submitted to him. He went in person as far as Babylon, and, according to his own account, was acknowledged as master by all the Eastern provinces to the very borders of Bactria. The Parthian and Bactrian kingdoms cannot but have trembled for their newly won independence. Here was a young warrior who, in a single campaign, had marched the distance of a thousand miles, from the banks of the Nile to those of the Lower Euphrates, without so much as receiving a check, and who was threatening to repeat the career of Alexander. What resistance could the little Parthian state hope to offer to such an enemy? It must have rejoiced Tiridates to hear that while the new conqueror was gathering somewhat too hastily the fruits of victory, collecting and despatching to Egypt the most valuable works of art that he could find in the cities which he had taken, and levying heavy contributions on the submitted countries, a revolt had broken out in his own land, to quell which he was compelled to retire suddenly and to relinquish the greater part of his acquisitions. Thus the threatened conquest proved a mere inroad, and instead of a power of greater strength replacing Syria in these regions, Syria practically retained her hold of them, but with enfeebled grasp, her strength crippled, her prestige lost, and her honor tarnished. Ptolemy had, it is probable,

not retired very long, when, encouraged by what he had seen of Syria's weakness, Tiridates took the aggressive, and invading the neighboring district of Hyrcania, succeeded in detaching it from the Syrian state, and adding it to his own territory. This was throwing out a challenge which the Syrian monarch, Callinicus, could scarcely decline to meet, unless he was prepared to lose, one by one, all the outlying provinces of his empire.

Accordingly in B.C. 237, having patched up a peace with his brother, Antiochus Hierax, the Syrian monarch made an expedition against Parthia. Not feeling, however, altogether confident of success if he trusted wholly to his own unaided efforts, he prudently entered into an alliance with Diodotus the Bactrian king, and the two agreed to combine their forces against Tiridates. Hereupon that monarch, impressed with a deep sense of the impending danger, quitted Parthia, and, proceeding northwards, took refuge with the Aspasiacae, a Scythian tribe which dwelt between the Oxus and the Jaxartes. The Aspasiacae probably lent him troops; at any rate, he did not remain long in retirement, but, hearing that the Bactrian king, whom he especially feared, was dead, he contrived to detach his son and successor from the Syrian alliance, and to draw him over to his own side. Having made this important stroke, he met Callinicus in battle, and completely defeated his army.

This victory was with reason regarded by the Parthians as a sort of second beginning of their independence. Hitherto their kingdom had existed precariously, and as it were by sufferance. It could not but be that the power from which they had revolted would one day seek to reclaim its lost territory; and, until the new monarchy had measured its strength against that of its former mistress, none could feel secure that it would be able to maintain its existence. The victory gained by Tiridates over Callinicus put an end to these doubts. It proved to the world at large, and also to the Parthians themselves, that they had nothing to fear--that they were strong enough to preserve their freedom. Considering the enormous disproportion between the military strength and resources of the narrow Parthian State and the vast Syrian Empire--considering that the one comprised about fifty thousand and the other above a million of square miles; that the one had inherited the wealth of ages and the other was probably as poor as any province in Asia; that the one possessed the Macedonian arms, training, and tactics, while the other knew only the rude warfare of the Steppes--the result of the struggle cannot but be regarded as surprising. Still it was not without precedent, and it has not been without repetition. It adds another to the many instances where a small but brave people, bent on resisting foreign domination, have, when standing on their defence, in their own territory, proved more than a match for the utmost force that a foe of overwhelming strength could bring against them. It reminds us of Marathon, of Bannock-burn, of Morgarten. We may not sympathize wholly with the victors, for Greek civilization, even of the type introduced by Alexander into Asia, was ill replaced by Tatar coarseness and barbarism; but we cannot refuse our admiration to the spectacle of a handful of gallant men determinedly resisting in the fastness of their native land a host of aliens, and triumphing over their would-be oppressors.

The Parthians themselves, deeply impressed with the importance of the contest, preserved the memory of it by a solemn festival on the anniversary of their victory, which they still celebrated in the time of Trogus.

CHAPTER IV. Consolidation of the Parthian Kingdom.

Selbucus might perhaps not have accepted his defeat as final had he been altogether free to choose whether he would continue the Parthian war or no. The resources of his Empire were so vast, his command of men

and money so unbounded, that he could easily have replaced one army by another, and so have prolonged the struggle. But renewed troubles had broken out in the western portion of his dominions, where his brother, Antiochus Hierax, was still in arms against his authority. Seleucus felt it necessary to turn his attention to this quarter, and having once retired from the Parthian contest, he never afterwards renewed it. Tiridates was left unmolested, to act as he thought fit, and either to attempt further conquests, or to devote himself to securing those which he had effected. He chose the latter course, and during the remainder of his reign--a space of above twenty years--he employed himself wholly in strengthening and adorning his small kingdom. Having built a number of forts in various strong positions, and placed garrisons in them, he carefully selected a site for a new city, which he probably intended to make his capital. The spot chosen combined the advantages of being at once delightful and easily defensible. It was surrounded with precipitous rocks, which enclosed a plain of extraordinary fertility. Abundant wood and copious streams of water were in the neighborhood. The soil was so rich that it scarcely required cultivation, and the woods were so full of game as to afford endless amusement to hunters. To the town which he built in this locality Tiridates gave the name of Dara, a word which the Greeks and Romans elongated into Dareium. Unfortunately, modern travellers have not yet succeeded in identifying the site, which should, however, lie towards the East, perhaps in the vicinity of Meshed.

We may presume that Tiridates, when he built this remarkable city, intended to make it the seat of government. Hecatompylos, as a Greek town, had the same disadvantages, which were considered in later times to render Seleucia unfit for the residence of the Parthian Court and monarch. Dara, like Ctesiphon, was to be wholly Parthian. Its strong situation would render it easy of defence; its vicinity to forests abounding in game would give it special charms in the eyes of persons so much devoted, as the Parthian princes were, to the chase. But the intention of Tiridates, if we have truly defined it, failed of taking permanent effect. He may himself have fixed his abode at Dara, but his successors did not inherit his predilections; and Hecatompylos remained, after his reign, as before it, the head-quarters of the government, and the recognized metropolis of Parthia Proper.

After passing in peace and prosperity the last twenty years of his reign, Tiridates died in a good old age, leaving his crown to a son, whose special name is a little uncertain, but who is called by most moderns Artabanus I.

Artabanus, having ascended the Parthian throne about B.C. 214, and being anxious to distinguish himself, took advantage of the war raging between Antiochus III., the second son of Seleucus Callinicus, and Achseus, one of his rebel satraps, to advance into Media, and to add to his dominions the entire tract between Hyrcania and the Zagros mountains. Of the manner in which he effected his conquests we have no account; but they seem to have been the fruit of a single campaign, which must have been conducted with great vigor and military skill. The Parthian prince appears to have occupied Ecbatana, the ancient capital of the Median Empire, and to have thence threatened the Mesopotamian countries. Upon receiving intelligence of his invasion, Antiochus levied a vast army, and set out towards the East, with a determination to subjugate all the revolted provinces, and to recover the limits of the old Empire of Nicator. Passing the Zagros chain, probably by way of Behistun and Kermanshaw, he easily retook Ecbatana, which was an open town, and undefended by the Parthians, and proceeded to prepare for a further advance eastward. The route from Ecbatana to the Caspian Gates crosses, of necessity, unless a considerable circuit be taken, some large tracts of barren ground, inlets or bays of the

Great Salt Desert of Iran. Artabanus cherished the hope that here the difficulties of the way would effectually bar his enemy's progress, more especially as his troops were so numerous, and as water was scanty throughout the whole region. The streams which flow from Zagros towards the East are few and scanty; they mostly fail in summer, which, even in Asia, is the campaigning season; and those who cross the desert at this time must depend on the wells wherewith the more western part of the region is supplied by means of _kanats_ or underground conduits, which are sometimes carried many miles from the foot of the mountains. The position of the wells, which were few in number, was known only to the natives; and Artabanus hoped that the Syrian monarch would be afraid to place the lives of his soldiers in such doubtful keeping. When, however, he found that Antiochus was not to be deterred by any fears of this kind, but was bent on crossing the desert, he had recourse to the barbaric expedients of filling in, or poisoning, the wells along the line of route-which the Syrian prince was likely to follow. But these steps seem to have been taken too late. Antiochus, advancing suddenly, caught some of the Parthian troops at their barbarous work, and dispersed them without difficulty. He then rapidly effected the transit, and, pressing forward, was soon in the enemy's country, where he occupied the chief city, Hecatompylos. Up to this point the Parthian monarch had declined an engagement. No information has come down to us as to his motives; but they may be readily enough conjectured. To draw an enemy far away from his resources, while retiring upon one's own; to entangle a numerous host among narrow passes and denies; to decline battle when he offers it, and then to set upon him unawares, has always been the practice of weak mountain races when attacked by a more numerous foe. It is often good policy in such a case even to yield the capital without a blow, and to retreat into a more difficult situation. The assailant must follow whithersoever his foe retires, or quit the country, leaving him unsubdued. Antiochus, aware of this necessity, and rendered confident of success by the evacuation of a situation so strong, and so suitable for the Parthian tactics as Hecatompylos, after giving his army a short rest at the captured capital, set out in pursuit of Artabanus, who had withdrawn his forces towards Hyrcania. To reach the rich Hyrcanian valleys, he was forced to cross the main chain of the Elburz, which here attains an elevation of 7000 or 8000 feet. The route which his army had to follow was the channel of a winter-torrent, obstructed with stones and trunks of trees, partly by nature, partly by the efforts of the inhabitants. The long and difficult ascent was disputed by the enemy the whole way, and something like a pitched battle was fought at the top; but Antiochus persevered, and, though his army must have suffered severely, descended into Hyrcanian and captured several of the towns. Here our main authority, Polybius, suddenly deserts us, and we can give no further account of the war beyond its general result--Artabanus and the Parthians remained unsubdued after a struggle which seems to have lasted some years; Artabanus himself displayed great valor; and at length the Syrian monarch thought it best to conclude a peace with him, in which he acknowledged the Parthian independence. It is probable that he exacted in return a pledge that the Parthian monarch should lend him his assistance in the expedition which he was bent on conducting against Bactria; but there is no actual proof that the conditions of peace contained this clause. We are left in doubt whether Artabanus stood aloof in the war which Antiochus waged with Euthydemus of Bactria immediately after the close of his Parthian campaigns, or whether he lent his aid to the attempt made to crush his neighbor. Perhaps, on the whole, it is most probable that, nominally, he was Antiochus's ally in the war, but that, practically, he gave him little help, having no wish to see Syria aggrandized.

At any rate, whether Euthydemus had to meet the attack of Syria only, or of Syria and Parthia in combination, the result was, that Bactria, like Parthia, proved strong enough to maintain her ground, and that the Syrian King, after a while, grew tired of the struggle, and consented to terms of accommodation. The Bactrian monarchy, like the Parthian, came out of the contest unscathed--indeed we may go further, and say that the position of the two kingdoms was improved by the attacks made upon them. If a prince possessing the personal qualities that distinguished the third Antiochus, and justified the title of "Great" which he derived from his oriental expedition--if such a prince, enjoying profound peace at home, and directing the whole force of his empire against them, could not succeed in reducing to subjection the revolted provinces of the northeast, but, whatever military advantages he might gain, found conquest impossible, and returned home, having acknowledged as independent kings those whom he went out to chastise as rebellious satraps, it was evident that the kingdoms might look upon themselves as firmly established, or, at least, as secure from the danger of re-absorption into the Syrian State. The repulse of Callinicus was a probable indication of the fate of all future efforts on the part of Syria to reduce Parthia; the conditions of peace granted by Antiochus to both countries, after a series of military successes, constituted almost a proof that the yoke of Syria would never be re-imposed on either the Parthian or the Bactrian nation.

With the departure of Antiochus from the East, about B.C. 206, we enter upon a period when Parthian history is, for a quarter of a century, almost a blank. Nothing more is known of Arsaces III. after Antiochus retired; and nothing at all is known of his successor, Priapatius, beyond his name and the length of his reign, which lasted for fifteen years (from about B.C. 196 to 181). The reigns of these princes coincide with those of Euthydemus and his son, Demetrius, in Bactria; and perhaps the most probable solution of the problem of Parthian inactivity at this time is to be found in the great development of Bactrian power which now took place, and the influence which the two neighboring kingdoms naturally exercised upon each other. When Parthia was strong and aggressive, Bactria was, for the most part, quiet; and when Bactria shows signs of vigorous and active life, Parthia languishes and retires into the shade.

The Bactrian Kingdom, founded (as we have seen) a little before the Parthian, sought from the first its aggrandizement in the East rather than in the West. The Empire of Alexander had included all the countries between the Caspian Sea and the Sutlej; and these tracts, which constitute the modern Khorasan, Afghanistan, and Punjaub, had all been to a certain extent Hellenized by means of Greek settlements and Greek government. But Alexander was no sooner dead than a tendency displayed itself in these regions, and particularly in the more eastern ones, towards a relapse into barbarism, or, if this expression be too strong, at any rate towards a rejection of Hellenism. During the early wars of the "Successors" the natives of the Punjaub generally seized the opportunity to revolt; the governors placed over the various districts by Alexander were murdered; and the tribes everywhere declared themselves free. Among the leaders of the revolt was a certain Chandragupta (or Sandracottus), who contrived to turn the circumstances of the time to his own special advantage, and built up a considerable kingdom in the far East out of the fragments which had detached themselves from what was still called the Macedonian Empire. When Seleucus Nicator, about B.C. 305, conducted an expedition across the Indus, he found this monarch established in the tract between the Indus and the Ganges, ruling over extensive dominions and at the head of a vast force. It is uncertain whether the two rivals engaged in hostilities or no. At any rate, a peace was soon made; and Seleucus, in return for five

hundred elephants, ceded to Sandracottus certain lands on the west bank of the Indus, which had hitherto been regarded as Macedonian. These probably consisted of the low grounds between the Indus and the foot of the mountains--the districts of Peshawur, Bunnoo, Murwut, Shikarpoor, and Kurrachee--which are now in British occupation. Thus Hellenism in these parts receded more and more, the Sanskritic Indians recovering by degrees the power and independence of which they had been deprived by Alexander.

This state of things could not have been pleasing to the Greek princes of Bactria, who must have felt that the reaction towards barbarism in these parts tended to isolate them, and that there was a danger of their being crushed between the Parthians on the one hand and the perpetually advancing Indians on the other. When Antiochus the Great, after concluding his treaty with Euthydemus, marched eastward, the Bactrian monarch probably indulged in hopes that the Indians would receive a check, and that the Greek frontier would be again carried to the Indus, if not to the Sutlej. But, if so, he was disappointed. Antiochus, instead of making war upon the Indians, contented himself with renewing the old alliance of the Seleucidae with the Maurja princes, and obtaining a number of elephants from Sophagesenus, the grandson of Sandracottus. It is even possible that he went further, and made cessions of territory in return for this last gift, which brought the Indian frontier still nearer than before to that of Bactria, At any rate, the result of the Indian expedition of Antiochus seems to have been unsatisfactory to Euthydemus, who shortly afterwards commenced what are called "Indian Wars" on his south-eastern frontier, employing in them chiefly the arms of his son, Demetrius. During the latter years of Euthydemus and the earlier ones of Demetrius, the Bactrian rule was rapidly extended over the greater portion of the modern Afghanistan; nor did it even stop there. The arms of Demetrius were carried across the Indus into the Punjaub region; and the city of Euthymedeia upon the Hydaspes remained to later times an evidence of the extent of his conquests. From B.C. 206 to about B.C. 185 was the most flourishing period of the Bactrian monarchy, which expanded during that space from a small kingdom into a considerable empire.

The power and successes of the Bactrian princes at this time account sufficiently for the fact that the contemporary Parthian monarchs stood upon their guard, and undertook no great expeditions. Arsaces III., who continued on the throne for about ten or twelve years after his peace with Antiochus, and Priapatius, or Arsaces IV., his son, who succeeded him, and had a reign of fifteen years, were content, as already observed, to watch over their own State, husbanding its resources, and living at peace with all their neighbors. It was not till Phraates I. (Arsaces V.), the son of Priapatius, had mounted the throne, B.C. 181, that this policy was departed from, and Parthia, which had remained tranquil for a quarter of a century, once more aroused herself, and assumed an attitude of aggression.

The quarter to which Phraates I. directed his arms was the country of the Mardians, a poor but warlike people, who appear to have occupied a portion of the Elburz range, probably that immediately south of Mazanderan and Asterabad. The reduction of these fierce mountaineers is likely to have occupied him for some years, since their country was exceedingly strong and difficult. Though the Mardi were (nominally, at any rate) subjects of the Seleucidae, we do not hear of any assistance being rendered them, or, indeed, of any remonstrance being made against the unprovoked aggression of the Parthian monarch. The reign of Phraates I. in Parthia coincides with that of Seleucus IV. (Philopator) in Syria; and we may account for the inactivity of this prince, in part by his personal character, which was weak and pacific, in part by the exhaustion of Syria at the time, in consequence of his father's great

war with Rome (B.C. 197-190), and of the heavy contribution which was imposed upon him at the close of it. Syria may scarcely have yet recovered sufficient strength to enter upon a new struggle, especially one with a distant and powerful enemy. The material interests of the Empire may also have seemed to be but little touched by the war, since the Mardi were too poor to furnish much tribute; and it is possible, if not even probable, that their subjection to Syria had long been rather formal than real. Seleucus therefore allowed the Mardians to be reduced, conceiving, probably, that their transfer to the dominion of the Arsacidse neither increased the Parthian power nor diminished his own.

But the nation which submits to be robbed of a province, however unproductive and valueless, must look to having the process repeated at intervals, until it bestirs itself and offers resistance. There is reason to believe that Phraates had no sooner conquered the Mardians than he cast his eyes on an adjacent district, and resolved to add it to his territories. This was the tract lying immediately to the West of the Caspian Gates, which was always reckoned to Media, forming, however, a distinct district, know as Media Rhagiana. It was a region of much natural fertility, being watered by numerous streams from the Elburz range, and possessing a soil of remarkable productiveness. Its breadth was not great, since it consisted of a mere strip between the mountains and the Salt Desert which occupies the whole centre of the Iranic tableland; but it extended in length at least a hundred and fifty miles, from the Caspian Gates to the vicinity of Kasvin. Its capital city, from a remote antiquity, was Rbages, situated near the eastern extremity of the strip, probably at the spot now called Kaleh Erij, about twenty-three miles from the "Gates." On this region it is clear that Phraates cast a covetous eye. How much of it he actually occupied is doubtful; but it is at least certain that he effected a lodgment in its eastern extremity, which must have put the whole region in jeopardy. Nature has set a remarkable barrier between the more eastern and the more western portions of Occidental Asia, about midway in the tract which lies due south of the Caspian Sea. The Elburz range in this part is one of so tremendous a character, and northward abuts so closely on the Caspian, that all communication between the east and the west necessarily passes to the south of it. In this quarter the Great Desert offering an insuperable obstacle to transit, the line of communication has to cling to the flanks of the mountain chain, the narrow strip between the mountains and the desert--rarely ten miles in width--being alone traversable. But about long. 52 deg. 20' this strip itself fails. A rocky spur runs due south from the Elburz into the desert for a distance of some twenty or thirty miles, breaking the line of communication, and seeming at first sight to obstruct it completely. This, however, is not the case absolutely. The spur itself is penetrable by two passes, one where it joins the Elburz, which is the more difficult of the two, and another, further to the south, which is easier. The latter now known as the Girduni Sudurrah pass, constitutes the famous "Pylae Caspiae." Through this pass alone can armies proceed from Armenia, Media, and Persia eastward, or from Turkestan, Khorasan, and Afghanistan into the more western parts of Asia. The position is therefore one of primary importance. It was to guard it that Rhages was built so near the eastern end of its territory. So long as it remained in the possession of Syria, Parthian aggression was checked. Rhagiana, the rest of Media, and the other provinces were safe, or nearly so. On the other hand, the loss of it to Parthia laid the eastern provinces open to her, and was at once almost equivalent to the loss of all Rhagiana, which had no other natural protection. Now we find that Phraates surmounted the "Gates," and effected a lodgment in the plain country beyond them. He removed a portion of the conquered Mardians from their mountain homes to the city of Charax, which was on the western side

of the Gates, probably on the site now occupied by the ruins known as Uewanikif. Their location in this strong post was a menace to the neighboring town of Rhages, which can scarcely have maintained itself long against an enemy encamped at its doors. We are not informed, however, of any results which followed on the occupation of Charax during the lifetime of Phraates. His reign lasted only seven years--from B.C. 181 to B.C. 174--and it is thus probable that he died before there was time for his second important conquest to have any further consequences.

Phraates had sufficient warning of his coming decease to make preparations with respect to a successor. Though he had several sons, some of whom were (we must suppose) of sufficient age to have ascended the throne, he left his crown to his brother, Mithridates. He felt, probably, that the State required the direction of a firm hand, that war might at any time break out with either Syria or Bactria; while, if the career of conquest on which he had made Parthia enter were to be pursued, he could trust his brother better than any of his sons to conduct aggressive expeditions with combined vigor and prudence. We shall see, as the history proceeds, how Mithridates justified his choice. Phraates would also appear to have borne his brother especial affection, since he takes the name of "Philadelphus" (brother-loving) upon his coins. It must have been a satisfaction to him that he was able by his last act at once to consult for the good of his country, and to gratify a sentiment on which it is evident that he prided himself.

CHAPTER V. Reign of Mithridates I.

The reign of Mithridates I. is the most important in the Parthian history. [PLATE 1. Fig. 3.] Receiving from his brother Phraates a kingdom of but narrow dimensions, confined (as it would seem) between the city of Charax on the one side, and the river Arius, or Hori-rud, on the other, he transformed it, within the space of thirty-seven years (which was the time that his reign lasted), into a great and nourishing Empire. It is not too much to say that, but for him, Parthia might have remained a more petty State on the outskirts of the Syrian kingdom, and, instead of becoming a rival to Rome, might have sunk shortly into obscurity and insignificance.

As commonly happens in the grand changes which constitute the turning-points of history, the way for Mithridates's vast successes was prepared by a long train of antecedent circumstances. To show how the rise of the Parthians to greatness in the middle of the second century before our era was rendered possible, we must turn aside once more from our proper subject and cast a glance at the condition of the two kingdoms between which Parthia stood, at the time when Mithridates ascended the throne.

The Bactrian monarchs in their ambitious struggles to possess themselves of the tracts south of the Paropamisus, and extending from the Heri-rud to the Sutlej and the mouths of the Indus, overstrained the strength of their State, and by shifting the centre of its power injured irretrievably its principle of cohesion. As early as the reign of Demetrius a tendency to disruption showed itself, Eucratidas having held the supreme power for many years in Bactria itself, while Demetrius exercised authority on the southern side of the mountains. It is true that at the death of Demetrius this tendency was to a certain extent checked, since Eucratidas was then able to extend his sway over almost the whole of the Bactrian territory. But the old evil recurred shortly, though in a less pronounced form. Eucratidas, without being actually supplanted in the north by a rival, found that he could devote to that portion of the Empire but a small part of his attention. The southern countries and the prospect of southern and eastern conquests engrossed him. While he carried on successful wars with the Arachotians, the Drangians, and the Indians of the Punjaub region, his hold on the more northern countries was relaxed, and they

began to slip from his grasp. Incursions of the nomad Scyths from the Steppes carried fire and sword over portions of these provinces, some of which were Even, it is probable, seized and occupied by the invaders.

Such was, it would seem, the condition of Bactria under Eucratidas, the contemporary of Mithridates. In Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes had succeeded his brother Seleucus IV. (Philopator) about a year before Mithridates ascended the Parthian throne. He was a prince of courage and energy; but his hands were fully occupied with wars in Egypt, Palestine, and Armenia, and the distant East could attract but a small share of his thought or attention. The claim put forward by Egypt to the possession of Coele-Syria and Palestine, promised to Ptolemy V. (it was affirmed) as a dowry with Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus the Great, led to hostilities in the south-west which lasted continuously for four years (B.C. 171 to B.C. 168), and were complicated during two of them with troubles in Judaea, rashly provoked by the Syrian monarch, who, unaware of the stubborn temper of the Jews, goaded them into insurrection. The war with Egypt came to an end in B.C. 168; it brought Syria no advantage, since Rome interposed, and required the restitution of all conquests. The war with the Jews had no such rapid termination. Antiochus, having not only plundered and desecrated the Temple, but having set himself to eradicate utterly the Jewish religion, and completely Hellenize the people, was met with the most determined resistance on the part of a moiety of the nation. A patriotic party rose up under devoted leaders, who asserted, and in the end secured, the independence of their country. Not alone during the remaining years of Epiphanes, but for half a century after his death, throughout seven reigns, the struggle continued; Judaea taking advantage of every trouble and difficulty in Syria to detach herself more and more completely from her oppressor; being a continual thorn in her side, a constant source of weakness, preventing more than anything else the recovery of her power. The triumph which Epiphanes obtained in the distant Armenia (B.C. 166-5), where he defeated and captured the king, Artaxias, was a poor set-off against the foe which he had created to himself at his doors through his cruelty and intolerance.

In another quarter, too, the Syrian power received a severe shake through the injudicious violence of Epiphanes. The Oriental temples had, in some instances, escaped the rapacity of Alexander's generals and "Successors;" their treasuries remained unviolated, and contained large hoards of the precious metals. Epiphanes, having exhausted his own exchequer by his wars and his lavish gifts, saw in these un-plundered stores a means of replenishing it, and made a journey into his south-eastern provinces for the purpose. The natives of Elymais, however, resisted his attempt, and proved strong enough to defeat it; the baffled monarch retired to Tabae, where he shortly afterward fell sick and died. In the popular belief his death was a judgment upon him for his attempted sacrilege; and in the exultation caused by the event the bands which joined these provinces to the Empire must undoubtedly have been loosened.

Nor did the removal of Epiphanes (B.C. 164) improve the condition of affairs in Syria. The throne fell to his son, Antiochus Eupator, a boy of nine, according to Appian, or, according to another authority, of twelve years of age. The regent, Lysias, exercised the chief power, and was soon engaged in a war with the Jews, whom the death of Epiphanes had encouraged to fresh efforts. The authority of Lysias was further disputed by a certain Philip, whom Epiphanes, shortly before his death, had made tutor to the young king. The claims of this tutor to the regent's office being supported by a considerable portion of the army, a civil war arose between him and Lysias, which raged for the greater part of two years (B.C. 163-2), terminating in the defeat and death of Philip. But Syrian affairs

did not even then settle down into tranquillity. A prince of the Seleucid house, Demetrius by name, the son of Seleucus IV., and consequently the first cousin of Eupator, was at this time detained in Rome as a hostage, having been sent there during his father's lifetime as a security for his fidelity. Demetrius, with some reason, regarded his claim to the Syrian throne as better than that of his cousin, the son of the younger brother, and being in the full vigor of early youth, he determined to assert his pretensions in Syria, and to make a bold stroke for the crown. Having failed to obtain the Senate's consent to his quitting Italy, he took his departure secretly, crossed the Mediterranean in a Carthaginian vessel, and, landing in Asia, succeeded within a few months in establishing himself as Syrian monarch.

From this review it sufficiently appears that the condition of things, both in Syria and Bactria, was favorable to any aspirations which the power that lay between them might entertain after dominion and self-aggrandizement. The Syrian and Bactrian kings, at the time of Mithridates's accession, were, both of them, men of talent and energy; but the Syrian monarch was soon involved in difficulties at home, while the Bactrian had his attention attracted to prospects of advantage in a remote quarter, Mithridates might, perhaps, have attacked the territory of either with an equal chance of victory; and as his predecessor had set him the example of successful warfare on his western frontier, we might have expected his first efforts to have been in this direction, against the dependencies of Syria. But circumstances which we cannot exactly trace determined his choice differently. While Eucratidas was entangled in his Indian wars, Mithridates invaded the Bactrian territory where it adjoined Parthia, and added to his Empire, after a short struggle, two provinces, called respectively Turiua and that of Aspionus. It is conjectured that these provinces lay towards the north and the north-west, the one being that of the Turanians proper, and the other that of the Aspasiacae, who dwelt between the Jaxartes and the Oxus. But there is scarcely sufficient ground for forming even a conjecture on the subject, since speculation has nothing but the names themselves to rest upon.

Successful in this quarter, Mithridates, a few years later, having waited until the Syrian throne was occupied by the boy Eupator, and the two claimants of the regency, Lysias and Philip, were contending in arms for the supreme power, made suddenly an expedition towards the west, falling upon Media, which, though claimed by the Syrian kings as a province of their Empire, was perhaps at this time almost, if not quite, independent. The Medes offered a vigorous resistance to his attack; and, in the war which followed, each side had in turn the advantage; but eventually the Parthian prince proved victorious, and the great and valuable province of Media Magna was added to the dominons of the Arsacidae. A certain Bacasis was appointed to govern it, whether as satrap or as tributary monarch is not apparent; while the Parthian king, recalled towards home by a revolt, proceeded to crush rebellion before resuming his career of conquest.

The revolt which now occupied for a time the attention of Mithridates was that of Hyrcania. The Hyrcanians were Arians in race; they were brave and high-spirited, and under the Persian monarchs had enjoyed some exceptional privileges which placed them above the great mass of the conquered nations. It was natural that they should dislike the yoke of a Turanian people; and it was wise of them to make their effort to obtain their freedom before Parthia grew into a power against which revolt would be utterly hopeless. Hyrcania might now expect to be joined by the Medes, and even the Mardi, who were Arians like themselves, and could not yet have forgotten the pleasures of independence. But though the effort does not seem to have been ill-timed, it was

unsuccessful. No aid was given to the rebels, so far as we hear, by any of their neighbors. Mithridates's prompt return nipped the insurrection in the bud; Hyrcania at once submitted, and became for centuries the obedient vassal of her powerful neighbor.

The conquest of Media had brought the Parthians into contact with the rich country of Susiana or Elymais; and it was not long before Mithridates, having crushed the Hyrcanian revolt, again advanced westward, and invaded this important province. Elymais appears to have a had a king of its own, who must either have been a vassal of the Seleucidse, or have acquired an independent position by revolt after the death of Epiphanes. In the war which followed between this monarch and Mithridates, the Elymseans proved wholly unsuccessful, and Mithridates rapidly overran the country and added it to his dominions. After this he appears to have received the submission of the Persians on the one hand and the Babylonians on the other, and to have rested on his laurels for some years, having extended the Parthian sway from the Hindoo Koosh to the Euphrates.

The chronological data which have come down to us for this period are too scanty to allow of any exact statement of the number of years occupied by Mithridates in effecting these conquests. All that can be said is that he appears to have commenced them about B.C. 163 and to have concluded them some time before B.C. 140, when he was in his turn attacked by the Syrians. Probably they had been all effected by the year B.C. 150; since there is reason to believe that about that time Mithridates found his power sufficiently established in the west to allow of his once more turning his attention eastward, and renewing his aggressions upon the Bactrian kingdom, which had passed from the rule of Eucratidas under that of his son and successor, Heliocles.

Heliocles, who was allowed by his father a quasi-royal position, obtained the full possession of the Bactrian throne by the crime of parricide. It is conjectured that he regarded with disapproval his father's tame submission to Parthian ascendency, and desired the recovery of the provinces which Eucratidas had been content to cede for the sake of peace. We are told that he justified his crime on the ground that his father was a public enemy; which is best explained by supposing that he considered him the friend of Bactria's great enemy, Parthia. If this be the true account of the circumstances under which he became king, his accession would have been a species of challenge to the Parthian monarch, whose ally he had assassinated. Mithridates accordingly marched against him with all speed, and, easily defeating his troops, took possession of the greater part of his dominion. Elated by this success, he is said to have pressed eastward, to have invaded India, and overrun the country as far as the river Hydaspes, but, if it be true that his arms penetrated so far, it is, at any rate, certain that he did not here effect any conquest. Greek monarchs of the Bactrian series continued masters of Oabul and Western India till about B.C. 126; no Parthian coins are found in this region; nor do the best authorities claim for Mithridates any dominion beyond the mountains which enclose on the west the valley of the Indus.

By his war with Heliocles the empire of Mithridates reached its greatest extension. It comprised now, besides Parthia Proper, Bactria, Aria, Drangiana, Arachosia, Margiana, Hyrcania, the country of the Mardi, Media Magna, Susiana, Persia and Babylonia. Very probably its limits were still wider. The power which possessed Parthia, Hyrcania, and Bactria, would rule almost of necessity over the whole tract between the Elburz range and the Oxus, if not even over the region between the Oxus and the Jaxartes; that which held the Caspian mountains and eastern Media could not fail to have influence over the tribes of the Iranic desert; while Assyria Proper would naturally follow the fortunes of Babylonia and Susiana. Still the

extent of territory thus indicated rests only on conjecture. If we confine ourselves to what is known by positive evidence, we can only say that the Parthian Kingdom of this period contained, at least, twelve provinces above enumerated. It thus stretched from east to west a distance of fifteen hundred miles between the Suleiman mountains and the Euphrates, varying in width from three or four hundred miles--or even more--towards the west and east, to a narrow strip of less than a hundred miles toward the centre. It probably comprised an area of about 450,000 square miles; which is somewhat less than that of the modern Persia.

Unlike the modern Persia, however, the territory consisted almost entirely of productive regions. The excellent quality of the soil in Parthia Proper, Hyrcania, and Margiana, has been already noticed. Bactria, the next province to Margiana towards the east, was less uniformly fertile; but still it contained a considerable proportion of good land along the course of the Oxus and its tributaries, which was cultivated in vineyards and cornfields, or else pastured large herds of cattle. The Mardian mountain territory was well wooded; and the plain between the mountains and the Caspian was rich in the extreme. Media, where it adjoined on the desert, was comparatively sterile; but still even here an elaborate system of artificial irrigation brought a belt of land under culture. Further west, in the Zagros chain, Media comprised some excellent pasture lands, together with numerous valleys as productive as any in Asia. Elymais was, in part, of the same character with the mountainous portion of Media, while beyond the mountain it sank down into a rich alluvium, not much inferior to the Babylonian. Babylonia itself was confessedly the most fertile country in Asia. It produced wheat, barley, millet, sesame, vetches, dates, and fruits of all kinds. The return of the wheat crop was from fifty to a hundred-and-fifty-fold; while that of the barley crop was three hundred-fold. The dates were of unusual size and superior flavor; and the palm, which abounded throughout the region, furnished an inexhaustible supply both of fruit and timber.

The great increase of power which Mithridates had obtained by his conquests could not be a matter of indifference to the Syrian monarchs. Their domestic troubles--the contentions between Philip and Lysias, between Lysias and Demetrius Soter, Soter and Alexander Balas, Balas and Demetrius II., Demetrius II. and Tryphon, had so engrossed them for the space of twenty years (from B.C. 162 to B.C. 142) that they had felt it impossible, or hopeless, to attempt any expedition towards the East, for the protection or recovery of their provinces. Mithridates had been allowed to pursue his career of conquest unopposed, so far as the Syrians were concerned, and to establish his sway from the Hindoo Koosh to the Euphrates. But a time at last came when home dangers were less pressing, and a prospect of engaging the terrible Parthians with success seemed to present itself. The second Demetrius had not, indeed, wholly overcome his domestic enemy, Tryphon; but he had so far brought him into difficulties as to believe that he might safely be left to be dealt with by his wife, Cleopatra, and by his captains. At the same time the condition of affairs in the East seemed to invite his interference, Mithridates ruled his new conquests with some strictness, suspecting, probably, their fidelity, and determined that he would not by any remissness allow them to escape from his grasp. The native inhabitants could scarcely be much attached to the Syro-Macedonians, who had certainly not treated them very tenderly; but a possession of 170 years' duration confers prestige in the East, and a strange yoke may have galled more than one to whose pressure they had become accustomed. Moreover, all the provinces which Parthia took from Syria contained Greek towns, and their inhabitants might at all times be depended on to side with their countrymen against the Asiatics. At the

present conjuncture, too, the number of the malcontents was swelled by the addition of the recently subdued Bactrians, who hated the Parthian yoke, and longed earnestly for a chance of recovering their freedom. Thus when Demetrius II., anxious to escape the reproach of inertness, determined to make an expedition against the great Parthian monarch, he found himself welcomed as a deliverer by a considerable number of his enemy's subjects, whom the harshness, or the novelty, of the Parthian rule had offended. The malcontents joined his standard as he advanced; and supported, as he thus was, by Persian, Elymsen, and Bactrian contingents, he engaged and defeated the Parthians in several battles. Upon this, Mithridates, finding himself inferior in strength, had recourse to stratagem, and having put Demetrius off his guard by proposals of peace, attacked him, defeated him, and took him prisoner. The invading army appears to have been destroyed. The captive monarch was, in the first instance, conveyed about to the several nations which had revolted, and paraded before each in turn, as a proof to them of their folly in lending him aid, but afterwards he was treated in a manner befitting his rank and the high character of his captor. Assigned a residence in Hyrcania, he was maintained in princely state, and was even promised by Mithridates the hand of his daughter, Ehodo-guns. The Parthian monarch, it is probable, had the design of conquering Syria, and thought it possible that he might find it of advantage to have a Syrian prince in his camp, well disposed towards him, connected by marriage, and thus fitted for the position of tributary monarch. But the schemes of Mithridates proved abortive. His career had now reached its close. Attacked by illness not very long after his capture of Demetrius, his strength proved insufficient to bear up against the malady, and he died after a glorious reign of about thirty-eight years, B.C. 136.