ASSYRIA

Lesson	Chapters
ASSY001	**Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4**
ASSY002	Chapters 5, 6
ASSY003	Chapters 7, 8
ASSY004	Chapters 9
ASSY005	Chapter 10

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. Description of the Country

The site of the second--or great Assyrian-monarchy was the upper portion of the Mesopotamian valley. The cities which successively formed its capitals lay, all of them, upon the middle Tigris; and the heart of the country was a district on either side that river, enclosed within the thirty-fifth and thirty-seventh parallels. By degrees these limits were enlarged; and the term Assyria came to be used, in a loose and vague way, of a vast and ill-defined tract extending on all sides from this central region. Herodotus considered the whole of Babylonia to be a mere district of Assyria. Pliny reckoned to it all Mesopotamia. Strabo gave it, besides these regions, a great portion of Mount Zagros (the modern Kurdistan), and all Syria as far as Cilicia, Judaea, and Phoenicia.

If, leaving the conventional, which is thus vague and unsatisfactory, we seek to find certain natural limits which we may regard as the proper boundaries of the country, in two directions we seem to perceive an almost unmistakable line of demarcation. On the east the high mountain-chain of Zagros.

penetrable only in one or two places, forms a barrier of the most marked character, and is beyond a doubt the natural limit for which we are looking. On the south a less striking, but not less clearly defined, line--formed by the abutment of the upper and slightly elevated plain on the alluvium of the lower valley--separates Assyria from Babylonia, which is best regarded as a distinct country. In the two remaining directions, there is more doubt as to the most proper limit. Northwards,we may either view Mount Masius as the natural boundary, or the course of the Tigris from Diarbekr to Til, or even perhaps the Armenian mountain-chain north of this portion of the Tigris, from whence that river receives its early tributaries. Westward, we might confine Assyria to the country watered by the affluents of the Tigris, or extend it so as to in elude the Khabour and its tributaries, or finally venture to carry it across the whole of Mesopotamia, and make it be bounded by the Euphrates. On the whole it is thought that in both the doubted cases the wider limits are historically the truer ones. Assyrian remains cover the entire country between the Tigris and the Khabour, and are frequent on both banks of the latter stream, giving unmistakable indications of a long occupation of that region by the great Mesopotamian people. The inscriptions show that even a wider tract was in process of time absorbed by the conquerors; and if we are to draw a line between the country actually taken into Assyria, and that which was merely conquered and held in subjection, we can select no better boundary than the Euphrates westward, and northward the snowy mountain-chain known to the ancients as Mons Niphates.

If Assyria be allowed the extent which is here assigned to her, she will be a country, not only very much larger than Chaldaea or Babylonia, but positively of considerable dimensions. Reaching on the north to the thirty-eighth and on the south to the thirty-fourth parallel, she had a length diagonally from Diarbekr to the alluvium of 350 miles, and a breadth between the Euphrates and Mount Zagros varying from about 300 to 170 miles. Her area was probably not less than 75,000 square miles, which is more than double that of Portugal, and not much below that of Great Britain. She would thus from her mere size be calculated to play an important (part) in history; and the more so, as during the period of her greatness scarcely any nation with which she came in contact possessed nearly so extensive a territory.

Within the limits here assigned to Assyria, the face of the country is tolerably varied. Possessing, on the whole, perhaps, a predominant character of flatness, the territory still includes some important ranges of hills, while on the two sides it abuts upon lofty mountain-chains. Towards the north and east it is provided by nature with an ample supply of water, rills everywhere flowing from the Armenian and Kurdish ranges, which soon collect into rapid and abundant rivers. The central, southern, and western regions are, however, less bountifully supplied; for though the Euphrates washes the whole western and south-western frontier, it spreads fertility only along its banks; and though Mount Masius sends down upon the Mesopotamian plain a considerable number of streams, they form in the space of 200 miles between Balls and Mosul but two rivers, leaving thus large tracts to languish for want of the precious fluid. The vicinity of the Arabian and Syrian deserts is likewise felt in these regions, which, left to themselves, tend to acquire the desert character, and have occasionally been regarded as actual parts of Arabia.

The chief natural division of the country is that made by the Tigris, which, having a course nearly from north to south, between Til and Samarah, separates Assyria into a western and an eastern district. Of these two, the eastern or that upon the left bank of the Tigris, although considerably the smaller, has always been the more important region. Comparatively narrow at first, it broadens as

the course of the river is descended, till it attains about the thirty-fifth parallel a width of 130 or 140 miles. It consists chiefly of a series of rich and productive plains, lying along the courses of the various tributaries which flow from Mount Zagros into the Tigris, and often of a semi-alluvial character. These plains are not, however, continuous. Detached ranges of hills, with a general direction parallel to the Zagros chain, intersect the flat rich country, separating the plains from one another, and supplying small streams and brooks in addition to the various rivers, which, rising within or beyond the great mountain barriers, traverse the plains on their way to the Tigris. The hills themselves--known now as the Jebel Maklub, the Ain-es-sufra, the Karachok, etc.--are for the most part bare and sterile. In form they are hogbacked, and viewed from a distance have a smooth and even outline but on a nearer approach they are found to be rocky and rugged. Their limestone sides are furrowed by innumerable ravines, and have a dry and parched appearance, being even in spring generally naked and without vegetation. The sterility is most marked on the western flank, which faces the hot rays of the afternoon sun; the eastern slope is occasionally robed with a scanty covering of dwarf oak or stunted brushwood. In the fat soil of the plains the rivers commonly run deep and concealed from view, unless in the spring and the early summer, when through the rains and the melting of the snows in the mountains they are greatly swollen, and run bank full, or even overflow the level country.

The most important of these rivers are the following:--the Kurnib or Eastern Khabour, which joins the Tigris in lat. 37° 12'; the Greater Zab (Zab Ala), which washes the ruins of Nimrud, and enters the main stream almost exactly in lat. 30°; the Lesser Zab (Zab Asfal), which effects its junction about lat. 35° 15'; the Adhem, which is received a little below Samarah, about lat. 34°; and the Diyaleh, which now joins below Baghdad, but from which branches have sometimes entered the Tigris a very little below the mouth of the Adhem. Of these streams the most northern, the Khabour, runs chiefly in an untraversed country--the district between Julamerik and the Tigris. It rises a little west of Julamerik in one of the highest mountain districts of Kurdistan, and runs with a general south-westerly course to its junction with another large branch, which reaches it from the district immediately west of Amadiyeh; it then flows due west, or a little north of west, to Zakko, and, bending to the north after passing that place, flows once more in a south-westerly direction until it reaches the Tigris. The direct distance from its source to its embouchure is about 80 miles; but that distance is more than doubled by its windings. It is a stream of considerable size, broad and rapid; at many seasons not fordable at all, and always forded with difficulty.

The Greater Zab is the most important of all the tributaries of the Tigris. It rises near Konia, in the district of Karasu, about lat. 32° 20', long. 44° 30', a little west of the watershed which divides the basins of Lakes Van and Urymiyeh. Its general course for the first 150 miles is S.S.W., after which for 25 or 30 miles it runs almost due south through the country of the Tiyari. Near Amadiyeh it makes a sudden turn, and flows S.E. or S.S.E. to its junction with the Rowandiz branch whence, finally, it resumes its old direction, and runs south-west past the Nimrud ruins into the Tigris. Its entire course, exclusive of small windings, is above 350 miles, and of these nearly 100 are across the plain country, which it enters soon after receiving the Rowandiz stream. Like the Khabour, it is fordable at certain places and during the summer season; but even then the water reaches above the bellies of horses. It is 20 yards wide a little above its junction with the main steam. On account of its strength and rapidity the Arabs sometimes call it the "Mad River."

The Lesser Zab has its principal source near Legwin, about twenty miles south of Lake Urumiyeh, in lat. 36° 40', long. 46° 25'. The source is to the east of the great Zagros chain; and it might have been supposed that the waters would necessarily flow northward or eastward, towards Lake Urumiyeh, or towards the Caspian. But the Legwin river, called even at its source the Zei or Zab, flows from the first westward, as if determined to pierce the mountain barrier. Failing, however, to find an opening where it meets the range, the Little Zab turns south and even south-east along its base, till about 25 or 30 miles from its source it suddenly resumes its original direction, enters the mountains in lat. 36° 20', and forces its way through the numerous parallel ranges, flowing generally to the S.S.W., till it debouches upon the plain near Arbela, after which it runs S.W. and S.W. by S. to the Tigris. Its course among the mountains is from 80 to 90 miles, exclusive of small windings; and it runs more than 100 miles through the plain. Its ordinary width, just above its confluence with the Tigris, is 25 feet.

The Diyaleh, which lies mostly within the limits that have been here assigned to Assyria, is formed by the confluence of two principal streams, known respectively as the Holwan, and the Shirwan, river. Of these, the Shirwan seems to be the main branch. This stream rises from the most eastern and highest of the Zagros ranges, in lat. 34° 45', long. 47° 40' nearly. It flows at first west, and then north-west, parallel to the chain, but on entering the plain of Shahrizur, where tributaries join it from the north-east and the north-west, the Shirwan changes its course and begins to run south of west, a direction, which, it pursues till it enters the low country, about lat. 35° 5', near Semiram. Thence to the Tigris it has a course which in direct distance is 150 miles, and 200 if we include only main windings. The whole course cannot be less than 380 miles, which is about the length of the Great Zab river. The width attained before the confluence with the Tigris is 60 yards, or three times the width of the Greater, and seven times that of the Lesser Zab.

On the opposite side of the Tigris, the traveller comes upon a region far less favored by nature than that of which we have been lately speaking. Western Assyria has but a scanty supply of water; and unless the labor of man is skilfully applied to compensate this natural deficiency, the greater part of the region tends to be, for ten months out of the twelve, a desert. The general character of the country is level, but not alluvial. A line of mountains, rocky and precipitous, but of no great elevation, stretches across the northern part of the region, running nearly due east and west, and extending from the Euphrates at Rum-kaleh to Til and Chelek upon the Tigris. Below this, a vast slightly undulating plain extends from the northern mountains to the Babylonian alluvium, only interrupted about midway by a range of low limestone hills called the Sinjar, which leaving the Tigris near Mosul runs nearly from east to west across central Mesopotamia, and strikes the Euphrates half-way between Rakkeh and Kerkesiyeh, nearly in long. 40°.

The northern mountain region, called by Strabo "Mons Masius," and by the Arabs the Karajah Dagh towards the west, and towards the east the Jebel Tur, is on the whole a tolerably fertile country. It contains a good deal of rocky land; but has abundant springs, and in many parts is well wooded. Towards the west it is rather hilly than mountainous; but towards the east it rises considerably, and the cone above Mardin is both lofty and striking. The waters flowing from the range consist, on the north, of a small number of brooks, which after a short course fall into the Tigris; on the south, of more numerous and more copious streams, which gradually unite, and eventually form two rather important rivers. These rivers are the Belik, known anciently as the Bileeha, and the Western Khabour, called Habor in Scripture, and by the classical writers Aborrhas or Chaboras.

The Belik rises among the hills east of Orfa, about long. 39°, lat. 37° 10'. Its course is at first somewhat east of south; but it soon sweeps round, and, passing by the city of Harran--the Haran of Scripture and the classical Carrh--proceeds nearly due south to its junction, a few miles below Rakkah, with the Euphrates. It is a small stream throughout its whole course, which may be reckoned at 100 or 120 miles.

The Khabour is a much more considerable river. It collects the waters which flow southward from at least two-thirds of the Mons Masius, and has, besides, an important source, which the Arabs regard as the true "head of the spring," derived apparently from a spur of the Sinjar range. This stream, which rises about lat. 36° 40', long. 40°, flows a little south of east to its junction near Koukab with the Jerujer or river Nisi-his, which comes down from Mons Masius with a course not much west of south. Both of these branches are formed by the union of a number of streams. Neither of them is fordable for some distance above their junction; and below it, they constitute a river of such magnitude as to be navigable for a considerable distance by steamers. The course of the Khabour below Koukab is tortuous; but its general direction is S.S.W. The entire length of the stream is certainly not less than 200 miles.

The country between the "Mons Masius" and the Sinjar range is an undulating plain, from 60 to 70 miles in width, almost as devoid of geographical features as the alluvium of Babylonia. From a height the whole appears to be a dead level: but the traveller finds, on descending, that the surface, like that of the American prairies and the Roman Campagna, really rises and falls in a manner which offers a decided contrast to the alluvial flats nearer the sea. Great portions of the tract are very deficient in water. Only small streams descend from the Sinjar range, and these are soon absorbed by the thirsty soil; so that except in the immediate vicinity of the hills north and south, and along the courses of the Khabour, the Belik, and their affluents, there is little natural fertility, and cultivation is difficult. The soil too is often gypsiferous, and its salt and nitrous exudations destroy vegetation; while at the same time the streams and springs are from the same cause for the most part brackish and unpalatable. Volcanic action probably did not cease in the region very much, if at all, before the historical period. Fragments of basalt in many places strew the plain; and near the confluence of the two chief branches of the Khabour, not only are old craters of volcanoes distinctly visible, but a cone still rises from the centre of one, precisely like the cones in the craters of Etna and Vesuvius, composed entirely of loose lava, scorim, and ashes, and rising to the height of 300 feet. The name of this remarkable hill, which is Koukab, is even thought to imply that the volcano may have been active within the time to which the traditions of the country extend.

Sheets of water are so rare in this region that the small lake of Khatouniyeh seems to deserve especial description. This lake is situated near the point where the Sinjar changes its character, and from a high rocky range subsides into low broken hills. It is of oblong shape, with its greater axis pointing nearly due east and west, in length about four miles, and in its greatest breadth somewhat less than three. The banks are low and parts marshy, more especially on the side towards the Khabour, which is not more than ten miles distant. In the middle of the lake is a hilly peninsula, joined to the mainland by a narrow causeway, and beyond it a small island covered with trees. The lake abounds with fish and waterfowl; and its water, though brackish, is regarded as remarkably wholesome both for man and beast.

The Sinjar range, which divides Western Assyria into two plains, a northern and a southern, is a solitary limestone ridge, rising up abruptly from the flat country, which it commands to a vast distance on both sides. The limestone of which it is composed is

white, soft, and fossiliferous; it detaches itself in enormous flakes from the mountain-sides, which are sometimes broken into a succession of gigantic steps, while occasionally they present the columnar appearance of basalt. The flanks of the Sinjar are seamed with innumerable ravines, and from these small brooks issue, which are soon dispersed by irrigation, or absorbed in the thirsty plains. The sides of the mountain are capable of being cultivated by means of terraces, and produce fair crops of corn and excellent fruit; the top is often wooded with fruit trees or forest-trees. Geographically, the Sinjar may be regarded as the continuation of that range of hills which shuts in the Tigris on the west, from Tekrit nearly to Mosul, and then leaving the river strikes across the plain in a direction almost from east to west as far as the town of Sinjar. Here the mountains change their course and bend to the south-west, till having passed the little lake described above, they somewhat suddenly subside, sinking from a high ridge into low undulating hills, which pass to the south of the lake, and then disappear in the plain altogether. According to some, the Sinjar here terminates; but perhaps it is best to regard it as rising again in the Abd-el-aziz hills, which, intervening between the Khabour and the Euphrates, run in the same south-west direction from Arban to Zelabi. If this be accepted as the true course of the Sinjar, we must view it as throwing out two important spurs. One of these is near its eastern extremity, and runs to the south-east, dividing the plain of Zerga from the great central level. Like the main chain, it is of limestone; and, though low, has several remarkable peaks which serve as landmarks from a vast distance. The Arabs call it Kebritiyeh, or "the Sulphur range," from a sulphurous spring which rises at its foot. The other spur is thrown out near the western extremity, and runs towards the north-west, parallel to the course of the upper Khabour, which rises from its flank at Ras-el-Ain. The name of Abd-el-aziz is applied to this spur, as well as to the continuation of the Sinjar between Arban and Halebi. It is broken into innumerable valleys and ravines, abounding with wild animals, and is scantily wooded with dwarf oak. Streams of water abound in it.

South of the Sinjar range, the country resumes the same level appearance which characterizes it between the Sinjar and the Mons Masius. A low limestone ridge skirts the Tigris valley from Mosul to Tekrit, and near the Euphrates the country is sometimes slightly hilly; but generally the eye travels over a vast slightly undulating level, unbroken by eminences, and supporting but a scanty vegetation. The description of Xenophon a little exaggerates the flatness, but is otherwise faithful enough:--"In these parts the country was a plain throughout, as smooth as the sea, and full of wormwood; if any other shrub or reed grew there, it had a sweet aromatic smell; but there was not a tree in the whole region." Water is still more scarce than in the plains north of the Sinjar. The brooks descending from that range are so weak that they generally lose themselves in the plain before they have run many miles. In one case only do they seem sufficiently strong to form a river. The Tharthar, which flows by the ruins of El Hadhr, is at that place a considerable stream, not indeed very wide but so deep that horses have to swim across it. Its course above El Hadhr has not been traced; but the most probable conjecture seems to be that it is a continuation of the Sinjar river, which rises about the middle of the range, in long. 41° 50', and flows south-east through the desert. The Tharthar appears at one time to have reached the Tigris near Tekrit, but it now ends in a marsh or lake to the south-west of that city.

The political geography of Assyria need not occupy much of our attention. There is no native evidence that in the time of the great monarchy the country was formally divided into districts, to which any particular names were attached, or which were regarded as

politically separate from one another; nor do such divisions appear in the classical writers until the time of the later geographers, Strabo, Dionysius, and Ptolemy. If it were not that mention is made in the Old Testament of certain districts within the region which has been here termed Assyria, we should have no proof that in the early times any divisions at all had been recognized. The names, however, of Padan-Aram, Aram-Naharaim, Gozan, Halah, and (perhaps) Huzzab, designate in Scripture particular portions of the Assyrian territory; and as these portions appear to correspond in some degree with the divisions of the classical geographers, we are led to suspect that these writers may in many, if not in most cases, have followed ancient and native traditions or authorities. The principal divisions of the classical geographers will therefore be noticed briefly, so far at least as they are intelligible.

According to Strabo, the district within which Nineveh stood was called Aturia, which seems to be the word Assyria slightly corrupted, as we know that it habitually was by the Persians. The neighboring plain country he divides into four regions--Dolomene, Calachene, Chazene, and Adiabene. Of Dolomene, which Strabo mentions but in one place, and which is wholly omitted by other authors, no account can be given. Calachene, which is perhaps the Calacine of Ptolemy, must be the tract about Calah (Nimrud), or the country immediately north of the Upper Zab river. Chazene, like Dolomene, is a term which cannot be explained. Adiabene, on the contrary, is a well-known geographical expression. It is the country of the Zab or Diab rivers, and either includes the whole of Eastern Assyria between the mountains and the Tigris, or more strictly is applied to the region between the Upper and Lower Zab, which consists of two large plains separated from each other by the Karachok hills. In this way Arbelitis, the plain between the Karachok and Zagros, would fall within Adiabene, but it is sometimes made a distinct region, in which case Adiabene must be restricted to the flat between the two Zabs, the Tigris, and the harachok. Chalonitis and Apolloniatis, which Strabo seems to place between these northern plains and Susiana, must be regarded as dividing between them the country south of the Lesser Zab, Apolloniatis (so called from its Greek capital, Apollonia) lying along the Tigris, and Chalonitis along the mountains from the pass of Derbend to Gilan. Chalonitis seems to have taken its name from a capital city called Chala, which lay on the great route connecting Babylon with the southern Ecbatana, and in later times was known as Holwan. Below Apolloniatis, and (like that district) skirting the Tigris, was Sittacene, (so named from its capital, Sittace which is commonly reckoned to Assyria, but seems more properly regarded as Susianian territory.) Such are the chief divisions of Assyria east of the Tigris.

West of the Tigris, the name Mesopotamia is commonly used, like the Aram-Naharaim of the Hebrews, for the whole country between the two great rivers. Here are again several districts, of which little is known, as Acabene, Tigene, and Ancobaritis. Towards the north, along the flanks of Mons Masius from Nisibis to the Euphrates, Strabo seems to place the Mygdonians, and to regard the country as Mygdonia. Below Mygdonia, towards the west, he puts Anthemusia, which he extends as far as the Khabour river. The region south of the Khabour and the Sinjar he seems to regard as inhabited entirely by Arabs. Ptolemy has, in lieu of the Mygdonia of Strabo, a district which he calls Gauzanitis; and this name is on good grounds identified with the Gozan of Scripture, the true original probably of the "Mygdonia" of the Greeks. Gozan appears to represent the whole of the upper country from which the longer affluents of the Khabour spring; while Halah, which is coupled with it in Scripture, and which Ptolemy calls Chalcitis, and makes border on Gauzanitis, may designate the tract upon the main stream, as it comes down from Ras-el-Ain. The region about the upper sources of the Belik has no special

designation in Strabo, but in Scripture it seems to be called Padan-Aram, a name which has been explained as "the flat Syria," or "the country stretching out from the foot of the hills." In the later Roman times it was known as Osrhoene; but this name was scarcely in use before the time of the Antonines.

The true heart of Assyria was the country close along the Tigris, from lat. 35° to 36° 30'. Within these limits were the four great cities, marked by the mounds at Khorsabad, Mosul, Nimrud, and Kileh-Sherghat, besides a multitude of places of inferior consequence. It has been generally supposed that the left bank of the river was more properly Assyria than the right; and the idea is so far correct, as that the left bank was in truth of primary value and importance, whence it naturally happened that three out of the four capitals were built on that side of the stream. Still the very fact that one early capital was on the right bank is enough to show that both shores of the stream were alike occupied by the race from the first; and this conclusion is abundantly confirmed by other indications throughout the region. Assyrian ruins, the remains of considerable towns, strew the whole country between the Tigris and Khabour, both north and south of the Sin jar range. On the banks of the Lower Khabour are the remains of a royal palace, besides many other traces of the tract through which it runs having been permanently occupied by the Assyrian people. Mounds, probably Assyrian, are known to exist along the course of the Khabour's great western affluent; and even near Seruj, in the country between Harlan and the Euphrates some evidence has been found not only of conquest but of occupation. Remains are perhaps more frequent on the opposite side of the Tigris; at any rate they are more striking and more important. Bavian, Khorsabad, Shereef-Khan, Neb-bi-Yunus, Koyunjik, and Nimrud, which have furnished by far the most valuable and interesting of the Assyrian monuments, all lie east of the Tigris; while on the west two places only have yielded relics worthy to be compared with these, Arban and Kileh-Sherghat.

It is curious that in Assyria, as in early Chaldaea, there is a special pre-eminence of four cities. An indication of this might seem to be contained in Genesis, where Asshur is said to have "builded Nineveh," and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen; but on the whole it is more probable that we have here a mistranslation (which is corrected for us in the margin), and that three cities only are ascribed by Moses to the great patriarch. In the flourishing period of the empire, however, we actually find four capitals, of which the native names seem to have been Ninua, Calah, Asshur, and Bit-Sargina, or Dur-Sargina (the city of Sargon)--all places of first-rate consequence. Besides these principal cities, which were the sole seats of government, Assyria contained a vast number of large towns, few of which it is possible to name, but so numerous that they cover the whole face of the country with their ruins. Amomig; them were Tarbisa, Arbil, Arapkha, and Khazeh, in the tract between the Tigris and Mount Zagros; Haran, Tel-Apni, Razappa (Rezeph), and Amida, towards the north-west frontier; Nazibina (Nisibis), on the eastern branch of the Khabour; Sirki (Circesium), at the confluence of the Khabour with the Euphrates; Anat, on the Euphrates, some way below this junction; Tabiti, Magarisi, Sidikan, Katni, Beth-Khalupi,etc., in the district south of the Sinjar, between the lower course of the Khabour and the Tigris. Here, again, as in the case of Chaldaea, it is impossible at present to locate with accuracy all the cities. We must once more confine ourselves to the most important, mind seek to determine, either absolutely or with a certain vagueness, their several positions.

It admits of no reasonable doubt that the ruins opposite Mosul are those of Nineveh. The name of Nineveh is read on the bricks; and a uniform tradition, reaching from the Arab conquest to comparatively recent times, attaches to the mounds themselves the same

title. They are the most extensive ruins in Assyria; and their geographical position suits perfectly all the notices of the geographers and historians with respect to the great Assyrian capital. As a subsequent chapter will be devoted to a description of this famous city, it is enough in this place to observe that it was situated on the left or east bank of the Tigris, in lat. 36° 21', at the point where a considerable brook, the Khosr-su, falls into the main stream. On its west flank flowed the broad and rapid Tigris, the "arrow-stream," as we may translate the word; while north, east, and south, expanded the vast undulating plain which intervenes between the river and the Zagros mountain-range. Mid-way in this plain, at the distance of from 15 to 18 miles from the city, stood boldly up the Jabel Maklub and Ain Sufra hills, calcareous ridges rising nearly 2000 feet above the level of the Tigris, and forming by far the most prominent objects in the natural landscape. Inside the Ain Sufra, and parallel to it, ran the small stream of the Gomel, or Ghazir, like a ditch skirting a wall, an additional defence in that quarter. On the south-east and south, distant about fifteen miles, was the strong and impetuous current of the Upper Zab, completing the natural defences of the position which was excellently chosen to be the site of a great capital.

South of Nineveh, at the distance of about twenty miles by the direct route and thirty by the course of the Tigris, stood the second city of the empire, Calah, the site of which is marked by the extensive ruins at Nimrud. Broadly, this place may be said to have been built at the confluence of the Tigris with the Upper Zab; but in strictness it was on the Tigris only, the Zab flowing five or six miles further to the south, and entering the Tigris at least nine miles below the Nimrud ruins. These ruins at present occupy an area somewhat short of a thousand English acres, which is little more than one-half of the area of the ruins of Nineveh; but it is thought that the place was in ancient times considerably larger, and that the united action of the Tigris and some winter streams has swept away no small portion of the ruins. They form at present an irregular quadrangle, the sides of which face the four cardinal points. On the north and east the rampart may still be distinctly traced. It was flanked with towers along its whole course, and pierced at uncertain intervals by gates, but was nowhere of very great strength or dimensions. On the south side it must have been especially weak, for there it has disappeared altogether. Here, however, it seems probable that the Tigris and the Shor Derreh stream, to which the present obliteration of the wall may be ascribed, formed in ancient times a sufficient protection. Towards the west, it seems to be certain that the Tigris (which is now a mile off) anciently flowed close to the city. On this side, directly facing the river, and extending along it a distance of 600 yards, or more than a third of a mile, was the royal quarter, or portion of the city occupied by the palaces of the kings. It consisted of a raised platform, forty feet above the level of the plain, composed in some parts of rubbish, in others of regular layers of sun-dried bricks, and cased on every side with solid stone masonry, containing an area of sixty English acres, and in shape almost a regular rectangle, 560 yards long, and from 350 to 450 broad. The platform was protected at its edges by a parapet, and is thought to have been ascended in various places by wide staircases, or inclined ways, leading up from the plain. The greater part of its area is occupied by the remains of palaces constructed by various native kings, of which a more particular account will be given in the chapter on the architecture and other arts of the Assyrians. It contains also the ruins of two small temples, and abuts at its north-western angle on the most singular structure which has as yet been discovered among the remains of the Assyrian cities. This is the famous tower or pyramid which looms so conspicuously over the Assyrian plams, and which has always attracted the special notice of the traveller. [

An exact description of this remarkable edifice will be given hereafter.

It appears from the inscriptions on its bricks to have been commenced by one of the early kings, and completed by another. Its internal structure has led to the supposition that it was designed to be a place of burial for one or other of these monarchs. Another conjecture is, that it was a watch-tower; but this seems very unlikely, since no trace of any mode by which it could be ascended has been discovered.

Forty miles below Calah, on the opposite bank of the Tigris, was a third great city, the native name of which appears to have been Asshur. This place is represented by the ruins at Kileh-Sherghat, which are scarcely inferior in extent to those at Nimrud or Calah. It will not be necessary to describe minutely this site, as in general character it closely resembles the other ruins of Assyria. Long lines of low mounds mark the position of the old walls, and show that the shape of the city was quadrangular. The chief object is a large square mound or platform, two miles and a half in circumference, and in places a hundred feet above the level of the plain, composed in part of sun-dried bricks, in part of natural eminences, and exhibiting occasionally remains of a casing of hewn stone, which may once have encircled the whole structure. About midway on the north side of the platform, and close upon its edge, is a high cone or pyramid. The rest of the platform is covered with the remains of walls and with heaps of rubbish, but does not show much trace of important buildings. This city has been supposed to represent the Biblical Resen; but the description of that place as lying "_between_ Nineveh and Calah" seems to render the identification worse than uncertain.

The ruins at Kileh-Sherghat are the last of any extent towards the south, possessing a decidedly Assyrian character. To complete our survey, therefore of the chief Assyrian towns, we must return northwards, and, passing Nineveh, direct our attention to the magnificent ruins on the small stream of the Khosrsu, which have made the Arab village of Khorsabad one of the best known names in Oriental topography. About nine miles from the north-east angle of the wall of Nineveh, in a direction a very little east of north, stands the ruin known as Khorsabad, from a small village which formerly occupied its summit--the scene of the labors of M. Botta, who was the first to disentomb from among the mounds of Mesopotamia the relics of an Assyrian palace. The enclosure at Khorsabad is nearly square in shape, each side being about 2000 yards long. No part of it is very lofty, but the walls are on every side well marked. Their angles point towards the cardinal points, or nearly so; and the walls themselves consequently face the north-east, the north-west, the south-west, and the south-east. Towards the middle of the north-west wall, and projecting considerably beyond it, was a raised platform of the usual character; and here stood the great palace, which is thought to have been open to the plain, and on that side quite undefended.

Four miles only from Khorsabad, in a direction a little west of north, are the ruins of a smaller Assyrian city, whose native name appears to have been Tarbisa, situated not far from the modern village of Sherif-khan. Here was a palace, built by Esarhaddon for one of his sons, as well as several temples and other edifices. In the opposite direction at the distance of about twenty miles, is Keremles, an Assyrian ruin, whose name cannot yet be rendered phonetically. West of this site, and about half-way between the ruins of Nineveh and Nimrud or Calah, is Selamiyah, a village of some size, the walls of which are thought to be of Assyrian construction. We may conjecture that this place was the Resen, or Dase, of Holy Scripture, which is said to have been a large city, interposed between Nineveh and Calah. In the same latitude, but considerably further to the east, was the famous city of Arabil or Arbil, known to the Greeks as Arbela, and to this day retaining its

ancient appellation. These were the principal towns, whose positions can be fixed, belonging to Assyria Proper, or the tract in the immediate vicinity of Nineveh.

Besides these places, the inscriptions mention a large number of cities which we cannot definitely connect with any particular site. Such are Zaban and Zadu, beyond the Lower Zab, probably somewhere in the vicinity of Kerkuk; Kurban, Tidu (?), Napulu, Kapa, in Adiabene; Arapkha and Khaparkhu, the former of which names recalls the Arrapachitis of Ptolemy, in the district about Arbela; Hurakha, Sallat (?), Dur-Tila, Dariga, Lupdu, and many others, concerning whose situations it is not even possible to make any reasonable conjecture. The whole country between the Tigris and the mountains was evidently studded thickly with towns, as it is at the present day with ruins; but until a minute and searching examination of the entire region has taken place, it is idle to attempt an assignment to particular localities of these comparatively obscure names.

In Western Assyria, or the tract on the right bank of the Tigris, while there is reason to believe that population was as dense, and that cities were as numerous, as on the opposite side of the river, even fewer sites can be determinately fixed, owing to the early decay of population in those parts, which seem to have fallen into their present desert condition shortly after the destruction of the Assyrian empire by the conquering Medes. Besides Asshur, which is fixed to the ruins at Kileh-Sherghat, we can only locate with certainty some half-dozen places. These are Nazibina, which is the modern Nisibin, the Nisibis of the Greeks; Amidi, which is Amida or Diarbekr; Haran, which retains its name unchanged; Sirki, which is the Greek Circesium, now Kerkesiyeh; Anat, now Anah, on an island in the Euphrates; and Sidikan, now Arban, on the Lower Khabour. The other known towns of this region, whose exact position is more or less uncertain, are the following:--Tavnusir, which is perhaps Dunisir, near Mardin; Guzana, or Gozan, in the vicinity of Nisibin; Razappa, or Rezeph, probably not far from Harran; Tel Apni, about Orfah or Ras-el-Ain; Tabiti and Magarisi, on the Jerujer, or river of Nisibin; Katni and Beth-Khalupi, on the Lower Khabour; Tsupri and Nakarabani, on the Euphrates, between its junction with the Khabour and Allah; and Khuzirina, in the mountains near the source of the Tigris. Besides these, the inscriptions contain a mention of some scores of towns wholly obscure, concerning which we cannot even determine whether they lay west or east of the Tigris.

Such are the chief geographical features of Assyria. It remains to notice briefly the countries by which it was bordered. To the east lay the mountain region of Zagros, inhabited principally, during the earlier times of the Empire, by the Zimri, and afterwards occupied by the Medes, and known as a portion of Media. This region is one of great strength, and at the same time of much productiveness and fertility. Composed of a large number of parallel ridges. Zagros contains, besides rocky and snow-clad summits, a multitude of fertile valleys, watered by the great affluents of the Tigris or their tributaries, and capable of producing rich crops with very little cultivation. The sides of the hills are in most parts clothed with forests of walnut, oak, ash, plane, and sycamore, while mulberries, olives, and other fruit-trees abound; in many places the pasturage is excellent; and thus, notwithstanding its mountainous character, the tract will bear a large population. Its defensive strength is immense, equalling that of Switzerland before military roads were constructed across the High Alps. The few passes by which it can be traversed seem, according to the graphic phraseology of the ancients, to be carried up ladders; they surmount six or seven successive ridges, often reaching the elevation of 10,000 feet, and are only open during seven months of the year. Nature appears to have intended Zagros as a seven fold wall for the protection of the

fertile Mesopotamian lowland from the marauding tribes inhabiting the bare plateau of Iran.

North of Assyria lays a country very similar to the Zagros region. Armenia, like Kurdistan, consists, for the most part of a number of parallel mountain ranges, with deep valleys between them, watered by great rivers or their affluents. Its highest peaks, like those of Zagros, ascend considerably above the snow-line. It has the same abundance of wood, especially in the more northern parts; and though its valleys are scarcely so fertile, or its products so abundant and varied, it is still a country where a numerous population may find subsistence. The most striking contrast which it offers to the Zagros region is in the direction of its mountain ranges. The Zagros ridges run from north-west to south-east, like the principal mountains of Italy, Greece, Arabia, Hindustan, and Cochin China; those of Armenia have a course from a little north of east to a little south of west, like the Spanish Sierras, the Swiss and Tyrolese Alps, the Southern Carpathians, the Greater Balkan, the Cilician Taurus, the Cyprian Olympus, and the Thian Chan. Thus the axes of the two chains are nearly at right angles to one another, the triangular basin of Van occurring at the point of contact, and softening the abruptness of the transition. Again, whereas the Zagros mountains present their gradual slope to the Mesopotamian lowland, and rise in higher and higher ridges as they recede from the mountains of Armenia ascend at once to their full heignt from the level of the Tigris, and the ridges then gradually decline towards the Euxine. It follows from this last contrast, that, while Zagros invites the inhabitants of the Mesopotamian plain to penetrate its recesses, which are at first readily accessible, and only grow wild and savage towards the interior, the Armenian mountains repel by presenting their greatest difficulties and most barren aspect at once, seeming, with their rocky sides and snow-clad summits, to form an almost insurmountable obstacle to an invading host. Assyrian history bears traces of this difference; for while the mountain region to the east is gradually subdued and occupied by the people of the plain, that on the north continues to the last in a state of hostility and semi-independence.

West of Assyria (according to the extent which has here been given to it), the border countries were, towards the south, Arabia, and towards the north, Syria. A desert region, similar to that which bounds Chaldaea in this direction, extends along the Euphrates as far north as the 36th parallel, approaching commonly within a very short distance of the river. This has been at all times the country of the wandering Arabs. It is traversed in places by rocky ridges of a low elevation, and intercepted by occasional _wadys_, but otherwise it is a continuous gravelly or sandy plain, incapable of sustaining a settled population. Between the desert and the river intervenes commonly a narrow strip of fertile territory, which in Assyrian times was held by the Tsukhi or Shuhites, and the Aramaeans or Syrians. North of the 36th parallel, the general elevation of the country west of the Euphrates rises. There is an alternation of bare undulating hills and dry plains, producing wormwood and other aromatic plants. Permanent rivers are found, which either terminate in salt lakes or run into the Euphrates. In places the land is tolerably fertile, and produces good crops of grain, besides mulberries, pears, figs, pomegranates, olives, vines, and pistachio-nuts. Here dwelt, in the time of the Assyrian Empire, the Khatti, or Hittites, whose chief city, Carchemish, appears to have occupied the site of Hierapolis, now Bambuk. In a military point of view, the tract is very much less strong than either Armenia or Kurdistan, and presents but slight difficulties to invading armies.

The tract south of Assyria was Chaldaea, of which a description has been given in an earlier portion of this volume. Naturally it was at once the weakest of the border countries, and the one possessing the greatest

attractions to a conqueror. Nature had indeed left it wholly without defence; and though art was probably soon called in to remedy this defect, yet it could not but continue the most open to attack of the various regions by which Assyria was surrounded. Syria was defended by the Euphrates--at all times a strong barrier; Arabia, not only by this great stream, but by her arid sands and burning climate; Armenia and Kurdistan had the protection of their lofty mountain ranges. Chaldaea was naturally without either land or water barrier; and the mounds and dykes whereby she strove to supply her wants were at the best poor substitutes for Nature's bulwarks. Here again geographical features will be found to have had an important bearing on the course of history, the close connection of the two countries, in almost every age, resulting from their physical conformation.

CHAPTER II. Climate and Productions

"Assyria, celebritate et magnitudine, et multiformi feracitate ditissima."--AMM. MARC. xxiii

In describing the climate and productions of Assyria, it will be necessary to divide it into regions, since the country is so large, and the physical geography so varied, that a single description would necessarily be both incomplete and untrue. Eastern Assyria has a climate of its own, the result of its position at the foot of Zagros. In Western Assyria we may distinguish three climates, that of the upper or mountainous country extending from Bir to Til and Jezireh, that of the middle region on either side of the Sinjar range, and that of the lower region immediately bordering on Babylonia. The climatic differences depend in part on latitude; but probably in a greater degree on differences of elevation, distance or vicinity of mountains, and the like.

Eastern Assyria, from its vicinity to the high and snow-clad range of Zagros, has a climate at once cooler and moister than Assyria west of the Tigris. The summer heats are tempered by breezes from the adjacent mountains, and, though trying to the constitution of an European, are far less oppressive than the torrid blasts which prevail on the other side of the river. A good deal of rain falls in the winter, and even in the spring; while, after the rains are past, there is frequently an abundant dew, which supports vegetation and helps to give coolness to the air. The winters are moderately severe.

In the most southern part of Assyria, from lat. 34° to 35° 30', the climate scarcely differs from that of Babylonia, which has been already described. The same burning summers, and the same chilly but not really cold winters, prevail in both districts; and the time and character of the rainy season is alike in each. The summers are perhaps a little less hot, and the winters a little colder than in the more southern and alluvial region; but the difference is inconsiderable, and has never been accurately measured.

In the central part of Western Assyria, on either side of the Sinjar range, the climate is decidedly cooler than in the region adjoining Babylonia. In summer, though the heat is great, especially from noon to sunset, yet the nights are rarely oppressive, and the mornings enjoyable. The spring-time in this region is absolutely delicious; the autumn is pleasant; and the winter, though cold and accompanied by a good deal of rain and snow, is rarely prolonged and never intensely rigorous. Storms of thunder and lightning are frequent, especially in spring, and they are often of extraordinary violence: hail-stones fall of the size of pigeon's eggs; the lightning is incessant; and the wind rages with fury. The force of the tempest is, however, soon exhausted; in a few hours' time it has passed away, and the sky is once more cloudless: a delightful calm and freshness pervade the air, producing mingled sensations of pleasure and repose.

The mountain tract, which terminates Western Assyria to the north, has a climate very much more rigorous than the central region. The elevation of this district is considerable, and the near vicinity of the

great mountain country of Armenia, with its eternal snows and winters during half the year, tends greatly to lower the temperature, which in the winter descends to eight or ten degrees below zero. Much snow then falls, which usually lies for some weeks; the spring is wet and stormy, but the summer and the autumn are fine; and in the western portion of the region about Harran and Orfah, the summer heat is great. The climate is here an "extreme" one, to use on expression of Humboldt's--the range of the thermometer being even greater than it is in Chaldaea, reaching nearly (or perhaps occasionally exceeding) 120 degrees.

Such is the present climate of Assyria, west and east of the Tigris. There is no reason to believe that it was very different in ancient times. If irrigation was then more common and cultivation more widely extended, the temperature would no doubt have been somewhat lower and the air more moist. But neither on physical nor on historical grounds Can it be argued that the difference thus produced was; more than slight. The chief causes of the remarkable heat of Mesopotamnia--so much exceeding that of many countries under the same parallels of latitude--are its near vicinity to the Arabian and Syrian deserts, and its want of trees, those great refrigerators. While the first of these causes would be wholly untouched by cultivation, the second would be affected in but a small degree. The only tree which is known to have been anciently cultivated in Mesopotamia is the date-palm; and as this ceases to bear fruit about lat. 35°, its greater cultivation could have prevailed only in a very small portion of the country, and so would have affected the general climate but little. Historically, too, we find, among the earliest notices which have any climatic bearing, indications that the temperature and the consequent condition of the country were anciently very nearly what they now are. Xenophon speaks of the barrenness of the tract between the Khabour and Babylonia, and the entire absence of forage, in as strong terms as could be used at the present day. Arrian, following his excellent authorities, notes that Alexander, after crossing the Euphrates, kept close to the hills, "because the heat there was not so scorching as it was lower down," and because he could then procure green food for his horses. The animals too which Xenophon found in the country are either such as now inhabit it, or where not such, they are the denizens of hotter rather than colder climates and countries.

The fertility of Assyria is a favorite theme with the ancient writers. Owing to the indefiniteness of their geographical terminology, it is however uncertain, in many cases, whether the praise which they bestow upon Assyria is really intended for the country here called by that name, or whether it does not rather apply to the alluvial tract, already described, which is more properly termed Chaldaea or Babylonia. Naturally Babylonia is very much more fertile than the greater part of Assyria, which being elevated above the courses of the rivers, and possessing a saline and gypsiferous soil, tends, in the absence of a sufficient water supply, to become a bare and arid desert. Trees are scanty in both regions except along the river courses; but in Assyria, even grass fails after the first burst of spring; and the plains, which for a few weeks have been carpeted with the tenderest verdure and thickly strewn with the brightest and loveliest flowers, become, as the summer advances, yellow, parched, and almost herbless. Few things are more remarkable than the striking difference between the appearance of the same tract in Assyria at different seasons of the year. What at one time is a garden, glowing with brilliant hues and heavy with luxuriant pasture, on which the most numerous flocks can scarcely make any sensible impression, at another is an absolute waste, frightful and oppressive from its sterilityr.

If we seek the cause of this curious contrast, we shall find it in the productive qualities of the soil, wherever there is sufficient moisture to allow of their displaying themselves, combined with the fact, already noticed, that the actual supply of water is deficient. Speaking generally, we may say with truth, as was said by Herodotus more than two thousand years ago--that "but little rain falls in Assyria," and, if water is to be supplied in adequate quantity to the thirsty soil, it must be derived from the rivers. In most parts of Assyria there are occasional rains during the winter, and, in ordinary years, frequent showers in early spring. The dependence of the present inhabitants both for pasture and for grain is on these. There is scarcely any irrigation; and though the soil is so productive that wherever the land is cultivated, good crops are commonly obtained by means of the spring rains, while elsewhere nature at once spontaneously robes herself in verdure of the richest kind, yet no sooner does summer arrive than barrenness is spread over the scene; the crops ripen and are gathered in; "the grass withereth, the flower fadeth;" the delicate herbage of the plains shrinks back and disappears; all around turns to a uniform dull straw-color; nothing continues to live but what is coarse, dry, and sapless; and so the land, which was lately an Eden, becomes a desert.

Far different would be the aspect of the region were a due use made of that abundant water supply--actually most lavish in the summer time, owing to the melting of the snows which nature has provided in the two great Mesopotamian rivers and their tributaries. So rapid is the fall of the two main streams in their upper course, that by channels derived from them, with the help perhaps of dams thrown across them at certain intervals, the water might be led to almost any part of the intervening country, and a supply kept up during the whole year. Or, even without works of this magnitude, by hydraulic machines of a very simple construction, the life-giving fluid might be raised from the great streams and their affluents in sufficient quantity to maintain a broad belt on either side of the river-courses in perpetual verdure. Anciently, we know that recourse was had to both of these systems. In the tract between the Tigris and the Upper Zab, which is the only part of Assyria that has been minutely examined, are distinct remains of at least one Assyrian canal, wherein much ingenuity and hydraulic skill is exhibited, the work being carried through the more elevated ground by tunnelling, and the canal led for eight miles contrary to the natural course of every stream in the district. Sluices and dams, cut sometimes in the solid rock, regulated the supply of the fluid at different seasons, and enabled the natives to make the most economical application of the great fertilizer. The use of the hand-swipe was also certainly known, since it is mentioned by Herodotus, and even represented upon the sculptures. Very probably other more elaborate machines were likewise employed, unless the general prevalency of canals superseded their necessity. It is certain that over wide districts, now dependent for productive power wholly on the spring rains, and consequently quite incapable of sustaining a settled population, there must have been maintained in Assyrian times some effective water-system, whereby regions that at present with difficulty furnish a few months' subsistence to the wandering Arab tribes, were enabled to supply to scores of populous cities sufficient food for their consumption.

We have not much account of the products of Assyria Proper in early times. Its dates were of small repute, being greatly inferior to those of Babylon. It grew a few olives in places, and some spicy shrubs, which cannot be identified with any certainty. Its cereal crops were good, and may perhaps be regarded as included in the commendations bestowed by Herodotus and Strabo on the grain of the Mesopotamian region. The country was particularly deficient in trees, large tracts growing nothing but

wormwood and similar low shrubs, while others were absolutely without either tree or bush. The only products of Assyria which acquired such note as to be called by its name were its silk and its citron trees. The silk, according to Pliny, was the produce of a large kind of silkworm not found elsewhere. The citron trees obtained a very great celebrity. Not only were they admired for their perpetual fruitage, and their delicious odor; but it was believed that the fruit which they bore was an unfailing remedy against poisons. Numerous attempts were made to naturalize the tree in other countries; but up to the time when Pliny wrote, every such attempt had failed, and the citron was still confined to Assyria, Persia and Media.

It is not to be imagined that the vegetable products of Assyria were confined within the narrow compass which the ancient notices might seem to indicate. Those notices are casual, and it is evident that they are incomplete: nor will a just notion be obtained of the real character of the region, unless we take into account such of the present products as may be reasonably supposed to be indigenous. Now setting aside a few plants of special importance to man, the cultivation of which may have been introduced, such as tobacco, rice, Indian corn, and cotton, we may fairly say that Assyria has no exotics, and that the trees, shrubs, and vegetables now found within her limits are the same in all probability as grew there anciently. In order to complete our survey, we may therefore proceed to inquire what are the chief vegetable products of the region at the present time.

In the south the date-palm grows well as far as Anah on the Euphrates and Tekrit on the Tigris. Above that latitude it languishes, and ceases to give fruit altogether about the junction of the Khabour with the one stream and the Lesser Zab with the other. The unproductive tree, however, which the Assyrians used for building purposes, will grow and attain a considerable size to the very edge of the mountains. Of other timber trees the principal are the sycamore and the Oriental plane, which are common in the north the oak, which abounds about Mardin (where it yields gall-nuts and the rare product manna), and which is also found in the Sinjar and Abd-el-Aziz ranges; the silver poplar, which often fringes the banks of the streams; the sumac, which is found on the Upper Euphrates; and the walnut, which grows in the Jebel Tur, and is not uncommon between the foot of Zagros and the outlying ranges of hills. Of fruit-trees the most important are the orange, lemon, pomegranate, apricot, olive, vine, fig, mulberry, and pistachio-nut. The pistachio-nut grows wild in the northern mountains, especially between Orfah and Diarbekr. The fig is cultivated with much care in the Sinjar. The vine is also grown in that region, but bears better on the skirts of the hills above Orfah and Mardin. Pomegranates flourish in various parts of the country. Oranges and lemons belong to its more southern parts, where it verges on Babylonia. The olive clothes the flanks of Zagros in places. Besides these rarer fruits, Assyria has chestnuts, pears, apples, plums, cherries, wild and cultivated, qinces, apricots, melons and filberts.

The commonest shrubs are a kind of wormwood--the _apsinthium_ of Xenophon--which grows over much of the plain extending south of the Khabour--and the tamarisk. Green myrtles, and oleanders with their rosy blossoms, clothe the banks of some of the smaller streams between the Tigris and Mount Zagros; and a shrub of frequent occurrence is the liquorice plant. Of edible vegetables there is great abundance. Truffles and capers grow wild; while peas, beans, onions, spinach, cucumbers, and lentils are cultivated successfully. The carob (_Ceratonia Siliqua_) must also be mentioned as among the rarer products of this region.

It was noticed above that manna is gathered in Assyria from the dwarf oak. It is abundant

in Zagros, and is found also in the woods about Mardin, and again between Orfah and Diarbekr. According to Mr. Rich, it is not confined to the dwarf oak, or even to trees and shrubs, but is deposited also on sand, rocks, and stone. It is most plentiful in wet seasons, and especially after fogs; in dry seasons it fails almost totally. The natives collect it in spring and autumn. The best and purest is that taken from the ground; but by far the greater quantity is obtained from the trees, by placing cloths under them and shaking the branches. The natives use it as food both in its natural state and manufactured into a kind of paste. It soon corrupts; and in order to fit it for exportation, or even for the storeroom of the native housewife, it has to undergo the process of boiling. When thus prepared, it is a gentle purgative; but, in its natural state and when fresh, it may be eaten in large quantities without any unpleasant consequences.

Assyria is far better supplied with minerals than Babylonia. Stone of a good quality, either limestone, sandstone, or conglomerate, is always at hand; while a tolerable clay is also to be found in most plices. If a more durable material is required, basaltic rock may be obtained from the Mons Masius--a substance almost as hard as granite. On the left bank of the Tigris a soft gray alabaster abounds which is easily cut into slabs, and forms an excellent material for the sculptor. The neighboring mountains of Kurdistan contain marbles of many different qualities; and these could be procured without much difficulty by means of the rivers. From the same quarter it was easy to obtain the most useful metals. Iron, copper, and lead are found in great abundance in the Tiyari Mountains within a short distance of Nineveh, where they crop out upon the surface, so that they cannot fail to be noticed. Lead and copper are also obtainable from the neighborhood of Diarbekr. The Kurdish Mountains may have supplied other metals. They still produce silver and antimony; and it is possible that they may anciently have furnished gold and tin. As their mineral riches have never been explored by scientific persons, it is very probable that they may contain many other metals besides those which they are at present known to yield.

Among the mineral products of Assyria, bitumen, naphtha, petroleum, sulphur, alum, and salt have also to be reckoned. The bitumen pits of Kerkuk, in the country between the Lesser Zab and the Adhem, are scarcely less celebrated than those of Hit; and there are some abundant springs of the same character close to Nimrud, in the bed of the Shor Derrell torrent. The Assyrian palaces furnish sufficient evidence that the springs were productive in old times; for the employment of bitumen as a cement, though not so frequent as in Babylonia, is yet occasionally found in them. With the bitumen are always procured both naphtha and petroleum; while at Kerkuk there is an abundance of sulphur also. Salt is obtained from springs in the Kerkuk country; and is also formed in certain small lakes lying between the Sinjar and Babylonia. Alum is plentiful in the hills about Kifri.

The most remarkable wild animals of Assyria are the following: the lion, the leopard, the lynx, the wild-cat, the hyaena, the wild ass, the bear, the deer, the gazelle, the ibex, the wild sheep, the wild boar, the jackal, the wolf, the fox, the beaver, the jerboa, the porcupine, the badger, and the hare. The Assyrian lion is of the maneless kind, and in general habits resembles the lion of Babylonia. The animal is comparatively rare in the eastern districts, being seldom found on the banks of the Tigris above Baghdad, and never above Kileh-Sherghat. On the Euphrates it has been seen as high as Bir; and it is frequent on the banks of the Khabour, and in the Sinjar. It has occasionally that remarkable peculiarity--so commonly represented on the sculptures--a short horny claw at the extremity of the tail in the middle of the ordinary tuft of hair. The ibex or wild goat--also a favorite subject with the Assyrian sculptors--is frequent in Kurdistan, and moreover abounds on the

highest ridges of the Abd-el-Aziz and the Sinjar, where it is approached with difficulty by the hunter. The gazelle, wild boar, wolf, jackal, fox, badger, porcupine, and hare are common in the plains, and confined to no particular locality. The jerboa is abundant near the Khabour. Beau's and deer are found on the skirts of the Kurdish hills. The leopard, hyaena, lynx, and beaver are comparatively rare. The last named animal, very uncommon in Southern Asia, was at one time found in large numbers on the Khabour; but in consequence of the value set upon its musk bag, it has been hunted almost to extermination, and is now very seldom seen. The Khabour beavers are said to be a different species from the American. Their tail is not large and broad, but sharp and pointed; nor do they build houses, or construct dams across the stream, but live in the banks, making themselves large chambers above the ordinary level of the floods, which are entered by holes beneath the water-line.

The rarest of all the animals which are still found in Assyria is the wild ass (_Equus hemionous_). Till the present generation of travellers, it was believed to have disappeared altogether from the region, and to have "retired into the steppes of Mongolia and the deserts of Persia. But a better acquaintance with the country between the rivers has shown that wild asses, though uncommon, still inhabit the tract where, they were seen by Xenophon." They are delicately made, in color varying from a grayish-white in winter to a bright bay, approaching to pink, in the summer-time; they are said to be remarkably swift. It is impossible to take them when full grown; but the Arabs often capture the foals, and bring them up with milk in their tents. They then become very playful and docile; but it is found difficult to keep them alive; and they have never, apparently, been domesticated. The Arabs usually kill them and eat their flesh.

It is probable that all these animals, and some others, inhabited Assyria during the time of the Empire. Lions of two kinds, with and without manes, abound in the sculptures, the former, which do not now exist in Assyria, being the more common. They are represented with a skill and a truth which shows the Assyrian sculptor to have been familiar not only with their forms and proportions, but with their natural mode of life, their haunts, and habits. The leopard is far less often depicted, but appears sometimes in the ornamentation of utensils, and is frequently mentioned in the inscriptions. The wild ass is a favorite subject with the sculptors of the late Empire, and is represented with great spirit, though not with complete accuracy. The ears are too short, the head is too fine, the legs are not fine enough, and the form altogether approaches too nearly to the type of the horse. The deer, the gazelle, and the ibex all occur frequently; and though the forms are to some extent conventional, they are not wanting in spirit. Deer are apparently of two kinds. That which is most commonly found appears to represent the gray deer, which is the only species existing at present within the confines of Assyria. The other sort is more delicate in shape, and spotted, seeming to represent the fallow deer, which is not now known in Syria or the adjacent countries. It sometimes appears wild, lying among the reeds; sometimes tame, in the arms of a priest or of a winged figure. There is no representation in the sculptures of the wild boar; but a wild sow and pigs are given in one bas-relief, sufficiently indicating the Assyrian acquaintance with this animal. Hares are often depicted, and with much truth; generally they are carried in the hands of men, but sometimes they are being devoured by vultures or eagles. No representations have been found of bears, wild cats, hyaenas, wolves, jackals, wild sheep, foxes, beavers, jerbdas, porcupines, or badgers.

There is reason to believe that two other animals, which have now altogether disappeared from the country, inhabited at least some parts of Assyria during its

flourishing period. One of these is the wild bull-often represented on the bas-reliefs as a beast of chase, and perhaps mentioned as such in the inscriptions. This animal, which is sometimes depicted as en-gaged in a contest with the lion, must have been of vast strength and boldness. It is often hunted by the king, and appears to have been considered nearly as noble an object of pursuit as the lion. We may presume, from the practice in the adjoining country, Palestine, 96 that the flesh was eaten as food.

The other animal, once indigenous, but which has now disappeared, was called by the Assyrians the _mithin,_ and is thought to have been the tiger. Tigers are not now found nearer to Assyria than the country south of the Caspian, Ghilan, and Mazanderan; but as there is no conceivable reason why they should not inhabit Mesopotamia, and as the _mithin_ is constantly joined with the lion, as if it were a beast of the same kind, and of nearly equal strength and courage, we may fairly conjecture that the tiger is the animal intended. If this seem too bold a theory, we must regard the _mithin_ as the larger leopard, an animal of considerable strength and ferocity, which, as well as the hunting leopard, is still found in the country.

The birds at present frequenting Assyria are chiefly the following: the bustard (which is of two kinds--the great and the middle-sized), the egret, the crane, the stork, the pelican, the flamingo, the red partridge, the black partridge or francolin, the parrot, the Seleucian thrush (_Turdus Seleucus_), the vulture, the falcon or hunting hawk, the owl, the wild swan, the bramin goose, the ordinary wild goose, the wild duck, the teal, the tern, the sand-grouse, the turtle dove, the nightingale, the jay, the plover, and the snipe. There is also a large kite or eagle, called "agab," or "the butcher," by the Arabs, which is greatly dreaded by fowlers, as it will attack and kill the falcon no less than other birds.

We have little information as to which of these birds frequented the country in ancient times. The Assyrian artists are not happy in their delineation of the feathered tribe; and though several forms of birds are represented upon the sculptures of Sargon and elsewhere, there are but three which any writer has ventured to identify--the vulture, the ostrich, and the partridge. The vulture is commonly represented flying in the air, in attendance upon the march and the battle--sometimes devouring, as he flies, the entrails of one of Assyria's enemies. Occasionally he appears upon the battle-field, perched upon the bodies of the slain, and pecking at their eyes or their vitals. The ostrich, which we know from Xenophon to have been a former inhabitant of the country on the left bank of the Euphrates, but which has now retreated into the wilds of Arabia, occurs frequently upon cylinders, dresses, and utensils; sometimes stalking along apparently unconcerned; sometimes hastening at full speed, as if pursued by the hunter, and, agreeably to the description of Xenophon, using its wing for a sail. The partridge is still more common than either of these. He is evidently sought as food. We find him carried in the hand of sportsmen returning from the chase, or see him flying above their heads as they beat the coverts, or finally observe him pierced by a successful shot, and in the act of falling a prey to his pursuers.

The other birds represented upon the sculptures, though occasionally possessing some marked peculiarities of form or habit, have not yet been identified with any known species. They are commonly represented as haunting the fir-woods, and often as perched upon the trees. One appears, in a sculpture of Sargon's. in the act of climbing the stein of a tree, like the nut-hatch or the woodpecker. Another has a tail like a pheasant, but in other respects cannot be said to resemble that bird. The artist does not appear to aim at truth in these delineations, and it probably would be a waste of ingenuity to conjecture which species of bird he intended.

We have no direct evidence that bustards inhabited Mesopotamia in Assyrian times; but as they have certainly been abundant in that region front the time of Xenophon to our own, there can be little doubt that they existed in some parts of Assyria during the Empire. Considering their size, their peculiar appearance, and the delicacy of their flesh, it is remarkable that the Assyrian remains furnish no trace of them. Perhaps, as they are extremely shy, they may have been comparatively rare in the country when the population was numerous, and when the greater portion of the tract between the rivers was brought under cultivation.

The fish most plentiful in Assyria are the same as in Babylonia, namely, barbel and carp. They abound not only in the Tigris and Euphrates, but also in the lake of Khutaniyeh, and often grow to a great size. Trout are found in the streams which run down from Zagros; and there may be many other sorts which have not yet been observed. The sculptures represent all the waters, whether river, pond, or marsh, as full of fish; but the forms are for the most part too conventional to admit of identification.

The domestic animals now found in Assyria are camels, horses, asses, mules, sheep, goats, oxen, cows, and dogs. The camels are of three colors--white, yellow, and dark brown or black. They are probably all of the same species, though commonly distinguished into camels proper, and _delouls_ or dromedaries, the latter differing from the others as the English race-horse from the cart-horse. The Bactrian or two-humped camel, though known to the ancient Assyrians, is not now found in the country. The horses are numerous, and of the best Arab blood. Small in stature, but of exquisite symmetry and wonderful powers of endurance, they are highly prized throughout the East, and constitute the chief wealth of the wandering tribes who occupy the greater portion of Mesopotamia. The sheep and goats are also of good breeds, and produce wool of an excellent quality. The cows and oxen cannot be commended. The dogs kept are chiefly greyhounds, which are used to course the hare and the gazelle.

It is probable that in ancient times the animals domesticated by the Assyrians were not very different from these. The camel appears upon the monuments both as a beast of burden and also as ridden in war, but only by the enemies of the Assyrians. The horse is used both for draught and for riding, but seems never degraded to ignoble purposes. His breed is good, though he is not so finely or delicately made as the modern Arab. The head is small and well shaped, the nostrils large and high, the neck arched, but somewhat thick, the body compact, the loins strong, the legs moderately slender and sinewy. The ass is not found; but the mule appears, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes used as a beast of burden, sometimes employed in drawing a cart. [PLATE XXXII., Figs. 1, 2.] Cows, oxen, sheep, and goats are frequent; but they are foreign rather tham Assyrian, since they occur only among the spoil taken from conquered countries. The dog is frequent on the later sculptures; and has been found modelled in clay, and also represented in relief on a clay tablet. Their character is that of a large mastiff or hound, and there is abundant evidence that they were employed in hunting.

If the Assyrians domesticated any bird, it would seem to have been the duck. Models of the duck are common, and seem generally to have been used for weights. The bird is ordinarily represented with its head turned upon its back, the attitude of the domestic duck when asleep. The Assyrians seem to have had artificial ponds or stews, which are always represented as full of fish, but the forms are conventional, as has been already observed. Considering the size to which the carp and barbel actually grow at the present day, the ancient representations are smaller than might have been expected.

CHAPTER III. The People

"The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon, fair of branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. . . . Nor was any tree in the garden of God like unto him in his beauty."--EZEK. xxxi. 3 and 8.

The ethnic character of the ancient Assyrians, like that of the Chaldaeans, was in former times a matter of controversy. When nothing was known of the original language of the people beyond the names of certain kings, princes, and generals, believed to have belonged to the race, it was difficult to arrive at any determinate conclusion on the subject. The ingenuity of etymologists displayed itself in suggesting derivations for the words in question, which were sometimes absurd, sometimes plausible, but never more than very doubtful conjectures. No sound historical critic could be content to base a positive view on any such unstable foundation, and nothing remained but to decide the controversy on other than linguistic considerations.

Various grounds existed on which it was felt that a conclusion could be drawn. The Scriptural genealogies connected Asshur with Aran, Pier, and Joktan, the allowed progenitors of the Armaeians or Syrians, the Israelites or Hebrews, and the northern or Joktanian Arabs. The languages, physical type, and moral characteristics of these races were well known: they all belonged evidently to a single family the family known to ethnologists as the Semitic. Again, the manners and customs, especially the religious customs, of the Assyrians connected then plainly with the Syrians and Phoenicians, with whose practices they were closely allied. Further it was observed that the modern Chaldaeans of Kurdistan, who regard themselves as descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the neighboring Assyria, still speak a Semitic dialect. These three distinct and convergent lines of testimony were sufficient to justify historians in the conclusion, which they commonly drew, that the ancient Assyrians belonged to the Semitic family, and were more or less closely connected with the Syrians, the (later) Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Israelites, and the Arabs of the northern portion of the peninsula.

Recent linguistic discoveries have entirely confirmed the conclusion thus, arrived at. We now possess in the engraved slabs, the clay tablets, the cylinders, and the bricks, exhumed from the ruins of the great Assyrian cities, copious documentary evidence of the character of the Assyrian language, and (so far as language is a proof) of the ethnic character of the race. It appears to be doubted by none who have examined the evidence, that the language of these records is Semitic. However imperfect the acquaintance which our best Oriental archaeologists have as yet obtained with this ancient and difficult form of speech, its connection with the Syriac, the later Babylonian, the Hebrew, and the Arabic does not seem to admit of a doubt.

Another curious confirmation of the ordinary belief is to be found in the physical characteristics of the people, as revealed to us by the sculptures. Few persons in any way familiar with these works of art can have failed to remark the striking resemblance to the Jewish physiognomy which is presented by the sculptured effigies of the Assyrians. The forehead straight but not high, the full brow, the eye large and almond-shaped, the aquiline nose, a little coarse at the end, and unduly depressed, the strong, firm mouth, with lips somewhat over thick, the well-formed chin--best seen in the representation of eunuchs--the abundant hair and ample beard, both colored as black--all these recall the chief peculiarities of the Jew more especially as he appears in southern countries. They are less like the traits of the Arab, though to them also they bear a considerable resemblance. Chateaubriand's description of the Bedouin--"_la tete ovale, le front haut et argue, le nez aquilia, les yeux grandes et coupe en amandes, le regard

humide et singulierement doux_" would serve in many respects equally well for a description of the physiognomy of the Assyrians, as they appear upon the monuments. The traits, in fact, are for the most part common to the Semitic race generally, and not distinctive of any particular subdivision of it. They are seen now alike in the Arab, the Jew, and the Chalaedeans of Kurdistan, while anciently they not only characterized the Assyrians, but probably belonged also to the Phoenicians, the Syrians, and other minor Semetic races. It is evident, even from the mannered and conventional sculptures of Egypt, that the physiognomy was regarded as characteristic of the western Asiatic races. Three captives on the monuments of Amenophis III., represented as belonging to the Patana (people of Bashan?), the Asuru (Assyrians), and the Karukamishi (people of Carchemish), present to us the sane style of face, only slightly modified by Egyptian ideas. [PLATE. XXXIV., Fig. 1.]

White in face the Assyrians appear thus to have borne a most close resemblance to the Jews, in shape and make they are perhaps more nearly represented by their descendants, the Chaldaeans of Kurdistan. While the Oriental Jew has a spare form and a weak muscular development, the Assyrian, like the modern Chaldaean, is robust, broad-shouldered, and large-limbed. Nowhere have we a race represented to us monumentally of a stronger or more muscular type than the ancient Assyrian. The great brawny limbs are too large for beauty; but they indicate a physical power which we may well believe to have belonged to this nation--the Romans of Asia--the resolute and sturdy people which succeeded in imposing its yoke upon all its neighbors.

If from physical we proceed to mental characteristics, we seem again to have in the Jewish character the best and closest analogy to the Assyrian. In the first place, there is observable in each a strong and marked prominency of the religious principle. Inscriptions of Assyrian kings begin and end, almost without exception, with praises, invocations, and prayers to the principal objects of their adoration. All the monarch's successes, all his conquests and victories, and even his good fortune in the chase, are ascribed continually to the protection and favor of guardian deities. Wherever he goes, he takes care to "set up the emblems of Asshur," or of "the great gods;" and forces the vanquished to do them homage. The choicest of the spoil is dedicated as a thank-offering in the temples. The temples themselves are adorned, repaired, beautified, enlarged, increased in manner, by almost, every monarch. The kings worship them in person, and offer sacrifices. They embellish their palaces, not only with representations of their own victories and hunting expeditions, but also with religious figures--the emblems of some of the principal deities, and with scenes in which are portrayed acts of adoration. Their signets, and indeed those of the Assyrians generally, have a religious character. In every way religion seems to hold a marked and prominent place in the thoughts of the people, who fight more for the honor of their gods than even of their king, and aim at extending their belief as much as their dominion.

Again, combined with this prominency of the religious principle, is a sensuousness--such as we observe in Judaism continually struggling against a higher and purer element--but which in this less favored branch of the Semitic family reigns uncontrolled, and gives to its religion a gross, material, and even voluptuous character. The ideal and the spiritual find little favor with this practical people, which, not content with symbols, must have gods of wood and stone whereto to pray, and which in its complicated mythological system, its priestly hierarchy, its gorgeous ceremonial, and finally in its lascivious ceremonies, is a counterpart to that Egypt, from which the Jew was privileged to make his escape.

The Assyrians are characterized in Scripture as "a fierce people." Their victories seem to have been owing to their combining individual bravery and hardihood with a skill and proficiency in the arts of war not possessed by their more uncivilized neighbors. This bravery and hardihood were kept up, partly (like that of the Romans) by their perpetual wars, partly by the training afforded to their manly qualities by the pursuit and destruction of wild animals. The lion--the king of beasts--abounded in their country, together with many other dangerous and ferocious animals. Unlike the ordinary Asiatic, who trembles before the great beasts of prey and avoids a collision by flight if possible, the ancient Assyrian sought out the strongest and fiercest of the animals, provoked them to the encounter, and engaged with them in hand-to-hand combats. The spirit of Nimrod, the "mighty hunter before the Lord," not only animated his own people, but spread on from them to their northern neighbors; and, as far as we can judge by the monuments, prevailed even more in Assyria than in Chaldaea itself. The favorite objects of chase with the Assyrians seem to have been the lion and the wild bull, both beasts of vast strength and courage, which could not be attacked without great danger to the bold assailant.

No doubt the courage of the Assyrians was tinged with ferocity. The nation was "a mighty and strong one, which, as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, cast down to the earth with the hand." Its capital might well deserve to be called "a bloody city," or "a city of bloods." Few conquering races have been tender-hearted, or much inclined to spare; and undoubtedly carnage, ruin, and desolation followed upon the track of an Assyrian army, and raised feelings of fear and hatred among their adversaries. But we have no reason to believe that the nation was especially bloodthirsty or unfeeling. The mutilation of the slain--not by way of insult, but in proof of their slayer's prowess was indeed practised among them; but otherwise there is little indication of any barbarous, much less of any really cruel, usages. The Assyrian listens to the enemy who asks for quarter; he prefers making prisoners to slaying; he is very terrible in the battle and the assault, but afterwards he forgives, and spares. Of course in some cases he makes exceptions. When a town has rebelled and been subdued, he impales some of the most guilty ; and in two or three instances prisoners are represented as led before the king by a rope fastened to a ring which passes through the under lip, while now and then one appears in the act of being flayed with it knife But, generally, captives are either released, or else transferred, without unnecessary suffering, from their own country to some other portion of the empire. There seems even to be something of real tenderness in the treatment of captured women, who are never manacled, and are often allowed to ride on mules, or in carts.

The worst feature in the character of the Assyrians was their treachery. "Woe to thee that spoilest, though thou wast not spoiled, and dealest treacherously, though they dealt not treacherously with thee!" is the denunciation of the evangelical prophet. And in the same spirit the author of "The Burthen of Nineveh" declares that city to be "full of lies and robbery"--or, more correctly, full of lying and violence. Falsehood and treachery are commonly regarded as the vices of the weak, who are driven to defend themselves against superior strength by the weapon of cunning; but they are perhaps quite as often employed by the strong as furnishing short cuts to success, and even where the moral standard is low, as being in themselves creditable. It certainly was not necessity which made the Assyrians covenant-breakers; it seems to have been in part the wantonness of power--because they "despised the cities and regarded no man;" perhaps it was in part also their imperfect moral perception, which may have failed to draw the proper distinction between craft and cleverness.

Another unpleasant feature in the Assyrian character--but one at which we can feel no surprise--was their pride. This is the quality which draws forth the sternest denunciations of Scripture, and is expressly declared to have called down the Divine judgments upon the race. Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah alike dwell upon it. It pervades the inscriptions. Without being so rampant or offensive as the pride of some Orientals--as, for instance, the Chinese, it is of a marked and decided color: the Assyrian feels himself infinitely superior to all the nations with whom he is brought into contact; he alone enjoys the favor of the gods; he alone is either truly wise or truly valiant; the armies of his enemies are driven like chaff before him; he sweeps them away, like heaps of stubble; either they fear to fight, or they are at once defeated; he carries his victorious arms just as far as it pleases him, and never under any circumstances admits that he has suffered a reverse. The only merit that he allows to foreigners is some skill in the mechanical and mimetic arts, and his acknowledgment of this is tacit rather than express, being chiefly known from the recorded fact that he employs foreign artists to ornament his edifices.

According to the notions which the Greeks derived from Ctesias, and passed on to the Romans, and through them to the moderns generally, the greatest defect in the Assyrian character--the besetting sin of their leading men--was luxuriousness of living and sensuality. From Ninyas to Sardanapalus--from the commencement to the close of the Empire--a line of voluptuaries, according to Ctesias and his followers, held possession of the throne; and the principle was established from the first, that happiness consisted in freedom from all cares or troubles, and unchecked indulgence in every species of sensual pleasure. This account, intrinsically suspicious, is now directly contradicted by the authentic records which we possess of the warlike character and manly pursuits of so many of the kings. It probably, however, contains a germ of truth. In a flourishing kingdom like Assyria, luxury must have gradually advanced; and when the empire fell under the combined attack of its two most powerful neighbors, no doubt it had lost much of its pristine vigor. The monuments lend some support to the view that luxury was among the causes which produced the fall of Assyria; although it may be questioned whether, even to the last, the predominant spirit was not warlike and manly, or even fierce and violent. Among the many denunciations of Assyria in Scripture, there is only one which can even be thought to point to luxury as a cause of her downfall; and that is a passage of very doubtful interpretation. In general it is her violence, her treachery, and her pride that are denounced. When Nineveh repented in the time of Jonah, it was by each man "turning from his evil way and from the violence which was in their hands." When Nahum announces the final destruction, it is on "the bloody city, full of lies and robbery." In the emblematic language of prophecy, the _lion_ is taken as the fittest among animals to symbolize Assyria, even at this late period of her history. She is still "the lion that did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lioness, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin." The favorite national emblem, if it may be so called, is accepted as the true type of the people; and blood, ravin, and robbery are their characteristics in the mind of the Hebrew prophet.

In mental power the Assyrians certainly deserve to be considered as among the foremost of the Asiatic races. They had not perhaps so much originality as the Chaldaeans, from whom they appear to have derived the greater part of their civilization; but in many respects it is clear that they surpassed their instructors, and introduced improvements which gave a greatly increased value and almost a new character to arts previously discovered. The genius of the people will best be seen from the accounts hereafter to be given of their language, their arts, and their system of government. If it

must be allowed that these have all a certain smack of rudeness and primitive simplicity, still they are advances upon aught that had previously existed--not only in Mesopotamia--but in the world. Fully to appreciate the Assyrians, we should compare them with the much-lauded Egyptians, who in all important points are very decidedly their inferiors. The spirit and progressive character of their art offers the strongest contrast to the stiff, lifeless, and unchanging conventionalism of the dwellers on the Nile. Their language and alphabet are confessedly in advance of the Egyptian. Their religion is more earnest and less degraded. In courage and military genius their superiority is very striking; for the Egyptians are essentially an unwarlike people. The one point of advantage to which Egypt may fairly lay claim is the grandeur and durability of her architecture. The Assyrian palaces, magnificent, as they undoubtedly were, must yield the palm to the vast structures of Egyptian Thebes. No nation, not even Rome, has equalled Egypt in the size and solemn grandeur of its buildings. But, except in this one respect, the great African kingdom must be regarded as inferior to her Asiatic rival--which was indeed "a cedar in Lebanon, exalted above all the trees of the field--fair in greatness and in the length of his branches--so that all the trees that were in the garden of God envied him, and not one was like unto him in his beauty."

CHAPTER IV. The Capital

"Fuit et Ninus, imposita Tigri, ad solis occasum spectans, quondam clarissima."--PLIN. H. N. vi. 13.

The site of the great capital of Assyria had generally been regarded as fixed with sufficient certainty to the tract immediately opposite Mosul, alike by local tradition and by the statements of ancient writers, when the discovery by modern travellers of architectural remains of great magnificence at some considerable distance from this position, threw a doubt upon the generally received belief, and made the true situation of the ancient Nineveh once more a matter of controversy. When the noble sculptures and vast palaces of Nimrud were first uncovered, it was natural to suppose that they marked the real site; for it seemed unlikely that any mere provincial city should have been adorned by a long series of monarchs with buildings at once on so grand a scale and so richly ornamented. A passage of Strabo, and another of Ptolemy, were thought to lend confirmation to this theory, which placed the Assyrian capital nearly at the junction of the Upper Zab with the Tigris; and for awhile the old opinion was displaced, and the name of Nineveh was attached very generally in this country to the ruins at Nimrud.

Shortly afterwards a rival claimant started up in the regions further to the north. Excavations carried on at the village of Khorsabad showed that a magnificent palace and a considerable town had existed in Assyrian times at that site. In spite of the obvious objection that the Khorsabad ruins lay at the distance of fifteen miles from the Tigris, which according to every writer of weight anciently washed the walls of Nineveh, it was assumed by the excavator that the discovery of the capital had been reserved for himself, and the splendid work representing the Khorsabad bas-reliefs and inscriptions, which was published in France under the title of "Monument de Ninive," caused the reception of M. Botta's theory in many parts of the Continent.

After awhile an attempt was made to reconcile the rival claims by a theory, the grandeur of which gained it acceptance, despite its improbability. It was suggested that the various ruins, which had hitherto disputed the name, were in fact all included within the circuit of the ancient Nineveh; which was described as a rectangle, or oblong square, eighteen miles long and twelve broad. The remains of Khorsabad, Koyunjik, Nimrud, and Keremles marked the four corners of this vast quadrangle, which contained an area of 216 square miles--about ten times that of

London! In confirmation of this view was urged, first, the description in Diodorus, derived probably from Ctesias, which corresponded (it was said) both with the proportions and with the actual distances; and next, the statements contained in the book of Jonah, which (it was argued) implied a city of some such dimensions. The parallel of Babylon, according to the description given by Herodotus, might fairly have been cited as a further argument; since it might have seemed reasonable to suppose that there was no great difference of size between the chief cities of the two kindred empires.

Attractive, however, as this theory is from its grandeur, and harmonious as it must be allowed to be with the reports of the Greeks, we have nevertheless to reject it on two grounds, the one historical and the other topographical. The ruins of Khorsabad, Keremles, Nimrud, and Koyunjik bear on their bricks distinct local titles; and these titles are found attaching to distinct cities in the historical inscriptions. Nimrud, as already observed, is Calah; and Khorsabad is Dur-Sargina, or "the city of Sargon." Keremles has also its own appellation Dur-* * *, "the city of the God [--]." Now the Assyrian writers do not consider these places to be parts of Nineveh, but speak of them as distinct and separate cities. Calah for a long time is the capital, while Nineveh is mentioned as a provincial town. Dur-Sargina is built by Sargon, not at Nineveh, but "near to Nineveh." Scripture, it must be remembered, similarly distinguishes Calah as a place separate from Nineveh, and so far from it that there was room for "a great city" between them. And the geographers, while they give the name of Aturia or Assyria Proper to the country about the one town, call the region which surrounds the other by a distinct name, Calachene. Again, when the country is closely examined, it is found, not only that there are no signs of any continuous town over the space included within the four sites of Nimrud, Keremles. Khorsabad, and Koyunjik, nor any remains of walls or ditches connecting them, but that the four sites themselves are as carefully fortified on what, by the theory we are examining, would be the inside of the city as in other directions. It perhaps need scarcely be added, unless to meet the argument drawn from Diodorus, that the four sites in question are not so placed as to form the "oblong square" of his description, but mark the angles of a rhombus very munch slanted from the perpendicular.

The argument derived from the book of Jonah deserves more attention than that which rests upon the authority of Diodorus and Ctesias. Unlike Ctesias, Jonah saw Nineveh while it still stood; and though the writer of the prophetical book may not have been Jonah himself, he probably lived not very many years later. Thus his evidence is that of a contemporary, though (it may be) not that of an eye-witness; and, even apart from the inspiration which guided his pen, he is entitled to be heard with the utmost respect. Now the statements of this writer, which have a bearing on the size of Nineveh, are two. He tells us, in one place, that it was "an exceeding great city, of three days' journey;" in another, that "in it were more than 120,000 persons who could not discern between their right hand and their left." These passages are clearly intended to describe a city of a size unusual at the time; but both of them are to such an extent vague and indistinct, that it is impossible to draw front either separately, or even from the two combined, an exact definite notion. "A city of three days' journey" may be one which it requires three days to traverse from end to end, or one which is three days' journey in circumference, or, lastly, one which cannot be thoroughly visited and explored by a prophet commissioned to warn the inhabitants of a coming danger in less than three days' time. Persons not able to distinguish their right hand from their left may (if taken literally) mean children, and 120,000 such persons may therefore indicate a total population of 600,000; or, the phrase may perhaps with greater probability be understood of moral ignorance, and the intention would in that case be to designate

by it all the inhabitants. If Nineveh was in Jonah's time a city containing a population of 120,000, it would sufficiently deserve the title of "an exceeding great city;" and the prophet might well be occupied for three days in traversing its squares and streets. We shall find hereafter that the ruins opposite Mosul have an extent more than equal to the accommodation of this number of persons.

The weight of the argument from the supposed parallel ease of Babylon must depend on the degree of confidence which can be reposed in the statement made by Herodotus, and on the opinion which is ultimately formed with regard to the real size of that capital. It would be improper to anticipate here the conclusions which may be arrived at hereafter concerning the real dimensions of "Babylon the Great;" but it may be observed that grave doubts are entertained in many quarters as to the ancient statements on the subject, and that the ruins do not cover much more than one twenty-fifth of the space which Herodotus assigns to the city.

We may, therefore, without much hesitation, set aside the theory which would ascribe to the ancient Nineveh dimensions nine or ten times greater than those of London, and proceed to a description of the group of ruins believed by the best judges to mark the true site.

The ruins opposite Mosul consist of two principal Mounds, known respectively as Nebbi-Yunus and Koyunjik. The Koyunjik mound, which lies to the north-west of the other, at the distance of 900 yards, or a little more than half a mile, is very much the more considerable of the two. Its shape is an irregular oval, elongated to a point towards the north-east, in the line of its greater axis. The surface is nearly flat; the sides slope at a steep angle, and are furrowed with numerous ravines, worn in the soft material by the rains of some thirty centuries. The greatest height of the mound above the plum is towards the south-eastern extremity, where it overhangs the small stream of the Khosr; the elevation in this part being about ninety-five feet. The area covered by the mound is estimated at a hundred acres, and the entire mass is said to contain 14,500,000 tons of earth. The labor of a man would scarcely excavate and place in position more than 120 tons of earth in a year; it would require, therefore, the united exertions of 10,000 men for twelve years, or 20,000 men for six years, to complete the structure. On this artificial eminence were raised in ancient times the palaces and temples of the Assyrian monarchs, which are now imbedded in the debris of their own ruins.

The mound of Nebbi-Ymus is at its base nearly triangular: It covers an area of about forty acres. It is loftier, and its sides are more precipitous, than Koyunjik, especially on the west, where it abutted upon the wall of the city. The surface is mostly flat, but is divided about the middle by a deep ravine, running nearly from north to south, and separating the mound into an eastern and a western portion. The so-called tomb of Jonah is conspicuous on the north edge of the western portion of the mound, and about it are grouped the cottages of the Kurds and Turcomans to whom the site of the ancient Nineveh belongs. The eastern portion of the mound forms a burial-ground, to which the bodies of Mahometans are brought from considerable distances. The mass of earth is calculated at six and a half millions of tons; so that its erection would have given full employment to 10,000 men for the space of five years and a half.

These two vast mounds--the platforms on which palaces and temples were raised--are both in the same line, and abutted, both of them, on the western wall of the city. Their position in that wall is thought to have been determined, not by chance, but by design; since they break the western face of the city into three nearly equal portions. The entire length of this side of Nineveh was 13,600 feet, or somewhat more than two and a half miles.

Anciently it seems to have immediately overhung the Tigris, which has now moved off to the west, leaving a plain nearly a mile in width between its eastern edge and the old rampart of the city. This rampart followed, apparently, the natural course of the river-bank; and hence, while on the whole it is tolerably straight, in the most southern of the three portions it exhibits a gentle curve, where the river evidently made a sweep, altering its course from south-east nearly to south.

The western wall at its northern extremity approaches the present course of the Tigris, and is here joined, exactly at right angles, by the northern, or rather the north-western, rampart, which runs in a perfectly straight line to the north-eastern angle of the city, and is said to measure exactly 7000 feet. This wall is again divided, like the western, but with even more preciseness, into three equal portions. Commencing at the north-eastern angle, one-third of it is carried along comparatively high ground, after which for the remaining two-thirds of its course it falls by a gentle decline towards the Tigris. Exactly midway in this slope the rampart is broken by a road, adjoining which is a remarkable mound, covering one of the chief gates of the city.

At its other extremity the western wall forms a very obtuse angle with the southern, which impends over a deep ravine formed by it winter torrent, and runs in a straight line for about 1000 yards, when it meets the eastern wall, with which it forms a slightly acute angle.

It remains to describe the eastern wall, which is the longest and the least regular of the four. Tins barrier skirts the edge of a ridge of conglomerate rock, which here rises somewhat above the level of the plain, and presents a slightly convex sweep to the north east. At first it runs nearly parallel to the western, and at right angles to the northern wall; but, after pursuing this course for about three quarters of a mile, it is forced by the natural convexity of the ridge to retire a little, and curving gently inwards it takes a direction much more southerly than at first, thus drawing continually nearer to the western wall, whose course is almost exactly south-east. The entire length of this wall is 16,000 feet, or above three miles. It is divided into two portions, whereof the southern is somewhat the longer, by the stream of the Khosr-Su; which coming from the north west, finds its way through the ruins of the city, and then runs on across the low plain to the Tigris.

The enceinte of Nineveh forms thus an irregular trapezium, or a "triangle with its apex abruptly cut off to the south." The breadth, even in the broadest part--that towards the north--is very disproportionate to the length, standing to it as four to nine, or as 1 to 2.25. The town is thus of an oblong shape, and so far Diodorus truly described it; though his dimensions greatly exceed the truth. The circuit of the walls is somewhat less than eight miles, instead of being more than fifty and the area which they include is 1100 English acres, instead of being 112,000!

It is reckoned that in a populous Oriental town we may compute the inhabitants at nearly, if not quite, a hundred per acre. This allows a considerable space for streets, open squares, and gardens, since it assigns but one individual to every space of fifty square yards. According to such a mode of reckoning, the population of ancient Nineveh, within the enceinte here described, may be estimated at 175,000 souls. No city of Western Asia is at the present day so populous.

In the above description of the ramparts surrounding Nineveh, no account has been given of their width or height. According to Diodorus, the wall wherewith Ninus surrounded his capital was 100 feet high, and so broad that three chariots might drive side by side along the top. Xenophon, who passed close to the ruins on his retreat with the Ten Thousand, calls the height 150 feet, and the width 50 feet. The actual greatest height at

present seems to be 46 feet; but the _debris_ at the foot of the walls are so great, and the crumbled character of the walls themselves is so evident, that the chief modern explorer inclines to regard the computation of Diodorus as probably no exaggeration of the truth. The width of the walls, in their crumbled condition, is from 100 to 200 feet.

The mode in which the walls were constructed seems to have been the following. Up to a certain height--fifty feet, according to Xenophon--they were composed of neatly-hewn blocks of a fossiliferous limestone, smoothed and polished on the outside. Above this, the material used was sun-dried brick. The stone masonry was certainly ornamented along its top by a continuous series of battlements or gradines in the same material and it is not unlikely that a similar ornamentation crowned the upper brick structure. The wall was pierced at irregular intervals by gates, above which rose lofty towers; while towers, probably of lesser elevation, occurred also in the portions of the wall intervening between one gate and another. A gate in the north-western rampart has been cleared by means of excavation, the form and construction of which will best appear from the annexed ground-plan. It seems to have consisted of three gateways, whereof the inner and outer were ornamented with colossal human-headed hulls and other figures, while the central one was merely panelled with slabs of alabaster. Between the gateways were two large chambers, 70 feet long by 23 feet wide, which were thus capable of containing a considerable body of soldiers. The chambers and gateways are supposed to have been arched over, like the castles' gates on the bas-reliefs. The gates themselves have wholly disappeared: but the debris which filled both the chambers and the passages contained so much charcoal that it is thought they must have been made, not of bronze, like the gates of Babylon, but of wood. The ground within the gate-way was paved with large slabs of limestone, still bearing the marks of chariot wheels.

The castellated rampart which thus surrounded and guarded Nineveh did not constitute by any means its sole defence. Outside the stone basement wall lay on every side a water barrier, consisting on the west and south of natural river courses; on the north and east, of artificial channels into which water was conducted from the Khosr-su. The northern and eastern walls were skirted along their whole length by a broad and deep moat, into which the Khosr-su was made to flow by occupying its natural bed with a strong dam carried across it in the line of the eastern wall, and at the point where the stream now enters the enclosure. On meeting this obstruction, of which there are still some remains, the waters divided, and while part flowed to the south-east, and reached the Tigris by the ravine immediately to the south of the city, which is a natural water-course, part turned at an acute angle to the north-west, and, washing the remainder of the eastern and the whole of the northern wall, gained the Tigris at the north-west angle of the city, where a second dam kept it at a sufficient height. Moreover, on the eastern face, which appears to have been regarded as the weakest, a series of outworks were erected for the further defence of the city. North of the Khosr, between the city wall and that river, which there runs parallel to the wall and forms a sort of second or outermost moat, there are traces of a detached fort of considerable size, which must have strengthened the defences in that quarter. South and south-east of the Khosr, the works are still more elaborate. In the first place, from a point where the Khosr leaves the hills and debouches upon comparatively low ground, a deep ditch, 200 feet broad, was carried through compact silicious conglomerate for upwards of two miles, till it joined the ravine which formed the natural protection of the city upon the south. On either side of this ditch, which could be readily supplied with water from the Khosr at

its northern extremity, was built a broad and lofty wall; the eastern one, which forms the outermost of the defences, rises even now a hundred feet above the bottom of the ditch on which it adjoins. Further, between this outer barrier and the city moat wall interposed a species of demilune, guarded by a double wall and a broad ditch and connected (as is thought) by a covered way with Neneveh itself. Thus the city was protected on this, its most vulnerable side, towards the centre by five walls and three broad and deep moats; towards the north, by a wall, a moat, the Khosr, and a strong outpost; towards the south by two moats and three lines of rampart. The breadth of the whole fortification on this side is 2200 feet, or not far from half a mile.

Such was the site, and such were the defences, of the capital of Assyria. Of its internal arrangements but little can be said at present, since no general examination of the space within the ramparts has been as yet made, and no ancient account of the interior has come down to us. We can only see that the side of the city which was most fashionable was the western, which immediately overhung the Tigris; since here were the palaces of the kings, and here seem also to have been the dwellings of the richer citizens; at least, it is on this side in the space intervening between Koyunjik and the northern rampart, that the only very evident remains of edifices--besides the great Mounds of Koyunjik and Nebbi-Yunus--are found. The river was no doubt the main attraction; but perhaps the western side was also considered the most secure, as lying furthest frown the quarter whence alone the inhabitants expected to be attacked, namely, the east. It is impossible at present to give any account of the character of the houses or the the direction of the streets. Perhaps the time may not be far distant when more systematic and continuous efforts will be made by the enterprise of Europe to obtain full knowledge of all the remains which still lie buried at this interesting site. No such discoveries are indeed to be expected as those which have recently startled the world but patient explorers would still be sure of an ample reward, were they to glean, after Layard in the field from which he swept so magnificent a harvest.