

THE ANCIENT WORLD

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THE ANCIENT WORLD .

By

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TO THE SOLIDARITY
OF ASIA

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This is the first of the Popular Series of publications of the Institute of Asian Studies, Hyderabad. The Institute proposes to publish, besides research volumes and *Bulletins*, a series of books and periodicals for the lay reader giving non-technical information about the history and culture of the peoples of Asia. It is written mainly with a view to profiting Asian readers. It is noted with regret that though Asia has been the cradle of almost all ancient civilizations yet scholars of this continent have taken little interest in the study of the same. It is hoped that this little volume will foster some interest in the reading public in the great cultural heritage of Asia.

FOREWORD

This little volume has no pretensions to research. It purports to give a very brief account of the ancient civilizations of Asia. Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Persia, Palestine, Syria, Crete, India, and China alone have, for the present, been treated. It is hoped that subsequent volumes will take up the rest of the countries of Asia.

The author cannot help feeling unhappy about the apathy of Asian scholars towards the study, chiefly, of the ancient Near and Middle East cultures. It is a great pity that while the West has done a lot in the direction, practically nothing has been done in Asia to foster study in that field. It is hoped that this little piece of history, written perhaps for the first time by an Asian national, will find favour with the readers of this continent.

This book has quite a few limitations. Indeed, none so drastic as the treatment of India and China. Both of these countries have had a history that has been continuous and has come down to the present day and, since an artificial contemporaneity had to be maintained, their accounts have had to be arbitrarily closed. The continuity of Indian culture is unbroken to the present day. All the same, there sets in a hiatus after the close of the Indus Valley civilization and it has been not so very unnatural to end the Indian account there. But the treatment of China has had to be extremely restricted since its history is of one piece down to the contemporary times. •

I am grateful to my young friend Subhas Chandra Chaturvedi, M. A., for assisting me in reading the proofs and doing the Index.

Author

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THE ANCIENT WORLD

CHAPTER I

EGYPT

1. HISTORY

The Land and its People

Cast amidst burning sands there lies a piece of living glory. This is Egypt, one of the earliest cradles of human civilization. This straggling fruitful valley is but an oasis of gigantic dimensions. On the west lie the endless sand-dunes of the Libyan desert, on the east rises a rocky highland of solid quartz, the crystalline masses of the Arabian hills, lining the naked, reddish, glimmering plateau beyond. Pressed between the two the valley of the Lower Nile, a bare breadth of fifteen to thirty miles, has moulded the destiny of man for ages.

The narrowest country in the world, not larger than the little kingdom of Belgium, Egypt has on her breast emblazoned glory of millenniums. Through a vast expanse of sand the life-giving Nile winds her way to a land-locked sea flooding the narrow dale in midsummer when the Ethiopian snow melts and seeks an outlet. The river was called Ha-pi by the ancients and the land, through which it coursed, Kamit, 'the Black Country'. The Greeks called the valley Egypt, the Hebrews Mizraim and the neighbourly Semite population Mesr.

Before man was able to harness nature to his advantage, he lay at the mercy of the herds of hippopotami and the crowds of crocodiles in the swamps and of the horned cerastes and the deathdealing cobra. But soon that savage who could stand erect and could

combine with the advantage of a mind the shaping services of a thumb, got the better of his deadly enemies and addressed himself to the noble task of humanizing the world.

His march through the stages of civilization is marked by the implements he has left behind ever since the palaeolithic age. He fought and hunted, made fire and cooked and soon rode the whirlpool to direct the storm. Effort and toil changed the face of his world. He began to sow and irrigate, grow and harvest his corn, the gift of the river in spate, indeed, his well deserved annuity. Mud and reed afforded him dwelling, pottery and paper, signaling his passing out of barbarism into civilization.

Once the light had dawned on the restive genius of man, the progress was rapid. Civilization grew by leaps and bounds and mighty men covered the marches of the arid waste and intrepid mariners braved the dangers of the deep. Mysteries of nature opened their secret to them when they discovered the balm to secure the dead skin against the temper of inclement weather. The skies gaped with wonder when little men, getting into the secret of team work, lifted tons' weight of rocks over naked sinews and, raising tire upon tire, drove the wedge of pyramids into their bosom ensuring the safety of human corpse under the vaulted domes against the decaying frown of the Heavens themselves.

But who were these makers of the mummies and builders of the pyramids ? That is not easy to answer. But who indeed were they ? Numerous origins, from Indian to African, have been suggested. Some regard the ancient Egyptians as descended from the Ethiopians and the Nubians, others give them a common ancestry with the Phoenicians, yet others suppose them to have come to the land of the Nile from the east, from the land of Punt across the Red Sea. At least a foreign,

north-eastern, element is discernible in both their religion and language. The sun-worship without doubt was an essentially Semitic cult and was absolutely foreign to the beliefs of the Neolithic Egyptians. So also do their early language, mainly their verbs, seem to have imbibed Semitic influences, apart from the belief of the philologists that the ancient Egyptian was a Semitic language. But certainly influences on religion and language can hardly determine the composition of a race, as both can be acquired.

Purity of race, as purity of culture, is a myth. It may be that the ancient Egyptians also like other people mingled their blood with neighbours and invaders. The separate existence of the lands of the Upper and the Lower Nile and their consequent welding into a single nation lends colour to this supposition. It is possible that the Semites entered the tube of Egypt from the top north and the Hamites from the bottom south. But these southerners were by no means negroes, not even negroid. They came probably from the north-eastern Africa and southern Arabia by way of the Upper Nile and Nubia, the usual way by which Egyptian caravans journeyed to Punt throughout the period of the Old Kingdom.

Legendary traditions credit *Shemsu-Hor*, 'followers of Horus', to have marched from the Upper Nile and conquered the Anu, the followers of Set, in the region of the Lower Nile. This refers to the southern conquest of the north at a time much anterior to the rise of the famous ruling dynasties of Egypt. Set was the god of the northern people, the Libyan Semites of the Delta, the Anu, while Horus, the skygod with his emblem of the falcon, was worshipped by the southern Egyptians. Hawk continued to be the godly symbol of authority of the ancient kings of united Egypt.

Who effected this conquest and union of the Upper and Lower Egypt no one can tell, but the legends

credit Mena with accomplishing the difficult task. This Mena is supposed to have founded the first of the famous Dynasties of Egypt.

Early Dynasties

In course of some thirty-five centuries Egypt was ruled by thirty-one dynasties of kings of which the 27th and 31st were Persian. Persians were succeeded in Egypt by Greeks and the possibility of an Egyptian revival was put to an end.

The annals of the first few dynasties are very obscure. Their kings are mere names and their exploits mostly legendary. Some tables of their names have been preserved both in the Greek and earlier local sacred records but they too are confused, and are of doubtful import, their order many a time disturbed and sequence broken. Sometimes it is even difficult to distinguish historical names from those divine.

One name, that of Mena, however, stands out both in the Egyptian and Greek records as the founder of the First Dynasty of Egyptian kings. Although his historicity too has been questioned by some, he may be accepted as perhaps the first human king to have ruled over the united Nile valley. How the Neolithic man in the valley of the Nile developed into the citizen of the 1st Dynasty is difficult to say, but we know for certain that in course of the early centuries the land fell to the power of a family of rulers among whom hereditary succession had already been established. This family came from a place called *Teni* (Greek *This* or *Thinis*) in Middle Egypt. Mena (Menes) himself was a king of this family who moved his royal residence to the gate of the Delta. The new capital was called Memphis which continued to be the royal residence and commercial centre down to the latest periods of Egyptian history. Today it is the great mound of Monf, Tel-el-monf, at Mitrahani.

Mena is credited with a number of important works of which the most outstanding was perhaps the building of a great dam to protect Memphis from the inundations of the Nile which even today serves as a bulwark for the province of Giza against the terrific floods of the river. Perhaps Mena also built the first temple of the metropolis, the temple of Ptah, and regulated service in the temple. Mena was the hero-king of the ancient Egyptians and was honoured and worshipped as a god.

Teta (Athothis, Atu) is the next name in the ancient records. He is supposed to have built the royal castle of Memphis. He was interested in medicine and perhaps wrote a treatise on anatomy. Those that followed are sheer names on the list, mere legends in the current time. Ata's reign was disturbed by the breaking out of a great plague. Sem-Ti and Semsu were perhaps kings of some consequence. Pestilence and epidemic rendered the rule of the latter unfortunate.

It is not easy to say who founded the 2nd Dynasty. Kakau's name, standing second on the lists, is indeed important, for he was responsible for the institution of the worship of the Apis-bull. But the greatest dynast, without doubt, was the king Baneteren (Binothis or Biophis) who established the legitimacy of female succession. This declaration was the first of its kind in history. In Egyptian history this decree was of immense importance to which even the Greek Ptolemies succumbed when they came to hold the sceptre of Egypt. Baneteren thus was the first feminist of the world. Send or Senedi was the next important ruler. His name signified 'terror' which may suggest some conquests to his credit. He was certainly worshipped. Khasekhem seems to have been another important historical figure, who held his court in a great fortress palace and who is said to have conquered both the north and south. He was himself a southerner

who married Ne-maat-Hap, the last of the long line of the 2nd Dynasty, thus renewing the union of the two powers, and assumed the significant sobriquet of Khasekhemui ('Appearance of the Two Powers'). He built an enormous tomb for himself at Abydos.

The names of the rulers of the 3rd Dynasty are greatly confused and their sequence is gravely doubtful. But the most important figure of the line was Tjeser, perhaps the son of Khasekhem. He was a conqueror of some dimensions and the builder of the first pyramid of stone, the Step-Pyramid of Sakkara with its admirable temple. Sa-Nekht, his brother, probably succeeded him. Another king of this dynasty, Nefarka, deserves mention for he unsuccessfully began the huge rock-cut excavation at Zawiyet el-Aryan, south of Giza.

With the 3rd Dynasty the archaic period ends and the epoch of the Great Pyramids begins.

The Age of the Pyramids

The Pyramids of Egypt have attracted visitors perhaps ever since they were built. Herodotus and Diodorus were lavish in their compliments to the great architects of antiquity who erected these massed enormities of solid masonry, and visitor after visitor, nation after nation, has gone on paying tributes to those wonders of the Nile. Egypt is the Pyramids. The country has become identical with its architectonic achievement which time has not succeeded in destroying. Pyramids epitomize the history of an epoch.

As the visitor drives to the south-west of modern Cairo and approaches the low ridge of the desert jutting up at the edge of the cultivated north-west of ancient Memphis, triangular structures of rocks loom large on the horizon and strike the sight. These are the pyramids, of which the biggest was called *Khut*, 'the Horizon' itself. They signalize an age which

had attained all the essentials of a civilization as fully developed as our own as early as 3000 B. C. They have stood there in the full glare of the Egyptian sun under the cold canopy of the sky for more than five thousand years and, despite the vandalism of man and time, they have disdained symptoms of decay.

Towering high over the necropoles of the common Egyptians these great pyramids were meant to house the sarcophagi and served as tombs and sepulchres at the end of their pompous toils on the earth. The prospect of that arid expanse preserves endless remains of funerary temples, buildings of hewn stone, pillared courts with outer temples and inner fanes, with magazines and store-houses packed to capacity with the objects denied to the living, needed for the dead. Amidst these deadly environs did Khufu, Khafra and Menkaura build their domes of the dead from where there was no returning to the world of the living.

Seneferu heads the list of the kings of the 4th Dynasty and begins the Age of the Pyramid-builders. Tjeser had already built the Step-Pyramid near the city, Seneferu built farther south at Dahshur and Medum; Khufu returned to the vicinity of the capital where Khafra and Menkaura followed him. They all built their pyramids there. The greatest of them all was one built by Khufu, 476 ft. high on a base of 764 ft. square originally, now 450 and 730 ft. respectively. Khafra's pyramid is 443 ft. high while Menkaura's barely attained an elevation of 216 ft. Menkaura's pyramid has been excavated and has afforded generous yields. The model set by these builders was continued by subsequent dynasts and the construction of pyramids remained a state affair with kings right down to the 14th Dynasty.

Pyramids were built undoubtedly at great costs by endless human labour. The word 'pharaoh' signifies a 'dweller of the Big House'. That the king

undoubtedly was. The phrase incidentally points to the unenviable character of the duab huts where the commoner must have dwelt. His earnings yielded the enormous revenues which went to feed the sinews that raised the rocks aloft and shaped the pyramids. If we can believe the histories of Herodotus and Diodorus, people who were made to work for building for the dead to the negation of the needs of the living naturally resented it and the royal mummies were buried elsewhere for fear of reprisals at the hands of the labourers. Around the pyramids lay stretched the necropolises and the mustabas where the bodies of the courtiers of the kings were interred. We have no evidence to ascertain if in very ancient times the attendants of the kings had also to die in the manner of those in Ur to keep company with their royal dead.

Except for some records about Seneferu, we know nothing about these great builders of the age. A relief with an inscription represents him as a conqueror of the peninsula of Sinai. He was succeeded by Khufu followed by Dadfra and Khafra. Menkaura followed next and was himself succeeded by Shepsekaf and the 4th Dynasty probably ended with him.

The kings of the 5th Dynasty founded by Useref, continued to build pyramids and their funerary temples at Abusir, south of Giza, mark the apogee of the remarkable development of art and architecture under the rulers of the 4th Dynasty. For the first time they come to bear reliefs on their walls depicting scenes from the life of the dead king. The builders of these pyramids were Sahura, Neferarika and Neuser-Ra. The last of the Dynasty, Unas, built his pyramid at Sakkara, south of Abusir, and got the walls of his inner chambers inscribed with incantations to ensure the safety of his spirit in the next world.

Teta founded a new dynasty, the 6th. But the most noted potentate of this family of rulers was

Merira Pepi I. His activities embraced the entire land from the Delta and Sinai to Elephantine and Sahal. Great stone temples had already appeared with the 4th and 5th Dynasties. Pepi developed activities in that direction to an unprecedented limit. He built lifesize images of bronze plates fastened with nails. South also attracted his attention and he sent punitive expeditions to "the Sand-Dwellers" of the Isthmus of Suez and the gulf coast. Pepi passed on an extensive domain to his two sons.

Decay soon overtook the 7th and 8th Dynasties and they started disintegrating and falling off. Alien raids made life in the Delta insecure and foreign intrusion necessitated a change of capital. The capital was thus moved to Herakleopolis. Among the 9th and 10th Dynasties also only a few kings deserve mention, namely Khati I, Tefa-ba, and Khati II.

Thebes had now become practically independent. Memphis had shrunk into a shadow of glory while Thebes had grown in power and importance. A new era thus began ushering in what is called the Old Theban or the Middle Kingdom. The Theban epoch witnessed great changes in the land of the Niles. Civil wars and luckless encounters with the Shepherd invaders from the east broke the backbone of resistance and finally the Shepherd kings or the Hyksos, as they were called, succeeded in establishing their sway over Egypt where they ruled for several generations. Their overthrow and expulsion finally was rejoiced by the Egyptian people as a national event. But of that in due context.

The Old and Middle Kingdoms

While the 10th Dynasty driven from Memphis ruled at Herakleopolis, the 11th Dynasty prospered at Thebes. The real founder of the dynasty was Uah-ankh but because of his greatness Neb-hapet-Ra was

later regarded a great ruler and almost the father of the royal line of Thebes. Perhaps he established his authority over the entire country. He excavated for himself, his queen and concubines, the oldest rock-cut royal tomb and a long gallery extending far beneath the mountain at Der el-Bahri (in the western necropolises opposite Thebes) ending in a chamber which originally held his coffin. It seems that his concubines (the priestesses of goddess Hathor) were all slain at the death of the king to accompany him to the next world. Courtiers and slaves were killed and buried with kings in the time of the 1st Dynasty, and the custom held on till as late as the time of Amenhetep II. Neb-hapet-Ra fought Libyans, Nubians, and Semites and he seems to have invaded as far as southern Palestine.

Neb-hapet-Ra was succeeded by Sankhkara Mentuhetep whose reign was distinguished by an expedition to the land of Punt by Henu. Henu reached the Red Sea by the Hammamat road and then sailed down to Somaliland and returned laden with incense, gum and myrrh.

Amenemhat I, the prime-minister of Sankhkara, founded the 12th Dynasty. As to the historicity of the rulers of this line we are somewhat on surer ground. The lists are fairly in agreement with one another regarding their statements about these kings.

The kings of this dynasty were energetic and Egypt enjoyed a period of unprecedented peace and prosperity. Amenemhat III reclaimed a whole province in the Fayyum and regulated the flow of water in and out of Lake Moiris. On the slopes of the tomb-hill of the kings were buried the functionaries of state, stewards, physicians, and retainers of various ranks, each, like his lord, with his own funerary state of great rectangular wooden coffins and the models of servants and boatmen which were supposed to turn into ghostly

ministrants in the underworld. The security of the problematic other world must rest indeed on certain destruction of human and other living beings!

The affluence and majesty of the 12th Dynasty is marked by the great temples its rulers built at Karnak, Heliopolis, Bubastis, Koptos, and at Herakleopolis. Colossal statues of kings adorned the fanes and served for motifs for later monarchs to copy and emulate. Senusert I was a great builder and he erected the first splendid obelisks in Egypt. Greek historians have waxed eloquent over the famous labyrinth at Hawara which is but a funerary temple built by Amenemhat III in front of his pyramid containing numerous halls and corridors.

The epoch of the 12th Dynasty was noted particularly for its commercial expeditions. Caravans by land and ships by sea traversed land and sea alike in search of commercial goods and barterable commodities. The east, south, west and north lay at the doors of Egypt through her intrepid expeditionists and sailors. No wonder that the land grew rich as never before and there was ample wealth to be spent on the splendour of buildings.

The dynasty also waged successful wars against the Nubians and added power and glory to the memorable line of rulers. Amenemhat III's reign marks the culmination of the Middle Kingdom. Two monarchs that followed him hardly deserve mention. They hastened the fortunes of the illustrious house down the road to ruin. They passed power to the rulers of the 13th Dynasty, hardly better than themselves, who in the gathering gloom of the approaching misfortune submitted to the Hyksos and entered abys.

The Hyksos Kings

Hyksos kings, whom the Egyptians called Shepherd kings out of spite, were indeed Syrian Canaanites.

The conquest was complete due to the dissensions of the Egyptian rulers. Another significant incident that changed the fortunes of war was the new method of warfare that the invaders introduced in their battles. This was the war-chariot and its horses. Horses, domesticated in Iran and introduced in western Asia by Iranians, replaced asses in chariots and changed the shape of fighting. Egyptians themselves later employed horse-drawn chariots in Palestine and elsewhere to their advantage.

The Hyksos were cruel and unsparing to their enemies. They sacked and burnt their cities and temples and drove women and children into captivity. They conquered both Memphis and Thebes and collected revenue from Lower and Upper Egypt with great force and hardship. These kings stayed behind their strongly garrisoned fastness-towns and emerged only to lead expeditions and to exact hated tributes.

Manetho preserves a list of the most notorious of the pillaging barbarians. The most important of them was perhaps Senserenra Khian who ruled as a great pharaoh and dedicated statues of himself in the temple of Bubastis. He must have been a great overlord for relics bearing his name have been discovered at places far apart, from Baghdad in Iraq and Knossos in Crete.

The Hyksos ruling later than about 1650 B. C. became completely Egyptianized. They adopted full pharaonic titles and dignity, worshipped Egyptian gods and built temples for them. Some new elements of religion like the veneration of the naked goddess Ishtar and the Syrian winged sphinx made their appearance in Egypt now. Although there were at times risings against the usurpers, the latter always suppressed them and having completely overrun the country ruled it with an iron hand.

Among the Theban kings of the 13th Dynasty the best known was Nub-kheper-Ra. He was perhaps the greatest enemy of the Hyksos rule and his inscription in the temple of Min at Koptos denounces the officials who surrendered to the Hyksos and received the hated enemies in the temple. He caused depredations in the territories of the Hyksos but could not conquer the land of his fathers from them.

With Maa-ab-Ra and others the first Hyksos Dynasty (the 15th) came to an end. A new and more energetic 16th Dynasty with Nekara Khian and Apep II ascended to power and subjugated the whole of the south.

The Hyksos, however, had throughout their rule in Egypt been hated as usurping foreigners and revolts against them were never wanting. A war of liberation was fought sometime between 1620 and 1573 B.C. The final revolt came, as usual, from the south. It is recorded that a long and bloody war was fought and Misphegmos (Aahmes) finally expelled them. Kings having Sekenenra as their names assumed full royal titles to the defiance of the Hyksos and the war of liberation began in full swing. Sekenenra III was killed in battle, and was succeeded by a son of twelve, named Kames. The death of the king gave indeed a setback to the liberation movement for a while but it gained vigour as young blood ascended the scene of affairs. Kames and his brothers one after another took up the challenge, fought the foreigners and met their end probably on the field of battle. At last when a third brother Nebpehtira, the youngest of them, mounted the crest of battle, the war was won. Memphis was captured, the Hyksos were crowded out of the land and Egypt was liberated. The liberator then founded a new the 18th Dynasty.

The Restoration and the Empire

The new times indeed proved great in Egyptian history. Vigorous rulers of the 18th Dynasty, which Nebpehtira Aahmes I founded, proved great at home and greater abroad for only half a century after expelling the Hyksos, they were warring on Asiatic land. The dynasty now entered on its epoch of imperial greatness and marked the First Empire in Egypt. The Hyksos were broken and flying, bringing war and confusion into Palestine in their train. Kassites had weakened Babylonia by their rule and the Hittites had not yet penetrated far to the south. Western Asia lay open to the manoeuvres of a chance adventurer. Thothmes I, the second successor of Aahmes, seized the opportunity, crossed to the north and overran Palestine and Syria. And this was no inroad like the raids of the Egyptian kings of the 12th or 6th Dynasties but conquests that held forth. Egypt was now opening a new chapter, one of imperial glory. This new era of conquest affords infinitely interesting incidents to the historian and luckily his way to them does not lie in the dark for no period of Egyptian history is so resplendent with records as this. The famous Tell el-Amarna letters belong to this period and throw a flood of light on the events of the 15th century B.C.

The Anatolian Hittites were beyond the Taurus, the Aryan Mitannis far to the north-east, the Kassites absorbed in home affairs, and the land of Lebanon and the wealthy cities of Syria between the Amanus Mountains and the Euphrates, Damascus already enjoying early fame among them, lay naked to the rapacious thrusts of the Egyptian ambition. Thothmes I rode down to the bank of the Euphrates which river he fixed as the northern boundary of his empire.

But the Syrian and other Asian barons were not easily to be denied their freedom and their suppression

was to be weighed against the strength of the army that Egypt could afford to keep on the bank of the Euphrates. The Egyptian queen Hatshepsut, despite her bravado and masculine attire, was, after all, a woman given to the luxuries of the harem and was naturally more interested in the glory of commercial and exploratory expeditions nearer home, or, at any rate, in what the danger of warfare listed least than in donning the battle habit. Her half-brother Thothmes languished in his inactive state of warlessness and fretted in silence while enemies on the Euphrates federated and mustered strong for a trial of strength with a country whose royal reins were held in the tender fingers of a slim woman.

At last the queen died and Thothmes III ascended the throne, which he had been only sharing with her until now, and assumed undivided power. For most of the period of his rule the emperor kept on campaigning and his epigraphical record on the wall of the corridor of the great temple of Amen in Karnak, the most graphic of the Egyptian records, details the incidents of his continuous punitive and predatory engagements.

Thothmes crossed the desert year after year to the land of the enemies abroad and made them lick the dust of their own soil. As many as seventeen military expeditions to western Asia were undertaken by him most of which have found detailed mention in the inscription. Tributes, rich and varied, poured into the royal coffers of Egypt. Enemies organized revolt after revolt but the strong hand of the Egyptian monarch dealt the necessary blow to scatter the confederation of the foes. March against one organized by the king of Kadesh has been very vividly described by the records. The enemy lay at Megiddo awaiting the arrival of the Egyptian army. While in the town of Yeham the latter argued against the chances of a march on the enemy who had taken position on

the ridge which connects Carmel with Samaria and separates the plain of Sharon from that of Esdraelon, the plain beckoned to the Egyptian monarch to march on, which he did. Horse behind horse, they marched, man behind man, in Indian file, and compelled the foe to seek shelter within the fortress which was later reduced. Campaign followed campaign, hostages followed hostages, in order to keep the vanquished to their knees, but the spirit could not be broken of those levelled low for a time in western Asia. Booty and spoils weighed heavy with the victors, honour and freedom heavier with the vanquished. Tributes came from the banks of the Euphrates, from the Kassites, from the land of Kadesh on the Orontes and from Crete, but the spirit of the rebels could not be broken. Euphrates, any way, continued to be the boundary and the empire of Thothmes III reached the outskirts of the land of the Mitannis and the Taurus, of course not a very peaceful one, all the same of dimensions unprecedented in Egyptian history.

The task of administering such vast possessions was not easy and to the same Thothmes addressed himself now.

The Organization of the Empire

The great king held his vast dominions by means of a number of garrisoned fastnesses and spheres governed by deputies and illustrious officials of state. One such, Tahutia or Thutii, administered the far off Naharin and Phoenicia and the neighbouring islands. Besides keeping the intransigent princes within their prescribed loyal bounds, these governors collected and remitted regularly to the imperial exchequer rich tributes from their provincial sway. Gold and silver, sapphire and lapis-lazuli poured into the coffers of state from the grand marches of the empire.

A novel measure that Thothmes adopted to hold the ends of his empire foreshadowed the Roman and

British inventions of later history. The Romans took the German and Thracian chiefs to Rome, made them Romans who aped Roman manners and kept the state of their rigid masters. So also did the British by founding colleges and public schools in India to train little native princes and chieftains, whose training completed in England, they proved the bulwark of the empire. Thothmes was the original inventor of this grand method. Sons and brothers of ruling chieftains were torn from their distant defying fortresses and were borne away to Thebes. As hostages they ensured, in the first instance, the good conduct of their ruling relations and by the time they repatriated to their native lands to succeed to their respective heritage they had been completely Egyptianized and rendered utterly incapable of taking field against their erstwhile masters. The expanding harem of the Egyptian monarch further cemented the process as the royal lady adding to the list brought affection to bear on the relentless feuds and, if not the contemporaneous, the generation that followed effected without doubt a cohesion of humane ties between the parties.

The genius of Thothmes III built up the first Egyptian Empire which the magnificence of Amenhetep consolidated and raised to a state of unforeseen splendour. Local authority had been wielded by powerful feudal families during the rule of the kings prior to XII Dynasty. It was fairly supreme even during the early years of that Dynasty but slowly it waned and came to be concentrated in the hands of later monarchs. As the lure of conquest, however, carried them away from Egypt, power had to be shared of necessity. There had been the office of the Vizier, that of the Tjate, or 'Man pre-eminent,' to whose charge the pre-occupied king now left the government of the metropolis and the police control. But he was the Vizier of the Southern regions alone with headquarters at Thebes. Later, one with like powers was appointed for the North also with his seat at Memphis. From

the tomb inscription of Rekhmara and the Tell el-Amarna letters it is evident that he was the first Minister of state also responsible for dispensing justice. He was, besides, the superintendent of the collection of all taxes although he had no control over them.

They were received, treasured and spent on the pleasure of the king. The Treasurer was thus another important functionary of state. The Chamberlain seems to have wielded ample authority and his proximity to the monarch, who was as much divine as human, naturally afforded him uncommon power.

The centre and fountain of all authority, however, was the king himself. He could not be out-riden in any way. He was supreme in the internal affairs of the state (appointing and dismissing at pleasure all the important officials of his government and administering the revenues of the state as he thought best) as also in foreign relations for he ordered his forces forth into the field and, as their supreme commander, led them against the enemy. Being a priest to the gods, he added a divine character to his temporal power. Slowly, however, there arose a formidable rank of powerful priests who were helped to assume their station of vantage in ecclesiastical affairs as in politics by Thothmes III. Amen was the supreme god and his priest the supreme officer.

Successors of Thothmes

Thothmes was succeeded about 1447 B.C. by Amenhetep II, his son, an incomparable soldier and a man of majestic built. His stern portliness bore the strength of a bull but he never over-reached the bounds of stately wisdom. He disdained cruelty as he abhorred rebellion. He would not go to war for mere conquest but likewise would not unsheathe his sword until he had brought the rebels to their knees and made them lick the dust if they had the daring

to revolt. Lebanon rose against him and was made to taste the sharpness of his blade. By hurried marches the youthful monarch crossed the desert, overthrew the enemy and stamped out revolt. Then he battled across the Euphrates and subdued the Mitanni princes bearing Aryan names. Artatama gave his daughter in marriage to Thothmes IV, the successor of Amenhetep, and Dushratta became a faithful friend and close correspondent of Amenhetep III. The empire from the seat of the friendly Mitanni beyond the Euphrates to the Third Cataract of the Nile knew no disaffection until Amenhetep was laid in his grave.

Thothmes IV followed next on the throne of Egypt. He was the first Egyptian potentate to marry the daughter of an alien ruler, Artatama, the chief of the Mitannis. He died young at the age of thirty and was succeeded by his son Amenhetep III. The latter preferred to marry an Egyptian lady but continued to favour the Mitanni house for he took from it two wives one after another, first Gilukhipa, daughter of king Shutarna, and then her niece Tadukhipa, daughter of Dushratta. He, however, never gave them the status of the chief queen but only that of the auxiliary beauties of the harem, flames that might illumine the prospect without burning the skin.

The history of the times is recovered from the famous Tell el-Amarna letters of Middle Egypt. They bear numerous records, letters and despatches incised in cuneiform characters on clay tablets revealing to us inter-state activities during the middle of the second millennium B.C. To this priceless hoard of letters and to the epigraphical records in the Egyptian temples are added the invaluable documents, excavated at Boghaz Kyoï in Asia Minor, enriching our knowledge of the contemporary international politics. The letters are exceedingly human and where they are addressed by the Mitanni king Dushratta to Amenhetep and the queen, they have become exceptionally touching

and affectionate. Those received on the succession of Amenhetep IV to his father's possessions and harem—it was normal for Egyptian royal heirs to succeed as much to the inferior queens of their father, their stepmothers, as to his material riches—are profuse in their condolences. Among other writers of these letters and despatches were Assyrian, Babylonian and Hittite princes. It is evident from these letters that Egyptian kings were on the best of terms with the Khatti, Kassite, Assyrian, Mitanni and Hittite rulers of Western Asia. Gold and precious gems flowed freely from one state to another as friendly tokens, tributes and bribes, for many a time a revolt had to be met with payment of gratuity. The Canaanites were generally in revolt, plundering Babylonian and Egyptian caravans wherever advantageous and the Hittites camouflaged their designs through letters of loving assurances while they made bloody inroads whenever chances of vulnerability admitted them to the east and south-east of the Taurus.

The southern points of the Egyptian empire were penetrating deeper into the heart of the continent. During previous reigns the bounds had reached the "Pure Mountain," to the Nubian town of Napata, which had become the southern centre of the diffusion of Egyptian culture, Amenhetep III carried his arms right down to the "Springs of Horus," perhaps the Sixth Cataract, a distance of a month's sailing from Napata. Upper Nubia thus came directly under the sway of the Empire and thither Amenhetep III erected his splendid colonnaded temples as Amenhetep II and Thothmes IV had done in Lower Nubia. Noble colonnades were added to the great Temple of Luxor at Thebes beckoning to the tired traveller of the desert to that sole retreat of civilization in that sea of arid waste. He called his temple after himself, *Kha-maat*, 'on a par with Maat', the goddess of Right and Law, and installed his own statue to be worshipped while he was still alive, unlike the current usage.

Amenhetep IV—Akhenaten

Amenhetep III had been a magnificent figure. So was his queen the illustrious Tii, a woman of uncommon power and political stature in that ancient world. Their son was Amenhetep IV on whom the judgement of history has fallen in a queer way. Some historians have adjudged him mad like the Tughlak king of India, Muhammad the visionary; others have accorded him a brilliant intellect.

Brilliant Amenhetep IV indeed was, and if an Alexander or a Sankara can be credited with uncommon genius for having accomplished extraordinary feats of valour or mind before the age of thirty, Amenhetep's achievement fell well within this range of age. He died about twenty-five when he had already declared his rebellious faith a decade earlier. He founded his new religion when he was barely fifteen. Great insight was needed to see what he saw, greater courage to say what he said. Christ had to pay with his blood for what he saw and said, the Prophets before him had to pass into bondage for the same, and, much later, the great seer of the desert had to seek asylum in an unfriendly city, but Amenhetep died a king, and a natural death defying the knife of the murderer and the noose of the bigot.

Centuries before the official doctrine of monotheistic philosophy was registered among concepts and advanced by philosophers, Amenhetep had preached it. He refused to believe in a plurality of gods or in a dismal divinity of death. He preferred to worship life and the brilliant effulgent cause of life, the sun-disk. Then again not the mere sun-disk as a frightened savage but the divine and conscious single pervasive power behind it. This was a brilliant idea. True the Prophets later talked about a Jehova who had been a singular god even to their forefathers, but the same was vague, while again it cannot be traced in its singleness of pur-

pose to the time anterior to Amenhetep. This boy of fifteen founded his doctrine in the first quarter of the 14th cy. B. C., before the Dorian Greeks had swooped down the rocky plains of the Olympian gods, before Troy had risen to eminence, before the great battle of Mahabharata had been fought, indeed long before Zarathushtra, Buddha, Confucius and Lao Tzu had preached their faith. His was without doubt the first doctrinaire in history.

Born of a stately father and a majestic mother he inherited the genius of both, but in a different way. He came to the throne a child and for a few years had to live under the strain of the regency of that brilliant queen Tii and per force of circumstances had to accept the feminine control of a masterly woman. Born in purple of a luxurious art-loving father and an energetic, perhaps an Aryan or semi-Aryan mother, all the requisites for the creation of a striking and abnormal character were present. A boy of absolutely original brain, untrammelled by consideration of traditions or usage, his genius had full play. Insensate and oblivious to everything else but his own 'truth', he preached his heresy and stood courageously by it.

The reaction was immense and disastrous for the great and formidable priests arose against him. The sun had been worshipped before but only as one of several gods and now he alone was to hold the field to the complete negation of the rest. Undeterred by consequences the young king carried the process of Atenizing the land. Temples in Egypt and Palestine of the Sun-disk were built, names of other gods were erased to make room for the new one and he himself underwent a new christening and assumed a new name, Akhenaten, 'Pleasing to the Sun-Disk.'

Unlike his father, Akhenaten was a man of peace and refused to go on expeditions of conquest in the Asian lands. He even refused to go out of his capital

and from there, in pursuit of his faith he declared war on the exceptionally oppulent priests of Amen and gods fattened on gold and land and cattle and on all the hosts of supporters of the old gods and of the ancient regime. The fury of the priests of Amen had no bounds; the bitterness of the soldiers and statesmen, who saw the genius and industry of the bygone ages thus dissipated by the caprice of a boy, called him mad and rushed against him; the Egyptian masses lashed to action by the frenzied fury of the priests and nobles in unrelenting hatred nicknamed him the 'Criminal of Akhetaten'. But Akhenaten bore the brunt with courage and his intrepidity and application triumphed. The first casualty to the faith was his own sister Nefretiti whom he had married five years earlier, the nobles of the court were the next and next to them those who seemed to see light. His cause triumphed and he died a natural death. His own poetical composition inscribed on the walls of the Tell el-Amarna tombs proclaim in beautiful hymns the tenets of his faith which sound so singularly Upanishadic.

Amenhetep IV, Akhenaten, was one of those men who do not leave male heirs behind. He had six issues but all daughters, and he was succeeded by a short-lived shadow, Smenkhkara, on the Egyptian throne. The light that went out in that desert was never sought to be revived but to the historian to whom nothing dies, this reviler of the ancient faith, this preacher of heresy, this insane Akhenaten was indeed the first doctrinaire of history.

The Successors of Akhenaten (C. 1362-1321 B. C.)

Smenkhkara, a son-in-law and successor of Akhenaten, was soon followed on the Egyptian throne by Nebkheperura Tutenkhamen, a better known figure, whose tomb has yielded an enormous quantity of gold. Tutenkhamen, himself perhaps a son of Amenhetep III by an inferior wife, married the third daughter of

Akhenaten. He began his reign as an Atenite but he soon returned with his court to the older religion. He even attempted to complete the colonnade in the temple of Amen at Luxor.

Tutenkhamen ruled for about a decade and was followed by Ai, originally a priest officer, soon supplanted by Horemheb after a short reign of five years. Horemheb had first been the 'Mayor of the Palace' and later the Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian forces. It was through his help and influence that Ai had succeeded to the throne and perhaps it was to him again that he owed his deposition.

Horemheb was a fanatical devotee of Amen and he completed the restoration to the orthodox faith. This rigidly conservative monarch is a singularly dull and uninteresting figure in Egyptian history. He was however, a soldier, with some organizing ability, for he is credited with the promulgation of a revised code of laws on a stele in the temple of Karnak. He ruled for more than two decades and closed the 18th Dynasty.

The 19th Dynasty

About 1320 B. C. a new dynasty, the 19th, came to capture power in Egypt. It was founded by Rameses I who ascended the throne of Horemheb. The family was probably of Lower Egyptian origin although Thebes continued to be the national capital.

The dynasty sought to revive the supremacy of Egypt over western Asia and came into sharp collision with the Hittites who held sway over most of that region. Rameses I, the founder of the family, was not destined to rule long and soon left the sceptre to his son Seti I. Seti marched into Palestine against Mursil the Hittite and recovered that province. He, however, desisted from further war and devoted his energies to nation-building activities at home. The

most important of them was the erection of a great royal funerary temple at Abydos. The architecture of the temple is commonplace but the sculptured reliefs are of the first order. It registers the high watermark in that kind of Egyptian art. The famous Hypostyle Hall begun by his father was mainly built by him although completed by his successor, Rameses II. The solemn structure was matchless in majesty and magnificence.

Rameses II next followed on the throne of Egypt about 1300 B. C. and enjoyed one of the longest reigns in Egyptian history. His greatness has been miscalculated for he ill-deserved the title 'Great'. He was a great self-aggrandizer and he lost no opportunity to bring his name into display by inscribing it after erasing others', or by attaching his own statues to temples that he restored. His most ambitious work was a gigantic structure bearing ugly pillars and a colossus of himself. It is generally known as the Ramesseum. On its exterior are depicted scenes of the numerous wars that he waged. The most important of these lasted for about fifteen years and was fought against the Hittites. It was concluded by a treaty and marked the decline of Egyptian power which could not be arrested despite the efforts of such energetic monarchs as Rameses III and Shishak. Rameses II died about 1234 B. C.

Before passing on to other events mention must be made of the admirable text of the treaty which is one of the most remarkable diplomatic documents of antiquity. This was the first instance in human history when an attempt was made to adjust international relations through literary documents preserved in royal archives. Such documents were not entirely unknown among the political transactions of Asian princes—for example, between the rulers of Babylon and Assyria—but this one is the lone instance of its kind preserved to this day on the walls of Karnak and

the Ramesseum in Egypt and —part of the cuneiform original draft—among the clay archives of Boghaz Kyoi in Asia Minor. The document is a rare specimen of order and logic and its wording strikes a most modern note.

The parties are placed on a footing of perfect equality. The protocol declares with uncommon equanimity that "There shall be no hostilities between them, for ever. The great chief of Kheta shall not invade the land of Egypt, for ever, to take anything therefrom, and Rameses—Meriamen, the great prince of Egypt, shall not invade the land of Kheta, to take anything therefrom, for ever."

Then follows the clause which reiterates the former treaties without recapitulating them. A few clauses deal with the important topics of extradition of political fugitives and of common emigrants from one country to the other anticipating the principle of international law that no man can change his country or his allegiance at his own will.

After the clause bearing divine witnesses there follows the final paragraph containing a description of Hittite figures and some seals including those of the contracting Hittite King Khattusil and his queen Pudukhipa.

What followed the conclusion of the treaty registers another specimen of international accord and amity during those remote times. Pudukhipa, the Hittite queen, received a letter from the queen of Rameses, Nefertari, expressing her delight at the restoration of peace. The peace did last throughout the reigns of both monarchs.

Thirteen years after the signing of the treaty, the friendship of Egypt and Khatti (Hittite) was reaffirmed by the marriage with Rameses of a Hittite princess,

daughter of Khattusil and Pudukhipa. The Hittite emperor made an even unprecedented state visit to his brother-monarch bringing in his train his daughter and vassals, and an immense amount of presents in gold and silver. He journeyed in winter, much to the astonishment of the Egyptians, in spite of snow in the passes of Taurus and rain among the hills of Palestine. While wishing godspeed to the departing Anatolians Rameses expressed the hope that they would not meet with snow and ice in the northern passes on their way back.

Meneptah succeeded Rameses II after the latter's death and ruled for about a decade. Of the two important events of his reign one was his successful campaign in Palestine and the other his breaking of the confederacy of the 'Northerners coming from all lands' that invaded Egypt.

After the death of Meneptah anarchy followed anarchy for a space of thirty years. Three kings ruled Egypt one after another, the last being Seti II. When he died throwing the land of the Nile into chaos and confusion, a Syrian adventurer captured the kingdom which was finally rescued by Setnekht. His son, Rameses III, bears a great name in Egyptian history. He sought to emulate Rameses II in every detail.

Rameses III's accession to throne, however, was symbolic of the last flicker of a dying flame. It spelt vigour, however. To the incessant wars of the two centuries and a half since the invasion of Thothmes I had succeeded a peace (concluded by the Hittite-Egyptian treaty between Khattusil and Rameses II), a slumber of exhaustion, which was now brought to an end when the reign of Rameses III awakened his people to the realities of war and conflict. Egypt was aroused from her torpor and assumed her stature once more, imposing and splendid, till the artificial revival of Rameses III collapsed under his successors,

and the empire fell into final decay. His model was far too inferior to his own genius but he preferred to toe the line and echo the empty vaunts of his great namesake.

The conflict opened with an invasion by the Libyans and Mediterranean tribes. Twice did they make their attempt and twice they were driven back into Libya. A third danger came from the east but the king beat it back. He saw that a vigorous offensive was the best defence. Advancing by sea and land along the coast towards Palestine, he fell with ships and chariots upon the barbarian host and inflicted upon it a complete victory. "They were dragged, capsized, and laid low upon the beach; slain and made heaps from stem to bow of their ships. And all their belongings were cast upon the waters."

In one particular instance, however, Rameses III did not imitate his prototype; he embarked on no wars of aggression. He left Egypt peaceful and wealthy, wealthier perhaps than ever before. His records relate of endless riches in corn, gold and silver which he shared in common with the gods, a sad reflection indeed on the condition of the people who must have suffered the pangs of poverty amidst plenty, for the wealth of Egypt meant the wealth of its monarchs. No wonder that his old age was troubled, howsoever little, by a harem conspiracy of menial servants and mercenaries. Rameses III died fairly old and was succeeded by his numerous sons one after another, all bearing his name.

The last of the Ramessides was Rameses XI who ended his royal career about 1100 B.C. Ever since the death of Rameses III the Egyptian Empire had been tottering to a fall and the wealth, prestige and power of the priests had been growing enormously through the endless endowments and gifts of the pharaohs. Ultimately Herihor, the high-priest,

quietly assumed the crown when Rameses XI died, closing with him the 20th Dynasty. One Priest-king followed another on the southern throne while the North became independent under a new house. The record of the 21st Dynasty, which came to an end about 945 B. C., is one of power rotating between the North and the South, now divided now combined. The Egyptian Empire had ceased to exist.

The Last Phase

The record of the rule of the following dynasties, right down to the last, was one of gathering gloom. An energetic king like Sheshenk (Shishak) tried occasionally to save the situation by breathing life into the nostrils of dying Egypt, but nothing could arrest her downward march. Three thousand years are even otherwise no mean length of life for any nation and Egypt had lived her day. Decay and death were her natural destiny. Ten dynasties, 22nd to 31st (of which two were foreign), had yet to rise and fall before Egypt could be finally extinguished as an independent power, first by Alexander and next by the Romans.

New powers kept on rising and crossing swords with the decrepit old giant and all spoils of adventure on the West Asian soil meant a strip cut out from Egypt's Asian possessions. Her frontiers went on shrinking as younger nations in the north became restive and ambitious and soon Egypt possessed nothing beyond her geographical boundaries. She was politically paralysed.

And yet a reference to the passing events that thread her story of incompetence and infirmity through occasional bursts of ambition to her final extinction will not be out of place here. The following pages relate the stages of her decline and ultimate disappearance into oblivion.

Sheshenk or Shishak founded the 22nd Dynasty after the death of Psusennes II. He was a successful military adventurer of Libyan descent who shifted his capital from Tanis to Bubastis. For over a century the kingdom of Egypt had been governed from two centres by two monarchs. Sheshenk at once joined the two crowns and terminated the theocratic rule by appointing his son as High-Priest. Sheshenk's triumphant march into Palestine was recorded on the walls of Karnak. The great Solomon was his senior contemporary in Palestine and Sheshenk awaited his opportunity which afforded itself five years after the death of that Jewish potentate. This was almost an attempt to revive the west Asian Egyptian Empire. Another attempt was made by his son Osorkon I, the successor of Sheshenk. The expedition was overwhelmed and the attempt proved singularly abortive.

The rest of the kings of the family were mere names. One of them, Osorkon II, however, is credited to have built a magnificent 'Festival Hall' at Bubastis to commemorate his *Sed* festival. During his rule a new danger threatened Egypt. The Assyrians were building up their great empire and while their king Shalmaneser was measuring swords with his opponents at Karkar, he sent a trepidation through his Egyptian contemporaries and annexed Syria and Palestine.

The 23rd Dynasty was contemporary with the 22nd from about 850 B. C. The two houses fought a war which ended in the defeat of the former. The 23rd Dynasty had its capital at Thebes. After some time the kingdom north of Siut split into a dozen or more principalities and the rulers of the important ones assumed regal titles. They were all princes of the Bubastite family. In course of time an independent prince of Libyan descent and holding the region on the western border of the desert soon got ascendancy over all of them. This was Tefnakht who soon conquered the entire Delta, and, establishing himself at

Memphis; he even essayed to subjugate the remaining parts of Egypt. Piankhi, the southern overlord, was ruling at Napata. He received representations from his vassals and had to send an army against Tefnakht. The conflict opened at Per-pegā, near Herakleopolis, where a great battle was fought. It ended in the defeat of the northern confederates. Piankhi moved north reducing cities and fortresses and laid siege to Memphis itself and finally invested it while Tefnakht secretly abandoned the city and rode to North. After making his triumphant entry into the capital the conqueror received the submission of all the Delta kings at a solemn ceremony. Tefnakht was captured after a hot pursuit in the marshes. He sent in his submission and was pardoned on his declaring himself a vassal and after taking an oath of allegiance to his overlord. Piankhi returned to Napata in 721 B.C. after appointing his son Shabaka his regent in the North. Then it was that he came in touch with the Assyrian steel a year after when on his instigation Israel revolted against Shalmaneser V, who struck quickly at the rebels, and after his murder Sargon, his successor, brought great consternation to the holy land. Not a soldier came from Egypt.

Shabaka, however, continued his intrigue. As a result Hamath and Damascus, and Samaria and Gaza rebelled against Assyria. Sargon was engaged in Babylonia, but leaving his operations there, he marched forthwith against the rebels, defeated the Syrians at Karkar, and crushed the Philistines and Egyptians at Raphia on the Egyptian frontier. The Ethiopians fled the field and Shabaka showed fair quickness in retreat. Egypt was spared the further humiliation of an attack for she bought off her enemy who was not slow to record this offering of gifts as tributes from the vanquished. Shabaka presently returned to the south, the north again gaining freedom under Tefnakht. Secret negotiations passed to and fro between the Egyptians and the rebels of Palestine on the instiga-

tion of the former. In 711 B. C. Shabaka moved again to North, this time as full-fledged king and overwhelmed the Lower Country burning alive its king Boknrenef (Uahkara, Bokkhoris), the son of Tefnakht.

Shabaka pushed on with his intrigues in Palestine and when Sennacherib, the son and successor of Sargon, ascended the Assyrian throne he found the entire west in revolt. He struck at the rebels soon after and pushed on to Palestine battling across the countries of the west and accepting submissions of broken potentates. Shabaka rushed on to his northern frontiers and sent substantial succour to the rebels of Palestine though he himself failed to take the field against his formidable adversary. Sargon smote and the 'sons of the kings of Musur' disbanded making the best of their way back across the desert to Egypt. Some Ethiopian generals were taken prisoner but the rest found their way back home.

The next Assyrian ruler Esarhaddon was the son of Sennacherib and he resolved to destroy Egypt and thus pay her back for her intrigues during half the previous century. But all Egyptians had such abhorrence for all Asians and could not be held down for long. They would endure no Hyksoses although their vigour had long damped. This fundamental fact the Assyrian emperor missed. The only way to win the Egyptian loyalty was to become Egypt's king, to ascend her throne and to accept her gods. But since this could not be acceptable to Esarhaddon or, later, to Ashurbanipal, the chances of making Egypt an Assyrian province too were lost.

Esarhaddon attacked the frontiers of Egypt in 675 B. C. but nature taking the side of the Egyptians, the invasion did not prosper. A great storm compelled the Assyrian army to withdraw. In the following year the Assyrian legions entered the Delta although no conquest could properly be registered. Three

years later (671 B. C.), however, Egypt was conquered. It was an answer to the Egyptian intrigues in western Asia. Tirhakah was the ruling pharaoh and he fled the field without fighting a single engagement. Although the danger of an Assyrian invasion had always been there, the pharaoh had done nothing to strengthen the national defences. He had been interested only in building temples by fleecing his subjects.

After arranging for an unbroken supply of water in the desert, Esarhaddon crossed the frontier, put the pharaoh to flight and stormed Memphis. Memphis was soon taken and its resistance was revenged by putting the city to the sword. After reducing the Delta and the land round Memphis and accepting the allegiance of the northern kinglets the emperor returned. But no sooner had he left the land of the Nile than Tirhakah descended suddenly like a storm and annihilated the Assyrian garrisons. Memphis at once fell to his might. Esarhaddon on getting the news was furious and essayed to return but was taken ill and died on the way. Egypt was saved from being laid waste.

Ashurbanipal, the mighty son of Esarhaddon, who ascended the Assyrian throne, at once addressed himself to the Egyptian affairs. Tirhakah met him on his frontiers but was again defeated and Memphis was reoccupied. Ships transported the Assyrian army along the water course to Thebes which was taken without resistance. Kinglets and princelings were set up and reinstated all along the route, even at Thebes, where the governor had capitulated.

Tirhakah made yet another attempt to regain his possessions in the North but was beaten back by Assyrian generals and those princelings who had secretly negotiated with him were sent in chains to Assyria. Tanutamun invaded North soon after. Thebes fell, Memphis was taken with great slaughter of the Assy-

rian garrison and the Delta was secured. Ashurbanipal returned like lightning and recovered the Delta. Tanutamoni fled to South following his defeat in Middle Egypt. Thebes was sacked and set on fire by the Assyrian soldiery. Ashurbanipal returned laden with booty dragging countless unfortunate prisoners of war.

Egypt was for the moment laid low with her cities ruined and the temples desecrated and stripped of all their splendour and riches. But within a decade Psamatic, who had been appointed viceroy by Ashurbanipal, led a revolt, freed Egypt from the Assyrian yoke and assumed the Double Crown of Egypt as its rightful pharaoh. He was the founder of a new dynasty, the 26th.

Defeats abroad and want of sound finances compelled the Egyptian leaders in politics to reflect on the past. Lack of money did not permit the rulers even to indulge in the usual pastime of building temples. A return to the past and, as such, to a state of speculative inactivity became the norm. It is usual with degenerate nations to seek to revive the dead glory of the bygone ages and thus to cover the inability to improve the immediate present. It was, however, an attempt at a mere artificial revivification of an old Egypt long passed away, and the effect of the renovation was only to intensify the old age of Egypt, who had but painted her wrinkled face with unreal aids to youth. In fact the revivalist movement which aimed at producing the pre-Empire days had begun during the Ethiopian domination. It started as a fashion of protest against the outmoded and vulgarized culture of the Empire, for the imperial tradition had not, after all, served Egypt who had fallen a prey to the adventures of west Asian militarists. In the bitterness of thralldom the Egyptians turned from the Empire towards the simple old days of the Pyramid-Builders for inspiration. Names and titles of that period returned and were assumed with great patronage and pride, and when

Psamatik I regained independence for Egypt this archaistic crusade was even officially adopted by the state. The renovation naturally was not the harbinger of real renaissance but only ushered in a period of empty vaunt. It must, however, be said that this revivalism and more than that, the combining of the crowns certainly brought in a prosperity never known since the days of the 20th Dynasty.

Psamatik I's son Necho (609-593 B. C.) showed some energy in raising the prestige of Egypt by seeking to re-establish her lost empire in western Asia. He pushed his arms across Palestine and seized the whole of Syria. This was effected with the help of the rebel princes of Assyria. But this was the last flicker of a fast dying flame. Soon the Babylonian ruler moved and at Carchemish where the great prince of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, completely routed him disbanding fully the hosts of Necho. The beaten divisions of the Pharaoh fled to Egypt abandoning all the conquests of the last five years. Nebuchadnezzar hotly pursued the beaten army right down to the borders of Egypt and halted only on hearing the death of his father. Necho on his return gave up all hope of regaining land or influence west of the Euphrates and settled down to maturing his plans of internal development the most important of which was to dig a canal for joining the Nile with the Red Sea.

Necho's successor Psamatik II (593-588 B. C.) was too occupied in Nubia to think of Asia. But his successor mistaking the non-interference of Nebuchadnezzar in western Asia for imbecility, determined to make a bid for empire in Asia. He appeared in Palestine and Phoenicia and captured Sidon and Tyre. Nebuchadnezzar, struck by the insolence of the Pharaoh, moved westward like lightning. While his armies operated in the South, he himself appeared before Ribla but the Pharaoh hastened back to Egypt by sea. Piece by piece the Babylonian conqueror subjugated the

Egyptian possessions in Asia. The foreign predilections had made the Egyptian king so hopeful to the people that they were even prepared to dethrone him. The dethronement, however, could not be effected although one of the nobles called Amasis managed to get control over the actual government of the country. The Pharaoh attacked him but was himself defeated and slain and Amasis assumed the royal power. There is evidence to show that Nebuchadnezzar entered Egypt and pushed as far South as the First Cataract.

While Egypt had been endeavouring to assume the rosy colour of youth and put on false pretences of rejuvenation, Babylonia and Persia, and a little earlier Assyria, were exulting in the glory of real youth. After Assyria Chaldaea with her capital at Babylon, and, last of all, Persia made a bid for power in the western world and the glory of the Medes and Persians seemed to have come to stay. This was a new power, the Aryan, appeared on earth which was now successfully combating for hegemony everywhere. In India the Aryans had long closed the urban civilization of Indus Valley and had erected their own rural structure on its debris. In Greece too centuries ago the Dorian Aryans had crushed the Cretan culture and established their own city-states. Last of all came the Medes who established themselves in the highlands of Iran and from there swooped down the plains of Mesopotamia. This was the Aryan power now rising to measure swords with the Simitic and Hametic rulers in the western world. The sun of the Simitic and Hametic power had set and the dawn of the Iranian Aryans was breaking in the east.

When Kurush conquered Babylonia, Amasis the Pharaoh never disputed his claim for he knew too well that Egypt could not possibly resist the nascent Persia. Even otherwise Egypt had become inert. When Cambujiya prepared to put through the Achaemenid plan of conquering Egypt, the latter lay fascinated in a

state of coma unable to defend herself and as though waiting to submit to her new master. No resistance whatever was offered except by a few Greek hirelings. A small engagement was fought at Pelusium, when Psamatik III gave battle to the Persian monarch. Some of the Egyptians went over to the Persian side, a great number were massacred and the rest fled with the king to Memphis. Memphis was taken and the deposed Pharaoh was carried to Asia where he was later put to death. Kambujiya never repeated the mistake of the Assyrian conquerors by contemptuously declining to accept the Egyptian throne, sceptre and the gods but appropriated them all and became a full-fledged Pharaoh. Kambujiya proceeded next to reduce Nubia and Napata where independent rulers had been ruling ever since Tanutamoni had retired from Egypt. The expedition of Kambujiya could not prosper although the Nubian kingdom was considerably shaken by the violent contact. The Persian conquest of Egypt came about in 525 B. C.

Kambujiya hastened home to put down a revolt leaving the charge of Egypt to his Satrap Aryandes. But the king died on the way and Darius ascended the throne of Persia. During the upheaval in Persia the Satrap Aryandes had revolted and assumed the royal dignity. Darius entered Egypt in 517 B. C., and the Satrap submitted at once to his lord. Darius also ascended the Egyptian throne and was accepted like Kambujiya by the conquered people as their Pharaoh. His rule in Egypt was marked by peaceful activity and important monuments were erected which do credit to his regime. The enlightened Persian rule came to an end following the smash at Issus (333 B. C.) of the host of Darius III by Alexander the Macedonian, when he marched on Egypt in 332 B. C.

Egypt first formed a province of the vast empire of Alexander the Great and later, when the Macedonian conqueror died and his empire was partitioned, the

land of the Nile fell to the share of Ptolemy who established an independent Greek kingdom in Egypt. But the Ptolemies were wise enough to become completely Egyptianized except in name. They accepted the religion and social habits of the land, married their own sisters in the Egyptian manner and their names were recorded in the sacred writings within cartouches. In the first century B. C. Egypt passed from the hands of the romantic queen Cleopatra to those of Octavius Caesar and became a province of the Roman Empire. Egypt, who had made history and dictated the destiny of man for well over thirty-five centuries, now ceased to be free.

2. CIVILIZATION

Egyptian civilization was one of the earliest human achievements. The first beginnings arose during the Neolithic period when Egypt was passing out of barbarism into civilization. Like all Neolithic peoples Egyptians too began to cover the marches of civilization through handicrafts. Pottery fashioned by hand and coloured was frequently of the most exquisite form. Reed mats were plaited and coarse cloth was woven, while the flint implements had no parallel in finish anywhere.

But it is not this aspect of Egypt's civilization which arrests the notice of the historian. It is indeed the outlook on life which shaped most of the peculiar trends of the culture of the Nile. This outlook was rather gloomy and was responsible for all the countless necropolises and imposing pyramids. Take away the pyramids from the count and much of what remains will cease to be of effective interest. The pyramids are the key to the dark mysteries of that land for they contained within them besides the untold riches of millenniums the embalmed mummies and the hieroglyphics, both remarkable achievements of antiquity and both incidents of the ingenuity and power of priestcraft.

The pyramids are imposing structures. Nothing more imposing in antiquity or since is known. They are peculiar to the land of the Nile for they are not temples, not mere tombs either. Tombs of Ur too have attracted interest but they lack the architectural marvel of the Egyptian superstructure and the preservative chemicals that gave such endless life to dead bodies in Egypt. Nor can the Ziggurats—temple structures of solid masonry—of Babylonia compare with the pyramids with their secluded chambers. Egypt does not lack in temples. They are galore and indeed unparalleled specimens of that kind which were erected with such devotion, zeal and fortitude and were endowed with such lavish wealth by generations of kings which again meant such power for the Pharaoh and his priests.

The pyramids bring to our knowledge the very details of life along the banks of the Nile, human glory and misery, love and hatred, legend and history, sciences and arts. They are symbolic of the Lower World, the abode of the dead, where god Osiris held his dismal charge rewarding the souls or condemning them according to their deserts. But souls could not be admitted to the shades unless their erstwhile bodies, their temporal abode in this world have been secured against decay. Without them the souls would wander beyond rest and have no peace. The longer the corpses stay undamaged the surer would the comfort of the souls be. And so human genius racked its brain and strove to explore the objects and the elements around it and beyond the reach of its eye and ultimately accomplished the unimaginable. Man discovered the preservative chemicals, the magic balm, that would secure the dead body against decay for thousands and thousands of years. Mummies are known as old as eight thousand years, not preserved under the unassailable vaults of the pyramids but in ordinary stone cases buried under common earth.

How was it done? Nobody can properly tell and yet the guesses have not been unfruitful. As soon as man was dead his body was attended by a surgeon and priest, both being the same individual, and by an assistant to aid the operation. By a bold incision the rotting properties within the chest and the intestines were taken out and the inside was re-filled with cedar-tree pitch and myrrh and cassia. Then for a period of ten weeks the body was soaked in a solution of natron brought from the desert of Libya. Now the mummy was ready to be wrapped in yards and yards of linen, to be placed in a pretty painted wooden coffin (which was of gold in cases of the king or the rich), and finally to be removed to its final rest in the western desert, among the necropoles of the western hills or in the chamber of a mighty pyramid. It was called a mummy because it was filled with 'mumiai' or pitch. The soul 'went west' for that was the abode of the dead.

The assistant who made the operation was the lowest of the lowly for no common man in Egypt would accept to do violence to a dead body. And he was chosen with care for the responsibility was great. It was found that to some the dead flesh was no less alluring than that alive, and many a time a wretch succumbed to hateful carnality and attempted to violate the body of an attractive girl which had been delivered to his charge for the process of embalming. The practice of leaving the body to such indiscriminate care was discontinued by a royal decree.

The journey of the soul was long and the repose of the body indeed eternal and interminable. The body had to be provided with all the amenities that contemporaneous civilization could afford. All kinds of eatables were interred along with the coffin in the royal chamber of the pyramid and stone effigies of officials and servants, symbolic of the living, were placed by the dead. Furniture of an exceptionally brilliant kind was stored along with innumerable other items of the

human menu and attire. The array of these effects was so alluring that it is no wonder that it incited theft and burglary and there are numerous incidents on record describing how robbers broke into the secluded chamber and carried the mass of golden riches so lavishly stored there. In order to prevent this kind of robbery in antiquity or rather to save the royal mummies from desecration they were removed many a time to convenient necropolises where they could be better guarded. Sometimes we read of most ingenious measures taken to make the mummies immune from the cupidity of man, the most important of these being, for instance, the deceitful labelling of names thus sending the desecrators on the wrong scent. These tombs disclose the wealth in gold and silver which the pharaohs amassed through their military exploits abroad and internal exactions at home. The temples and the pyramids were the chief favourites of this hoarded wealth. The coffin of Tutenkhamen can be instanced as a case in point. Besides a coffin of solid gold, the inner chamber, containing the coffin had walls plated with thick sheets of gold that struck the explorers dumb.

The temples at Memphis, Thebes, Karnak, Luxor and at numerous other sites leave the visitor gaping at their size, glory and architectonic temper. Whereas the pyramids are solid masses of masonry, stupendous delights of their builders, the temples are ornate structures giving us glimpses into the distant past where little man set against the forces of nature could achieve as much. The walls of the pyramids as also those of the temples bear records for the benefit of the posterity and while the former relate the deeds of the dead the latter recount the exploits of the living.

This brings us to the sacred writings, called hieroglyphics technically, which were, besides the discovery of the preservatory chemicals, the other wonder of that ancient world. Coeval with the most ancient writings of India, China and Sumer, perhaps even anterior to

them all in point of time, the art of writing was probably the discovery of the man of the Nile valley. What riches, what endless details, of life lived, of powers shattered, of gains stolen and of life yoked to efforts do these undecaying undying pictures on walls present ! For thirty centuries the secret of writing went on concentrating power in the priest, the most tormenting intermediary between the alive and the dead. The human was so very small and the divine so extremely severe that the interceding priest naturally came to be looked upon as a saviour. For long periods of time he kept the secret of writing, indeed of power, to himself until the same reached the form what the Egyptologists call the Demotic in which most of the later records are inscribed. In course of time when trade by land and commerce by sea, and, ever more than these, human affairs on the affectionate and romantic side developed, the art of writing was shared by the more fortunate of the lay men. Such records and those others depicting incidents of diplomatic relations and genealogical tables of the various Dynasties are preserved on strips of papyrus reed, the earliest type of paper utilized by man.

The gods of the Egyptian world like any other, save the Palestinian, were numerous. Each village and locality had its tutelary deity. The earliest perhaps were the spirits in the trees and in the stones and the Nile, and those who were partly human, partly animal. The most important was, of course, Osiris, the god of the Lower World. His wife was Isis and his son Horus, the sun-god with falcon; and another sun-god was Ra, perhaps a divinity introduced from the Semitic world into the Egyptian pantheon. Ptah, the "Opener", was another such foreign entity that added to the crowd of gods of Egypt. Set was an evil sacred animal-god. Amen, first the patron god of the kings of Thebes later became the king of gods, and great temples were dedicated to him at Karnak. Akhenaten suppressing the worship of numerous gods, established that of one god—Aten, the sun-disk. For the first time in history

was the oneness of God realized. The idea was much in advance of the age and was suppressed. Hathor was perhaps the most important goddess with the head of an ass. To these the pharaoh added his own weight by installing his images in temples and getting them worshipped after his death.

The yield in grains from the land was considerable looking to the narrow strip of the land. Two crops were harvested, one after another, after the flood of the river had receded enriching the soil with inches of fertile mud. A system of canals for irrigation also came incidentally to be maintained. Incidentally again the science of Geometry developed from an attempt at keeping and re-marking the boundaries of the holdings in land. The floods again indirectly became the cause of maintaining a calendar, perhaps the earliest in history.

But how did the people themselves live—those builders of the great pyramids who brought tons of weight of stone from the western mountains and lifted thousands of tons of weight on their bare bones aloft into the sky, raised the crops, fought and won battles for their kings, braved the dangers of the sea and the desert to acquire gold for their lord? They were paupers amidst plenty. They rose as the streak of red appeared on the horizon of the desert and went out to till their fields and went to bed as the light died behind the western hills. Between the twilights they toiled and plodded across the day without hope or fulfilment, without chances of recompense and died as uncared as they had lived. The pictures of man that have been preserved in the hieroglyphics give him a bare strip of cloth across the loin which is certainly not much for one who worked the elements and raised the wealth of the land. Osiris was as severe with him after death as Horus had been in life, for his journey across the gloom was gloomier still, in the absence of the funerary articles so abjectly denied while living.

CHAPTER II

MESOPOTAMIA

1. SUMER

Geography

Mesopotamia is the 'land lying between the two rivers', Euphrates and Tigris. It is now wholly covered by the kingdom of el-Iraq. We can divide this country into two parts, the lower South and the upper North. Roughly the lower South would be Babylonia (the plain of Shinar) and the upper North the uplands of Assyria lying mostly to the east of the Tigris.

Above the combined courses of the Euphrates and Bhatt-el-Hayy (the Snake River), an arm of the Tigris, Sabylonia proper begins. To the south-west of this dead-flat alluvial plain lies the Arabian Desert and to the north-east the mountain-barrier. Except for a little gypsum near the Persian Gulf, the plain is completely devoid of stone; there is not a pebble on its face. Between the rivers, along their courses and where canals have been dug from them the soil is exceedingly fertile. Its summer and winter crops of wheat, corn, barley, spelt and sesame are plenty. But in summer the south wind is scorching, although it is not without advantages for it ripens the dates. Beyond the reach of the rivers and their canals the land is drab covered with yellow-grey sand over which the mirage dances and blazes. Beyond the crops every other necessity of life was imported by the ancient Babylonians. They got, for example, their stone from Assyria and Arabia, their timber from Lebanon and the Amanas, their gold, silver and lead from Asia Minor and their copper from Arabia and Persia.

Above Baghdad the rocky uplands begin. East of the Tigris stretches Assyria right up to the spurs of the mountains of Kurdistan. Four rivers water the land of Assyria and make it one of the pleasantest countries in the world. Wheat and barley grow in abundance and grapes, olives and apricots are in plenty. In the absence of extreme heat dates cannot be grown.

The Sumerians

The main Semitic empires arose in Mesopotamia between the two waters. The Babylonians and the Assyrians both were builders of empires. But what may seem strange is the fact that their Semitic culture grew out of non-Semitic foundations. The earliest civilized inhabitants of southern Babylonia were the Sumerians, a non-Semitic people. To their habitat they gave the name of Sumer. The Sumerians invented the cuneiform script which was universally used by the Semite Babylonians and Assyrians and by the Aryan Hittites and Mitannis and many others. The language, however, could not remain the same and developed into an agglutinative tongue.

The Sumerians, however, were not the original settlers of the land but were new-comers during those remote and indistinct centuries. It is because of this that their gods bear Semitic looks incidental to the local influence. We are not aware of the stages of development of their civilization for when we first hear of them in the fourth millennium B. C., they are in a state of Minerva born in panoply, already settled in populous cities under a highly organized government. They use metals and a complicated system of writing.

Their culture and non-Semitic nationality extended to the east over Elam. We are not sure, if the Elamites also were Sumerian but they were non-Semitic without doubt. Differing completely in their ethnic type and language from the Semites, Aryans, or others,

Sumerians resembled the Dravidians most in both. A cognate culture flourished contemporaneously in the Indus Valley and was perhaps an elder collateral. Seals originating from that site or at least imitated from Indian motifs have been found in one of the layers of the Sumerian civilization and it is quite possible that some people migrated from the original habitat through Baluchistan and Southern Persia. It may be pointed out that both in Baluchistan and Southern Persia the Dravidian type has been noted. In Baluchistan there is even today a patch of population speaking Brahui, a Dravidian dialect. The Brahuis may be the descendants of the remnants of those that marched through that land. There is one difficulty in accepting this view as final for in that case the Sumerian script should have some affinity with the writing on the seals of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa and should even give some clue to the latter's decipherment which has baffled all attempts so far. Besides, it can be said that the two scripts look so different and that the Indian writing has the appearance of a picture script, although it may equally be argued that it is possible that the Sumerian writing too originally may have been pictographic but in course of time it developed into the hieratic form and the exigency of the clime and the materials of writing used changed it to the 'cuneiform' owing to its being written with a square-ended stylus on soft clay.

Other alternative theories suggested would make Sumerians residents of the Caspian Coast or of Iran. There is no doubt about the fact that their language resembles Turkish in many incidents of construction. The problem of the origin of the Sumerians must as a matter of fact remain undecided for the moment for want of conclusive evidence. We cannot at this stage again decide whether the cities of southern Babylonia were built by the Sumerians themselves or by their Neolithic predecessors. We must not forget, however, that in northern Babylonia too cities existed

simultaneously with those of southern Babylonia. It is usually believed that the Sumerians were the city builders and the Semites of the north also had with their help covered the stages of civilization and built their own cities.

The civilization of Babylonia was originally of the urban type and the monumental finds in the excavations disclose the existence at that early age of a number of cities in Babylonia, both in the south and the north. Ur was the most important of them. Eridu Uruk, Nippur, and Shuruppak were other Sumerian settlements. The cities were generally warring among themselves. We are not sure whether the Sumerian cities ever combined together against the Semitic cities of the north under one king. Perhaps they did some times. We do read in Sumerian legends of very ancient semi-divine rulers of ancient Babylonia to whom fabulously long years of reign have been ascribed.

The Deluge

A most important legend coming from the Sumerian times relates the story of the Deluge which has formed part of the mythological traditions of almost all the ancient peoples of the world. The Deluge covered perhaps the whole of Babylonia reaching as far as the highlands of the North. The recent excavations have uncovered traces of an extensive flood and rushing water over a vast area of the region. Although it may not be sane to look for the Noah's Ark on the uplands of Armenia and Assyria, perhaps it will not be credulous to accept the authenticity of the legend. After all, the tradition was so powerful as to find its way to the mass of legends of all ancient peoples and has indeed to be looked some where for its origin. The greatest possibility for the occurrence of the Deluge is in this region as indicated by the excavations. The Indian version of the story is related in the *Satapatha Brahmana* which cannot be placed anterior to the 8th

century B. C. which is far later than either the occurrence of the Deluge itself sometime about 3200 B. C. or than the first reference to it by Nur-Ninsubur in about the year 1984 B. C.

In that case the recording of the Indian version would fall about twenty-five centuries later which means that it has been lifted from an alien source. This view finds further support from the fact that when closing the narration Manu wishes to perform a thanks-giving sacrifice, he asks for an Assyrian priest (Asura-Brahmana) to officiate at the rites. Certainly this points to the source from where the story was lifted or received. It is interesting that the Sumerian document relating the great event was preserved in the Assyrian cuneiform in the library of the great Assyrian emperor Ashurbanipal. Without doubt the narrator of the *Brahmana* could not have had the chance of deriving his knowledge of the event from the Sumerian source but only from the Assyrian with which he was contemporaneous. It will not be out of place here to give the Sumerian version of the legend.

Shuruppak, one of the cities of ancient Babylonia, was the traditional home of Ziusuddu, the Babylonian Noah, who, with his family, was alone supposed to have survived its destruction by water. The Sumerians believed that the Flood came just before the beginning of written history and did damage over an enormous area and, in particular, destroyed Shuruppak. The Flood which damaged both Uruk and Shuruppak occurred at the end of the Jemdet-Nasr period and may have been the catastrophe referred to in the following account supposed to have been given to one of his descendants (Gilgamesh) by Ziusuddu himself.

"I open unto thee a secret matter, and unto thee even will reveal counsels of the gods. Shuruppak, a city which thyself knowest, which is set on the bank of Euphrates—that city was waxed old; and the gods

within it, great gods—their heart moved them to bring about a deluge...

The Brighteyed Lord, the god Enki, was in converse with them, but he repeated their words, to a reed-hut: 'Reed-hut, reed-hut! Wall, wall! Hear, O reed-hut! Consider, O wall!'

'Man of Shuruppak, son of Ubardudu, pull down the house, fashion a boat, abandon goods, seek after life! Hate property and save life alive! Bring up all seed of life into the midst of the boat.'"

Ziusuddu obeyed, built his ark and entered it with his family taking all seed of life, and set the boat afloat. In the meanwhile a terrible storm broke out and the terrified people saw among the dark clouds the gods themselves brandishing torches.

"Brother could not distinguish his brother. Folk could not be seen from the heavens. The very gods feared the deluge. They scurried away. They went up to the heaven of the god An. The gods were cowering like dogs, huddling together on the threshold. The goddess Inanna cried like a woman in labour. Sweet of voice grieved the lady of the gods: 'Let the day turn to clay because I spoke evil in the assembly of gods! How did I speak evil in the assembly of gods, commanded a hurly-burly for the destruction of my folk! Do I then give birth to my own folk, that as the spawn of fish they should fill the sea?'"

Six days and seven nights followed, bitter nights and bitter days. The storm raged and waters heaved and boiled, and Ziusuddu, afloat on the waters, wept bitterly over the destruction of the race. Everything lay under the rushing torrents except the mountain peaks on one of which the ark finally grounded. The hero goes on narrating his tale of woe:

"At the seventh day's coming I brought out and released a dove. The dove went off. She wandered about but alighting place there was none and she returned. I brought out and released a raven. The raven went off and saw the abatement of the waters. She fed wading and dabbing; did not return. I brought out and sacrificed a sacrifice unto the four winds. I made a drink-offering on the high-place of the mountain; set forth seven and seven flagons; strewn below them cane, cedar and myrtle. The gods snuffed the savour, the gods snuffed the sweet savour! The gods gathered together like flies about the master of the sacrifice! At last the Divine Lady (i. e. Inanna) at her coming, lifted up the great necklace that the god An had made according to her desire. 'Ye, the gods, even as I forget not the sapphires of my neck, so indeed will I remember these days and not forget them for ever. Let the gods come to the sacrifice; but let not Enlil come to the sacrifice because he would not be advised, but brought about the deluge and numbered my folk for destruction.' At last the god Enlil, at his coming, beheld the ship. Enlil was angry." He got into a frenzy over the escape of a mortal while Enki tried to reason with him thus:

"Thou chief of gods, thou champion, why, wouldst thou not be advised but wouldst bring about a deluge? On the sinner lay his sin, on the trespasser lay his trespass! Be merciful, that he be not utterly cut off, clement that he be not altogether confounded. Rather than that thou shouldst bring about a deluge, let a lion come and diminish the folk. Rather than that thou shouldst bring about a deluge, let a hyaena come and diminish the folk..."

The pleadings of Enki bore fruit and god Enlil saw reason and calmed down. Ziusuddu narrates:

"Enlil came up to the midst of the ship. He took my hand and brought me out, me even. He brought

out my wife and caused her to kneel beside me. He touched our foreheads and, standing between us, blessed us: 'Formerly, Ziusuddu was human. But now, Ziusuddu and his wife shall assuredly be like unto us gods. Ziusuddu and his wife shall dwell afar at the mouth of the Rivers.'"

The Flood which destroyed Uruk and Shuruppak about 3200 B. C. represents the end of the Jemdet-Nasr period. It is important that at the two cities the last remains of that period are separated from those of the following historical period by a silt deposit, nearly five feet thick at Uruk, which undoubtedly warrants the consequences of a deluge.

The Cities

One of the Sumerian legends refers to an early king to have reigned from Kuth over the entire country. It says that the land was overrun by a strange people bearing bodies of birds and faces of ravens. They came from the northern mountains. For three years their raids continued, in the fourth they were routed by the king.

The most outstanding legend of the times is contained in the famous Epic of *Gilgamesh*. Perhaps it is the earliest known book of the ancient world. It records the exploits of a very early king, Gilgamesh, (a descendant of Ziusuddu to whom the latter had narrated the woeful tale of the Deluge) of Uruk (Erech). During his time, it is told in the legend, Uruk was besieged for three years and was reduced to terrible straits although it is not clear whether Gilgamesh himself was the besieged or the liberator. Later he ruled like a tyrant and the gods had to send Enki-du, half beast, half man, to destroy him. Enki-du was, however, captivated by the wiles of a woman who took him to the court where he made friends with Gilgamesh. Both together are related to have per-

formed deeds of valour and to have taken out an expedition against a demon whom they destroyed and whose castle they took. The stories preserve the independent state of the cities.

Every city had its own god whose high-priest was called Patesi. Patesi was the vicegerent of the gods on earth and ruled the city. Sometimes when several cities were subjugated and brought under a single government, the victorious Patesi took the title of Lugal which meant a king.

The most ancient dynasty of the Sumerians ruled at Ur. One of its kings was A-anni-padda whose monuments have been brought to light by recent excavations. Utug was the king of Kish. Kings of Kish after Utug were Semites. The last of the Semites of Kish was subdued by Enshakushanna, a Sumerian king of Uruk. Soon Uruk and Ur both came to be ruled by the same Sumerian king. Another Sumerian ruler was Lugal-da-lu of Adab whose statue has been found. Opis was another city where a Sumerian dynasty ruled. The city which rose to incomparable importance was Lagash where Ur-nina ruled. Ur-nina dug canals, and built granaries and store-houses. Statues of this king, of his son and wife, and of his gods have been unearthed. Some of the most ancient relics of Sumerian art like the copper lions and bulls and gold weapons and ornaments of Ur come from this period and date from the time of A-anni-padda.

Eannadu the grandson of king Ur-nina, conquered Umma and Kish. It was about this time that Lagash defeated Opis. A remarkable state of Eannadu brings out in a splendid manner his war and conquest of the cities. The monument is called popularly the Vulture-Stele and bears an inscription to that effect. The war evidently had been severe and bloody. Battle-axes are much in evidence with body-armour, solid phalanxes of six men in a row. Soldiers put on rectangular

bucklers, reaching their feet and stood in the front behind whom were those in the rear who used their long spears with great effect. Eannadu carried his victorious arms to Elam where he inflicted a great slaughter on the enemy's forces. Uruk and Ur also fell to his might. His successor Entemena was more a man of peace and a patron of religion.

The last king of Lagash, Urukagina, was the usurper and a great reformer in the interest of the common man. Before him Lagash had terrorized the cities of Sumer and appropriated huge amounts of exactions which were usually shared by high officials of state and the priests. Urukagina abolished the various undue taxes and cut down considerably the needs, the privileges and the revenue of the priests and officials. He did not mind even if his ordinances affected his own purse. He promulgated new laws regarding divorce and it was his proud declaration that "the strong man did no harm to the widow and the orphan." He was thus a great benefactor of the weak and the oppressed. The result was that by his favour of the poor and the powerless he made the high-ups his enemy. Umma in the meanwhile had become independent and strong and was ruled by the powerful Lugalzaggisi who resolved to take advantage of the weakness of his old enemy. He attacked suddenly and ended the reign of Urukagina and put an end to the domination of Lagash.

Lugalzaggisi thus became the chief ruler in Babylonia and he shifted his capital to Uruk where he styled himself as the king of the land of Sumer. Kish and Opis were next conquered and what followed was unprecedented in the annals of the time; for he carried his arms right down to the coast of the Mediterranean across Syria subduing all the territory between Babylonia and the sea. Writes the king in his panegyric, "From the rising of the sun unto the setting of the same has Enlil granted him dominion." This was

the first time Syria had come under the sway of the east. One result of this temporary occupation of that land was the spread of the Sumerian culture in that region of which the outstanding feature was the cuneiform writing. As for the people, they had long before been Semitized.

The Semites

Lugalziggisi ruled for twenty-five years and the great conqueror was deposed by Sharrukin of Akkad and Kish who founded his own dynasty. The Semitic sun had now appeared on the horizon and was moving fast towards the crest of the sky. Sharrukin was the first Semitic king to leave monuments of importance. From his inscriptions it is evident that after conquering Uruk and Ur he led Lugalziggisi in chains through the gate of Enlil and Nippur. We learn that he subdued also the coast of the Mediterranean, Lebanon, the region of Taurus, eastern Syria, the Syrian coast, and northern Syria, and carried his arms eastward across Elam to Persia. Towards the close of his reign a general revolt broke out and Babylon was destroyed. His son restored the empire after the confusion and reconquered Elam. Marrishtusu, the third in the line, was a powerful prince and left us some important documents. But the greatest ruler of the family was unquestionably Sharrukin, more popularly called "Sargon of Agade." Apart from becoming the greatest conqueror of the times Sargon was accepted by the Babylonians as a great hero and numerous legends and traditions have grown around his name. One of these traditions makes him a foundling brought up by a water-carrier. He was the emperor of all Western Asia and became the model for the later rulers to imitate and emulate. Sargon ruled sometime about 2800 B. C.

Soon after there followed the Semitic chiefs, Naram-Sin and Sharagali-sharri of Akkad. Naram-Sin was

the grandfather of the latter prince and ruled sometime about 2750 B. C. He conquered Lulubu and the land as far as the northern Mesopotamia. Eastern Arabia too was brought under the empire and he rightly styled himself as the "King of the Four Quarters of the World." From other sources also it is evident that both Naram-Sin and his grandson Sharagali-sharri inherited the empire of Sargon. The stela, commemorating Naram-Sin's subjugation of Satuni, king of Lulubu, is a splendid piece and is reckoned among the triumphs of ancient Babylonian art which reached its apogee in this relief. It depicts with exceptional vigour Naram-Sin's march with his officers on his enemy Satuni of the northern uplands and details the figures to an unprecedented degree in the relief.

Sharagali-sharri was followed by anarchy which was brought to an end by Dudu who restored peace in the land. The family, however, could not endure long and shortly after his son's reign Uruk fell to the might of the mountaineers of Gutti, the hills of the Zagros. The Gutti dynasty ruled for 125 years and was followed at Uruk by a Sumerian prince and the land ultimately passed on to the Third Dynasty of Ur. Next followed Ur-Nammu. The second king of the new dynasty of Ur assumed a new title, that of the "King of Sumer and Akkad." This was a Sumerian dynasty that had been set up at Ur. The kings of the dynasty endeavoured to outdo the Semite rulers Naram-Sin and the great Sargon and their reaction against them was such that they sacked the shrines of the Semitic gods and carried off their temple-treasures. This was more true of Shulgi, the son of Ur-Nammu, than of any other.

This dynasty of Ur was put an end to by the king of Elam who conquered Ur and carried its ruler, the third successor of Shulgi, off to his capital. The end of the dynasty came sometime about 2357 B. C. The Elamite conqueror also sacked Uruk and carried

away its goddess Nana to Susa. The Sumerian rule of Ur was followed by the two Semitic dynasties ruling one after the other. Among the kings following two were important. Of these one was Ur-Enurta or Ur-Ninurta and Rim-Sin; the latter belonged to a family of rulers that had come from Elam and was the contemporary and rival of the great Babylonian emperor Hammurabi.

2. BABYLON

The city of Babylon had hitherto been an insignificant factor in the history of Akkad. It lay exposed to attacks from the Western Desert and when fortune smiled on the Amorite princes they did not fail to make a debut on the Babylonian stage. Who the new conquerors were it is difficult to say, but they were foreign Semites beyond doubt. They made Babylon the chief city of the land and raised the humble Marduk to the status of the king of gods.

After the rule of a few kings of the dynasty Hammurabi succeeded to the throne and soon proved his might among the princes. He gave to his kingdom the status of an empire and he came to be reckoned as one of the greatest kings of all times. He had inherited the whole of the ancient Akkad but southern Babylonia still lay open to the aggression of the Elamite conquerors. He wrested from the powerful Elamite lord of Larsam both Uruk and Isin. But soon Rim-Sin reasserted himself and Hammurabi was not able to register any more conquests in that direction. Later he became restive again and subjugated a large part of Mesopotamia. He made Shitullum, to the north of Akkad, and Ashur, further north, which later became the seat of power of the Assyrian empire, his tributary states.

The tussle between Rim-Sin and Hammurabi was great. It was natural too for both were neighbours

and powerful and ambitious. One ruled southern Babylonia down to the coast of the Persian Gulf and the other controlled an empire reaching to Armenia and Palestine although his capital lay within easy attack from the south.

Until a few years back Elam had been a weak state generally obeying the commands of the kings of Sumer and Akkad but now it had become powerful and its rulers often made inroads on both of these kingdoms occasionally despoiling their temples and carrying their kings captives. If a Hebrew tradition can be believed, right at this time Chedorlaomer (perhaps Kudur-lagamar) imposed his will upon the rival kings of Babylonia and communicated across them with the Hittites.

But in his thirty-five years (*c* 2094 B. C.) Hammurabi bid for power and challenged the Elamites everywhere. His generals Siniddinum and Inukshamar took Ur and Larsam and invaded Emutbalim (in Elam) and overran it. Elam, however, remained out of his power but the Babylonian monarch annexed the entire territory in Southern Babylonia upto the borders of Elam.

Hammurabi's letters and despatches are uncommon specimens of ancient political dealings, but what is still more important is his Code, the first human planned code of law. It is inscribed on a stele discovered at Susa and has made Hammurabi's name familiar to the modern world as of no other king of antiquity is. It is true that much of the Code is based on Sumerian laws, yet its scientific recast and classification make the Babylonian emperor rightly a great lawgiver.

Hammurabi was an extraordinary organizer of empire and government. It was mainly through him that Babylon became the undisputed metropolis of ancient Mesopotamia. For about a millennium

and a half the city kept on arousing the cupidity of all the monarchs of the ancient world.

But once the strong hand of Hammurabi was removed from the scene the kingdom again became vulnerable. His son had to face the trouble which kept on coming from Southern Babylonia and from the coast. The coast became independent where a new dynasty took root. Elam, however, was reconquered by the fourth successor of Hammurabi.

It was about this time that the inroads of the Kashshu or Kassites, an Indo-European nation, began and their tribes started pressing from Media through the Zagros towards the fertility and wealth of Babylonia. About the same time occurred the first onslaughts of an exceptionally vigorous Aryan nation that came from beyond the Taurus in Anatolia. They were the terrible 'Goyyim' of Asia Minor, the formidable Khattis with whose popular name, the Hittites, the lay readers are more familiar. They came down suddenly, unexpectedly, irresistibly. During the reign of Samsu-ditana, Mursil I (Murshilish), the king of Khatti, appeared (c1926 B. C.) before Babylon, stormed and sacked it, putting an end to the empire of Hammurabi and to the 1st Dynasty of that great city. Death and destruction trailed the route of the fierce Hittites who vanished as soon as they had appeared. The Kassites took this opportunity and their leader, Gandash, at once captured Babylonia (Kar-Duniyash) and took the throne thus founding the Kassite dynasty, which flourished for six centuries.

3. KASSITES AND MITANNIANS

Very little is known about the Kassite kings. We have only a string of names and there are unbridgeable voids between the names. Occasionally the curtain is drawn, a king appears, hacks and cuts, and is lost in the folds again. Agum III became important

as he took over the last fastness of the kingdom of the Sea-land. Already about 1710 B. C. his uncle Ulamburiash had overthrown the kingdom, which had been the last piece of land held by the Sumerians. They had been broken and thrown down from power by the Semites and yet they had gone on sticking to insignificant principalities and during their last phase of existence they had even carved out a coastal kingdom. This kingdom, despite the numerous thrusts and parries, had held on and the Babylonian kings had to abandon their hope to conquer them. The Kassites, who took Babylon, could not reduce this kingdom and for three centuries since their coming to the crest in Babylonian affairs, the Sumerians defied them successfully. Now the kingdom disappeared from the face of earth and with it the last vestiges of that non-Semitic civilization which had taught the whole of Western Asia all it was worth. Nothing remained except their script. Their gods were appropriated by the neighbours and their language vanished, and ultimately they themselves as a nation.

The Kassites were Aryan barbarians who cared little for the fine arts. We have few monuments ascribed to them. Temple-building and like activities were completely at a standstill during their regime. Literature received no stimulus and there is positive paucity of records. Scribes were in no demand and arts were neglected. It was a dull period devoid of activities, of war or peace. There were Indo-European elements in their language and their names were Aryan. Their chief god was *Suryash*, Indian *Surya*, another was *Maruttash*, Vedic *Marut*, and their word for god was *bugash*, Slav *bogu*, and Vedic *bhaga*. The Indo-Aryans were perhaps already settled in India, the Medes and Persians held the Armenian heights and the eastern uplands, the Hittites were holding sway over Asia Minor, and had now conquered Babylonia.

It was about this time that another powerful Aryan tribe (perhaps belonging to the stock similar to the

Kassites), the Mitannians, were founding their kingdom of Mitanni in the north between the Euphrates and Tigris. The names of the Mitannian princes too are Aryan, for example, Saushshatar, Artatama, Shutarna, Dushratta. Likewise their gods are also Aryan and of Indian Vedic origin, viz. Varuna, Indra, Nasatyau. The Mitannians had become masters of both Semites and Hittites in Northern Syria, which remained tributary to them till the Egyptian conquest in the 16th century. Assyria also for a time in the beginning played a feudatory role to them.

Babylonian Culture

The culture of Babylonia started taking shape in the South in the settlements of the Sumerians. Sumerians were a non-Semitic people who gave to the whole of Babylonia or for that matter to the entire Asian west several incidents of their culture, the most important of them being the mode of writing called the cuneiform. Later, as the Sumerians lost in political influence and the Semites gained supremacy in that sphere, the former culture declined and a systematic Semitization started until the whole of the west from the coast of the Persian Gulf to that of the Mediterranean Sea had become completely Semitic in look as well as in spirit.

The Sumerian language, as already pointed out, was agglutinative. Their numerous records on baked clay furnish us with exceedingly fascinating pieces of literature. Numerous traditions and legends have been found preserved in that literature, two of them being the story of the Deluge and the Epic of Gilgamesh.

The pantheon of the Sumerian gods was fairly crowded for every city had its own tutelary deity. The gods had their temples and great riches were amassed in them. Patesis were their priests who concentrated at a time both religious and political

power. Endless revenues were their charge. Temples were solid structures and were later called ziggurat. The Sumerian and Babylonian gods got so mixed up that it has become difficult today to distinguish the former from the latter.

Usually Enki (the earth god), Enzu (the moon-god), Enlil (the supreme god), Utu (the sun-god), Ana, (the sky-god), Inanna (mother-goddess) are supposed to be Sumerian deities. Enlil was the god who had brought about the great Flood, Enki had calmed him down, and Inanna had shamed him for his lust of destruction. It is generally supposed that gods and goddesses without consorts are Sumerian in origin and attempts have been made to separate the Sumerian and the Babylonian gods. Some, for example, suggest that gods Ea, Sin or Nannar, Ningirsu, and such others were pre-Sumerian. The Semitic Bel (or Baal) perhaps emerged from Sumerian Enlil, as did Shamash from Utu. Marduk, the supreme Semitic god of Babylon, was certainly Sumerian in origin, unlike Ramman or Adad, the thunder-god, who was Semitic. Among the Semitic goddesses were Belit, the consort of Bel, Sarpanitum of Marduk, Laz of Nergal. Anunitum is perhaps of Semitic origin and Ishtar of Syrian or Canaanite. She was served by eunuch-priests.

Thus we find that the religion of both the Sumerians and the Semites was pantheistic and that throughout that region and beyond, indeed from the Indus to the Mediterranean and from the Baltic Sea to the Nile, idolatry was the norm, and animal sacrifices the order. Only the Aryans were greatly non-idolatrous but pantheistic all the same. One is struck with the common affinities among the functions of the gods and among the numerous legends. We have already alluded to the great legends of the Deluge and Gilgamesh. One of the most fascinating is the legend of Etana and the Eagle. The Eagle carried Etana to the heavens

and towards the sun and then fell down to the earth. This has such a resemblance with the Greek legend of Icarus and with the Indian Sampati. Likewise part of the legend dealing with the war of Eagle with the Serpent is so similar to the Indian Garuda legends, of the offsprings of Vinata and Kadru.

By the time Hammurabi had ascended the throne the Sumerian writing had been developed, the bow and arrow had made their appearance and the horse also had been introduced by Aryan horsemen. The city-states had been united within a single kingdom. Trade and commerce flourished, crops were raised with the help of an irrigational system of canals. Money-lending prospered and astronomy and astrology were cultivated. Taxes were paid in kind, mainly in corn. Prices were paid in grain and although weights and measures were current currency proper was wanting. Barter was in use although big prices were computed in shekel-weights of silver. Free labourers were worse than slaves for they got only food and no protection from the employer. Slave was protected from the master by law. The judges, appointed by the king, went about on circuit meting out irrevocable justice. Land mostly belonged to the temples and the king.

The Code of Hammurabi inscribed on a stela, on the top of which the figure of the king is shown receiving the laws from the sun-god Shamash, is a most remarkable document throwing a flood of light on the social and legal aspects of life. To a great extent law was equitable. In the Sumerian times the wife had no right of divorce but Hammurabi modified the law in favour of the woman. The divorcing husband had to maintain her and her children, besides returning her marriage portion. She had the custody of the children also. Under the Sumerian laws man was more important than woman unlike the conditions in Egypt where she was the 'lady of the house' and more important than man. But in Babylonia women

could own property, whether in houses or slaves, and could personally plead in the courts. Votaresses or vestals enjoyed unusual privileges. Religious prostitutes were a prominent feature of the Babylonian religion. The long robe was in fashion. The Sumerians cut their hair while the Semites grew their hair and beard.

Babylonians were greatly litigious. Sale or lease of land and other items of property were the main causes of litigation. Deeds were always drawn up in the valid legal form and were attested duly by witnesses and ultimately impressed with the respective seals of the parties or, in their absence, with their nail marks. Cylinder-seals were rolled over the clay tablets. They were made of various metals and stones. They always bore some mythological scenes or figures and were the very triumphs of the glyptic art. Some seals were received from the Indus valley also as those bearing the figure of an elephant prove. Bull was sacred.

No description of the culture of Babylonia can be complete without a reference to the tombs of Ur. The excavated tombs have disclosed startling facts of life and death. In this regard the 'Royal Cemetery' with its fabulous treasures of gold and human victims of sacrifice may be alluded to. Like the Egyptians, the early Sumerians provided their dead with every earthly necessity, from food and drink to chariots, thrones and instruments of music. The material excavated from some 2,000 graves discloses the extraordinary culture of the early dynastic period of Ur wherein splendid metal-work figured to a great extent. Oppressive was the look of the 'death-pits' which contained numerous skeletons of man-servants and maid-servants who had been made to accompany their masters and mistresses in death as they had done in life.

From the graves were obtained "gold bandlets for the forehead, bracelets and big earrings of gold, silver or copper, necklaces of gold, silver, cornelian and

lapis heads, copper and silver axe-heads of the finest workmanship and superb spearheads, some leaf-shaped and others square in section, which display the great skill in casting. Little conical vanity-cases of metal, with forceps, pick and ear-cleaner attached, are as modern in conception as in execution". These were the riches discovered in the private graves but they were nothing compared to what was obtained in the 'death-pits'. Their unbelievable contents were multitudes of human and animal sacrifices and rich furnishings were disposed about the floor of a great pit, at one end of which was a chamber of brick or stone containing the remains of the royal or sacred personage in whose honour so many lives and so much treasure had to be committed to the dust. One of the tombs had the body of a woman with an elaborate head-dress of gold holding in her hands an exquisite fluted gold tumbler. Four manservants were killed and their corpses placed by that of their mistress. Three sheep lay slaughtered out of the closed door of the chamber. The tomb-shaft contained several floors, the three uppermost layers having one human sacrifice apiece. The topmost layer further yielded a wooden box containing two gold-bladed daggers with hilts of lapis-lazuli studded with gold and cylinder-seal of shell carved and inscribed with the name of *King Meskalmdug*. Other tombs were still richer, both in wealth of precious metals and sacrificed humans—one containing as many as 74 victims. Mention may be made here of the glorious drinking vessels, wine-strainers and toilet accessories in chased gold, the extraordinary gold and silver headdresses and the harps adorned with great animals' heads in gold and lapis from the grave of *Lady Shubad*, the silver boat and the superb fragments of a copper shield with figures of lions in *repousse* belonging to a certain *Abargi*, and the famous 'standard'—an extraordinary object of wood, inlaid on two sides with scenes of a battle and a feast in polychrome mosaic. This habitat of the dead yielded in staggering profusion precious objects like four-wheeled

wagons, each drawn by three oxen, splendid stone vessels, golden daggers, spears and axes of electrum (gold-silver alloy), lovely miniature animals of gold, soldiers' helmets of copper, curious inlaid gaming-boards, and beads and ornaments of every description. What endless riches the dwellers of these rich Babylonian cities could command in those times prior to 2500 B. C. and what aids to beauty their ladies could handle! But what capacity to kill and cupidity to possess servants on the part of the masters and mistresses who had their corps of men and women to serve them in life and who must again have them dead to guard their repose!

4. HITTITES

Hittites, the Biblical *Heth*, were generally called *Khatti*. The Egyptians called them *Kheta* and the Semites *Goyyim*, 'the nations'. They were perhaps an Indo-European people living in the snows of Taurus in Asia Minor. Since the Mesopotamian name of their land was *Mushki*, they came to be called *Mushkaya*. To the Mesopotamian Semites they were formidable barbarians with scant culture who descended on their northern cities from behind the snow only to rob and slay. Their inroads were terrible and devastating. We have already referred to their calamitous invasion of Babylon about 1925 B. C. About the beginning of the 2nd millennium B. C. parts of Northern Syria were colonized and settlements formed where Hittite princes ruled side by side with local dynasts and Aryan barons from Mitanni. They had their own culture and a peculiar hieroglyphic system of writing and for some time even resisted the Semite influence but ultimately succumbed to it. The excavations at Carchemish and other sites have yielded material which give an insight into their civilization. The cuneiform writing penetrated beyond the Taurus and was used in the royal chancery at Boghaz Kyoï. Such records also

filled the imperial archives during the heyday of the Khatti Empire.

It is also possible that the Hittites were Anatolian nationals and non-Aryans originally and assumed the Aryan characteristics of their worship only later. They were doubtless a white people from whom, it is said the 'white Syrians' are descended. Their tongue had little common with the Indo-European and the names of their kings—Shubbiluliuma, Mursil, Muwatalli or Mutallu, Khattusil, Dudhalia, Arnuanda, Pudukhipa (queen), Muni-Dan (queen)—generally were Anatolian although a few of these do sound like the Aryan.

Among their deities one universally worshipped was the mother-goddess Ma ('Mother'). Attis was the sun-god. For these there were temples owning great extents of land mostly profitting the priests, the Galli, who had to be eunuchs and who kept wandering in the country. Besides, Mithra (Vedic Mitra), the sun-god, and Men (Iranian Mao), the moon-god, were worshipped too and later perhaps Indra and Varuna of the Vedic pantheon also made their way into the Anatolian religion. These, we know from the famous Boghaz Kyoï inscription, were also the deities of the Aryan nobles of Mitanni. The Baghaz Kyoï inscription is very important for another reason because it has been pointed out by some as an evidence of the eastern Aryan migration bearing on the Indo-Aryans of the Rigvedic period. The main difficulty in its acceptance is the nature of the gods themselves for they are Vedic Indian names and we know that their names and worship developed in the Punjab and were peculiar to the land. Nowhere else, except in Iran, were they known and worshipped and it may not be improbable that the gods travelled from India and were propagated in Asia Minor and Mesopotamia at a later date.

History

The earliest monarchs among the Hittites, known to us, were Khattusil I, Mursil I, Khantil, Khuzzias, Telibinus, and Khattusil II, father of the great conqueror Shubbiluliuma. It was the records of the last named that were found at Boghaz Kyoï. He was the first king to use the cuneiform writing. Boghaz Kyoï represents the remains of the capital city of the Hittites called Khatti after the people and forming the inmost layer of the Hittite spider.

The city stood on the slope of a hill surrounded by a solid wall of polygonal masonry superimposed by towers and pierced at a few places by gates. In the citadel on the rock called Buyuk Kale, within the walls, numerous archives were preserved. It was a fastness-city 3,000 feet above the sea in an upland where snow lies throughout the winter, and the summer is bright and invigorating. This was the seat of the Hittite empire and the refuge of its shock-dealing princes. How the Hittites grew in power is a story of great cunning and boldness, calculation and courage, intrigue and conquest.

The end of the reign of Pharaoh Amenhetep III threw his Asian empire into confusion. North Syrian princes were uncertain whether their allegiance was due to Egypt or to Mitanni. It opened the way to the conquests of the energetic Khatti ruler Shubbiluliuma. But he knew that a direct bid for power that end would lead to crossing swords at once with both Egypt and Mitanni. He preferred to have recourse to intrigue and incited a revolt of the Hittite and Amorite princes in Lebanon. A curious complication was the result. Letters and despatches followed between Egyptian lords in that part and their master at home and fealty was pledged and broken by local princes. Egypt was deceived and Abdashirta and his son Aziru, the Amorite leaders, conducted this cam-

paign of war, diplomacy and lies with incredible craft and crowning success. These intrigues had the support of Shubbiluliuma.

Now it was time for the Hittite monarch to act. The Mitanni were in a deplorable state due to their internal disaffection. Dushratta had two brothers one of whom, Artashumara, succeeded their father Shutarna but was murdered. Dushratta ascended the throne while his other brother, Artatama, his son Shutarna and grandson Itakama lived as semi-independent dynasts in Naharin intriguing against him with the Hittite king. At one turn of events when matters became easy for him, he accused Dushratta of breaking a former treaty, crossed the Euphrates forthwith, and plundered the northern frontiers of Mitanni. He was sure of assistance from the new Assyrian state which was always looking for an opportunity to push the intruding Aryan Mitannians from their seat. Dushratta fretted and fumed but Shubbiluliuma, not minding him though avoiding contact for reason of his defeat in a former engagement, crossed the Euphrates in force into Naharin, subjugating lands tributary to the Mitanni ruler on the way. He broke all opposition, plundered the country, and carried princes captives to Khatti where he declared: "From the mountain Niblani, from the Euphrates have I made them my territory."

The revolt continued. Letters and cross-letters followed and slowly and steadily Abdashirta and his son Aziru annexed one fortress after another. It was about this time that Amenhetep III died and was followed by his non-aggressive philosopher son Amenhetep IV. Representations after representations were made by the kings of Babylonia and Mitanni but the peaceful Pharaoh would not move. Aziru crowded the Egyptian officials out from the sphere of his influence and conquests, and after he had killed the Egyptian royal representative Ribadda and the ruler of Beirut, he was summoned to Egypt. He went thither and having

made a diplomatic pledge he returned to break it at home by assuming the sceptre. Shubbiluliuma was offended. He had considered Aziru his vassal but the latter's visit to Egypt and return as an Egyptian subject provoked the Hittite to an attack. One of his records shows that he did attack Aziru and compelled him to swear allegiance to him and to obey his commands. The whole of Syria and Phoenicia was lost to Egypt.

Dushratta at this stage was murdered by his own son who could not, however, gain the throne for it was seized by the late king's exiled brother and rival Artatama and the latter's son Shutarna. "The land of Mitanni was entirely destroyed, and the Assyrians and the people of Alshe divided it between them." Thus Ashur-uballit appropriated at once the portion of the Mitannikingdom nearest to him and compelled Shutarna to restore the gold and silver door which Saushshatar, the father of Artatama I, had carried off from Ashur and had set it up in his palace at Washuganni his capital.

Shubbiluliuma now appeared upon the scene. He says in his epigraph that it was the utter desolation of Mitanni that brought him to help the people of the palace to whom he sent corn and sheep. Mattiuaza, the unnatural son of Dushratta, after being driven by Artatama and his son had taken refuge at Khatti and was now the protégé of its king. To him the king gave his daughter in marriage and, for her sake, now the Mitanni kingdom. He entered Mitanni, drove out the Assyrians and the men of Alshe, and Artatama and Shutarna, and placed Mattiuaza on the throne of Dushratta as his son-in-law and vassal.

Thus Shubbiluliuma's patience and sagacity had been proved to his advantage. He in his old age was now the master of the whole of Western Asia in-

cluding Palestine where Jerusalem had already been captured after the defeat of Aziru. Before his death the great king of Khatti concluded a treaty with the Pharaoh which left him in complete possession of Naharin and Amurru. The stone bearing the record of the treaty was set in an edifice that the king built. Shubbiluliuma died in peace about 1345 B. C.

On the death of the great king his son Arnuanda II ruled for a very short time after which the crown passed to the latter's younger brother Mursil II. It was a fairly extensive dominion which he was called upon to lord. It extended from the Phrygian mountains and the Black Sea to the Carmel and Galilee in the south, and to the northern frontier of Assyria and the mountains of Armenia in the east. Mursil avoided to come in touch with Egypt. Egypt had revived by the advent of a new dynasty. Seti I, the Pharaoh, occupied the uncontested Palestine and proceeded to reassert his claims over the north. He entered Galilee and the Hittites met him there on the field to no disadvantage of Egypt. Seti occupied Phoenicia, where no resistance whatever was offered, and returned to the Delta. After some time Mursil showed signs of invading Phoenicia. Seti returned, advanced from Phoenicia, entered the Orontes valley and invaded Kadesh overthrowing a Hittite army. Mursil never moved south while the prestige of Egypt was restored. Palestine and rich Phoenicia returned to Egyptian control.

Seti gave up the idea of going North, but the proud and impetuous Rameses II was uncontrollable, and despite the two former treaties resolved to recover the lost conquests of Thothmes III. Mursil advanced to check him with a great confederate host. A sharp battle was fought in which the mobility of the Egyptian army and the youthful impetuosity and valour of Rameses himself got the better of the bulk and numerical superiority of the Hittite forces and beat it beyond

repair. In the rout that followed several of the foremost Hittite leaders fell, slain by the sword or drowned in the river, before Mursil's eyes. He stood watching on the other bank of the river. The flower of the Hittite army including Mursil's own brother perished.

For the Egyptians it was a great victory and at once, on the return of the victor, sculptors and scribes set to adorn temple-reliefs with a well-earned panegyric. For Mursil the disaster was too great to bear and he soon died crushed by its weight. He was succeeded by his son Mutallu (or Muwatalli) and the new king determined on a vigorous offensive against Egypt in order to retrieve the fallen fortune of his family. He suddenly appeared into Galilee and the whole of Palestine went over to the Hittites, Phoenicia alone remaining faithful to Egypt. Rameses at once rode his chariot and reconquered the whole of Palestine right up to Dapur in Syria, which was taken after a siege. Rameses followed up his victory with a quick march into Naharin where for a whole century no Egyptian army had been seen. Katna and Tunip fell, Arvad submitted (*c* 1290 B. C.), and the fourth successor of Aziru abandoning his allegiance to Khatti, declared himself for Egypt. At long last Mutallu recovered both Naharin and Amarru and died about 1285 B. C. He was succeeded by his younger brother Khattusil III.

Khattusil was not so uncompromising as his brother and at once moved for peace with Egypt after restoring Put-akhi, the rebel successor of Aziru, who had been taken prisoner by Mursil, to Egypt's tutelage. Both the parties were exhausted and peace was welcome to them both. A very honourable treaty was signed with elaborate clauses followed by an exchange of congratulatory and affectionate letters between the consorts of the two rulers. We have already referred duly to the contents of the treaty in the Egyptian context.

Khattusil affirmed this treaty after several years with the marriage of his daughter to Rameses and he took the princess himself to distant Egypt. Rameses recompensed it by doing him and his nobles great honour and by sending one his most venerated deities, Khonsu of Thebes, to the Hittite court. The god was later sent back to Thebes with numerous precious gifts. Khattusil died a very old man and was succeeded by his son Dudhalia about 1255 B. C.

Not much is known either about him or about his son and successor Arnuanda III except that his mother, the widow of Khattusil, Pudukhipa, was very powerful and held supreme power during her son's early years. She was mentioned in the documents with Dudhalia as co-regent. Rameses also addressed a personal letter to her. This shows the honour in which the queen and queen-mother were held and the important role which they played in the Hittite state. Tawashi, Dudhalia's queen and Arnuanda's mother, is likewise mentioned in the records and so also Muni-Dan, 'the Great Queen' of Arnuanda, who was at the same time his sister. Perhaps this custom of marrying sister came to be imitated following the friendship with the pharaohs in the usage of Egypt.

Arnuanda was perhaps the last powerful ruler of the Hittite line. The fortunes of the Hittites were on the decline while those of the Assyrians were on the ascendant. The Anatolian rulers were not strong enough to protect their eastern possessions and not a finger was raised when the Assyrian monarch Shalmaneser insolently marched into Syria or when, during Dudhalia's time, his son Tukulti-Enurta ravaged the eastern provinces or tributary kingdoms of the Hittites. Truly the Hittite sun had set.

5. ASSYRIA AND BABYLONIA

Although Naharin and Mitanni formed part of the Hittite empire the Khatti kings never attempted

to conquer Assyria. It was good for the Hittites to keep their hands off the realm for the attempt would have proved too costly against the tried valour of the Assyrian soldiery. Babylonia had passed under the tutelage of Assyria since Kurigalzu had been placed on the throne of Babylon by his Assyrian grandfather. The young prince had, however, developed great power and was fast bringing distinction to his new house. He had already warred with the Elamites, captured their king, sacked the capital, Susa, and brought great spoil back home. Slowly he endeavoured to get out of control of the Assyrian monarchs and at least was able to loosen their grip on him. Adad-nirari, however, turned out an ambitious ruler and asserted his right of suzerainty over Babylonia. A pitched engagement followed and the old Babylonian beat the Assyrian forces in the field and compelled his cousin to respect his frontiers which he drew afresh. After his death Adad-nirari attacked his successor to retrieve his prestige but the old frontiers, any way, were reaffirmed.

Adad-nirari was succeeded by a very energetic son, Shalmaneser I. His ambition could not restrain him to keep to the old frontiers and he resolved to extend his domain. He ascended the Tigris right up to its source and entered the valley of the Euphrates compelling North Syrian and the adjacent territories to pay tribute. Later he conquered Mitanni after defeating the Hittite sub-king and slaughtering his combined Hittite and Syrian forces 'like sheep.'

The Hittite monarch Khattusil at once opened friendly relations with Assyria's Babylonian enemy Kadashman-turgu and later compelled the Babylonian officials to give the throne to his son Kadashman-Enlil after the king's death. The death of Kadashman-turgu can be dated to about 1284 B. C. which would place the chronology of Shalmaneser I also within the reach of understanding.

Kadashman-Enlil II could not remain on the throne for long and six years after his accession he was brought to an end either by murder at home, where a party had arisen that preferred the collateral Assyrian control to the Hittite tutelage, or by Shalmaneser in battle.

Kashliliashu, the third successor of Kadashman-Enlil II, was strongly anti-Assyrian, whom the energetic son of Shalmaneser, Tukulti-Enurta I, defeated and deposed, thus expanding the dominions of Assyria. He took the throne himself and ruled over both the kingdoms as a single state for seven years from about 1248 to about 1241 B. C. This was done in the face of the Hittites, the Babylonian ally, which set seal to the Khatti influence in that direction. At the same time Assyria ascended a status of equality with Khatti.

But the Babylonians could not stand this subjugation and soon became restive. They revolted vigorously and brought the rule of Tukulti-Enurta to an abrupt close. On the throne of Babylonia they placed Adad-shum-usur, son of the deposed king. Tukulti-Enurta suffered in this manner in Babylonia, at home a more cruel fate awaited him at the hands of his unnatural son. Ashur-nasir-pal, his son, assisted by Assyrian nobles revolted against the authority of Tukulti-Enurta, deposed him, "besieged him in a house in the city of Kar-Tukultienurta, and cut him down with the sword."

Tukulti-Ashur succeeded Ashur-nasir-pal I after his very brief rule in Assyria. We know nothing about him beyond the fact that he restored the image of Marduk, six years after it had been carried off, to Babylon as this sacrilege had been supposed to be the cause of the Assyrian misfortune. Then there followed the reigns of numerous rulers fighting sometimes among themselves, sometimes with the kings of Babylonia.

Ultimately Enlil-kudur-usur of Assyria and Adad-shum-usur of Babylon closed in combat and both fell fighting each other (c 1211 B. C.). Babylonia was the victor.

Melishipak II ascended the throne of Babylon and followed up the victory of his father with an invasion of Assyria. He perhaps conquered the country and put it under the control of his son, Marduk-apal-iddina, who had fought by the side of his father and shared his victory. Father and son ruled respectively for fifteen and thirteen years, one after the other. We hear of an Assyrian king after years, only when Ashur-dan defeats Ilbaba-shum-iddina, the successor of Marduk-apal-iddina (c. 1183 B. C.) and restores the Assyrian kingdom to its old limits adding to it part of Babylonian territory.

The Kassite dynasty came to an end after its last king Enlil-nadin-akhe died or was murdered about 1180 B. C. A new dynasty, native of Babylonia now, took charge of the affairs of the land and for a time peace prevailed between the two nations.

Assyria had been in a bad way for some time due to the press of danger from the west. Anatolians had been ousted from their own land beyond the Taurus by new European tribes and were in their turn pressing hard against the western provinces of Assyria which they soon appropriated, thus putting an end to the conquests of Tukulti-Enurta. This happened about the time when the Assyrian monarchs had been supplanted by the Babylonian dynasty.

A few generations later Assyria revived and during the rule of Ashur-rish-ishi expeditions were undertaken against the northern tribes and war was declared on Babylonia. The new dynasty of Babylon had set on its throne an energetic king, Nebuchadnezzar I. He had waged a successful war against

Elam but Assyria made matters hot for him. In North-western Mesopotamia, in the valley of Euphrates near the mouth of the Khabur, where the marches of the Hittite empire had met those of Babylonia for centuries, the conflict opened. The armies of Babylonia and Assyria met and fought an engagement in which the Babylonians were worsted with considerable loss. Nebuchadnezzar was not present. This defeat, however, compelled him to cede most of the territory in the valley of Upper Euphrates to Assyria. Over this western part Babylon had exercised a nominal control in the absence of the effective supremacy of either Egypt or the Hittites.

But Assyria could not permit even this nominal control of Babylonia to last any longer. In fact during the next reign, i.e. in the reign of Tiglath-pileser I, a bid for world-power was made by her. Tiglath-pileser moved with vigour against Babylonia. The latter withdrew leaving all her western possessions to the Assyrian conqueror. Twice he reduced her to a state of vassalage and took for himself the sobriquet, King of Sumer and Akkad. Tiglath-pileser proved his metal in the north as well, for he crowded the new Anatolian settlers out of the Upper Euphrates valley. Next he subdued Shubari, overran Nahrin, west of Euphrates, conquered the Hittite principality of Musri nearer home, and finally penetrated beyond Taurus, the unknown land of the Hittites. There he burnt down the city of Khunusa and sowed its site with salt. The royal city of Kibshuna was likewise taken and destroyed. He carried his arms right up to the coast of the Black Sea, a rare mark of distinction.

6. THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

Soon after the events narrated above Assyria sank to the state of a third rate power following the depredations of Aramaean invaders. Much of her territory

was gone and the blank of a century followed. The veil was lifted by Tiglath-pileser II, a contemporary of Solomon and of Shishak, but of him also we know only from an inscription of his grandson, Adad-nirari II. Adad-nirari, who died in the year 889 B. C., left a prosperous kingdom to his son Tukulti-Enurta II.

This latter was an exceptionally energetic king and showed signs of a great conqueror in making early through his successful northern campaigns, but his career was terminated by death in 884 B. C. Before passing on to subsequent events a fact of world importance must be mentioned. From the time of Adad-nirari II the list of the *limmi* or eponymous magistracies of the years came to be kept without omission till the close of the Assyrian empire. With the help of this list the exact dates of most of the chief events in Assyrian history can be fixed without the possibility of error. With Adad-nirari II we touch upon the sheet-anchor of Assyrian chronology.

Ashur-nasir-pal

Tukulti-Enurta II was succeeded by his son Ashur-nasir-pal II, who ruled from 884 to 859 B. C. Ashur-nasir-pal was one of the greatest conquerors of ancient times. Assyria under him became the arbiter of the destiny of nations. An unprecedented zeal of military activities sprang forth and the conquests of Tiglath-pileser were restored in no time. This monarch was ruthless and cruel and to his resisters he was absolutely unsparing and unrelenting. He exulted in torturing his conquered enemies. His usual method of treating the vanquished was to burn their city and to cut off the hands and ears and to put out the eyes of all grown up men. Then they were piled up to die a death of torture and starvation. All children, boys and girls, were burnt alive at the stake, and the conquered chiefs were carried off to Assyria to be flayed alive.

Provinces were depopulated, sometimes the inhabitants carried to other provinces and thus population, where not exterminated by ruthless massacre and inhuman tortures, was exchanged in order to annihilate the chances of rebellion. The standards of inhumanity set by Ashur-nasir-pal were maintained by subsequent Assyrian conquerors also throughout the history of the land although no instances of the burning of children are on record. This was a peculiar pleasure of this ruler who was a monster even in those days of monstrous cruelty.

The army had its corps of standing troops but usually during the war time all able-bodied men were mobilized. It was mostly in the bowmen that the strength of the Assyrian army lay. The infantry with its long arrows put the charioteers completely out of action and carried the field. Chariots were becoming outmoded. Assyrians were the originators of military engineering. Their main contribution to the military science was the siegecraft. The commander-in-chief of Assyrian forces was called *turtan*.

Ashur-nasir-pal first advanced against the mountain tribes of the east and north. He worked havoc with his sword and fire through Southern Armenia to Commagene and Cilicia. The conqueror pressed along the river with lightning speed. Two Aramaean states were overthrown and destroyed. Sukhi, despite Babylonian support, was ruined, and the southern Hittite kingdom with its capital at Carchemish subdued (876 B. C.). Then the conqueror crossed the Euphrates, marched through Northern Syria to the Orontes, crossed it descending down to the sea and thus entering the Lebanon, and received the submission of the Phoenician cities. The Syrian king of Damascus was paralysed by the swiftness of the Assyrian operations. Ashur-nasir-pal then turned back to the Euphrates and completed the circle by marching through the upper valley of the Tigris back to where

he had begun. And the devastation was so thorough, the ruin so complete, the overthrow of kingdoms so sudden that no opposition or resistance could be possible anywhere, and the route of the conquering armies—a trail of burning villages, a sea of massacred humanity.

Ashur-nasir-pal was also an uncommon organizer of state. He organized it on a military footing and moved his capital from the ancient Ashur to Kalkhi (Calah) which had been founded by Shalmaneser I but had lain abandoned for centuries. From that barrack-like town he ruled his empire.

There he built his palaces and temples. And in that regard the great militarist was exceptionally brilliant. He was an uncommon builder. He employed sculptors and architects to erect his temples and palaces who had no parallels anywhere in that world and his buildings became at once the models and the despair of subsequent emulators in the neighbouring states. He died in 859 B. C., a feared man, and after a dazzling rule for twenty-five years left his extensive empire to his worthy son Shalmaneser III, equally successful in his military campaigns and in the organization and administration of the state.

Shalmaneser III

Shalmaneser began by intimidating the conquered states so that the change of masters might not give them hopes of freedom. After completely destroying and suppressing the tributary kingdoms he moved south to strike terror and to subdue principalities.

A great battle was fought in 853 B. C. at Karkar where Ahab of Israel, Irkhuleni of Hamath and Benhadad II of Damascus confederated and led their combined hosts to give battle to the Assyrian emperor. Benhadad was the most formidable of the enemies

that the Assyrians had thus far met. The battle was indecisive although the Assyrians claimed a victory. But they too retreated immediately and Benhadad was left undisturbed in the possession of his realm. The Syrian losses were great and the allies dispersed carrying considerable rancour against one another which set the background for a war among them. Five years later Shalmaneser returned to wreak vengeance on Damascus. He was again balked by the fierce resistance of the Syrian monarch. Three years later in 845 B. C. Shalmaneser, furious at his failure, put a hundred and twenty thousand men into the field and yet he could not break the resistance of the redoubtable Syrian. The dogged persistence of the Assyrian invader was met with redoubled vigour and Shalmaneser had to abandon his plan of subduing Syria for the moment. He instead consolidated his power in Northern Syria and completed the submission of the Phoenician cities (842 B. C.).

In that year Benhadad II was murdered. It was time for Shalmaneser to act. Both Syria and Israel were weakened by war and their new kings were not settled firmly. Shalmaneser marched south in the next year. Hazael, the successor of Benhadad, met him on the slope of Hermon, was defeated and driven back to Damascus. The territory was ravaged by the Assyrians although the capital defied them and could not be taken. Jehu, the new king of Judah, sent rich presents and this incident, construed as a show of frailty, was commemorated on an obelisk of black stone, set in the royal palace at Calah.

Shalmaneser when foiled in Syria sought his compensation in the direction of the Taurus. Subjection of the tribes in that area was firmly established and Cilicia was perfectly conquered. But the greater recompense came from Babylonia. In the interim there had been considerable turmoil in Babylonia. Chaldean tribes took possession of Babylon for a time and

were followed, first by an Elamite usurper, and then, by a native dynasty whose two kings were later defeated by Adad-nirari II. Later, Babylonia became friendly to Assyria except for a momentary enmity in which she had helped Sukhi which was conquered by Ashurnasir-pal. The Babylonian contemporary of Shalmaneser, Marduk-zakir-shum, worried by the revolt of his brother, called in the aid of the Assyrian emperor. Shalmaneser invaded Babylonia, defeated the rebels in two engagements, drove out the Chaldeans, and reduced the intimidated Babylonian to the status of a vassal. This assured the Babylonians their commercial gains while the Assyrians achieved their suzerainty over Babylonia. Henceforth only ambitious princes of the land sometimes rose against the Assyrian supremacy, but the great bulk of the merchants of Babylon were always a bulwark of support to Assyria.

Shalmaneser had accomplished a lot by now and wanted to be relieved from leading forces to battlefields. He left therefore his command to his *turtan*, Ashur-dayan. Shamshi-Adad, a younger son, was made the crown-prince. In 827 B. C. Ashurdaninpal, the elder brother, revolted against his father and brother, and carried with him the greater part of the kingdom including Nineveh and Assur. But the Capital, Calah, with its military headquarters, remained faithful to Shalmaneser and Shamshi-Adad. Ashurdaninpal held on. But on the death of his father in 824 B.C. Shamshi-Adad V ascended the throne of Assyria. The civil war terminated two years later. During this time both Hamath and Babylonia had revolted. Shamshi-Adad at once invaded the latter and crushed the Babylonian monarch Marduk-balatsu-ikbi in the battle of Dur-Papsukal, thus disbanding the confederacy of the Babylonians with the Elamite and Chaldean hirelings. After inflicting this disaster on Babylonia Shamshi-Adad died in 811 B.C.

Decline of Assyria

Adad-nirari III, son of Shamshi-Adad, too returned to Syria after subduing the tribes of the North. Benhadad III, son of Hazael, was compelled to pay tribute to Assyria for the first time. Jehoahaz, king of Israel, broke loose from Syria and paid tribute to Adad-nirari. Hamath and Phoenician cities resumed their payments of the annuity. The records say that the Assyrian monarch was able to exact tribute even from Edom and Palestine.

Jehoash of Israel emerged successful in the political confusion of Palestine and turned against Syria. He recovered the entire territory of Israel east of the Jordan and his son Jeroboan turned out to be so vigorous that he even took Damascus and Hamath. The Assyrians were slowly losing ground.

About the same time an important kingdom of Urartu (Ararat), where the Ararat Mountain is situated, was rising into prominence. The kingdom was called Khaldia after the chief god Khaldis of the people of Urartu. The tribe was very warlike and lived in the highlands of Armenia towards the Caucasus and the Assyrian monarchs had to undertake repeated expeditions to keep their restive leaders to their own bounds. Babylonian culture had spread among them and later the princes of the tribe came to use the cuneiform writing. Their restive character gave the western and southern enemies of Assyria some relief as no more could the Assyrian armies keep long on punitive expeditions for the fear of their formidable upland neighbours.

In the meanwhile Assyria plunged into a civil war. A number of cities revolted following the total solar eclipse of 763 B.C. which was accepted as an ill-omen and a signal for change. The centre of the revolt was Assur, the old capital, and the king was murdered.

Interne war and pestilence ravaged the land. At last in 758 Adad-nirari IV, the successor of Ashur-dan, succeeded in suppressing the revolt. Simultaneously with Assur, Babylonia also revolted against the authority of Assyria and Nabu-shum-ishkun restored the old kingdom. When he died in 748 B.C. and his son Nabunaser (Nabonassar) succeeded him a new era, that of expansion, started in Babylonia. The affairs of Assyria, however, went from bad to worse and in 746, following the revolt of Calah, the Assyrian general Pulu ascended the throne of Assyria and the old dynasty came to an end.

Revival; Tiglath-pileser

Pulu took the name of Assyria's greatest warrior Tiglath-pileser (745-727 B.C.). The name of Tiglath-pileser III, therefore, was one of great promise suggestive of renewed glory and revived empire. And the implied promise came true. New blood infused new life and the west and south readily submitted.

He entered the northern part of Babylonia not at all meaning to depose its king but only to intimidate the land into dependence. Now thus securing Assyria against Babylonia and the Aramaean hordes, Tiglath-pileser marched against Syria. The chief of Syria, getting alarmed, confederated with the king of Urartu, Sarduris III, who marched down the Euphrates to attack the flank of the Assyrian army. Tiglath-pileser wheeled round and struck Sarduris, completely defeating him. After a few engagements the West submitted.

Azaria, the overlord of the dependencies of Israel, was perhaps the main instigator of the resistance in Southern Syria. In a couple of years (739-38) Tiglath-pileser, campaigning in the Armenian mountains, beat the enemy and broke the confederacy as also the dream of Azaria of re-creating a Solomonic empire.

Kullani, Hamath, Samal fell one after another and Damascus, Tyre and part of Israel paid tribute to the invader. Azaria died and was succeeded by Jotham.

Then the conqueror appeared in the north and campaigning across Media reached the foot of Demavena, and through Urartu, Lake Van on whose shore Turushpa, capital of Sarduris, lay. He could not take the citadel but certainly made his power felt. In the meanwhile he received an appeal from Judah, now threatened by its old dependencies in Southern Syria and Israel, which he answered by appearing in Syria after the destruction of Urartu. He marched down to the hitherto unconquered Philistia, not conquered even during the days of Solomon. Hanun of Gaza fled to Egypt. A statue of Tiglath-pileser was set up in his palace and sacrifices were offered to Ashur in his temples, while all the gods and the royal treasure were carried off to Assyria. Israel submitted and all the land east of the Jordan, Galilee and Naphtali with a number of towns were annexed by the conqueror. Hard was the lot of Damascus. The city was taken, its king killed, territory annexed and its people carried captive to Kir. Tyre sent loads of riches and, Ammon, Moab, and Edom accepted the Assyrian tutelage. Lands right up to the frontiers of Egypt—Philistia, the whole of Palestine and Syria north of Galilee and east of the Jordan, with the exception of Phoenicia—were annexed and governors appointed over them. About half the population in each state was carried into captivity making place for captives from Armenia and elsewhere.

Babylonia had given no trouble but its own disturbed state gave Tiglath-pileser an opportunity to annex the state. Following internal political disaffection, a Chaldaean chief had taken possession of the country and the merchants asked for Assyrian help. In 731 the conqueror entered Babylonia and subdued the entire country down to the shore of the Persian

Gulf by the year 728 and took its crown for himself. He died in the following year.

During the reign of Shalmaneser V (727-722 B.C.), his successor, Egypt showed great unrest. Important changes had taken place in Egyptian politics and the pharaoh Piankhi had appointed his son Shabaka the regent and commander-in-chief of the North. The Assyrian annexation of Palestine was resented and the young Egyptian prince, not knowing the Assyrian power and ruthlessness, sought to try conclusions with the latter. As a result and relying on Egyptian support Tyre and Israel refused to pay the annual tribute to Assyria. Shalmaneser struck quickly at the rebels and Tyre submitted forthwith; the land of Israel was overrun and laid waste. Egypt did not interfere. Hoshea, the king of Israel, was blinded and his entire country annexed. Shortly before this Shalmaneser was murdered and Sargon ascended the throne of Assyria.

Sargon (722-705 B. C.)

Sargon, the new emperor, had to forget the West for the moment as events nearer home had to be his first concern and they were fairly important as the Aramaean and Chaldaean tribes had made another bid for power. The Chaldaean chief Marduk-pal-iddina, supported by the Elamite king Khumbanigash, who had got jealous of the Assyrian power and its encroachments on his rear, entered Mesopotamia in 721 and laid siege to the fortress of Dur-ilu, on the Lower Tigris. Sargon who proceeded to its relief was beaten by the Elamites before its walls and was compelled to beat a retreat. Marduk-pal-iddina ascended the throne of Babylon.

Taking advantage of the Assyrian reverse the West revolted with the support of Shabaka. Leaving the affairs of Babylonia where they were, Sargon hastened

west, defeated the leader of Damascus at Karkar and the combined Philistines and Egyptians on their country's border, exacting tribute from Egypt and Arabian kingdoms. Israel he punished by carrying into captivity the very flower of the nation, twenty-seven thousand two hundred and ninety, and settled them in Gozan and distant Media, filling their place by a mixed horde of Syrian and Babylonian prisoners, who together with the remnant of Israel formed the laterly Samaritans.

Now Sargon turned to the north-west leaving Babylonia free with its new master. The tribes of the west had turned restive with the support of Rusas of Urartu and Mita of Mushki. This Mita was perhaps the lord of the Phrygians who had extended their domain up to the Taurus and mingled with the Anatolian Hittites. He is supposed by some to have been the mythical Midas at whose touch all things turned to gold. A small state of Mannai between Armenia and Media had been created by Tiglath-pileser IV largely composed of deported tribes from Western Asia. Its rulers swayed between Rusas and Sargon during the long years of unrest. Rusas deposed the ruler for he submitted to Sargon and set up the Median prince Daiukku as king of Mannai. Sargon deposed him and deported him to Hamath (715) and, following his reverses, Rusas killed himself in despair. Midas likewise had incited the Hittite princes to revolt. Carchemish, the seat of Hittite kingdom, was annexed in 717. The Hittite rulers in the mountains were next subdued. No conclusions could be tried with Midas for he was too far away although the Assyrian governor of Cilicia reported successes (715) on the western frontier against him.

In the meanwhile Shabaka had become king in Egypt and his instigation started bearing fruit in the shape of revolt in the South and West. In 715 Ashdod revolted but its leader was captured and sent to Assyria in chains. Judah likewise rebelled and submitted. Now after settling accounts that end and not at all in-

tending to enter the unknown land of the Nile, Sargon turned to Babylonia, drove its Chaldaean king into Chaldaea, and took the throne of Babylon for himself in 709. Then after subjugating his original home along the sea he exchanged its population with that of Samaria and the Hittites of Kommagene. At his imperial feast that followed the conqueror received among others the gift-bearing ambassadors from Midas, now desirous of peace, and tributes from the seven kings of the island of Cyprus who had accepted the overlordship of Assyria as early as 715. Now except for a few disaffections the empire was quiet and territories directly under Assyrian control were being governed by Assyrian officials. Thus the dominions of Sargon extended from Cilicia to the Persian Gulf.

Sargon was one of the greatest builders of the Assyrian dynasty. He built numerous temples and palaces at Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad) to a little north of Nineveh. The excavations of Khorsabad have brought to light brilliant pieces of architecture and sculpture and a whole corridor full of reliefs running round a central ziggurat-temple. Sargon had come to believe in a number of gods as against his predecessors, who were the adorers of a single all-powerful god Ashur, and he installed their images in the new temples he built for them. In his own new palaces he could not live for more than two years for he died in 705 B.C. leaving his extensive possessions to his son Sin-akhi-irba, better known to us as Sennacherib.

Sennacherib (705—681 B. C.)

Sennacherib was neither shrewd nor farseeing like his father. He pursued his campaigns with vanity and they were chronicled and inscribed on clay cylinders and deposited in the royal library, a custom closely followed by his successors.

The Median conquests of Sargon fell away and Marduk-pal-iddina, with Elamite help, fell again, a third

time, on Babylon. Sennacherib expelled him by defeating his Elamite supporters and set up a native Babylonian of the old royal house, thus abandoning his own claims to Babylonia which had been ruled by two of his predecessors as its kings. Then the king had to turn to west for revolts had broken out there on the instigation of Egypt. Luli of Sidon had imposed his authority over all Phoenicia and Hezekiah of Judah over Philistia. In Ashkelon and Ekron kings had been deposed. Sennacherib drove Luli across the sea and Phoenicia submitted. Philistia was likewise subdued with a strong hand. Shabaka sent an army to the help of the Palestinians when the Assyrian monarch moved towards the borders of Egypt but the latter beat the Egyptian forces at Eltekeh. All arrangements in the land were now made as Sennacherib wanted. The whole territory was ravaged and more than two hundred thousand people were taken as spoils. Soon the monarch returned home. The siege of Jerusalem was continued by his officials while the king Hezekiah held out heroically within. Then a compromise was accepted and the Assyrians raised the siege. Hezekiah foolishly admitted ambassadors from the Babylonian pretender Marduk-pal-iddina for which the Prophet Isaiah rebuked him. Sennacherib, this time determined to put an end to the pretender, hounded him out of Babylonia and from his original home in Bit-Yakin, and forced him to take refuge in the Elamite territory while he placed his own son Ashur-nadin-shum on the throne of Babylon after deposing his puppet-king Bel-ibni. In 693 B.C. Sennacherib fitted out a flotilla and embarked on it with his army down the course of Euphrates and reached the sea. The Elamite coast was ravaged and the fugitive Chaldaeans with their gods and Elamite prisoners were sent captives in hundreds to Assyria. This was to catch Marduk-pal-iddina who disappeared from the scene, whether dead or alive we do not know. Furious at this spoliation of his coastal territory the Elamite king at once invaded Babylonia and captured both Sippar and

Sennacherib's son, its ruler, and carried the latter home setting up his own nominee on the throne of Babylon. Sennacherib at once moved into Babylonia and carried this Elamite nominee off to Assyria. He then attacked Elam but to no purpose. In the meanwhile the Babylonians set up their own king and when Sennacherib returned, they bribed the new Elamite king Umman-minanu and summoned his help, and he came. A great battle was fought at Khaluli on the Tigris and most glowing tributes were paid to the Assyrian monarch's prowess and victory was claimed in his records for him. But, in fact, the field lay with the Elamites and the Assyrians had to withdraw to Assyria although the Elamite general was killed in the battle and the son of Sennacherib freed. The Babylonian king also could not be touched.

Sennacherib awaited the death of the Elamite Umman-minanu and, after it had occurred, he appeared before Babylon, captured and burnt down the city and carried its king and god Marduk to Assyria. Its population too was expelled. During the last eight years of his reign we hear of no military expeditions but of one against the Arabs. The king's chronicles do not record the event; it is given by his son's chroniclers.

Sennacherib too, like his father, was a great builder and built numerous palaces and temples at Nineveh. Nineveh had become a mighty capital. He says in his inscription that he did everything to beautify Nineveh which his forefathers had neglected. He straightened its roads, built plantations and a proper wall. About the labour utilized he writes in his own inscription: "The people of Chaldaea, the Aramaeans, the Mannai, the men of Kue and Cilicia, the Phoenicians and Tyrians who had not submitted to my yoke, I carried away, and I set them to forced labour, and they made bricks." The double walls ran round double the area of the city and were pierced by fifteen gates, each bearing a distinct name, as did the walls themselves, and beautiful gardens

were laid outside the habitat within the walls which were watered by numerous aqueducts constructed from springs in the hills north of Nineveh. The king had vouched that he would make of Nineveh a better city than Babylon. Certainly he was able to prove his boast as he had laid the ancient city waste and there was none to compare its glory with one he had built and beautified.

But his end also came early after this and that too a violent one. The Bible puts it clearly : "And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead." He was praying when he was thus murdered. The god heard his prayer but the weight of justice compelled him to decree his favour elsewhere and to lay hands on the real culprit.

Esarhaddon (681—669 B.C.)

Esarhaddon (Ashur-akh-iddina) was the youngest of Sennacherib's four sons and came to the throne in 681 B.C. after the murder of his father. He was away in the provinces when his father met his violent death and he hastened home on getting the news to capture the throne and avenge Sennacherib. Six weeks later he had expelled the parricides from Nineveh, pursued and beat them, although he could not get them for they fled to the king of Urartu. Esarhaddon ascended the ancestral throne formally in 680 B. C.

The first act of the king was to make amends to one of his father's grave wrongs. He re-built Babylon which his father had razed to the ground. Within three years the city was rehabilitated. The Chaldaeans were thus chased away and the people won over. The result was that when the ex-Chaldaean king's son tried to revolt he was beaten back and the Elamite king,

who invaded Babylonia and took Sippar, was likewise thrown out by the hostile mob. A wise man, very unlike his father, had come to rule the people and his statesmanship bore fruit. He was left free to strike against the tribes of the North and to mature his plan to conquer Egypt. The Kimmerians and the Treres were pressing from the north-west and the northern tribes became restive. Set in motion, the Mannai, the Medes and the Scythians invaded Assyria. But Esarhaddon beat them back by sowing seeds of dissension among them. This was done by marrying an Assyrian princess to Bartatua, a Scythian chieftain, and setting him against Spaka, the king of that tribe.

Now Esarhaddon was free to settle accounts with Egypt. Due to the latter's intrigues the west had stirred. During his punitive expedition the king demolished the walls of Sidon (677) and beheaded its king. The Cilician king met the same fate. Phoenicia submitted. Ten kings of Cyprus paid homage and Palestine sent assurances of loyalty. Across Palestine Esarhaddon marched into Egypt little knowing that Egyptians differed from the Assyrians in language, race, religion, in everything, that to the commonest Egyptian the rule of a Hyksos would be hateful, that even though conquered, Egypt could not be held by mere sword, and that the only way to hold her was to sit on her throne and accept her gods as did the Persians, Kambujiya and Darius, who both conquered and held her. In 671 Esarhaddon conquered Egypt. The Pharaoh fled the field of battle after defeat and the Assyrian monarch followed up his victory by investing Memphis, the inhabitants of which city had paid with life for their gallant resistance. Esarhaddon returned to Assyria setting up stelae of victory on the way. The Pharaoh Tirhakah at once returned to Memphis and massacred the Assyrian garrisons. Esarhaddon moved back but was taken ill and died on the way (669). He had already made a will that on his death his elder son, Ashurbanipal, should rule at Nineveh, and that the

younger one, Shamash-shum-ukin, should hold Babylon under the control of his elder brother. Matters were settled as decreed.

Ashurbanipal (669—626)

Ashurbanipal was a great conqueror and the last great ruler of a most powerful family of kings. He ruled for about half a century and his reign was full of events. His first act was to return to Egypt to punish the Pharaoh. He defeated that king at Karbanit, occupied Memphis without a blow and sailed upstream to Thebes. The story is told elsewhere, in the context of Egypt, as to how he dealt with the princes of that land. On his return all his conquest was undone in Egypt and he undertook a punitive expedition in person. He reached Thebes mercilessly suppressing opposition and destroying and burning the cities on the way. Thebes met the same cruel fate and all its glory was gone. While on his way back home Ashurbanipal completely subjugated Phoenicia and received an embassy from far-off Lydia across the seas. Assyrian prestige had reached its apogee.

Elam appears next on Ashurbanipal's list of conquests. Elam had invaded Babylonia and thus had given the Assyrian monarch an opportunity to make an end of it. The eponym-lists break off about this time and our information about the course of events becomes somewhat defective after the year 666 B.C. The Elamite king was marching on Nineveh but on the approach of the Assyrian army he retreated to the mountains pursued by Ashurbanipal's forces. He was driven back to Susa and at Tulliz on the river Ula a pitched battle was fought in which the Elamite king Te-Umman was killed. The territory was diminished and given to Ashurbanipal's nominee. The event was commemorated on a frieze.

In 652 an important event happened which, if things had been successfully organized, would have

become a danger of great force. It was the rebellion of Shamash-shum-ukin, the brother-king of Ashurbanipal, who had the charge of Babylonia. He organized a big conspiracy with the rulers of Elam and those of Palestine and Phoenicia. Fortunately for his brother the matter leaked out and the revolt had to be attempted before the plans were mature. The conspiracy aimed at making the king of Babylonia the master of both the states. He rebelled, and so did the king of Elam. The Chaldaeans appeared with Merodach-baladan's grandson as their leader and took Ur and Uruk. The Elamite king was murdered in his camp by his own son. Ashurbanipal moved into Babylonia with a formidable army, blockaded Sippar, Kuth and Babylon. Shamash-shum-ukin set fire to his palace and perished in the flames for he knew that otherwise, when apprehended, his fate would be still worse. Ashurbanipal placed a nobleman Kandalanu on the Babylonian throne and marched into Elam. Susa was captured and completely destroyed and the statue of the goddess Nina, which had been carried to Elam 1635 years back, was restored to its temple at Uruk. The Chaldaean chief committed suicide and the king of Elam was carried captive. Elam disappeared from history.

Next the emperor turned to his western rebels. The Arabs were the first to encounter. But before the Assyrian army could achieve much they joined hands with others and the entire country from Edom to Damascus was in revolt. But the leader of the Arabs, Uaite, was defeated and carried captive to Nineveh where he and his wife were extremely ill-treated. Most of the rebel kings met the same fate. About the same time the Kimmerian hordes moved eastwards across the Taurus and were defeated by the Assyrian army in Syria. They retreated northward. The king of Lydia sent an embassy to Ashurbanipal to congratulate him on this event. In 635 B. C. Ashurbanipal celebrated a triumph at Nineveh during which he

drove his chariot to the temple of Ishtar to the yoke of which were harnessed the kings who had been defeated and brought as captives. The king of Egypt was conspicuous by his absence for during the Assyrian civil war when the garrisons were withdrawn from Egypt, he had become independent.

The great conqueror died in 626. He had ruled long and his years were crowded with events from the beginning to end. True that he was feared as long as he lived but he left the affairs of the country in a sad state.

The Fall of Nineveh

Ashurbanipal left the state of Assyria impoverished and weak following his costly campaigns, mainly against Elam. The northern tribes had been extremely restive even while the monarch was alive and the Scythians had overrun Syria. And now after Elam had been removed the younger tribes of Iran likewise became restive. In the north the Scythians, the Mannai and the Kimmerians combined and took the mixed name of *Umman-manda* and confederated with the Medes under their king Uvakhshatra and got ready to strike. The Scythians under their youthful leader Madyes, son of Bartatua, was laying the country waste. He had ravaged all the lands upto the borders of Egypt and had been bought off with rich bribes by Psamatik the Pharaoh. The Scythians indeed struck terror in western Asia through their depredations and even drove the Kimmerians out of the field. Madyes, the Scyth, was murdered by Uvakhshatra the Mede.

Babylonia broke away from Assyria and soon after Ashurbanipal's death established its free authority under an energetic local chief Nabu-pal-usur (Nabopolassar). The successors of Ashurbanipal were weaklings. Nabu-pal-usur and Uvakhshatra entered into a treaty against Assyria and in 612 B. C. together they

descended on the shrunken kingdom. In that year, after a terrible siege, Nineveh was destroyed and the last Assyrian king Sin-shar-ishkun perished in the flames of his burning palace with his courtiers and slaves. And thus ended the story of a city that had decreed the death and destruction of endless towns in course of its own existence, and of a dynasty the like of which the history of man has never known. No country ever produced a succession of conquerors at once so powerful, so ambitious, so ruthless and so many. But its end was of a piece with its character.

Assyrian Civilization.

The empire was a military organization and its emperors were sworn militarists. Strength of its armies was its passion, enslavement of nations its ambition. The hardy farmers of the Assyrian uplands were welded into a nation of ruthless fighters and the state was organized on a footing of constant warfare. The military science was developed to an extent no former state organization in history had reached and the art of laying siege was perfected. The horse and the bowmen played their role as never before. Resistance was crushed with relentless cruelty. Flaring alive and burning at stake of the war victims, mainly the chiefs, who were yoked to triumphal chariots, became common. The storming of a city meant, on its capitulation, a ruthless sack, putting the citizens to sword, even children not spared sometimes, razing it completely to the ground, carrying away its gods, depopulating entire districts and provinces, rehabilitating them with alien peoples being some of those characteristics which are reminiscent today of the Assyrians. Their ruthlessness, strength of body and organization of military state left such indelible impressions that literatures of nations are replete with references to them. Even the distant Indian literature was affected by the memory and the word Asura, formed albeit from *asavah*, *pranah*, i. e. vitals, came

to signify a demon. From the *Rigveda* down to the classics Asura denoted power and ruthless strength. Even Kalidasa refers indirectly to the cruel warfare of the Assyrians, the Asuras, by his advocating the ways of the 'righteous conqueror' (*dharmavijayi*), who took away the sovereignty from the vanquished but not his state (*sriyam jahara na tu medinim*) as against the Asura kind of warfare wherein the conqueror brought annihilation to the population and uprooted violently the state (*utkhaya tarasa*).

The Assyrian conquerors sought to crush nations through their unexampled mercilessness and yet there were rebellions year after year; the chiefs and the people knew the unrelenting fate awaiting them following capture and yet they revolted; the cities were conscious of the slaughter that would ensue on their capitulation, all the same, they closed their gates to the inhuman invader and faced the inevitable holocaust. It was because violence and militarism can never crush peoples and nations. They have their repercussions rebounding on themselves as it happened in Assyria. Nations rose, suffered yet balked the barbarians, and turned the blazes of fire that the latter had made for others to themselves, and the flames gutted their palaces and licked clean their monuments of victory and motifs of art. Distant nations and their chroniclers wondered, as do we now sometimes, at the fate of Nineveh. But no, Nineveh went down amid the curses of the nations and was forgotten like a story told, an argument long forgotten, for its glory was written on the tide of water and it was washed away when the waves rolled. So one should not wonder at the fate of Nineveh. The contemporary prophet Nahum never did. Instead, he blazed forth in splendid poetry the inevitable doom: "Woe to the bloody city. Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will show the nations thy nakedness and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast

abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and and set thee as a gazing-stock. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste; who will bemoan her? Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women, the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy walls. . . . Thy shepherds slumber, O King of Assyria; thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them. There is no healing of they hurt; thy wound is grievous; all that hear the grief of thee shall clap their hands over thee, for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually ?”

Assyrians had no literature except what they were able to borrow from subject-nations like the Palestinians, Sumerians and Babylonians. But they were great conservators of ancient literature. They learnt from the Sumerians and their successors, the Babylonians, the art of cuneiform writing and collected hundreds of thousands of the bricks that bore ancient literature and even made fresh copies of them. Ashurbanipal himself was a superb collector and his library and archives have preserved treasures of ancient literature in the absence of which much of our knowledge of the ancient Middle and Near East would have been lost to us. Another kind of important literature that Assyrian kings have left to us is extensive, though boastful, chronicles of their campaigns. A third and very exceptional class of writing is the *limmi*, the eponymous magistracies which record the dates of contemporary events so accurately that they have become the sheet-anchor of the contemporary Middle East chronology.

The Assyrians borrowed their gods too, mostly from the Babylonians, except a few of whom the most important god was Ashur. He was their supreme national deity. Ashur was their hero and god, Ashur

was the name of their old capital, as also that of the Assyrian people. But as the rulers came in touch with other peoples they created a regular pantheon of the divinities they borrowed from others, chiefly the Babylonians. Ea, Baal, Nesroch, Nebu, Shamash, Sin, Nergal, Ishtar, all came to be honoured.

But one aspect of genius that the Assyrians developed was their love for art. Who their artists were, or from where they came, we do not know, but the commissions they executed, the reliefs they traced and the motifs they carved were indeed the wonders of their age and set models to the arts of subsequent nations. Their palaces were feats of contemporary architecture and the tracings along their walls and the reliefs had no parallel. Their lion-figures, carved steeds, and frieze decorations created examples for the contemporary world to follow. Their bulls and lions journeying through the splendid specimens of like and subsequent sculptures ultimately set the originals for the Asokan monuments in India. The hunting scenes on the walls of Ashurbanipal's palace, chiefly the figure of the arrow-struck lioness, have no parallels in liveliness and vigour. The remains laid bare at Khorsabad and elsewhere in Iraq by the spade of the archaeologist, now mostly stored in the museums of Europe, leave the visitor gaping in dumbfounded wonder.

In look the Assyrians were tall and hardy, robust and full of muscles, as can be seen in the tracings on the walls of temples and corridors and of palaces. They wore long cloaks and grew their hair and beard long. They believed in astrology and in the divine oracles which the kings tried before every campaign.

CHAPTER III

PALESTINE

Land and its People

We have said so much about Palestine, its numerous states and cities, a constant prey to the cupidity and aggression of the Egyptian, Babylonian, Hittite and Assyrian monarchs. It will be better to have an idea of the land itself which was the meeting place of all the powers of the neighbourhood. It was the 'Holy Land' where the great and fearless Prophets of the *Old Testament*, preached fire, which again was the 'Promised Land'.

Looking at the map of Palestine we find a mountainous strip of country stretching along the Mediterranean coast enclosed by Egypt, Arabia, Syria and Phoenicia. In the north lay Syria and Phoenicia, both lying almost parallel to each other, Syria to the east and Phoenicia to the west, between Syria and the sea covering roughly the modern state of Lebanon. Phoenicia was full of rich coastal cities and, as the mistress of the sea, came, in course of time, to found prosperous and powerful colonies along the Mediterranean. Its wealth attracted conquerors and its towns became constant cockpits for the neighbouring powers. To the east of Palestine lay the desert of Arabia where the nomad tribes moved about restlessly. Egypt lay to the south and its borders ran along the borders of the holy land. To the west of Palestine lay the landlocked sea.

The midland had numerous settlements, numerous tribes and numerous kingdoms. Gilead lay to the south of the Yarmuk river, in the north-east, and to its west and south-west stretched the territory of Israel, west of the Jordan; due south of Gilead was

situated the kingdom of Ammon along whose southern borders ran the marches of Moab. Judah lay next to Israel and to its south. The kingdom of Edom, lying in the extreme south, was pressed between Arabia and Egypt. Philistia ran along the sea and its borders in the north ended where the Phoenician borders began.

This was the unfortunate land of the Jews and the Israelites where Abraham led his flock, the Petrarchs cast their longing eyes and where Moses wandered back from Egypt to find the 'Promised Land' to settle his people down there. The ever-moving sons of Israel, hounded out of one place crowded out of another, object of hatred and incalculable wrong and subjected to persistent persecutions across countries, across time, have again found their home and have built up their state round Zion where their Judges once judged by the Laws, Solomon ruled with wisdom and the Prophets preached their fury and Christ his love.

About the middle of the 14th century B. C. all the great states of Egypt, Babylon, Khatti and Assyria became paralysed which was a signal for the rise of new and independent states in Palestine and Syria. Tribal movements were astir and heading towards this middle land. The Aramaeans moved about this time from the bank of the mid Euphrates and settled down in Syria in the land of Ubi with its capital at Damascus, thus absorbing the Amorites and Hittites in course of time. To the South of the Aramaeans and across the Yarmuk river were the Hebrews already settled. Their original home had been Harron in Mesopotamia. They were Semitic like the Aramaeans and seemed to have been of Arabian extraction. They were perhaps already astir about the time of Hammurabi. One of the earliest movements had been led by Abraham whose exact time cannot be stated although some scholars have read

in the Biblical texts the possibility of his having been a contemporary of the great Babylonian lawgiver Hammurabi.

It is possible that the ancestors of the Hebrews moved out of Ur under Abraham about 2000 B. C., entered Canaan and left it soon after, reaching Egypt sometime about 1800. It is possible also that the Hyksos were part of the great movement who, after taking Egypt, settled the Jews there as their state functionaries and tax-collectors. The rule of the Hyksos became so intolerable, because of their oppressive ways and because of the Egyptian love for independence, that the people of Egypt rose in revolt and expelled the foreign rulers. The Jews too were foreigners who had so identified themselves with the Hyksos and made themselves so hated through their tyrannical methods of exactions that the Egyptians made a bid to annihilate them. But their leader, Moses, led them out of the country and, wandering across the Arabian desert and the slopes of the Sinai under extremely severe conditions of every character, they entered Palestine. Moses himself died on the way but his followers under Aaron reached the Promised Land which they made their final abode. The Aramaeans and the Israelites, having originated from the same spot and being closely akin in stock, coalesced easily and from the first. They absorbed in course of time the Canaanite and Amorite inhabitants of the land too who were Semites like them.

The Philistines entered Palestine a little later and settled down south of Phoenicia along the sea. They were uncircumcised Aegean invaders from Crete and were never sought to be absorbed by the Semites to whom they were so alien in everything. The Phoenicians in the north and out of Palestine were Semites but they looked down upon the Aramaeans of Syria and the Israelites of Palestine because they were so backward in civilization. They themselves were rich

merchants and masters of the sea, and traded all along the Mediterranean coasts and with distant countries. They soon established big colonies into which the wealth of the nations and the world flowed. Among these Carthage, with which the Romans fought for a couple of centuries through their historic Punic wars a duel unto death and which ultimately met its destruction at their hands, was the greatest. It was founded about the close of the ninth century; Utika and Gades were much older; and Tharshish was the oldest, busy with commerce as early as Hiram I and Solomon in the 10th century B. c.

Hebrew Conquest of Palestine and the Philistines

The position of the Hebrew settlement in Palestine may now tentatively be stated thus. About the time of Hammurabi Abraham left Harron in Mesopotamia with his tribes, crossed the Euphrates, defeated the Five Kings of Syria and settled down in southern Canaan. About 1800 the tribes entered Egypt with the Hyksos and remained there for about five centuries. About 1300 B. c. the Exodus began and Moses and Aaron led the Israelites from Egypt wandering across the desert for about three decades. About the middle of the 13th century Aaron led his people into the 'Promised Land,' the home of their ancestors, perhaps by way of Jericho.

From the Biblical account it would seem that the main body of the tribe crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan near the city of Jericho. Jericho and Ai were taken after a fight. The Israelites pushed further into the hill-country and occupied Bethel and Shiloh. Then they moved southwest under Joshua into the Shephelah where the Canaanite kings of Lachish and Gezer were defeated and Lachish, Gezer and Ekron were occupied. After this there followed troubles within the Israelite camp which, however, were settled and a reconciliation ended their quarrels

for the present. The invaders were now in possession of two enclaves of hill-territory—Mount Ephraim in the north and Judah in the south, Jerusalem still lying as a Canaanite wedge between them. The Canaanite princes, however, combined to throw them out of the plains where they were powerless before the enemy's chariots.

At this stage a new power entered the land. The Philistines with their broad swords and huge spears made their appearance and carried everything before them. Don and Asher, two trading tribes who had settled down on the sea-coast were thrown down and driven into the hills from wherever they had been in the plains. They took the deities of the Canaanites away from them and enslaved their inhabitants. They had established their own state in Canaan about 1100 B. C. comprising mainly of the five settlements of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. Each one of these was ruled by a *seren* with his nobles. They took counsel together under the leadership of the *seren* of Ashdod who also commanded the forces during war. In these cities and in others the Philistines had their theatres in which huge crowds of spectators could assemble to watch the theatre or gladiatorial combats. The Biblical account of Samson gives the numbers of men and women assembled in the theatre of Gaza as three thousand to watch Samson make sport.

This Philistine culture was the product of a foreign military garrison and soon gave way to the Semitic civilization taking over the Canaanite gods and manner of worship and by the time of David the Philistines had started speaking the Canaanite tongue.

But since their impact on the Israelites was great which threw them into confusion, the latter were compelled to retreat into their hill-fastnesses of the uplands. There they were attacked by the Arab tribes.

Midianites particularly reduced them to extreme straits, taking away all the produce of the earth. Two Israelite leaders, Gideon and Jerubbaal, are particularly recorded as having given reprisals to the Midianite raiders.

The kingdom of Edom, between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba, perhaps of the Aramaean origin, was fast developing into a powerful state. It had inflicted a severe defeat upon the Midianites in the territory of Moab during the reign of Hadad I. Moab, Ammon and Edon made a common cause against the Israelites and off and on attacked their territory.

A kingship had begun taking shape among the Israelites and Abimelech, son of Jerubbaal, seems to have attempted to rule part of Israel definitely as a king. The result was a revolt and civil war. Shechem, the city of the tyrant, was burnt and he was killed at Thebez.

The Philistine invasion had come about 1080 B.C. The victory over the Israelites in the battle of Eben-ha-ezer was complete. It annihilated the Israelite army and the sacred ark of Yahweh was captured. The resistance was broken. Garrisons were placed at numerous places to guard against the risings of Israelites. For half a century the grip of Philistine over Israelites was secure.

Samuel, the prophet, who hated all those who worshipped other gods than Yahweh, could not excuse the Philistines for the insult they had done to the Israelitish sanctuary even after they had restored the ark. He nurtured a religious revolt with Saul as its leader. Saul's kingdom of Israel was the result. Samuel, however, had never wished to establish an independent kingship. His idea was to make of Saul a great leader who would be subservient to him after war. But Saul could not play the second fiddle to Samuel. The

differences between them went on widening and after Samuel's death his followers were put to the sword. David, a young rival of Saul, at once secured the support of the infuriated priests and with their help he captured the Israelite throne. David ruled at his fastness of Jerusalem.

But before we come to the reign of David, the story of Saul's revolt must be told. The Philistines had forbidden the working in metals so that arms might not be available to the Israelites but Saul and Jonathan his son managed to get them for their men. Saul's first expedition was led against the Ammonite prince Nahash, and after defeating the latter and securing his people's allegiance, he now crossed the Jordan and fell upon the garrison at Geba. The garrison was confused and the Philistines were badly beaten at the great battle of Michmash. Saul next moved against the Amalekites, defeated and took their king prisoner whom Samuel sacrificed with his own hands.

The Philistines in the meanwhile were not sitting idle and were attacking the Israelites and were being attacked by them. Continuous warfare became the order of the day during the entire length of the reign of Saul. During this war David, the son of Jesse of Bethlehem in Judah, distinguished himself to an exceptional degree. He became so popular with the army and the people that Saul gave him his own daughter.

Saul, however, soon found out that David was intriguing with Samuel against him and he became so furious that his son-in-law had to flee the kingdom. David then started making war on the Philistines on his own account. Saul in the meanwhile continued to harass him through his pursuits and David was compelled to come to peace with the Philistines and to accept a fief under their king of Gath. This

king canvassed with the Philistine chiefs to take David on the expedition against Saul but they refused to put faith in him or to receive his aid. So David could not take part in the great battle of Mount Gilboa in which both Saul and his son Jonathan were killed.

Henceforth two kings started ruling over the Israelites both under the tutelage of the Philistines. Ishbaal, son of Saul, ruled at Mahanaim, while David ruled at Hebron in the south. David, however, soon deposed Ishbaal and took over the whole kingdom of Saul. This act was supported by Samuel and the priests and accepted by the majority of the people. A little later Ashbaal was murdered and David became the undisputed Lord of Israel. He soon moved from Hebron to the impregnable fortress of Jerusalem after capturing it with great cunning. The Philistines could not bear this *coup* of David quietly moving to his new seat from where he could always defy them. They sent an expedition against him but it failed miserably for David beat them twice at Baal-perazim and in the valley of Rephaim. At both the places the Philistines were thoroughly routed. Even their gods were captured.

David followed up his successes by declaring an all-out war on Philistia and opening operations against Gath. Gath was the kingdom that had given David, when he had fled from Saul, asylum and a fief, and the same was now fighting for life. Fighting in such a situation is always severe and in the battles that followed quarters were neither given nor sought. Ultimately David captured Gath and fell upon Ashdod, the centre of the Philistine power. The city was taken and almost all resistance broken. David soon took over the dependencies of Gath and the dimensions of Israel touched limits not thitherto known. The Philistine mercenaries flocked to Jerusalem to take service with the victorious king who employed them in the corps of his bodyguards.

The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

David organized his kingdom on a military footing. Military officers enjoyed greater privileges than the civil servants. The Israelite state was far more military in character than either Egypt or Babylonia. David very diplomatically subordinated the priests also to himself. He himself appointed them and naturally they felt responsible to him. And since he appointed to the office of priests mostly his sons and relatives, they always secured his interest first.

David's next move was to organize revenge on those that had been his enemies and he spared nobody. Thus the ancient enemy of Israel Moab was overthrown and two-thirds of her inhabitants were slaughtered despite the fact that the kingdom had given asylum to his parents when he was in hiding to evade Saul's anger. Ammon's turn came next. So knowing its lot the kingdom entered into an alliance with the Aramaean tribes against Israel. The allies, however, were utterly defeated and later David massacred the citizens of the capital of Ammon after taking it. This angered the Aramaean king of Zobah and he sent his general with a big army against David but the latter defeated the enemy severely. Syrians then moved against him and he beat them and annexed Damascus, the capital of Syria. This raised David's prestige in the eyes of distant rulers and the kings of Hamath and Tyre sought his friendship and became his ally.

After settling thus the affairs in the north David turned south. Edom was invaded and overthrown and a general massacre of its people ordered and carried out. The king of Edom was killed in the battle and his son fled to Egypt where the Pharaoh gave him a pension till David's death. Edom was annexed as far as the sea. Thus within a short time David made Israel an extensive and powerful

kingdom. He, however, could not live in peace in his old age because of the harem-intrigues. He had to flee the capital following the rebellion of Absalom. Another son Adonijah attempted to wrest the crown which the king had sought to reserve for his son Solomon. Solomon therefore was at once consecrated and associated with his father in the affairs of the state.

On the death of his father Solomon succeeded without a struggle. All those who had supported the cause of his rival were either put to death or removed from the way through exile.

Solomon was magnificent and tyrannical. The simple ways of his father were abandoned by him. He was now one of the greatest kings of the age and received tributes from far and near. To the common man he was also exceedingly wise. He was a man of great culture and an uncommon aesthete. He built a great temple at Jerusalem, the first building of importance in Israel, and its splendour sat deep in the commoners' mind. The Jews came to consider him the wisest and the mightiest and the most magnificent of all rulers of all times. He made wealth by commerce and maintained it. His kingdom lay on the highway between Egypt and Mesopotamia and between Arabia and Asia Minor, and the result was a downpour of wealth. The Pharaoh gave him his daughter and along with her Gaza in dowry which was a great centre of trade. Solomon's wisdom lay, besides other ways, in diplomatically keeping Israel out of war.

The marriage-alliance with Egypt secured peace on the south-west border while friendship with the king of Tyre, the most powerful Phoenician prince opened his way to the rich Mediterranean cities of Phoenicia. With the help of Hiram of Tyre he equipped a great naval expedition from Ezion-geber to the land of Ophir and brought back the famous cargoes

of the wealth of India (ivory, apes, and peacocks) described with such detail in the Book of Kings. Thus trade even with distant India was fairly brisk. He is supposed to have exchanged the Galilaean towns to Hiram for his cedar and gold.

His reign became the theme of popular romance. Balkis, the queen of Sheba, is supposed to have gone to Jerusalem to see the wise and magnificent king. At last the king's unrealistic living bore fruit. Both Edom and Syria broke away from Solomon's kingdom and became independent. David's days were gone. Hadad III, who had taken refuge in Egypt and married an Egyptian princess returned and won back the independence of his lost kingdom. So also did Rezon of Syria his kingdom. After the death of Solomon the kingdom split again into two natural states of Judah and Israel.

Solomon died about 930 B. C. after a rule of about 45 years and was succeeded by his son Rehoboam who turned out to be good for nothing. Soon the northern part of the kingdom (Israel) was seized by Jeroboam, son of Nebat. Religious reaction against the idolatrous tendency of Solomon had contributed to the success of this revolt, but as soon as Jeroboam secured the throne he did not hesitate to offer public sacrifices to the bull-images at Dan and Bethel. Since then for about two centuries the Prophets waged constant war against the iconic trends of the royal court and the majority of the population. The result was the intrepid splendid prophetic literature of the *Old Testament* the like of which is not to be found in any literature of the world. Yahweh was the sole god the prophets adored.

Judah remained simple and isolated in the hills, almost wholly aniconic. In the fifth year of his reign (c. 925 B.C.) Rehoboam was attacked by Shishak (Sheshenk I) of Egypt and Jerusalem was captured

and sacked.

The Philistines acknowledged Egyptian supremacy to save themselves from the Israelite enmity and aggression. This supremacy was never challenged by either David or Solomon.

With the battle of Karkar (853 B.C.) in which Shalmaneser II defeated the confederate forces of Syria, Hamath, and Israel, history of the kingdoms of Syria and Palestine merged into that of Assyria and Babylonia. The role of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel was rather a secondary one after now, and sack and surrender and depopulation were their lot. And yet their prophets, whether, bound or free, thundered against the tall and the mighty and called upon the elements to destroy the haters of Yahweh. They were terrible monotheists and with Akhenaten the first to preach the dominion of one god, and of the chances of the poor against the rich which note was carried on and consummated in the promise by Christ of the 'Kingdom of Paradise' on earth.

CHAPTER IV

BABYLONIA AND PERSIA

1. BABYLONIA

Assyria had been a curse fallen on Babylonia. The military state had completely paralysed her. Once the iron grip of Assyria was removed, Babylonia again rose to eminence. Her energetic king Nebopolassar at once moved north and occupied most of the territory of Assyria, as the Medes annexed the lands north and east of Tigris.

Pharaoh Necho (609-593), finding Assyria thus fallen and Babylonia pre-occupied, smashed the forces of Josiah at Megiddo and seized the whole of Palestine and Syria. The heir to the lands of Assyria was Babylonia and Egypt's boldness could not be swallowed by her. At Carchemish the die was cast and Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, smote the forces of the Nile and compelled them to withdraw within the borders of Egypt. The prince had to halt his hot pursuit and hasten home for the news had come of his father's death. He returned to Babylon and secured his throne and was acknowledged ruler of the entire territory between Babylonia and Egypt. Josiah alone kept on fanning the fanaticism of Judah where the king, the people and the priests all combined to defy the conqueror. The prophet Jeremiah warned them and counselled moderation but the new king of Judah Jeconiah, as persistent in his defiance as his father, kept the field. Nebuchadnezzar captured him and Jerusalem both and carried him with numerous inhabitants into captivity. The great king got busy building the splendid temples and planting wonderful gardens in his capital.

In the meanwhile Egypt decided to try conclusions with him on the issue of the Asiatic possessions. The Phoenician towns at once accepted Egypt's hegemony and, encouraged by them, king Zedekiah of Judah rose against Babylon and refused to pay tribute to her. Nebuchadnezzar crossed the Euphrates and descended on North Syria (587 B.C.) and from there sent out a force to take Jerusalem. A siege was laid, and the Pharaoh, who had retreated wisely before the redoubtable Babylonian to Egypt, advanced to relieve the city of Judah. He had to beat a retreat again and Jerusalem fell. The king was carried captive with his two sons who were slain before his eyes by the orders of Nebuchadnezzar and his own eyes were later put out. Most of the population was likewise carried captive. The miserable remnant murdered the Babylonian governor and migrated to Egypt with the prophet Jeremiah. There they were properly settled.

Sidon made peace and Tyre acknowledged the Babylonian suzerainty after a long siege. It has been supposed that Nebuchadnezzar pushed up against the Pharaoh deep into the land of Nile and reached the First Cataract. During his old age, any way, the great conqueror got mad and died in 562 B.C. He was a great builder and built the temples of E-sagila at Babylon and E-zida at Borsippa. Then he built the great wall of Babylon which his father had planned. A double massive wall now ran round the vast city and between the two and overlooking them a running fastness was erected. The great wall was further surrounded by other walls and ditches. Besides these temples and walls the ancient city was beautified by broad streets and pretty secular buildings. The city assumed her real stature and became the proverbial Babylon in splendour and glory.

Nebuchadnezzar was followed on the throne of Babylon by common-place undistinguished monarchs and with a boy Nabopolassar's Chaldaean dynasty

terminated in 556 B. C. The priests then selected a merchant Nabunaid (Nabonidus) king of Babylon. Nabonidus was given more to a life of peace than to that of the soldier and like the princes of Nabopolassar's family he too was a builder. He was an archaeologist and collected ancient records. He is supposed to have discovered a foundation-stone of Naram-sin and that discovery he commemorated with great zeal. He built the sun-temple, E-babbar, and the temple of Anunitum, E-ulmash, at Sippar. He was succeeded by his ill-famed unlucky son Belshazzar to whom the writing on the wall is supposed to have appeared. The Persians, the Iranian Aryans, had become by then all-powerful and Babylon faced its doom at their hands 'while Belshazzar feasted'. The king fared as did his city.

2. PERSIA

The Beginnings

The Medes and the Persians belonged to the same Aryan or Indo-European race. They both seem to have separated somewhere in the Armenian mountains having come originally perhaps from the main Aryan knot in Southern Russia. The Medes were the western branch who made their appearance early in Assyrian politics and moved, like their Aryan ancestors the Mitannians and the Kassites, towards the west. The Persians in the meanwhile were making their way into south-eastern Iran, the vicinity of Elam. When they got there is not so easy to say but since one of their earliest kings Kurush defeated the Medes and annexed their kingdom about 550 B. C. or slightly later, their first appearance in Iran cannot be placed too far back. It is possible that their earliest wave entered Iran a few centuries earlier than Kurush's date.

The Medes were supreme in the confederation which along with the Babylonians broke the power of Assyria and destroyed Nineveh. King Kyaxares

(Uvakhshatra) of the Medes was succeeded after his death by his son Astyages, who was defeated and deposed (550 B. C.) by Kurush II, the Persian. After this the kingdom of the Medes came to an end and formed part of the growing kingdom of the Persians.

The Persian kingdom of Anshan, of which Kurush (Cyrus) and Darayavaush (Darius) both were kings, was founded by Chishpish, son of Hakhamanish or Achaimenes. The founder of the dynasty ruled sometime about the last quarter of the seventh century B. C. After Chishpish there seems to have run two lines of succession, two collateral branches of rulers, as Darius's own expression, *duvitaparnam*, would show. In one branch Chishpish was succeeded by Kurush I, followed by Kambujiya I (Cambyzes), Kurush II the Great (Cyrus) and Kambujiya II. In the other Chishpish was followed by Ariyaramna (Ariaramnes), Arshama (Arsames), Vishtaspa (Hystaspes) and Darayavaush (Darius I). The last named came to lord the territories of both the branches of rulers when they became merged into a single state, Darayavaush counting his pedigree consecutively right from Hakhamanish through all the succeeding steps of the other branch as well and calling himself the ninth.

Chishpish seized Elam perhaps during the confusion following the conquest of Ashurbanipal. Slowly the entire country passed into the hands of the Persians, who took over the ancient towns of the Medes, Ekbatana and Susa. After the deposition of their king Astyages the Medes accepted Kurush naturally and he too made no distinction between the Medes and the Persians and perfectly welded them into a single people.

It is said that it was about this time that Zoroaster made his appearance. A much earlier date, even earlier than 1000 B.C., is sometimes suggested for this great prophet, but accepting the saner view, he may with ample reason be placed in the 6th century B.C.

In that century all Asia seems to have been cast in a religious ferment. Great religious movements under great thinkers and popular leaders sprang up and thoughts fairly revolutionary and opposed to the ancient and the orthodox made their appearance. It was at this time that Mahavira and Buddha lived and preached in India; it was now that Confucius and Lao Tzu elaborated their ideas in China; and it was about then that the prophets in Palestine disgorged their angry words of fire. No wonder that the spirit of the times took shape in Iran also and Zoroaster appeared with his militant ethics. There is an important tradition that fixes his birth to 599 B.C. He is supposed to have commenced his teaching in his fortieth year in Khorasan. There at Kishmar, in the district of Turshiz, in order to commemorate the conversion to his new faith of King Vishtaspa (Gushtasp), father of Darius I, he planted the famous cypress tree which was said to have lived until A. D. 861, when the Caliph el-Mutawakkil had it felled and taken to Samarra on the Tigris, to be utilized in the construction of his palace. Darayavaush, the son of the first royal convert to Zoroastrianism, seems to have been a devout Zoroastrian, as is particularly suggested by his campaign against 'lies', perhaps the lies of the Magian form of worship, in his Behistun inscription.

Of the old Aryan gods of the north-west area of the Mitannians, viz. Indra, Varuna, and the Nasatya-twins, only Varuna had been retained in the Zoroastrian religion, the rest were not only not worshipped but had come to signify demoniac powers right opposed to the divine. In the *Avesta* Indra and the Asvins (Nasatya-twins) have become evil demons. They may even have formed, along with the Magian gods, the 'lies' of Darayavaush. Herodotus describes the peculiar Zoroastrian custom of exposing the bodies of the dead to birds and dogs before burial. It is obvious therefore that the times were favourable to the spread of the new cult and that Darius I, the son of the first convert to

Zoroastrianism, turned out to be a most devout Zoroastrianist. It has been rightly suggested that Darayavush received his great fervour and inspiration from his uncompromising master and that the rise of his vast dominions was incidental to the zeal infused into the conqueror by his extraordinary contemporary.

The Empire

The deposition of Astyages gave Croesus of Lydia the signal to move eastward. He consulted the oracles of Greece and crossed the Halys and seized Cappadocia. Kurush II too moved westward in the autumn of 547 B.C. and fought the indecisive battle of Pteria. Croesus retreated supplicating help from Sparta, Egypt, and Babylonia where Nabonidus was ruling. But Kurush gave him no time and before succour could be received from anywhere Kurush advanced in winter and fell upon him, annihilating his forces and taking Croesus prisoner. He was taken to Persia where, it is said, he lived like a noble at the Persian Court.

In those short engagements the Europeans saw that the Orientals were superior to them in warfare, particularly in the methods of siege which they had learnt from the Assyrians. They had brought science into the field. The subjugation of the Ionian Greeks and Teians was so swift and thorough that they even thought of leaving their country and migrating wholesale to Sardinia. Indeed, the helplessness proved beyond hope. Next followed the submission of the Milesians, of Caria and Lycia. Lycians resisted the invader smartly but all opposition proved futile before the Persians and the Persian general Harpagos completed his conquest in no time.

Kurush then turned to Babylonia. Its southern part had already been taken and a Persian governor posted at Uruk. Now the final blow came in 539 B. C.

when Gaubaruva, the Persian satrap of Assyria and Gutium, defeated the Babylonians at Opis. Belshazzar commanded the Babylonians. He was perhaps killed and Nabonidus fled from Sippar to Borsippa where he died. The citadel of Babylon held on for sometime more. It was stormed in the presence of Kurush and fell to his sword. He entered Babylon in triumph and was welcomed by the priests and people as their deliverer. The Babylonian monarchy came to an end.

Nabonidus had made himself hateful to the priests who had resented his antiquarian zeal for collecting the gods from all over the country and they applauded Kurush, who, in usual accordance with the Persian tolerance of the religions of the subject races, sent back the images to their shrines.

Phoenician cities too readily submitted and so did Palestine where Kurush permitted the establishment of a Jewish community at Jerusalem. Kurush then conquered the Sakas of the east and thus extended his dominions over the region beyond the Jaxartes. Then he died leaving his crown to his son Kambujiya.

Egypt and Persia

Amasis the pharaoh of Egypt did not oppose Persia as long as he lived. Persia was moving along her course of conquest as planned by her great rulers and the subjugation of Egypt was their next step. Egypt lay palsy-stricken and her deserting mercenaries could not save her from the disciplined Persian forces who came to conquer the country. A short engagement was fought at Pelusium where Psamatic III, son of Amasis, was defeated. He fled to Memphis. Kambujiya II followed him there, took Memphis, deposed the pharaoh and sent him to Persia, and himself ascended the throne. This was the first time a foreigner had sat on the Egyptian throne, a thousand years after

the hated Hyksoses. The secret of holding Egypt lay in sitting tight in its throne and in accepting its gods. Kambujiya did both by getting formally consecrated and by offering sacrifices publicly to Egyptian gods. He assumed even the Egyptian name which was given to him by Egyptian officials. After accepting the submission of Cyrene, the vassal of Egypt, he sent an expedition to conquer the distant Carthage which, however, perished in the desert. He had already moved south as far as Aswan and lived for sometime at Thebes. Now he proceeded to capture Napata and restore Nubia to Egypt, but the barren region of the Second Cataract proved too severe for his forces that were ruined. He ascribed his disasters to the sorceries of Egypt and he ran amok outraging the people and their gods. In the meanwhile news came from Persia that the false Smerdis had rebelled and Kambujiya hastened home leaving the charge of Egypt to Satrap Aryandés.

Bardiya (Smerdis), the brother of Kambujiya, had been secretly murdered by him before his march on Egypt. Now the nobles of the court, hearing of the king's disasters in Egypt, placed a false Bardiya on the Persian throne, and the people accepted him for they had no knowledge of the murder of the real Bardiya. Kambujiya was crossing Syria with Darius, son of Hystaspes, when he suddenly died. Darius, however, pushed on carrying the body of the king and was welcomed by the nobles who knew the truth. Gaumata, the false Bardiya, was a Magian and had assumed royal dignity and was living in a castle of Nisara. Darius attacked and killed him and was himself raised to the throne of the childless Kambujiya, his own father, ruling in Parthia and Hyrcania, tendering his allegiance to his son.

Following the trouble at home Satrap Aryandes had sought to become independent in Egypt. He had carried the Persian arms to Cyrene and Benghazi.

Darius came to Egypt in 517 B. C. to complete the conquest of Egypt which his predecessor had begun. As a first step he executed Aryandes and then set to reconciling the outraged and wronged Egyptians with various measures of peace. He took the crown with an Egyptian name and accepted the Egyptian gods. He built the famous temple of Hibis in el-Khargah where he also constructed subterranean conduits for irrigation.

Darayavaush I

Darayavaush I (Darius) had ascended the throne of Persia but matters did not prove easy and he had to exert himself first to suppress and win opposition. There came up considerable opposition and Babylonia, Elam, Armenia, Media, Egypt, even the home province of Pars at once revolted against his authority. But it must be said to the credit of the great genius of Darius that he did not swerve from the danger but brought each of the provinces back to the empire and settled accounts with everyone of his enemies.

Babylonia rose first under a certain Nebuchadnezzar III. Two engagements and a siege operation carried the capital and the usurper was apprehended and slain. A little later the city revolted again under a certain Aratha but was soon brought under control and disaffection rooted out of the land. Next followed Elam where a Persian had styled himself an Elamite prince and donned the Elamite name of Ummanish. His insurrection was easily put down and the Elamites disappeared from history. A Mede called Fravartish declared himself Khshathrita, a scion of the family of Kyaxares, and essayed to restore the old Median kingdom. He was caught and brutally executed. In the home province Vahyazdata held out long and the king had to bring all his resources to bear him down. Egypt too was brought to book, as we have seen, and its satrap Aryandes beheaded. This stupendous task was accomplished within the first few years of his reign and

his victories over his provinces and enemies well deserved mention. They were recorded on a rock-cliff overhanging the main route from Mesopotamia into Persia through the Zagros, in an inscription on the face of which Darius was represented with the conquered rebels lying bound. This is the famous Behistun inscription which was first copied by Sir Henry Rawlinson in 1837 at great risk of his life. It was written in Persian, Susian, and Babylonian cuneiform and afforded the clue from which the cuneiform writing was deciphered and the treasures of the tells and archives laid bare to us. Along with the famous Rosetta Stone, which made the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphics possible, the Behistun epigraphs furnish us with a key to the understanding of the entire Middle East history.

West now drew the attention of the great king. Samos was conquered by his generals in 516. The Sakas of the steppes, chiefly under their leader Skunka, had been giving considerable trouble to the northern frontiers of the empire, and Darius, determined to put an end to their raids, decided to find them in their own habitats of southern Russia. He resolved to take an expedition into Europe and arrived at Bosphorus where he summoned the Ionian tyrants to meet the royal army with their own. They came with an Athenian despot, a fleet was fashioned, and the army sailed along the course of the Danube and for the first time an Asian expedition entered Europe proper. The king himself pursued fruitlessly the Scythian prince who kept on evading him and ultimately put his efforts to naught. The emperor returned to Persia while his general subdued Thrace and received the allegiance of Macedonia.

About this time Athens declared her fidelity to the democratic principles of Solon and proclaimed a war on tyrants. First she compromised with Persia in a number of ways. But soon the final break came following the Ionian revolt and the burning and sack of Sardis

when she threw in her lot with her kin against the tyrant of the orient. Darius ordered her destruction and the first expedition in 492 B. C. was the result. Proceeding under Marduniya by land and sea and through Thrace it was wrecked by a storm off Mt. Athos and the Persian fleet was destroyed. Then followed a second expedition under Datis and Artapherne with Hippias helping them. Eretria soon fell to the advancing army and it sent a shudder through Athens. Help was sought of Sparta and the great Olympian runner ran his maddest to carry the news of the impending danger to that premier city of Greece. But the Lacedaemonians arrived too late for the Athenians had already fought and vanquished the enemy. Great numbers of the enemy lay dead on the field of battle. The Spartans congratulated the conquerors and went away as they had come without striking a blow. The Persian army had landed by the coast of Marathon, an open sea-plain, where one of the greatest and most decisive battles of mankind had been fought. The army of the greatest empire of the age was pitted against the patriotism of the little city of Athens and of her friend Plataea. And when the Athenians closed in combat the enemy was struck by the resistance and shaken by the attack. They charged the great foe at a run and dispersed the Persians, who taken by panic, rushed to their ships and sailed off with those on the board. Those who could not reach the ships were massacred on the field. Six thousand is stated to have been the number of the invaders dead as against one hundred and ninety-two. This was a great event for Athens, and Greece, and for Europe and the world, but for Iran it was not perhaps so much an event of importance. After all, at the fag end of the extensive empire a few generals had lost a battle in which a few soldiers of the vast Persian militia had been killed. All the same, Darius prepared to attack Athens again and annihilate the daresome city. But about the same time Egypt revolted under Khabhash (486 B. C.) and drew the attention of the emperor in

that direction. Right when Darius was ready to proceed on his punitive expedition to Egypt, he died in 485 B. C. and for the moment both Egypt and Athens were spared the fate they later met.

Daravavaush was a great king, great as a conqueror and great as an organizer and administrator of empire. For the administration of the empire the vast dominions were divided into satrapies or provinces, twenty-one (including Thrace) in number. Each satrapy was the charge of a satrap (Kshatrapa) who was a civil political officer assisted in his work by a general who looked after the military matters and a secretary. All the three were independent in their respective spheres. One of the satrapies, the twentieth, was India from where weights of gold dust were received by the imperial exchequer. Coins were in circulation and they were of a fixed standard imitating the Lydian and other Greek models. The gold coin 'daric' bore the emperor's name and was the last word on the art of exquisite coining. It bore the device of the running Persian archer.

Travelling commissioners were the very 'eyes and ears' of the king. Many of the provinces and kingdoms were left to the charge of local leaders and kings. This kind of local autonomy coupled with the centralized power in the hands of a benevolent despot was unique and worked most perfectly. Darius left the peoples and races completely free in matters of religious belief and modes of worship. His policy of tolerance was much ahead of time and gained the confidence of the most alien of his subjects. The system endured till the end of the empire in the third quarter of the 4th century B. C. It developed out of the Assyrian arrangement of provinces but was totally different in the spirit and in the result. The appointment of a civil satrap to the charge of a province made all the difference and freed the population from the ruthlessness of the Assyrian military governors. The em-

pire was one of the most extensive absolutely unprecedented in that age. It was as extensive as the Egyptian during the tallest conquerors of Egypt with Asia up to the Pamirs and the Caspian, Arabia, Asia Minor, Ionia and several islands, part of extreme south-eastern Europe and the Russian steppes added to it. From the Danube to the Jaxartes and from the Caspian and south Russian steppes to the borders of Nubia in Africa ran the marches of the empire of Darius the Great, at once the model and terror to the tyrants of the west.

Persia and Greece

Khshayarsha (Xerxes) next came to the throne. But his first duty lay towards Egypt and he took measures to put down the revolt of Khabbash. Babylon too had shown signs of unrest and had to be put in its place. Freed from these affairs, Xerxes proceeded to teach a lesson to Athens and to avenge his father's privation on the field of Marathon. The march of the enormous host began in 480 B.C.

In the meanwhile the approaching danger brought all the Greeks together excepting a few who had already submitted to the yoke of Persia. A congress banned all civil wars and exhorted all the Greeks to combine to resist the Persians who had massed men on an unprecedented scale.

Xerxes crossed the Dardanelles by a bridge of boats. Along the coast moved a huge fleet carrying supplies. The Persian monarch himself was leading his enormous hosts. This time the Spartans were not slow and fourteen hundred of their men, steel cast into human flesh, under Leonidas stood waiting to do their job at the narrow pass of Thermopylae, a mountainous district leading from Thessaly into the southern provinces. The Greeks intended to send reinforcements before the Persians arrived. But the Persians arrived a little too soon and the little force

of the Spartans was faced with annihilation. Some of the Greeks, who were not Spartans, seeing the futility of the resistance decided to retreat, but Leonidas said: "Retreat if you wish to, but as for me and my Spartans, we have been sent to hold the pass, and here we will remain." Not a man moved.

Then began a battle which will be remembered while the world lasts. For two days armours clanged, swords whipped and spears smote, but the enemy could not get the better of the little band of men that held him at that historic spot. On the evening of the second day the traitor Ephialtes guided a force of Persians through the hills and the brave Leonidas was attacked in the rear. Leonidas at once dismissed all his allies save four hundred Thebans and seven hundred Thespians, and with his three hundred Spartans prepared for the worst. Getting desperate, he sallied forth with his fourteen hundred and fell upon the mass of men. When night came Leonidas and his faithful patriots lay dead under the corpses of their enemies. Every man of the fourteen hundred was killed. The pass lay open unguarded and the Persians entered Thebes and Athens. Thebes submitted to Persians and accepted their terms. The Athenian garrison was thrown from the rocks of the Acropolis and the city was burned. All seemed lost and the Athenians fled to the island of Salamis and on board the ships which Themistokles had prevailed upon Athens to build in the teeth of opposition. On the 20th of September of the year 480 Themistokles forced the Persian fleet to give battle in the bay of Salamis and destroyed it. Xerxes was watching the fray from his golden throne on the slopes of Aigaleos. With growing horror the omnipotent sovereign saw the disaster and, getting frantic, rent his robes and departed hastily from the scene. Greece was saved.

Xerxes retreated to Susa with one half of his army leaving the other half behind under Marduniya.

The Spartans now emerged from the safe shelter of the wall which they had built across the Isthmus of Corinth and marched under their leader Pausanias against the Persian general. About one hundred thousand men attacked the enemy near Plataea and routed the Persian hosts.

After this war Persia sank into a confusion of domestic troubles. Xerxes himself was murdered in 465 which was a grave signal for revolts. Rebellions broke out in Egypt, Syria and Media.

And yet the empire of Darius held on for a century and a quarter. Intrigues and disaffections shook the joints of the vast realm. Darius III was the last ruler of the family who had seen the falling off of the provinces and who now witnessed the ruin of his empire. Alexander the Macedonian first beat him at Issus in 333 B. C. and again at Arbela two years after. Darius fled the field and escaped north towards the country of the Medes. He was pursued, was overtaken at dawn, dying in his chariot, murdered by his own people.

Alexander had already captured Babylon, Susa and Persepolis. At the last named city, the capital of the empire, an event happened which shamed the valour of the Greeks. In the midst of a drinking bout maddened by nocturnal carousals and vicious romping, the conqueror rose at the incitement offered by the courtesan Thais, his pretty keep, snatched a torch from one of the attendants and set fire to the great palace of Darius, the king of kings. The city burned as Athens had burnt a century and a quarter before. And perhaps that was the purpose of this arson. A recompense of queer sanity!

Nothing remained of the palace that Darius built or of the extensive domains of the Persians that was stretching across the Middle East from end to end. The immense empire tottered to a fall and was lost in its own ruins.

But the empire did not die without leaving its traces behind. Alexander thought of it as a model and Chandragupta Maurya followed its despotism in his own plan of building an empire, the shortcomings of the Persian organization set right by his great minister Chanakya. Another and a more distinct influence left behind was of the Persepolitan architect and sculptor. The Asokan monuments breathe the execution and finish of the Persian pattern, its polish and shine, which India never knew before, never followed after. No wonder too, for the contact between the two countries had been close. Indian mercenaries had fought the Greeks and shared the defeat of Xerxes and the Punjab had formed the Twentieth Satrapy of the empire of Darius the Great. His voice, though calmed by love and urged by human welfare, set the tone of Asokan edicts, the first to be inscribed in India.

CHAPTER V

AEGEAN CIVILIZATION

The Beginnings

Prior to the invasion of the Classical Greeks there vegetated towns and cities in the islands and along the coast of the Aegean Sea. Archaeological excavations in some of them have laid bare the traces of a civilization of the bronze age, greatly developed, urban, and coeval with the cultures of Egypt and Sumer. The main centres of this civilization were Knossos in the island of Crete, Mycenae on the mainland of Greece and Troy in Asia Minor. In all of these places buildings and palaces have been found. The earliest centre of this culture is supposed to have been Knossos where palaces fitted with running water, bathrooms, banquet-halls with beautiful frescoes, and winding staircases have been discovered. Since the civilization arose in the island of Crete it is sometimes called Cretan culture, as also Minoan after the appellation of its kings who were called *Minos* as the Egyptian kings were called *Pharaoh*. Some people call it even Mycenaean after the name of the ancient and ruined city of Mycenae in the peninsula of southern Greece.

The makers of this great Aegean civilization, which had its beginnings in the fourth millennium B. C. and which met a violent end about the middle of the second millennium B. C., were southerners. In fact the civilization developed out of the Neolithic and those who were the builders of the Neolithic culture of Crete and traded in that early age with Egypt have been connected in blood and language with the Basques to the west and the Berbers and Egyptians to the east. Perhaps originally they came from Egypt as is suggested from their dress of a simple waistcloth so

common with the ancient Egyptians. They had nothing to do with the white races of Europe and are supposed to have arrived in the island of Crete from north Africa while they were still using stone implements. They were conversant with the use of bronze as well as copper and among them the use of the alloy soon superceded that of the pure metal. We know that the Egyptians used copper alone until the advent of the Middle Kingdom when bronze also came to be used. The alloy, however, came to the knowledge of the Egyptians much later. The art of alloying copper with tin seems to have come to Babylonia, Greece and Egypt from the east where tin was available and was known. We know that the people of the Indus Valley civilization made use of this alloy. The early use of metal contributed greatly to the speedy growth of the Aegean civilization which wears such a halo of artistic splendour.

It developed its own art of writing also. Like the script of the Indus Valley this too remains to be deciphered. This want of decipherment does not permit us to be sure of the strata in time and the knowledge of Cretan history naturally remains imperfect.

But the remains of the monuments of Crete, Troy and Mycenae have thrown such light on the contemporary times that it has been possible to form an idea of the various stages of development of that civilization. The credit of the excavations and of the classification of these stages in relation to the periods of time goes to Sir Arthur Evans. He has been able to construct a chronological plan of three successive periods, each of which again is further divided into three sub-periods, viz. the Early Minoan Period, the Middle Minoan Period and the Late Minoan Period, each of these having its own First, Second and Third sub-periods.

These periods and sub-periods have been formed as a result of very careful study of the monuments of

prehistoric Crete and Greece and of Egypt. These have been synchronized with corresponding periods of Egypt which in sequence of time stand on a more solid footing. For example, in Sir Arthur Evan's view, the end of the Old Kingdom in Egypt corresponds to the First Early Minoan period, the Middle Minoan to the Middle Kingdom, and the First and Second Late Minoan periods to the Eighteenth Dynasty; the Third Late Minoan period likewise was perhaps contemporary with Rameses III (C. 1200 B. C.) of Egypt. As the result of this effective synchronism a working basis has been found for the chronology of the Minoan civilization. Its end came about 1400 B. C. or a little later when the Achaian Greeks and earthquakes combined to destroy this marvellous civilization which had enjoyed the amenities of comparatively much modern times.

The Pre-Kingdom Stage

The Early and Middle Minoan periods were using metal in a considerable measure. Bronze came to be used very early, then followed copper. Short daggers and long swords came to be forged from these metals. The Aegean population seems to have been almost as well equipped in the implements of war as the Babylonians were. Metals, ordinary and precious, replaced the clay material for making vases. Wares of silver, electron and gold have been unearthed in the excavations and are clear evidence of the material amenities of the times. Earthenware also came to be modelled after the metallic pattern. The ceramic art had reached a high stage of development. Crete was the first among the Aegean islands to paint wares. The next great stride in its development was taken during the Second Early Minoan period. Numerous patterns of vases now made their appearance. Beaked jugs and curved lines, which soon developed into regular spirals, are in evidence. These gave rise in the next Early Minoan period to the spiral decoration and

the field is suddenly flooded with an unprecedented variety of receptacles.

This is the period of the Second City of Troy also, later famous for its war with the Greek tribes of the Indo-European race. Incidents of the same stage of culture as of the Third Early Minoan age turn up in Troy of Asia Minor. There also articles of precious metals have been found in a considerable quantity. Gold pins and chains and gold and silver vases, unearthed there, have justified the name of "Priam's Treasure" given to the Trojan hoards by archaeologists. In the field of pottery the Trojans, without doubt, retained their black style and the pattern of the "owl-headed" vases.

Likewise the islands between Troy and Crete have afforded specimens of the same civilization and pottery and artistic pieces of the Cretan type. There too tombs of like type have been discovered. Idols in human form are as common in the Cretan graves as in the tombs of these islands resembling those of the pre-dynastic Egyptian graves.

Characteristic of the last Early Minoan period is the marked progress in carving stone. Stone flowers and sea-urchins are the usual motifs. Steatite and white marble are the usual material from which these pieces are fashioned. Spiral decoration very generally appears on them. On gold of Troy and the stone pieces of the islands it seems to precede the like design on pottery. This had its origin in the Babylonian metal-working which was copied by the Trojan goldsmiths. The same figured later on stone work and pottery. Egypt also adopted the same pattern in course of time.

The mastery in designing and finishing exquisite pieces of pottery was the result of two inventions of far-reaching importance in the history of art. These were the baking-furnace and the potter's wheel. They

were accomplished in the east, may be in Elam, perhaps in the Indus Valley, prior to 4000 B. C. They reached Crete and Troy about the Third Early Minoan period.

The 'seal-stones' belonging to the same period bear some remarkable signs related to a hieroglyphic system of writing. Thus a mode of writing was fast coming into existence. Its figures were impressed on clay tablets by means of a stylus in the Babylonian manner. It has been assumed that a considerable Egyptian influence was cast on the development of this script.

Architecture also was taking shape in this age. Most of the stone houses built prior to the Minoan palace at Knossos belonged to this period. It was from this stage that the excellent palatial buildings, halls and staircases were ultimately to develop and pronounce the last word on contemporary residential architecture.

The Kingdom of Knossos

The kingdom of Minos had its capital at Knossos on the northern coast of Crete. During the Middle Minoan period greater part of the island came to be ruled by Minos and soon the whole of Crete, the neighbouring islands and seas formed part of his kingdom. Phaistos and the palace of Agia Triada also are supposed to have been built by a Knossian king. Phaistos appears as a colony in legend.

The palace of Knossos was built on the remains of the Neolithic age. The site is close to the modern city of Candia, on the north coast of the island. The palace has been revealed by the excavations of Sir Arthur Evans and Dr. Mackenzie. Its grand western entrance and "Stepped Theatrical Area" at Phaistos translated into stone a fine and spacious architectural conception and epitomized the tremendous powers of

their builders. A portion of hill was levelled before the palaces could be built which shows that the kings who built them had great resources at their command. As in the north at Knossos so also in the south at Phaistos palaces rose almost simultaneously. Close to Phaistos, a little later, a palace was built of which the remains preserved are known as Agia Triada, from the little church which stands on the site. This site had been inhabited from very early days, perhaps from the Early Minoan period, Agia Triada, the palace itself originating from the Late Minoan period.

The Late Minoan period saw great alterations made in the Knossian palace which had already been remodelled at the end of the Middle Minoan period. The recent excavations have brought to view its extraordinary complex of halls, staircases, and chambers descending a slope, with outlying buildings like the "Royal Villa" below it to the north and the "Western House" higher up the hill to the west—a phenomenal growth of Cretan civilization during the short few centuries. This palace is extremely modern in look and execution with its elaborate system of sanitary drainage. It is more modern than any Greek building of the classical period and before it the palaces of the Egyptian Pharaohs were but elaborate hovels of painted mud. It was surpassed only by the splendour of the painted palaces of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, but while their coldness was weird and forbidding that at Knossos rang with teeming life. The frescoes on the walls of the palace at Knossos disclose a crowded court, a big band of retainers, both men and women, surrounding the king and enjoying themselves. The paintings are often stiff and crude, even conventional, but indeed very powerful in design. In the frescoes of the palace-corridors women appear as often as men and take free part in the dalliances. Women's part in life seems to have been easy and great. They seem to have moved about on equal terms with men. They perhaps even controlled the life at the palace

and in the society. No nation of the ancient world gave such freedom and equality to women as did the culture of Crete.

The frescoes represent women as white and men as red in colour after the Egyptian convention. The Minoan courtiers were clean-shaved and wore their hair as long and as elaborately dressed as did the women. Many a time, specially in the bull-fights in which both take equal and free part, the boys are not distinguishable from the girls except from the colour, for both have the same flying hair, indeed the same length. Besides the bull-fights, which of course are numerous, ladies of the Minoan court are depicted sitting at the windows of the palace quite unveiled. Their dress defy the old times and they wear quite the modern breath. They wear a *decollete*, with bare necks and arms, the breasts covered apparently with gold or silver guards making out their outline, waists pinched in, and, below, ample skirts with parallel rows of flounces, resembling nothing so much as the crinolines of the mid-nineteenth century. Women of earlier centuries wear skirts with high ruff-like collars and horned head-dresses which may or may not be their hair. The coiffeur of the ladies of the Late Minoan period have knots and side-curles of the eighteenth century England. They wear tiaras or fillets.

Men put on a very simple dress: a waist-cloth under, a short kilt above, together giving the impression of a bathing suit. But these dresses, unlike the Egyptian ones, bore bright colours ornamented with spiral and other designs. As in Egypt, the upper part of men's bodies were generally left bare. They occasionally wore a conical cap. Men sometimes coiled up their hair on the crown, but ordinarily left them hanging loose down the back to the waist or below it, sometimes in plaits or curls. Like the Hittites of later times, the men of Knossos wore putteed sandals or high boots.

The Minoans seem to have been rather poor in defensive weapons. They wore no armour during fights but carried a shield. A leather helmet, reaching down to the end of the cheeks, however, was worn in wars and gladiatorial combats. A straight thin sword was their chief weapon of offence. It was often ornamented with designs in inlaid metals.

The Minoans were perhaps a brunette race, much like the modern Italians. Their skin was red, their hair was dark brown to black, their features were 'Caucasian'.

Inscriptions, unlike the Egyptian and the Assyrian, do not appear on the walls along the paintings, but figure almost exclusively on tablets of which great stores were found at Knossos and elsewhere. These tablets are supposed to be inventories and accounts of objects although they have not been read as yet. The seal-impressions give some idea about the chariot which was in use at this stage of about the 15th century B. c. On one of these there occurs the figure of a war-horse, rather a small variety, very possibly recently introduced from Egypt.

Life lived was rather gay and inauustere, untrammelled by religious rigours. The gods, however, were known, and a mother goddess bearing serpents seems to have been universally honoured. There were perhaps numerous minor deities of woods and streams and stones and of the ocean, huntress-goddesses, and sun-warriors, Dryads, Satyrs, and Fauns, Naiads and Nereids and Old Men of the Sea, who have been formed depicted on many a Minoan seal-intaglio. The funerary rites were perhaps influenced by the Egyptian. The dead were usually placed in pottery coffins.

Besides the frescoes on walls and paintings on the vases, which give us an idea of the free riotous life

of their makers, the magazines and chambers of the palaces and towns have yielded enormous articles of art. We have already mentioned the rich colours which have preserved a lot of the teeming life we have spoken about. Now we may refer to a few other branches of artistic pursuit. Stone sculptures in the round or in high relief are few and far between, almost nil as compared to the countless numbers of the east and the south. Among the finest pieces of small sculpture in the world are the two steatite vases of the First Late Minoan period from Agia Triada, on one of which we see a procession of drunken roistering peasants bearing agricultural implements, and on the other the reception or dismissal of a warrior with his followers by a king or prince. The first is a master-piece of relief, while the second is full of Greek reticence and sense of proportion.

The period that followed was one of positive decadence. The highest culture of the Cretan palaces was already lived before the Greeks, the earliest among the classical waves, appeared.

The Later Times

In course of time the Cretans overreached themselves. They built up almost an empire on the neighbouring islands, seas and their coastal lands. The nation slowly exhausted itself. The southern and central Grece, earlier the neighbourhood of Troy, were colonized. Numerous towns including Mycenae became the centres of the Minoan culture. Their pottery, their metal articles, their buildings and monuments were inspired and influenced by the Cretan models. For a time the greater part of Greece and numerous spots in Asia Minor had colonies of Minoan settlers. This meant work and exhaustion. Although it meant considerable revenue too in the shape of tributes from the colonies on the main land and from the islands to the mother country including

human victims, an inhuman annuity, for the sacrifices to the bull-deity, the burden proved too heavy and the shoulders fell away. The spine broke down and what remained of the living mass was consumed by the fires set ablaze by the invaders.

Who were these invaders? From where did they come? When did they come?

It is difficult to answer any of these or similar questions. Who were these invaders? Much speculation has been occasioned in answer to this query. Perhaps the original Greeks, perhaps the Achaians, perhaps the later advents like the Dorians, even perhaps the Hittites or other warlike inhabitants of Anatolia. We are not quite sure which of the Indo-European Aryans were the cause of the destruction of the Cretan palaces and of the Minoan culture, not even about the time when they entered Greece. It has been suggested that even if they came they settled down very early almost with the Minoan settlers from whom they learnt and whom they destroyed. It has been doubted if the Achaians were pure Aryans and not a mixed race representing both Mycenaeans and Aryans or even Hittites. Pelops, the founder of the house of Agamemnon itself, it has been speculated, might have been a Hittite. It is possible that the Homeric Greeks who applauded their forefathers as Achaians might have made the Mycenaeans themselves that honoured breed and rejoiced at being their offspring. Whoever it was, the race that bore the Cretans down was singularly fitted for the task of destruction and left no bricks sticking together.

If they did not rise from the land they destroyed, they perhaps came from north of Thessaly, from Thessaly itself, which, however, was not their original habitat. Perhaps they came from the mid-reaches of the Danube, or from beyond them, from southern Russia or from the coasts of the Black Sea. Any of these could be

their original home. They came down, wave after wave, deluged the great cities of Greece, breathed the free air of their rural settlements round the Cretan colonies and Grecian towns which they besieged and invested. Then they crossed the seas, swooped down the rich islands, and finally reached the luxury-loving coast of the great island of Crete, the cradle of the Minoan civilization that had forestalled our age by millenniums in look and amenities. Life there had not known the green of decay; it had held the red vitals in its palm which it was now compelled to stretch forth. Luxuries of centuries were stored in the palaces of Knossos and of Phaistos, and they all were consigned to flames and to scorched debris, and they lay there until Sir Arthur Evans dug them up.

The Invasions and the End

A series of invasions followed. Perhaps the first to come were the Achaians. Next came the Boeotians who themselves, were followed by the Thessalians. The Thessalian or Thesprotian invasion, which probably occurred about the thirteenth century B. C., was a tremendous one and engendered far-reaching effects. This brought for the first time great numbers of iron-using Aryans into Greece. The Achaians of Thessaly, who had already infiltrated southward and formed the mixed population of Ionia, were rooted out and scattered. A portion of them conquered the south and the rest crossed the sea to the Phrygian coast. The Trojan war may have been an incident of this racial movement, thus occasioning the possibility of the Achaians having been the conquerors of Troy rather than the Peloponnesians. Likewise the Boeotian and Achaian invasions of the south uprooted the Minyae, Pelasgians, and Ionians. While Minyae pressed on to Lemnos, the Pelasgi and Ionians concentrated in Attica, and the southern Achaians moved into the Peloponnese, a mixed body of Peloponnesians (Arcadians and Laconians), Kythnians and other

Ionians took ship across the sea and appeared in Cyprus and gave their dialect to the island. With this same succession of invasions and the resulting migrations must be associated the great wandering of the Philistines and their allies, perhaps from Crete, themselves driven out probably by Achaians. This horde overran Palestine and were stopped on the borders of Egypt by Rameses III. They were later absorbed in the Semitic population after a short spell of independent colonization of Canaan and the eastern mainland of the Mediterranean. The traditional date of the Trojan War according to the Parian Chronicle is 1194-1184 B. C. and it accords admirably with the known date of the war of Rameses III with the Philistines, about 1196 B. C. These restless movements and migratory wars of the tribes all along the south-eastern Europe and south-western Asia are reflected in the Egyptian records. "The isles were restless:" they say, "disturbed among themselves."

Usually the introduction of iron in Greece is ascribed to the Thesprotian invasion. The invaders came ultimately from the region of Danube where iron was in use. Their easy victory over the Achaians, who had originally lived in Thessaly and learnt the use of metal from the Aegeans, was incidental to the use of iron which became universal when the uprooted Achaians moved to the south and diffused their knowledge of the new metal there. The new metal reached even the north coast of Crete and we know from the discovery at Mouliana that for a time both bronze and iron were used side by side, while the old Aegean culture was disappearing. The invasion threw the entire civilization and the cities into confusion. The ancient Minoan cities had no defences and were soon abandoned and their population fled to fastnesses in the hills. Pirates infested the seas and their coasts and life everywhere in that region became insecure. It was about this time that the Phoenician traders made their first appearance on

the Greek seas, and as the Homeric poems assert, trafficked with the Aegeans and stole them to be sold as slaves in Sidon and Tyre.

The Homeric Poems

At this time numerous lays of the Achaians and other tribes were sung. They were a mass of floating literature depicting life in the foregone centuries. A Chian poet, called Homeros (popularly Homer) welded in the ninth century B. C. into a magnificent whole the lays and poems by earlier poets which described the great event of the Achaian colonization of Aeolis, viz. the siege of the Phrygian city of Troy by Agamemnon, King of Argos, and the great quarrel between him and his ally Achilles, King of the Thes-salian Myrmidones. The great epic was the famous *Illiad*. Probably the invaders came from Argos in Thessaly and were the natural enemies of Troy rather than from Argos in the Peloponnese although there was nothing to impede the poets from appropriating the glories of Mycenae near Argos in the Peloponnese by making the chief of the latter the leader of all the Greek forces arrayed against the Trojans.

The world of the great epic is that of Greece of a few centuries prior to the tenth. Anachronistic incidents are not wanting in the *Illiad* but the general life depicted in the poem belonged to the epoch between the 13th and 10th centuries. Homer lived perhaps in the ninth century B. C. but he concentrated on an older society and the earliest events of his narration may very well visualize the conditions immediately following the migration. This is to say that the Homeric culture is the culture of the Achaians of the twelfth or eleventh century B. C. when bronze is the usual metal although iron is not unknown and is occasionally used. Both the *Illiad* and the older parts of the *Odyssey* show that the classical Greece had not dawned as yet although its foundations were being laid.

It was about this time, between the twelfth and eleventh centuries, that a great event took place which set the stage for the coming new life in Greece and of a sudden created the circumstances which brought about the birth of the new culture. It was the invasion of the Dorian Aryans. This brought to southern Greece an unmixed population of the Aryans. The Dorians came from Illyria whom the Thesprotians had set into motion. With the Thesprotians hard on their heels they pressed forward and colonized Greece. The Peloponnese was conquered and Laconia became the main Dorian state. It enslaved the Achaian and the Aegean populations and ruled with a rod of iron from the village which the Dorians built by the older Achaian capital, Lacedaemon. By the tenth century B. C. the kingdoms of Sparta and Argive had been established. The Dorians were soon in Crete and among the neighbouring islands completing the task of destruction that had begun centuries before. The Ionians had already moved eastward and had colonized Ionia.

It was now from there, from the east, that light came. In the courts of Acolis and Ionia the remnants of the old Aegean culture had taken refuge and there the Homeric poets of Asia received the patronage for the lays they conserved and composed. There the weak yet great Aegean culture mingled with the cruder elements of the Aryan Greek civilization and proclaimed the dawn of the Greek renaissance. The new Greek civilization arose in Ionia. Ionia gave Greece her coined money and letters, art and literature, receiving them partly from the east, transmitting the same to the west, and partly from the Aegean culture which was strong enough in that part to lend its yarn to the new fabric.

CHAPTER VI

INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

Until very recently it was supposed that the history of India began with the advent of its earliest makers, the Aryans, sometime about the fifteenth century B. C. Only a few centuries earlier they had started migrating in various directions from their central knot in Southern Russia. It was natural therefore that scholars should look for the beginnings of Indian history in the light of the data furnished by their traditions and literary records, chiefly the *Rigveda*, which disclose a world of about the middle of the second millennium B. C. But in 1922 a gifted Indian archaeologist, R. D. Banerji, lighted upon certain objects, which when traced to their origin, disclosed the remains of a new civilization and pushed of a sudden the history of India by a couple of thousand years. Its character at once became of a piece with the culture of Sumer and linked it with the coeval civilizations of Babylonia, Egypt and Crete.

Ever since the close of the first World War peculiar antiquities had begun coming to light in the province of Sindh. These were seals with a perforated hump at the back and a face bearing life-like reliefs of animals topped with a seemingly pictographic writing hitherto unknown in India. No efforts, however, had been made to study and understand them until years after when Mr. Banerji's excavations made their treatment urgent. He was excavating the base of a *stupa* at a place called Mohenjo-daro in the Larkana district of Sindh when traces of the vast remains of an ancient city lying buried under the solid structure became evident.

A few other sites too were explored bringing to our knowledge numerous mounds which, when opened,

proved the existence of a riparian civilization, long dead, vegetating in the basin of the Indus. Remains were likewise discovered at numerous places in the Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan. Ruins of towns, long buried under ground, where teeming life had once buzzed, started echoing with the sound of the spade and the noise of labour, and an Indus Valley civilization sprang up into the records of history. That the life in this civilization had been urban was known when the sites of Mohenjo-daro, the "Mound of the Dead", and Harappa in the Montgomery district of the Punjab were laid bare.

Buildings

It has already been mentioned above that the Indus Valley civilization was urban in character and that the remains unearthed were of towns. Two towns of considerable dimensions, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, have yielded enormous material for study and for the invariable conclusion that they were exquisitely planned. The cities of the Indus Valley were the first planned towns of history. In fact real planning of towns is a recent incident in architecture and when we see the remains of Mohenjo-daro we are struck with the thoroughness with which the city was laid out. We are describing the conditions of the people and their living in that town alone which may serve for the type.

The main streets were fairly broad, somewhere between 9 ft. and 34 ft., and in certain cases running as long as half a mile. They cut each other at right angles and these divided the city in squares or rectangular blocks. The lanes of the interior also intersected one another subdividing the blocks of houses into further subsections. The houses, mostly double-storied, stood on the streets and the lanes and opened in the streets. They were brick built, bricks being both sun-dried and baked in fire, those sun-baked

used for the foundations and the terraces and the burnt ones utilized for the rest of the structure. Bricks were laid in mud or in both mud and gypsum mortar. Most of the houses had the usual living rooms, a bathroom, a stairway leading to the upper storey, and a well. At Harappa workmen's quarters have also been found. They are generally of two rooms and a courtyard. The courtyard was the basic feature of the house planning, and was usually paved with bricks laid flat. It was surrounded with rooms and chambers opening into it. The most important feature of the city planning was its mode of conservancy. Every house contained a drain to carry off the dirty water. These individual drains, both vertical and horizontal, were connected with the street drains which collected into a main one finally flowing out into the river. Public wells were constructed between two houses in the street which, besides, contained its soakpits, manholes, dust-bins and rubbish chutes. Nowhere was a house permitted to encroach on the public street or lane. At Harappa a huge building, styled as the Great Granary, measures 169 feet by 135 feet. At Mohenjo-daro a pillared hall, 80 feet square, containing long corridors and benches, suggests the notion of a public assembly.

But the most important building of Mohenjo-daro is a vast hydropathic establishment, popularly called the Great Bath. The actual bathing space measured 39 feet long, 23 feet wide, and 8 feet deep. The surrounding building with verandahs on all sides covered an area of 180 feet by 108 feet. Flights of steps on both sides led to the surface of the water. The floor of the bath was paved with bricks laid in gypsum mortar with an inch of damp proof bitumen. A round well filled the tank and a vaulted culvert, 6 feet 6 inches high, emptied it. A *hammam* or hot air bath was attached to the Great Bath which shows that the principle of hypocaustic arrangement was understood and utilized by the people of Mohenjo-daro.

It will be evident from the above that the habitats of the Indus Valley had reached a high watermark of civilization and people were living under a remarkably advanced system of town planning and sanitation, where municipal laws were kept and lived. Their streets were broad and methods of conservancy perfect. Public baths were in use which must have engendered in the people the repose and activities of a corporate city life.

Social and Economic Aspects

The remains permits us to form a fair estimate of the people's habits and dealings, both social and economic. The population, of which four ethnic units—Proto-Australoid, Mediterranean, Alpine and Mongolian—have been discovered, was evidently cosmopolitan, and the people acquired their wealth through rural occupations as well as commercial exploits.

It is evident that the climate of the place during those remote millenniums was mild and the soil yielded crops in numerous grains. The very existence of big cities proves the availability of food in ample quantity. In fact a riverain settlement presupposes cultivation of the land and raising of the crops. There was copious rainfall and the presence of a great river, besides the Mihran which dried up in the 14th century A. D., must have made the problem of irrigation easy of solution. Specimens of both wheat and barley have been found which shows that these grains were cultivated besides other cereals.

Food and Dress

The menu of the Indus people included both vegetarian and animal diet. The cereals were perhaps the staple food although fruits and vegetables too were eaten. Stones of dates have been discovered which show that they were either grown or were picked from

wild vegetation. The existence of the cattle almost settles the possibility of milk being included in the dietary. It can be gathered from the burnt shells and bones and the offerings to the dead that the people had among their items of food pork, beef, mutton, poultry, fish and the flesh of aquatic animals.

From the large finds of spindle-whorls it would appear that spinning was a universal habit and was freely practised. Those of the rich were made of faience while of the poor of shell and pottery. Cotton, which struck admiration among the Greeks beholding the cotton-clad mercenaries of Xerxes two thousand years later, was the lighter textile of the Indus people. A piece of cotton was found adhering to a silver vase which shows the present day coarser Indian variety of the *khadi* with its typical convoluted structure. Wool was the warmer textile and was naturally used during the cold season. The existence of herds of sheep warrants its ample provision.

The cosmopolitan character of the population necessitated a cosmopolitan variety of dress. A statue represents a male figure wearing a long shawl, drawn over the left shoulder and under the right so as to leave the right arm bare. A robe specimen suggests the chint wear. A number of images are nudes, which, however, must not be interpreted that people went about naked. The lower garment was usually the *dhoti* or a loin-cloth.

An endless variety of ornaments is in evidence which shows that people were fairly fond of them. The common ornaments for both men and women were necklaces, earrings, bracelets and anklets, and girdles of beads. They naturally had their rich and poor varieties. Gold, silver, ivory, faience, lapis-lazuli, jasper, carnelian, agate and like stones provided material for the ornaments of the rich while copper, bone, shell and clay served the poor.

Stones and Metals

Stone was perhaps rare but not altogether difficult to procure. We find it used for door-sockets, saddle querns and mullers, statues and statuettes, and for cult objects. Metals known and utilized were gold, silver, copper, tin and lead. Bronze, an alloy of copper (nine parts) and tin (one part), was one of the earliest metals put to use by the Indus Valley people for it has been found among the lowermost layers of the civilization. The art of alloying presupposes the art of melting metals. Iron has not been found and, it being one of the late discoveries among metals, was not known.

Weapons

Stone weapons and implements were being used side by side with the metal ones although the latter were fast replacing the former. The weapons of war and chase were now usually made of copper and bronze. Among the weapons of war the most prominent were maces, axes, daggers, spears, bows, and arrows, and slings. These were generally made of metal, i.e. copper and bronze. Maces made of alabaster, sand and limestone, have been found. The pear-shaped mace was very common. We are not sure if the defensive weapons like the helmet, shield or the armour were in use; but a kind of scale armour made of thin domed pieces of copper perforated with two minute holes has been found.

Weights and Measures

Weights of an infinite variety have come to light. They range from the heaviest, which had to be lifted with a rope, to the smallest used by jewellers. The most common are cubical in shape. It is believed that they are of a greater accuracy than those found in Elam and Mesopotamia.

A slip of shell has been taken by Dr. Mackay to be part of a linear measure. In Egypt the decimal linear measure had been in use since the 4th Dynasty, and in Sumer both the decimal and the sexagesimal systems were used. So also in Elam a purely decimal system was in vogue. We are not sure if the Indus Valley also used a decimal system in measurement although groups of five seeming to bear special marks would appear to point to that direction. The steel-yard was, however, not known; but both the foot and cubit systems seem to have been current.

Household Articles

An innumerable variety of articles used in the household is on record. They are made of various materials like clay, stone, shell, faience, ivory and metal. Copper and bronze are the usual favourites and seem to have mostly replaced stone as the material for household implements. Earthenwares are by far the most numerous. Cake-moulds, beakers, bowls, goblets, dishes, basins, pans, saucers, jars, vases are usually made of clay. Besides these there were needles, saws, sickles, knives, chisels, etc. These were made of bronze or copper and sometimes of ivory. Then there were in use numerous receptacles of toilet and cosmetics. The well known 'vanity case,' found at Harappa, contained besides other objects piercer, ear-scoop, and tweezers, and bears testimony to the use of such toilet articles as have been enearthed at Ur and Kish. The endless aids to beauty for example, collyrium, face-paint with their applying knobs had their cases made of metal, shell or ivory. Mirrors and combs and razors were known and were in use. Lamps of copper, shell and clay have been found.

Games and Toys

Marbles, balls and dice have turned up in a large number to suggest that they were the favourite games

of the people. Marbles were found in the Sumerian excavations also whereas the dice was the hot favourite of the later Aryans. Dice were both cubic and tabular in shape.

Toys of a large variety mostly fashioned out of clay have been formed. The clay-cart, which became later so popular as to suggest the title as well as theme for the famous play *Mrichchhakatika* by Sudraka, was the usual model. Rams yoked to wheels are as countless in number then as later in Sunga times. Besides, there were fashioned terracotta figurines of men, women, animals, and other toys and play-things like the rattle. Sometimes there turn up models of birds with stock legs, animals climbing up a pole, and figures with moveable arms. Clay bulls with a nodding head, worked by fibre thread, make for much fun.

Animals

A good number of animals, both tamed and wild, were known. Bones of several of these have been recovered. Bull, sheep, pig, buffalo, camel and elephant were known to the Indus Valley people who formed the population of the earlier epochs, for the bones of these have been found in corresponding layers. The carcasses of the horse and the dog have been recovered from the top levels. Besides these numerous other animals known to the people, but perhaps not domesticated, were those depicted on the seals, viz. rhinoceros, bison, crocodile, monkey, tiger, bear, deer, hare, and the like.

Art

Of a piece with the character of the rest of the contemporary world, the Indus Valley showed remarkable energy and ingenuity in carving and casting images and in turning out pieces of art. Statues of stone carved in the round and statuettes of steatite are rare

specimens of the plastic art. They are such faithful illusions of their living originals that they defy all attempts at finding close parallels in coeval civilizations. The dancing stone figure from Harappa is an ingeniously carved model that typifies rhythm in an arrested spin. The bronze image of the wiry girl from Mohenjo-daro is a rare specimen of wrought metal and has no parallel in the ancient world. Its natural poise, standing akimbo in frank abandon, breathes of a harmony that has been seldom achieved in metallurgic art.

But by far the most impressive is the hoard of the seals and sealings which spell the pride of the ceramical arts. Embossed tenderly and cast out of wonder-moulds these seals reveal to the eye the noblest that could be achieved in the art of moulding figures. Animal figures in massive or delicate humour have been delineated with unfailing skill and severe faithfulness. The bull, the crocodile, the tiger of the seals can be compared only with their live originals for man's hand has not shaped, whether in the past or present, anything that would stand comparison with these pieces. The bull particularly is a model of pent up force and cannot be matched to anything similar either in the ancient or the modern world.

The images and seals furnish us also with a few cult objects. Numerous terracottas of the mother goddess, who was an object of adoration all across the ancient world, were the precious yield of the excavations but indeed none more precious than the bust of the *yogi* in the attitude of meditation with his eyes fixed on the tip of his nose, and the seal of the horned god, Pasupati, the lord of the animal world, surrounded by his flock.

Art of Writing

The Valley of the Indus has been particularly deficient in yielding epigraphical records. When

we compare it with the enormous crop of cuneiform tablets of ancient Babylonia, preserving long epics and great narratives, or of the Hittite diplomatic correspondence, of the panegyrical Assyrian records or the report of the eponymous magistracies, or of the extensive inscriptions in the Ramesseum or on the exteriors of the Egyptian temples or again with the hieroglyphics of the pyramids or the sarcophagi, indeed our disappointment knows no bounds. The Indus field looks singularly barren. Yet however, we know that the art of writing was known to the Indus people. The seals are topped with a line or lines of writing which is suggested to have been written from right to left, or at places in the *boustrophedon* style i.e. written from right to left and then from left to right. Unfortunately the Indus script, like the Minoan, remains undeciphered as yet, although numerous attempts at its decipherment have been made. It is, however, supposed to belong to the proto-Elamite and hieroglyphic order, and its characters (some four hundred signs have been classified) have a pictographic look. When finally deciphered, the script is bound to throw a flood of light on the life and beliefs of the people of the Indus Valley. It has been sought to be related to the Brahmi and enthusiasts have not been wanting who have essayed to connect it to the proto-Brahmi script. But their ingenuity has failed to achieve anything and the remotest possibility of that kind has for the moment been discredited.

Religion and the Disposal of the Dead

The extensive remains of the civilization have thus far failed to yield positive proofs in the form of temples or priestcraft. But, as already pointed out, there is no dearth of iconic objects which may stand for cult articles. Numerous terracottas that have come to light betoken of the Nature Mother or the Mother Goddess whose worship was in vogue in all the lands between Persia and the Aegean coasts. In

India it was from her worship that the laterly Sakta cult developed. Besides these icons, numerous representations of the phallic emblems—the *linga* and the *yonī*—have been unearthed, which prove the evolution of the mother cult during those and the succeeding centuries. The three-faced horned figure of a male sitting in the *Yogi* attitude of meditation and surrounded by numerous animals on the face of a seal is suggested to be the proto-type of Siva in his Pasupati form. This undoubtedly would prove the hoary antiquity of the Saiva religion and of the remarkable continuity of the Indian culture.

Apart from these suggestions about the prevalence of iconic Mother and Saiva worship we have ample evidence of the people practising zoolatry and tree-worship. Tree-worship has come down to our days in some form or other but animal worship has mostly died out except in cases like the adoration of the Nandi, Siva's bull, the monkey-god Hanuman and serpent gods and goddesses.

Three methods of the disposal of the dead seem to have been in practice, namely, outright burial, burial after exposing the body to birds and beasts, and burial after cremation. No traces of a cemetery have been found at Mohenjo-daro although one on level ground has come to light at Harappa. Funerary urns with offerings have been discovered but never human victims of sacrifice to keep company with the dead in the manner of the tombs at Ur. Nor either did the Indus people hoard gold and precious stones and objects of use in the present world in the manner of the Egyptian dynasts or that of the common rich to the negation of the same for the living poor. The historian records this with ample relief.

Date and the Authors of the Indus Valley Culture

When did this great civilization flourish? Who were the authors of this riparian culture? How long

did it last ? How did it meet its end? These are some of the questions which naturally face the expert and lay reader alike. But these are not easy to answer. And yet an attempt will be made in the following paragraphs to answer them as best as can be done under the present state of our knowledge.

Usually following the conclusion of Sir John Marshall a date between 3250 B. C. and 2750 B. C. is given. But although the two dates fall within the range of truth, certainly they cannot be accepted as conclusive. Neither the former date can claim to be the starting point of the Indus Valley civilization nor the latter one can be supposed to terminate it. They do, however, particularly the former, indicate its epochs without marking the outer limits of the age. How have these dates themselves been realized? The excavations at Mohenjo-daro have been classified among five strata or layers of civilization, namely, three of the later period, three of the Intermediate and one of the Early period. The earliest is not quite the earliest because the subsoil is merged under water and can never be excavated. It has been suggested that since habitats under flood conditions are as quickly rehabilitated as they are deserted, a century alone for a single layer, in all five centuries, can be given for the duration of a single epoch. Now, from the priority of this civilization to the Aryan, and from a comparison with the excavated civilizations of Elam and Sumer where, in the latter place (Tell Asmar), seals of the Indus origin have been recovered, the culture of their origin i.e. the Indus Valley civilization, has to be dated to earlier than 1900 B. C. and 2600 B. C., these dates indicating the layers of their finds at Kish, Eshnunna and Ur. If tentatively the date has to be put somewhere about 2750 B. C. (with the help of independent local element), giving a hundred years to each stratum, in all five hundred years, according to Sir John's computation, 3250 B. C. is reached. This, however, even under his reckoning does not warrant the beginning,

which, nevertheless, cannot be far removed from the beginning, of the civilization. The beginnings must concede a few centuries more for its growth and evolution, in case its authors did not come from outside and were autochthons who developed their living from the Neolithic and Palaeolithic origin.

Firstly, five hundred years alone could not be enough to cover the marches of such a great civilization howsoever homogenous and unvarying its incidents might have been. So there is no need to suppose that it ended only five hundred years after its beginning, wherever it may be placed. Secondly, the seal-finds in Babylonia indicate the two ranges of say, 2700 B. C. and 1900 B. C. This would easily and without effort stretch the narrow five centuries to at least eight centuries which would mean that on other sites, if not on the banks of the Indus, the civilization kept on vegetating till later, possibly much later than 1900 B. C., may be till the 15th century B. C. if, or even if not, it was destroyed by the Aryans, if it was at all destroyed by them, as certain incidents of its violent termination suggest. Roughly the civilization may be supposed to have originated sometime in the fourth millennium B. C. and to have been destroyed in the second millennium B. C.

It is difficult to say as to how this riparian civilization met its end. Change of the course of the river, great flood, earthquake, invasion, any of these could be the cause of its end. In one of the rooms of a building at Mohenjo-daro mutilated bodies have been found and on the strength of this it has been conjectured that they fell a prey to violent attack. They perhaps first fought and resisted, then took shelter and finally were annihilated in the cellar where they had taken shelter. The invaders may have been the conquering Aryans who in the beginning of the 2nd millennium B. C. made themselves the scare of the settled civilizations in the Near and the Middle East. If Mohenjo-daro

was deserted due to inundation or was destroyed by earthquake, other sites at Harappa in the southern Punjab, Jhukhar-daro and Canhu-daro in Upper Sindh, and at Nal in the Kelat State (Baluchistan) might have continued to flourish until finally devastated by the Aryans.

That the Aryans were for certain not the makers of the Indus Valley Civilization is settled by the incidents of great contrast between the culture of the Rigvedic Aryans and that of the Indus people. The whole structure of the Rigvedic life was rural and the Aryans lived in villages of thatched huts of mud, whereas the Indus people were urban and lived in populous cities in brick-built commodious houses under a system of perfect conservancy. Theirs was a complex urban living aided by vast hydropathic establishments and a hypocaustic system of heating. It was perhaps to these Indus towns built of bricks that the Aryan priests referred when they prayed to Indra to destroy the enemy's forts of metal. The people of the Indus had almost no weapons of defence while the Rigvedic people had several. In the Indus Valley it was the bull who was the object of adoration while with the Aryans it was the cow. The horse and the dog were the constant companions of the Aryan warrior while in the Indus Valley civilization they are almost totally missing. Only the uppermost layers have disclosed remains of the horse and the dog. The Indus Valley worship was iconic and phallic worship was one of its main features whereas the Aryan religion was aniconic and among the Aryans *Sisnadevah*, phallic-worshippers, was a term of reproach. These divergent characters of the two civilizations completely exclude the possibility of the one having developed from the other or of the Aryans having been the authors of the Indus Valley civilization.

Likewise the priority of the Rigvedic culture to the Indus Valley civilization is also precluded. The

unbroken continuity of the Indian civilization from the Rigvedic times makes it impossible for a heterogeneous culture like the Indus Valley's to have formed a link in the lineal chain. Besides, the Indus Valley civilization was coeval with the Middle East cultures and of a piece with them whereas the Aryan was a late comer.

But the Rigvedic Aryans seem to have known the people of the Indus Valley although as enemies. It is perhaps to them that they referred in their hymns as *Dasas* and *Dasyus* and dubbed with such opprobrious epithets as *krisnah*, black-skinned, *anasah*, pug-nosed, *adevayu*, godless, *ayajvan*, devoid of rites, *mridhravachah*, jargon-talkers.

The only other people who now can be credited with having created this wonderful civilization were the Dravidians, who were either autochthons or in their own turn immigrants from outside. If they came from outside the possible habitat may have been Elam or Sumer where amidst the Semitic peoples a non-Semite race had lived and developed a culture which it bequeathed to the neighbouring Semites who exterminated it. Or if the Dravidians were original inhabitants of Sindh and the adjoining districts and part of them migrated to Elam and ancient Sumer, they would have found the distance not very trying for a whole belt of their habitat across Baluchistan lay along the way. The Brahmi speaking population might prove a migration either way or the remnant of another basic site of that civilization like Nal in the state of Kelat in Baluchistan. The fact of priority in the date of the two settlements of Sumer and Indus Valley will also enter in the answer to the question. Although at one stage it was Mohenjo-daro and Harappa which influenced the Sumerian culture, it will not be possible to settle the problem of priority. Even if it were settled, it can always be possible to hold in the absence of conclusive evidence that the two civilizations were

totally independent although there was a free commerce of ideas between the two. Whatever the truth be, the chances of the Dravidians building that glorious civilization are the most likely.

CHAPTER VII

CHINA

Beginnings

We know the effect of the inventions of paper, press, and gun-powder over the history of mankind. The history of the people to whose credit these inventions go must be very fascinating and it is the same that we are going to narrate in the following pages in as succinct a manner as possible.

Within the scope of our survey the history of the Chinese people has not only to be very brief but, indeed, has to close where that of the most people begins. This is because the history of that ancient land is so coherent and consecutive that unless we cut its narration drastically its entire run will have to be related. It has, for example, no termination in the manner of Egypt, Crete, Sumer, Babylonia, or Elam; it does not even warrant a hiatus in the manner of Indian history after the Indus Valley epoch which affords both space and time for the historian to breathe before he can plunge again into the current of history which follows the advent of the Indo-Aryans and runs coherently until the Muslim invasion.

It is obvious therefore that the range of this treatment has to be limited arbitrarily and its bounds, at least on the outer side, have to be consequently unnaturally fixed. The following survey therefore essays to marshal into array the events of Chinese history from the earliest times, as far as they can be ascertained, to the fall of the famous Chou Dynasty in 249 B. C.

The People

The Chinese civilization also, like other ancient civilizations of the world, was riparian and arose and developed in the basin of the great Hwang-ho, the life-giving Yellow River. The name of the Yellow River in China has been mentioned for millenniums with considerable fear as it is associated with the havoc of devastating floods, which have dislodged millions from their original homes and compelled them to move north and south in search of food in course of the eventual famine. All the same, it has been the birth-place and cradle of a great civilization the coherence and continuity of which has been peculiar to the land of China. That continuity has not terminated even to-day, at a distance of some five thousand years since its traditional history is supposed to have begun.

True, that the north and the north-west of China have always had restive nomads and that the world has received its destructive pests and perils from that direction, once inhabited by the Yueh-chi, Hiung-nu, and the Mongols, the Chinese of the Hwang-ho basin have normally been a settled people. In the absence of a fixed settlement it could not have been possible for them to have built up the great culture of their land. There is no doubt about the fact that like all other peoples of the world the Chinese also have had to suffer a free mixing of alien blood incidental to constant movements of ethnic units, yet they have always retained their basic Mongoloid features and yellow colour. This fact amply discredits the numerous suggestions of their having been originally a brunette people. Various original homes have been suggested for the main Chinese stock, namely India, Sumer, Egypt, Persia. The records and traditions of the Chinese people also are completely silent and do not give any indication of their immigration into China from outside. In fact the anthropological

data appear to contradict the idea of any connexion with Indians, Babylonians, Egyptians or Assyrians. The earliest Chinese hieroglyphics ascribed traditionally to the Shang dynasty (second millennium B. C.) confirm the Mongol character of the nation that invented them by the decided obliquity of the human eye wherever it appears in an ideograph. Without accepting the possibility of a purity of blood, it can be said that the central stock of the Chinese people that created the civilization of the Hwang-ho was autochthon.

History

Like the traditions of other nations those of the Chinese people also are far from trustworthy and since no date prior to 776 B. C. is reliable, we have to depend on these traditions separating, wherever possible, the grain from the chaff. It is unfortunate that though the European nations were so deeply interested in trading with China, they did little to explore and excavate the promising sites in that country. As natural with all legends of mythology, the Chinese too express in terms of millions of years the happenings of their past and give their ancient kings appellations of semi-divine beings. They style them as "Heavenly emperors," "Terrestrial emperors," "Human emperors," "Nest-builders," and the like.

According to the Chinese their first historical emperor Fu-hi lived and ruled in the years 2852-2738 B. C. He is supposed to have been a supernatural being, half human half fish, who brought order out of social chaos. He created a family life in a state where "children knew only their mothers and not their fathers" by instituting the marital laws. He is supposed to have taught his people to hunt, to fish, to domesticate animals and to construct and play on musical instruments. He also gave the form of hieroglyphics to the vague system of writing which had

'been hitherto in vogue. Certainly the ascription is too varied and too great to be accomplished by a human being, but it, all the same, is important inasmuch as the Chinese people accepted these as social phenomena achieved and developed by human agency. They even hinted at the matriarchal beginning of society and at the creation of the institution of marriage from which all relationship springs up.

Likewise the next logical step is suggested by ascribing the introduction of agricultural life to the Emperor Shon-nung, supposed to have lived in the twenty-eighth century B. C. It is in the fitness of things that his name should have borne the implication of the "Divine Labourer." With the third Historical emperor Huang-ti, the "Yellow emperor," Ssi-ma Tsien begins his history. The first two emperors have been referred to in much earlier texts. The original empire had been a narrow strip of land along the Yellow river and around the present city of Si-an-fu. Huang-ti is related to have extended the bounds of this domain to more honourable dimensions. Numerous cultural innovations are ascribed to this emperor whose rule is said to have commenced in 2704 B. C. according to one authority and in 2491 according to another. He was perhaps the first emperor to engage in war against the Hiung-nu, the ancestors of the Huns, who occupied the northern frontiers of his empire.

Hsia Dynasty (c. 1994-c. 1523 B. C.)

According to traditional accounts, the first Chinese dynasty was Hsia, founded about 1994 B. C. by Yu the Great, who was noted for the control of the floods. The emperor is supposed to have cast nine large bronze tripods upon which were engraved the descriptions of the nine regions of his realm among which he is said to have divided his empire. His exploits are recorded in a section of the *Shu Ching* (*Document of History*) known as *Tribute to Yu*.

Shang Dynasty (c. 1523-c. 1027 B. C.)

The Hsia dynasty was succeeded by the Shang which established its capital at Anyang sometime between 1500 and 1200 B. C. The name of the dynasty also they changed from Shang to Yin. The ancient capital Anyang stood in the northern part of the Honan province. Recent archaeological excavations in those parts have brought a few interesting facts to light. They have disclosed that the Chinese of the Shang-Yin period were not merely industrious agriculturists but also builders of walled cities and towns. They had become masters of the arts of melting and casting metals. They had developed the bronze industry and were making bronze ceremonial vessels of exquisite workmanship. Likewise they had developed the ceramic and decorative arts and discovered the use of glaze. Their language with a pretty pictographic script had already become well-developed. Inscriptions on the unearthed artifacts reveal that during that period the foundation was laid for much of the later development of Chinese culture, and a scanty literature was produced. A few specimens in the form of odes and declarations are found in the *Shih Ching* (*Book of Songs*) and the *Shu Ching* (*Document of History*).

The Shang-Yin dynasty too like the Hsia met its end through the reckless vice and cruelty of a tyrant (Chou-sin with his queen Ta-ki). China even in these early days maintained her position as a civilized nation by keeping at bay the predatory tribes of her frontiers. Of these the most persistent were the ancestors of the Hiung-nu, or Huns, settled along the northern and western marches. To fight them, to make pacts and compromises with them, and to befriend them with gifts so as to keep them out of the imperial territories, had been the role of a palatinate on the western frontier, the duchy of Chou, while the court of China with its emperor gave itself up to effeminate luxury. Chou-sin's evil practices had

aroused the indignation of the palatine, subsequently known as Won-wang, who in vain remonstrated with the emperor's criminal treatment of his subjects. The strength and integrity of Won-wang's character had made him the corner-stone of that important epoch; and his name is one of the best known both in history and in literature. The courage with which he spoke his mind in rebuking his unworthy liege lord caused the emperor to imprison him, his great popularity alone saving his life. During his incarceration, extending over three years, he compiled the *I-king*, or "Canon of Changes", supposed to be the oldest book of Chinese literature, and certainly the one most extensively studied by the nation. Won-wang's son, Wu-wang, avenged his father and the many victims of Chou-sin's cruelty. Under his leadership the people rose against the emperor and, with the assistance of his allies, "men of the west", possibly the ancestors of the Huns, overthrew the Shang dynasty after a decisive battle, whereupon Chou-sin committed suicide by setting fire to his palace and perishing in its flames. He turned to ashes with the luxury that surrounded him which he denied to those who would enjoy them after him.

Chou Dynasty (c 1027—c 249 B. C.)

The fortunes of the Chou dynasty were intimately connected first with the region west of the present city of Sian, in Shensi province, and next with the environs of the city of Loyang, in Honan. It was started gloriously by the wise statesmanship of King Wen, King Wu, and the Duke of Chou, who originated the state machinery. King Wu established schools for the education of the nations' youth, and sent his own son and heir to one of these schools to be educated like the son of a common labourer. Thus he laid the foundation of that democratic principle which has been characteristic of the system of education and the subsequent promotion to high offices among the

Chinese. It was this freedom which marked the thoughts and feelings of the people who, sometimes unconcerned with the power that was, lived their simple way and crooned their artless prayers and sang their fearless songs of daily action. One such has been preserved to this day.

When the sun rises, I toil;

When the sun sets, I rest;

I dig well for water;

I till fields for food.

What has the power of the ruler to do with me?

As pointed out above, Wu-wang, the first emperor of the new dynasty, named after his duchy of Chou on the western frontier, was greatly assisted in consolidating the empire by his brother, Chou-kung, i.e. "Duke of Chou." As the loyal prime-minister of Wu-wang and his successor the duke of Chou laid the foundation of the government institutions of the dynasty which became the prototype of most of the characteristic features in Chinese public and social life down to recent times. The brothers and adherents of the new sovereign were rewarded with fiefs which in the sequel grew into as many states. China thus developed into a confederation inasmuch as a number of independent states, each having its own sovereign, were united under one liege lord, the emperor, styled "Son of Heaven," who as high-priest of the nation reigned in the name of Heaven. The emperor represented the nation in sacrificing and praying to God. The mode of the sacrifice was most sacred. In a recent description* relating to the performance of sacrifice by much later emperors the incidents of the august ceremony are brought out. The reference is recent and yet it preserves the features of the sacrifice so materially that to quote the same here will not be out of place.

*The author's *Letters From China*.

"The emperor left his palace in the forbidden city in a jade palanquin borne by sixteen carriers. The imperial cortege was a kaleidoscopic feast of colour. Mounted eunuchs in gorgeous robes carried paraphernalia for the sacrifice. Escorts of the Leopard Tail Guards. Grooms in Imperial liveries of maroon satin. Standard-bearers in velvet-trimmed uniforms with triangular dragon flags. Guant horsemen with bows and arrows leading ponies with yellow saddle-cloths. Absolute silence prevailed. In that deathlike hush did the Imperial procession move on unseen. None would be permitted to cast a look on the moving royalty. Shutters would go up on the windows all along the line of march and the side streets would be closed off with blue curtains, while all the people would be ordered indoors. Thus encircled by a triple belt of solitude, under a roof of gorgeously glazed emerald tile, with no sound to break the solemn stillness, save the quiet murmuring of cypress trees—'rooted on earth but pointing towards heaven'—the emperor priest waited in silence the coming of that mystic hour before the dawn, which was to assemble round him the spirit of his ancestors. He stood there alone, thinking, longing, pondering, praying, resolving, with nothing to guide him but his own conscience and the hush of the long cold night! He was expected for the last two days to have endeavoured to withdraw his attention from every external object and turn it steadily within in the great effort to purge away every evil and weakness of the heart, to be able to hold it up clean and strong before the Spirit of Heaven, that his blessing should not be withheld from the subjects of His son. This sacrifice in the Temple of Heaven was held during every solstice, summer and winter.

The time marked out for the sacrifice was seven quarters of an hour before sunrise while the blackness of night still clung to the chill morning air. Then the Sacred Tablets were borne in procession.

Then solemnly would the priest address the gathering, 'Ye musicians and dancers, Ye choristers and officiating attendants, all perform your duty.' Then would follow the Hymn of Peace, the cardinal point in China's culture, like, indeed, India's own.

After the Hymn of Peace, amid the roll of drums, the wail of wind instruments, the resonance of bells and sonorous tones, the emperor ascended the topmost terrace, where the Spirit of God of the Universe gazed down on him. He finished the ceremony by kneeling eighty-one times. A painstaking adoration!"

Likewise the emperor's relations with his vassals and government officials, and those of the heads of the vassal states with their subjects as well as of the people among themselves were regulated by the most rigid ceremonial. The dress to be worn, the speeches to be made, and the postures to be assumed on all possible occasions, whether at court or in private life, were subject to regulations. The duke of Chou, or whoever may have been the creator of this system, showed deep wisdom in his speculations, if he based that immutability of government which in the sequel became a Chinese characteristic, on the physical and moral immutability of individuals by depriving them of all spontaneous action in public and private life. Originally and nominally the emperor's power as the ruler over his vassals, who again ruled in his name, was unquestionable; and the first few generations of the dynasty saw no decline of the original strength of central power. A certain loyalty based on the traditional ancestral worship counteracted the desire to revolt. The rightful heir to the throne was responsible to his ancestors as his subjects were to theirs. "We have to do as our ancestors did", the people argued; "and since they obeyed the ancestors of our present sovereign, we have to be loyal to him." Interference to this time-honoured belief would have amounted to a rupture, as it were, in the nation's

religious relations, and as long as the people looked upon the emperor as the Son of Heaven, his moral power would outweigh strong armies sent against him in rebellion. The time came soon enough when central power depended merely on this spontaneous loyalty.

Not all the successors of Wu-wang, however, profited by the lessons given them by past history. The empire became weaker as it gained in extent for the centre could not hold the distant provinces. The power of the centre declined as the vassals grew stronger in capacity and undue weakness hastened this decline. Located centrally, surrounded by vassal states, the empire remained stunted while the sub-lords added to their territory and prestige on the frontiers. Many of the vassal states were thus coming up to the front and many a time challenged the authority of the emperor. All the same, quite a few of the thirty-five sovereigns of the dynasty proved illustrious and accomplished deeds of valour. Mu-wang of the 10th century B. C. sallied out of the frontiers and engaged successfully against the Dog Barbarians, the ancestors of the Hiung-nu race. The *Books of Odes*, a contemporaneous poem, gives a good account of the warfare of one of the emperors of the dynasty—Suan-wang (827-782 B. C.)—against the Tangutans and the Huns. The same book of verse recounts in a poem the evils of the lewd emperor Yu-wang. Among the signs of divine displeasure against the ill-deeds of the emperor is mentioned an eclipse of the sun which had recently occurred, the date and month being clearly stated. This date corresponds exactly with August 29, 776 B. C. and astronomers have calculated that precisely on that date an eclipse of the sun was visible in North China. This, of course, cannot be a mere accident and since the date falls into the sixth year of Yu-wang's reign, the coincidence is bound to increase confidence in that part of Chinese history. This date naturally has become the sheet-anchor of Chinese chronology.

The Chou dynasty maintained its prestige and integrity for about three centuries. It has left to posterity certain significant legacies. A few may be mentioned : the germ of a well-worked out system of government, which served as a model for succeeding dynasties; some fundamental economic and social institutions and basic rules of propriety, which were later embodied in the *Chou Li* (*The Rites of Chou*) and *Yi Li* (*Ceremonial Customs*); cultural relics, mostly bronze vessels, which reveal in part the literature, art, life, and customs of its time of prosperity; a body of literature now found in the *Shih Ching*, *Shu Ching*, and *Yi Ching* (*Book of Changes*). Despite occasional oppression there prevailed during the Chou times a sense of freedom not always preceded in human history. Said the Duke of Shao to Lin Wang (878-842 B. C.), the 10th king of the Chou dynasty:

“It is more dangerous to shut the people’s mouths than to block the waters of a river. To block the progress of a river means to force it to expand and thus do more harm than if it has been allowed to take its natural course.

The Son of Heaven knows how to govern when all officials and scholars are free to make verses, the blind bards to sing their ballads, the historians to keep their records, the ministers of music to give their advice, the hundred artisans and all people to speak of anything....”

Indeed the soul of the Chinese people found a readier and fuller utterance in odes and ballads. They sang them with the accompaniments of flute or string instruments. Their singing has been a powerful influence for good and their voice could not be silenced. The advice of the Duke of Shao, quoted above, brings out the spirit and the sense of freedom with which the verses of the times were permeated.

Since the seventh century B. C. the power of the Chous began to decline speedily. The emperor's position was reduced to a mere titular state and the hegemony in the empire fell in turn to one of the five major states for which reason the period came to be called one of the "Five Leaders." The state of Tsi (North Shan-tung) achieved great economic successes through the advice of its prime-minister, the philosopher Kuan-tzi, and began overshadowing the rest. Other states attained leadership by success in warfare. Among these leaders was duke Mu of Tsin (659 B. C.), a state on the west considered barbaric due to the Hunnic influence over its politics and population. These states kept on warring among themselves without referring to the emperor and the chiefs of some even went to the extent of styling themselves as king. The state of Tsin, however, proved most powerful among them; and it was this that destiny favoured in course of time and made supreme over China.

Contending States

The period of this general struggle is called that of "The Contending States" by Chinese historians. The period is indeed full of romance. Examples of heroism, cowardice, diplomatic skill and philosophical equanimity which fill the pages of its history have become the subject of elegant literature in prose and poetry. The political development of the Chou dynasty is the exact counterpart of that of its cultural life as reflected in the contemporaneous literature. The orthodox conservative spirit which reflects the official views of the emperor and his royal partisans is represented by the name Confucius (551-479 B. C.). The great sage had collected old traditions and formulated the moral principles which had been dormant in the Chinese nation for centuries. His doctrines tended to support the maintenance of the central power; so did those of other members of his school, especially Mencius. Filial love showed itself as obedience to the

parents in the family and as loyalty to the emperor and his government in public life. It was the highest virtue, according to the Confucian school. The history of the nation as taught in the *Shu-king* was in its early part merely an illustration of Confucianist ideas about good and bad government. Confucianism was dominant during the early centuries of the Chou dynasty, whose lucky star began to wane when doctrines opposed to it got the upper hand. The philosophical schools built up on the doctrines of Lao-tzu had in the course of generations become antagonist, and found favour with those who did not endorse that loyalty to the emperor demanded by Mencius; so had other thinkers, some of whom had preached morals which were bound to break up all social relations like the philosopher of egotism, Yang Chu, according to Mencius, disloyalty personified and the very reverse of his ideal, the duke of Chou. The egotism recommended by Yang Chu to the individual had begun to be practised on a large scale by the contending states, their governments and sovereigns, some of whom had long discarded Confucian rites under the influence of Tatar neighbours. It appears that the anti-Confucian spirit which paved the way towards the final extinction of Wu-wang's dynasty received its chief nourishment from the Tatar element in the population of the northern and western boundary states. Among these the Tsin was the most prominent. Having placed itself in the possession of the territories of nearly all of the remaining states, Tsin made war against the last shadow emperor, Nan-Wang, who had attempted to form an alliance against the powerful usurper, with the result that the western part of the Chou dominion was lost to the aggressor.

Mention may be made here of the outstanding philosophers of the times. They were the following: Lao Tzu, "the Old Fellow," who showed mankind the "Way and Its Power" in his great prose-poem *The Lao-Tzu Tao-teh Ching*; and taught men to requite

injury with goodness. Confucius (551-478 B. c.), Lao Tzu's junior contemporary, who unveiled the light of reason, speaking not as a seer but as a teacher, and who devoted himself to what is fundamental, holding that well-being is its own reward. In his teachings he did not express belief in a future life. Some of his sayings and doings were put down in *The Confucian Analects* (*Lun Yu*), *The great Learning* (*Ta Hsueh*), and the *Ching Tung*, which is variously known as "The Doctrine of the Mean," "The Conduct of Life," and "Central Harmony." Mo Tzu (500-420 B. c.), the great altruist, has been described as an "Apostle of Universal Love, a Spartan with pacific convictions, a Stoic without the Stoic's fatalism, a Utilitarian with a religious mentality, a Socialist believing in an autocracy of virtue." His teachings were recorded in a work bearing his name. Mencius (Meng Tzu, c 372-289 B. c.) was a follower of Confucius and a severe critic of Mo Tzu, a "mentor of princes," and a champion of the principles of democracy, who declared that in a nation the people are the most important and the head of the state is the least important of all. He believed in the essential goodness of man and affirmed that the function of education is to lead people to become aware of their goodness and endeavour to be good for something. Like Lao Tzu, Mo Tzu, and other humanitarians, he denounced war but preached the right of revolution even in the face of the feudal lords. His work, *The Meng Tzu*, along with the *Confucian Analects*, the *Great Learning*, and the *Chung Yung* formed the Four Books, which every school boy in old China was required to study. Hsun Tzu (Hsun Ching, c 298-238 B. c.), was the realist and "moulder of ancient Confucianism," who preached that man is essentially bad, though he is the noblest in all creation. He thought, however, that the evil in man could be mended by education. Both a poet and philosopher, he would like to see man harmonize his raw instincts by music and by the performance of ceremonial acts, which

would make poetry of daily living. He put his ideas into beautiful literary form as is evident from the book that bears his name.

Other political thinkers were Shang Yang (d. 330 B. C.), the "totalitarian," founder of the Legalist School of political thought, who as "guest minister" of the feudal state of China, encouraged the people to open up virgin lands for cultivation, and made new laws and enforced them with severity. He punished even the crown prince, who happened to have violated one of the new laws. One of his great admirers was Han Fei (d. 233 B. C.), a disciple of Hsun Tzu and a devoted student of the Legalist School of political thought. Han Fei laid stress on the necessity of being true to the truth of things. In politics he emphasized the importance of the "undeviating administration of the law" and the need for statecraft on the part of the sovereign. His writings and those of Shang Yang are among the most important milestones of political thought and literature.

The great thinkers and writers mentioned above lived mostly in the Yellow River valley. In the Yangtse River region there appeared contemporaneously a number of lyric poets, who invented a new form of poetry and introduced a wealth of new material in the folklore and folksongs of the inhabitants of the districts watered by the great Yangtse and its tributaries. The new form of poetry was called *Fu* (prose-poem). It differed from the *Shih* in the *Shih Ching* in that it was usually a long poem consisting of from 200 to 400 lines of unequal length or irregular metre, that it was highly allusive and allegorical, and in that it was meant to be recited and not sung.

Among the poets of the Yangtse River region, the best known was Chu Yuan (c. 328-285 B. C.). For a time he served as minister of the lord of the feudal state of Chu. The incompetence of his liege lord and

the intrigues and corruptions of the courtiers drove him to such utter despair that at last he drowned himself in the Milo River. His drowning is commemorated annually throughout China on the "Dragon Boat Festival Day." His short poem, *The Soldiers' Dirge*, and his long poem, *The Li Sao (An Elegy on Encountering Sorrows)*, are the extraordinary possessions of the Chinese poetry.

Chuang Chou, the eloquent follower of Lao Tzu, died in 275 B. C. He hated the formalism of the privileged men and undertook to expose their hypocrisy. In scathing terms he spoke boldly, laying bare the weakness of mankind and discounting civilization and its arts. He so flayed the followers of Confucius and Mo Tzu that the scholars of his day were quite unable to refute his criticisms. In colourful anecdotes and simple parables he gently spoke, leading men to self-examination and to quest for spiritual freedom and a new life. His work is entitled *The Chuang Tzu*. His sense of humour and illuminating wit, the sweep of his imagination, his underlying earnestness and devotion to truth, and his inimitable, charming style of writing are admirable.

The Last Phase

Nan-Wang died in 256 B. C. and a relative whom he had appointed regent was captured in 249 B. C., when the king of Tsin put an end to this last remnant of the once glorious Chou dynasty by annexing its territory. The king had already secured the possession of the Nine Tripods, huge bronze vases said to have been cast by the emperor Yu as representing the nine divisions of his empire and since preserved in the treasuries of all the various emperors as a symbol of Imperial power. With the loss of these tripods Nan-Wang had forfeited the right to call himself "Son of Heaven." Another prerogative was the offering of sacrifice to Shang-ti, the Supreme Ruler, or God,

with whom only the emperor was suppose to communicate. The king of Tsin had performed the ceremony as early as 253 B. C.

By 220 B. C. the lord of Tsin had overthrown all his warring rivals. He founded the Chinese Empire and styled himself Shih Huang Ti ("The First Emperor"). His name was connected with the construction of the Great Wall and the destruction of numerous literary documents. Because of his "burning of books" and "burying alive" of a number of Confucian scholars, his name has been defamed. He was himself the product of confusion, which he brought to order, and when he died China was again cast into confusion.

This is but an extremely short survey of the Chinese history. It does little justice to the land or to its people. The vast land supported, as it does now, the greatest unit of human population, and the great deeds of China in the domain of peace and culture will always be a subject of extensive study and enduring treatment. All the same, the little period of our survey furnishes the historian with no mean achievements, and the same should do for the present. In fact no country evinces the possibilities of China, of China that followed the period of the Chous and of one that is or is yet to be. Its dragon has cast its coils and the opium-eating giant is on his legs. A new dawn has broken and life, dove in hand, rides the morn.

CHAPTER VIII

RETROSPECT

In the preceding pages we have given the history of the peoples of Asia, of great empires, and of mighty men of arms. They have passed out of sight but the vision remains, a vision soaked in blood, of fame written on the tide of water, of little men moving mountains. Empires arose, extended, decayed. They were built and destroyed. Man built them, man destroyed them. Man perished as he built, perished as he destroyed. And yet he alone is the residue, standing amidst the ruins like a Colossus, trowel in hand.

He was the elemental unit, the basic factor, in the building of empires, egged on and whipped to action. Empires develop their own nature. Exertion and exhaustion is their inevitable lot. Within they totalize, without they aggress, subjugate, enslave. One may be more or less ruthless than another but their traits are the same: their constituents do not essentially differ. They appropriate heterogeneous elements which break asunder when the central knot that holds them together loosens, and they dismember. A congeries of nations is held by artificial force. Clashing interests interacting on one another are assembled together and held by an unreal cord and the sockets open up and tenons fly apart when the fibres wither and the cord snaps. Diverse peoples, curious tongues, multiform beliefs and modes of worship, multitudes of men compelled to work for others, all are huddled together in an inorganic whole; all get at loggerheads with one another and together they work the ruin. The Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Persians, and the Assyrians, the most unrelenting of them all, walked the same end, met the same fate.

As early as the fifth century A. D., the Indian chronicler probed into the nature of empires, realized their cruel void and condemned their achievement. "I have given this history;" the historian of the *Visnu Purana* sums up wrathfully the ego and the consequent doom of empires, "the existence of these kings will in future become a matter of debate and doubt as the very existence of Rama and other august kings has become today a matter of doubt and speculation. Emperors become mere legends in the current of time—the Emperors who thought and think 'India is mine'. Fie on Empires! Fie on the Empire of Emperor Raghava!"

Empires went down the inevitable way to ruin, but what the little men built remained. Civilization and culture were what they built and they endure down to this day, even as the pyramids do, as the Great Wall does, and will live beyond decay, beyond time, as the pyramids and the Great Wall will not do. The achievements of bygone epochs are never lost but are assimilated and carried on by subsequent ages down to eternity.

For history is a continuous and universal process. The history of writing, of coinage, of banking, of sailing, of arts, fine and commercial, of knowledge, discoveries and inventions, points but to one coherent and continuous process of its noble burden of accumulated achievements borne down the passage of time. India lived (kingless and peaceful Mohenjo-daro!), and so did China for they breathed across the empires, in spite of them, and stored the humane values and cultural gains in order to live by them. The mighty voice of Buddha and Asoka, of Akhenaten and Zoroaster, and of the wise men of China echoes and re-echoes in space, and the intrepid challenge of the Jewish Prophets to the mightiest of the mighty is mellowed by the calling love of one born in the stables of Bethlehem which gave battle to the imperial palace of the Palatine Hill of Rome and stilled the warcy of the legions.

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