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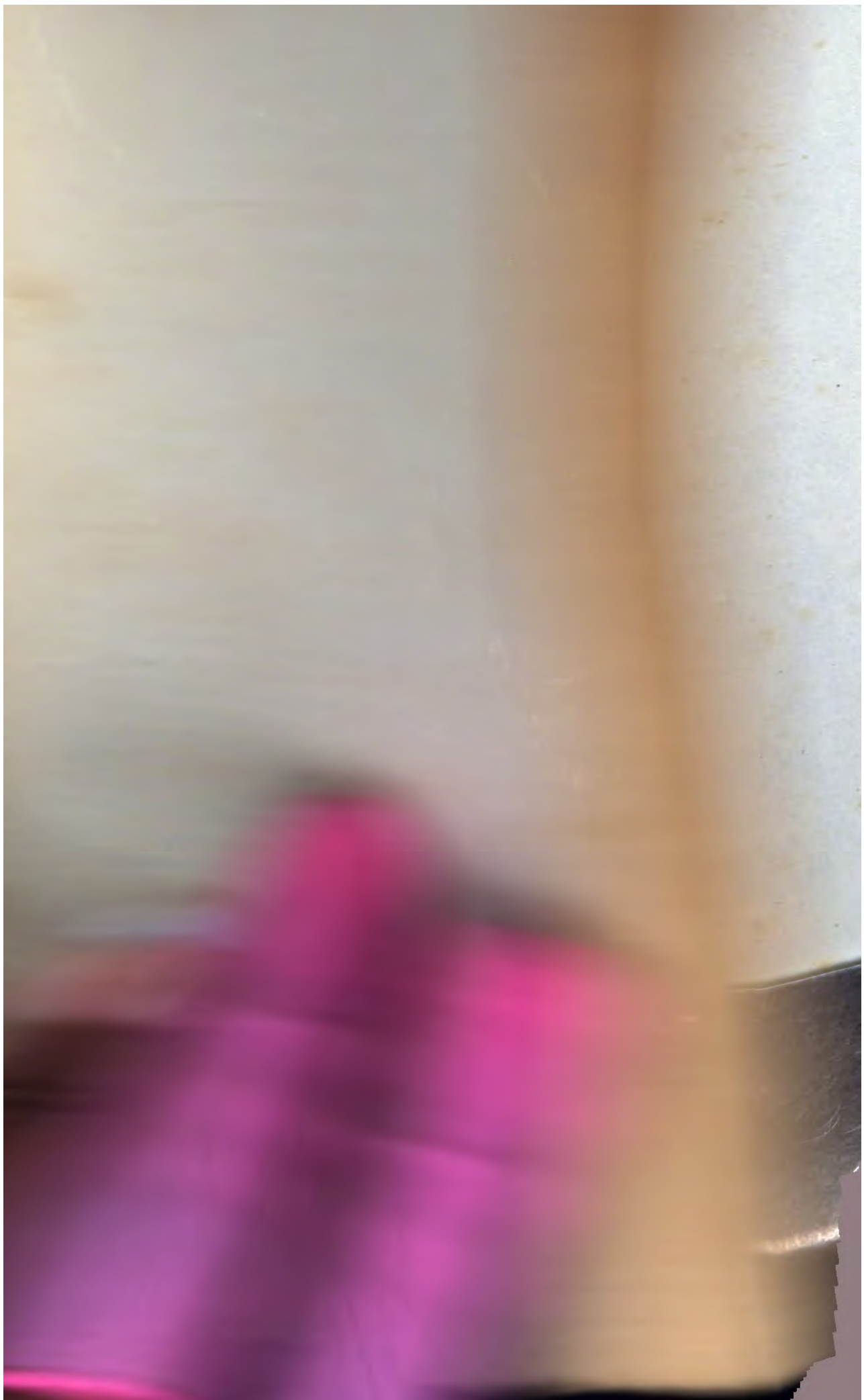
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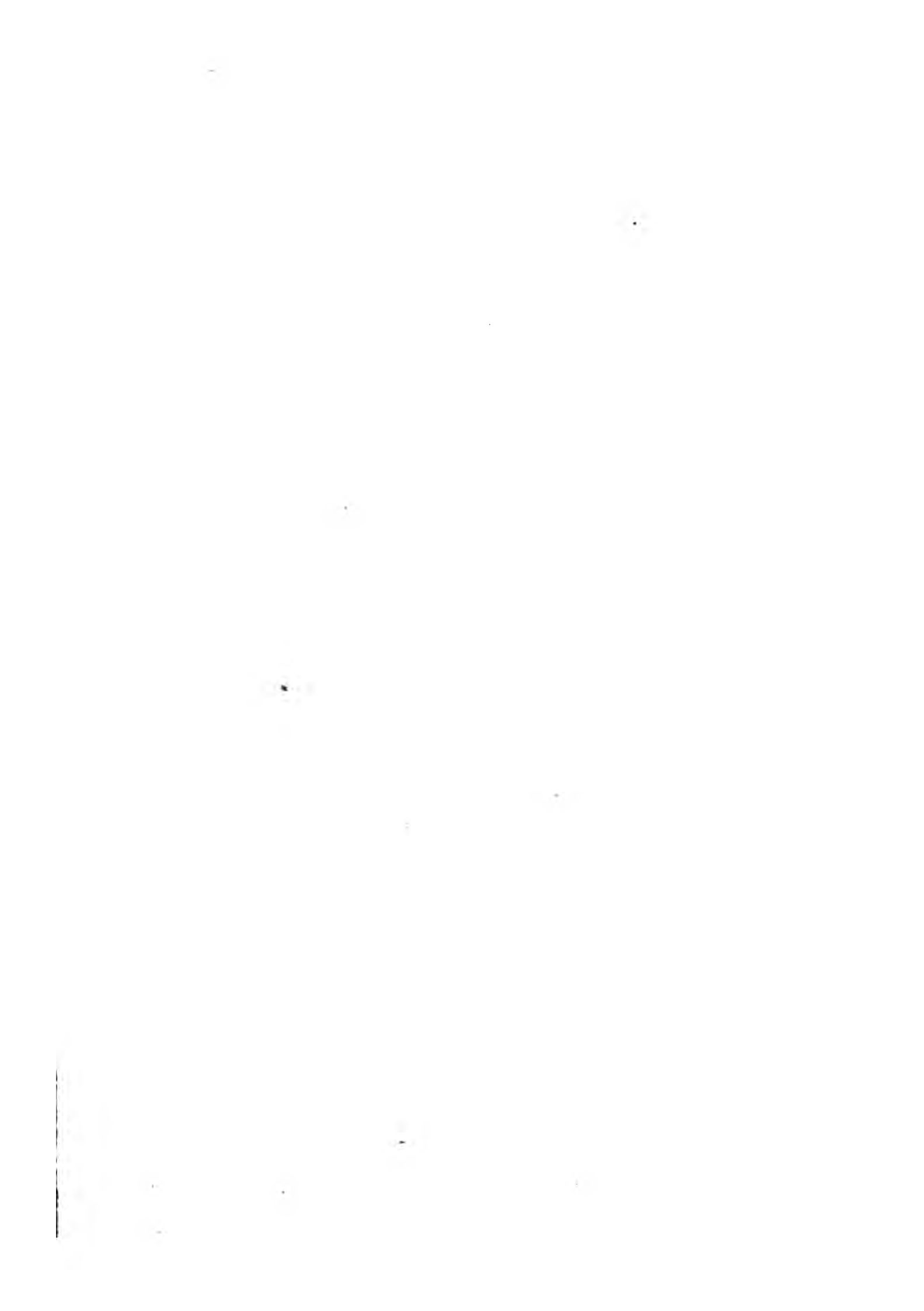
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47.816.



47.816.





THE
LIFE OF CYRUS.

So let the nations learn, that not in wealth,
Nor in the grosser pleasures of the sense,
Nor in the glare of conquest, nor the pomp
Of vassal kings, and tributary lands,
Do happiness and lasting power abide :—
That virtue unto man best glory is,
His strength and truest wisdom ;—and that guilt,
Though for a season it the heart delight,
Brings misery yet, and terror, and remorse,
And weakness, and destruction in the end :—
So if the nations learn, then not in vain,
The mighty one hath been, and is no more !

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PREFACE.

THE following pages are devoted to an interesting but obscure portion of ancient history. To the uninformed reader of eastern story, it is startling to find the same individual identified under totally dissimilar names used by different writers; but this presents in itself no difficulty to the scholar, aware of the Asiatic custom, which has descended to modern times, for persons to have several names, and to be known under one through a certain period of life, and then under another, some great transition of circumstances having transpired. Thus, in the fourth century, Kermanshah, the son of Shapoor II., mounted the throne of Persia under the name of Baharam. The Mogul conqueror, likewise, Gengis Khan, was known as Temujin during the early part of his career. So, the subject of this volume at first bore the name of Agradates, and received that of Cyrus, the Persian Kohr, signifying "the sun," upon becoming a victor over the Medes.

The real difficulty presented by the life of Cyrus, arises from the total absence of contemporary historians who made it their theme, from the tales and legends which were speedily incorporated with it, from the conflicting accounts of the writers who afterwards traced

his career, and from the want of chronological data to fix the time and sequence of events. Still, the leading public occurrences in which he acted are certain, and these it has been the main object of the writer to notice, with a view to illustrate the fulfilment of Scripture prophecy, and those portions of inspired history which touch upon his age and country. The versions given of the sacred text in its native poetic dress, have been selected as faithful expressions of the meaning and spirit of the original, taken chiefly from Blayney and Rosenmüller.

It may be necessary to remark, that to some it may appear inconsistent with the view taken of the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon in the opening chapter, subsequently to recognise the existence of Cyaxeres II. who figures in its pages, and the relation of Cyrus to him, usually and here considered as Darius the Mede of Scripture. But while regarding the *Cyropædia* as a romance, all the principal personages may yet be as strictly historical, as we are certain its hero is; and a well-known passage in *Æschylus* is thought to be confirmative of Xenophon. Still the point is one about which the writer has his misgivings, but he has chosen to mistrust his own judgment, rather than run counter to the almost unanimous consent of biblical critics and commentators.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

	Page
Cyrus—Jewish Writers—Isaiah—Daniel—Ezra—Greek Writers—Herodotus—Ctesias—Xenophon—Native Persic annalists—Dukiki—Ferdousi—The Sháh Námeb, or History of Kings.	7

CHAPTER II.

THE MEDES AND PERSIANS.

Ancient Media—Physical Features—Persia Proper—Susiana—Median History—Dejoces and Kai Kobad—Shraortes—Cyaxeres I.—Solar Eclipse—Kai Kaoos—Astyages—The Persian Tribes—Religion—Zoroaster—The Guebres and Parsees.	20
--	----

CHAPTER III.

BIRTH AND EARLY CAREER OF CYRUS.

Parentage of Cyrus—Dreams of Astyages—Attempts the Life of his Grandson—Rescue of the Child—Subsequent Adventures—Restored to his Parents—Conspiracy against Astyages—Cyrus heads the Persians—Overthrow of Astyages—Relation of Ferdousi—Kai Khoosroo—Xenophon—Medo-Persian Empire founded—Daniel's Symbolic Vision—Pasargadæ built—Its Site and Remains.	38
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

WAR WITH THE LYDIANS.

Ambitious Views of Cyrus—Favourable Circumstances—Median and Persian Costume—Weapons—Isaiah and Xenophon—Situation of Sardis—Popularity of Cræsus—Interview with Solon—Ambiguous Oracle—Battle with the Persians—Retreat to Sardis—Surrender of the City—End of the Lydian Kingdom—Fate of Cræsus—Treatment of the Asiatic Greeks—Fall of Priene—Magnesia on the Meander—Phocæa—Teos—Cnidus—Xanthus.	55
--	----

CHAPTER V.

CONQUEST OF BABYLON.

	Page
Babylonia — Death of Nebuchadnezzar — Successors— Structure of Babylon—Extent—Edifices—Inhabitants —Luxury—Prophecies of Jeremiah—Feelings of the Jews—Advance of Cyrus—Stratagem—Capture of the City—Relation of Daniel—Inscription on the Wall— End of the Babylonian Empire—Fulfilment of Pro- phesy—Name and Actions of Cyrus—Confederates against Babylon—Operation on the Euphrates— Surprise of the Capital—Porches burnt—Taken by Darius Hystaspes—Complete and Final Desolation of the City.	79

CHAPTER VI.

ADMINISTRATION OF DANIEL.

The Prophets of the Exile—Fortunes of Ezekiel and Daniel—Advancement of the latter—His Retirement —Return to Power—Its Design—Persecution of Daniel—Laws of the Medes and Persians—Integrity and Patriotism of the Prophet—Death of Darius— Liberation of the Jews—Decree of Cyrus—Inferences from it—Adoption of the Hebrew Theology—Influence of his Example—Return of the Jews under Zerub- babel—Rebuilding of the Temple—Its Completion— Death of Daniel—Tomb at Susa.	122
--	-----

CHAPTER VII.

CAPITALS OF CYRUS.

Migration of the Persian Court—Ecbatana, the Summer Residence—Description of the City—Hamadan—Tomb of Esther and Mordecai—Winter Residence of the Court—Susa—Its Wealth—The River Choaspes— Ruins at Sus—Desolation—Persepolitan Monuments —Palace of Forty Pillars—Sculptures—Royal Proces- sion of Cyrus—Probable Design of the Structure— Conduct of Alexander.	149
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH OF CYRUS.

Its Date—His Age—Conflicting Accounts—Relation of Herodotus—Of Ctesias—Of Ferdousi—Of Xenophon —Probable Conclusion—Tomb at Pasargadæ—De- scribed by Arrian—Visited by Alexander—Rifled— Inscriptions—Conjecture of Morier and Porter—Suc- ceeding Monarchs of the Persian Empire.	168
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THE
LIFE OF CYRUS.

CHAPTER I.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

As the subverter of three of the most powerful monarchies of antiquity, the Median, Lydian, and Babylonian, and the founder of another, the Medo-Persian; as the liberator of the Jews from their seventy years' captivity, an instrument specially raised up and employed by Providence for the purpose, and announced as such by one of the Hebrew prophets upwards of a century before his birth; as the contemporary of Daniel and Ezekiel, present at the gates of Belshazzar's capital when the former prophet interpreted the inscription of the monarch's doom written by a supernatural power upon the wall of his palace; Cyrus, connected with these events and persons, is a character of no ordinary interest. With a

single exception—that of the Messiah himself—he occupies a larger space upon the page of inspired prophecy than any other individual; and, excluding that instance, we have no similar example of a personage whose definite name was given to the world beforehand in a written document. These particulars, together with the numerous victories achieved, the vast empire founded, the personal qualities of the conqueror, the pledge given him of the Divine protection and assistance, and his presumed renunciation of the creed of his race for the doctrines of revealed religion, with which he was certainly acquainted, have contributed to fix attention upon Cyrus, to give celebrity to his name, and stimulate inquiry to the investigation of his career. But in the whole range of antiquity we have scarcely a similar instance of one so known to fame whose history is involved in so much obscurity. We know not the place of his birth, nor are the circumstances of his death beyond dispute; and with reference to various details current concerning him, it is impossible to say how largely the fabulous blends with the authentic.

The chief sources of information respecting this great prince may be summarily stated.

The Jewish writers are the earliest authorities. Isaiah makes a distinct mention of Cyrus, but the record is a prophetic anticipation, couched in very general terms, touching upon no particulars of private life. It celebrates his successful public career, the many nations subjugated by him, and especially the grand historical events in which he took part, or which he facilitated—the conquest of Babylon, the return of the Jewish exiles to their own land, and the rebuilding of their capital and temple—transactions in which Cyrus is pointedly proclaimed to be the agent of the Divine purposes, acting under the sanction, and with the assistance of Heaven. Jehovah is introduced, in the first instance, merely announcing the appearance of a deliverer:—

“Who raised him up from the east,
 And sent victory on his path?
 Who gave him nations for a prize,
 And made him rule over kings?
 Who caused that before his sword they were dust,
 Before his bow as driven stubble?
 He pursued them, and went on safely,
 Even by the way that his feet had never trod.
 Who hath done this, and accomplished it?
 I, who call up generations from the beginning—
 I, Jehovah, the first and with the last—I am He.
 Lands saw it and feared;
 The ends of the earth trembled.”

ISA. xli. 2–5.

Subsequently, the name of the victor thus described is expressly mentioned:—

“I am He who saith to Cyrus,
 ‘My shepherd is he, and shall perform all my pleasure.’
 Even he shall say to Jerusalem, ‘Thou shalt be built,’
 And to the temple, ‘Thou shalt be founded.’
 Thus speaks Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus,
 Whom I hold by his right hand—
 Before whom I subdue nations,
 And ungird the loins of kings—
 Before whom I open gates,
 And to whom doors shall not be shut.
 I will go before thee, and level the heaps,
 Brazen gates I will burst, and iron bars I will sever,
 I will give thee deep-hidden riches, and secreted treasures,
 That thou mayest know that I am Jehovah!
 He who calleth thee by name, the God of Israel!
 For the sake of Jacob my servant,
 And of Israel my chosen,
 I called thee by thy name—
 Yea, I named thee, ere thou knewest me.”

ISA. xlv. 28; xlv. 1—4.

Such were the cheering statements which the prophet was inspired to circulate among his countrymen in the view of the approaching tempest of the Chaldee invasion, and by the announcement of which he enabled them, when the storm broke, to look beyond the gloomy waste of its ravages, and confidently anticipate the reversion of their lot. The era of Isaiah closed before B.C. 700; and Cyrus was on the threshold of his greatest success about B.C. 560; so that upwards of a century and a half inter-

vened between the delivery of the prediction and its full accomplishment.

Daniel, who was in the first band of Hebrew captives sent to Babylon, then in early youth, as he survived through the whole period of the captivity, was the compeer and minister of Cyrus, and mentions him in the record of history and prophecy which bears his name. We only learn, however, that he succeeded Darius in the new empire which rose upon the ruins of the Babylonian, and that, under both sovereigns, the illustrious Jew, distinguished by the fallen dynasty, was continued in his office of grand vizier, or supreme head of the pashas, his last prophetic vision, on the banks of the Hiddekel, or Tigris, dating in the third regnal year of Cyrus.

Ezra, who flourished immediately afterwards, and conducted the affairs of the Jews under several of the successors of Cyrus, relates their history from the first year of that monarch to the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, a period of about ninety years. He gives the edict of Cyrus, authorizing the return of the people, a copy, probably, of the original document in the royal archives. He describes the Samaritan influence prejudicing the cause of the Jews;

and narrates the appeal made to the decree favourable to them, in the days of Darius Hystaspes, who was ambitious to tread in the steps of his great predecessor, and proceeded, therefore, to carry out his views, upon the document which registered them being found in the "house of the rolls," at Achmetha, answering to a modern record office. These are the principal particulars, relative to the subject of these pages, to be gleaned from the sacred writings, but many references occur to the events and scenes associated with his name, which will be noticed in their place, as sources of valuable and interesting illustration.

From the Greek writers, we have a large mass of materials, but interspersed with fable, and in many instances, conflicting.

Herodotus, whose history dates within a century after the death of Cyrus, devotes the greatest part of his first book to the record of his life and actions, which naturally fell within the scope of his work, "that the acts of man," as he expresses it, "may not be forgotten through lapse of time, and that great and wonderful achievements, performed partly by Greeks, and partly by barbarians, may not be without their fame." His nearness to the time

of the great Persian hero, his travels in the scenes of his renown and power, his obvious singleness and rectitude of purpose, together with the numerous confirmations which his veracity has received in modern times, are in favour of his narrative of Cyrus being received as tolerably authentic in its general outline; though, deriving his information from traditional remembrances which speedily grow corrupt, the fictitious blends with the true. Herodotus appears to have visited Ecbatana, one of the capitals of the Persian empire, the summer residence of the court, and probably Susa, the royal abode in winter. He was certainly well acquainted with Babylon and its neighbourhood. Referring to the navigation of the Euphrates, he speaks of the boats as the greatest curiosity he saw there, formed of willows, and covered externally with skins. The description calls up the fine elegy of the exile Jew, a composition of an earlier period, celebrating the sorrows of his countrymen by the rivers of Babylon, refusing to sing the Lord's song at the bidding of the heathen, and hanging their harps upon the willows. After the lapse of three and twenty centuries, the traveller now sees upon the Euphrates, light craft of construction

identical with that which attracted the attention of the Greek historian, formed of the reeds and willows which grow by its waters, thickly coated with bitumen, or incased with skins.

Ctesias, a Greek physician, who flourished a little later, and long resided at the Persian court, where men of his profession were held in high consideration, compiled a history of the empire, which exists only in fragments, mainly preserved by Photius, Diodorus Siculus, and Ælian. In his account of Cyrus, he differs from Herodotus in many circumstances of his life, but his well-known exaggerations in relation to the previous empire of Assyria deprive him of much title to confidence.

Xenophon, about the same period, the writer of the well-known *Cyropædia*, has rather exhibited Cyrus in that work as the model of a good and virtuous ruler, according to his own ideas of what such an one should be, than upon the authority of any testimony. The *Cyropædia*, therefore, has little weight as a history, but is more of a historico-political and ethical romance, of which the *Telemachus* of Fenelon is a kindred modern example. Aulus Gellius has a chapter headed, "Whether Xenophon and Plato were rivals and enemies?" a question which he

answers in the affirmative, citing, as one proof, the production of the *Cyropædia*, with a design to oppose the views on government advanced in the republic of Plato. It is certain that Xenophon had no relish for the democracy of Athens, and preferred the monarchical constitution of Sparta, becoming a voluntary exile from his native city, until expatriated by a sentence of banishment. If we suppose, therefore, as is probable, that he wrote with the assigned object, his statements upon matters of fact are obviously open to exception, and a reason at once suggests itself for some representations of events more favourable to his hero, as to the manner of his death, in which he differs from Herodotus. At the same time, the *Cyropædia* is valuable to a writer of the life of Cyrus, because containing some true pictures of the Persian manners and government. Such is the view which will be taken of this work in the following pages, though, it is right to add, that several writers of eminence, as Jahn, and especially Prideaux, prefer the authority of Xenophon to Herodotus.

From native Persic annalists, the light that is shed upon the early history of the country, its kings and people, is very scanty and dubious,

That national records existed in ancient times, commemorative of the fates and fortunes of its dynasties, we learn from the book of Esther, where reference is several times made to the "books of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia." All that the sovereign did or said appears to have been regarded as worthy of note, and hence a retinue of scribes formed part of his court, whose office it was to register his words and actions, with those occurrences in which royalty was concerned. Xerxes, at a review of his vast army, was attended by secretaries, who penned the answers which he received to his various questions as he rode along the ranks in his chariot. These documents were deposited in the capitals of the empire, at Susa and Ecbatana, and are the archives referred to by Herodotus, Thucydides, and Ctesias, the latter of whom affirms that he made use of them in compiling his history.* Not a scrap of the original documents now remains. The five centuries of national subjec-

* It has been plausibly conjectured, that the omission of the Divine name in the Book of Esther, in which it does not once occur—a most singular fact, considering its subject, and supposing it the original composition of a Jew—is due to the circumstance, of its being composed of literal extracts from the Persian annals, which at once accounts for the peculiarity.

tion, which followed the overthrow of the first Persian empire by Alexander, must have been largely fatal to their preservation, and the fanatical zeal of the Moslem subverters of the second, further contributed to their destruction.

Still some fragments of ancient Persian story escaped from the general wreck of its literature, which one of the Samanee princes, who established an independent authority in Khorassan, in the ninth century of the Christian era, collected together, and committed to the hands of Dukiki, the court poet, to versify. After producing a thousand couplets, Dukiki was assassinated by one of his slaves, and the work remained interrupted for a century, when it was resumed by Ferdousi, the Homer of Persia, at the command of Mahmoud of Ghizni. The result of Ferdousi's labours is the *Sháh Náme*h, or History of Kings, recently made accessible to English readers by the Oriental Translation Society. It has become the pride and delight of modern Persians, their great national epic, the standard volume of the people, containing all the knowledge that could be obtained from the few native documents extant at the time of its production respecting their ancient kings, which Ferdousi

presents in a dress due to an inventive genius and fertile imagination.

There is great discrepancy between the Persic national records incorporated in the *Sháh Náme*h, respecting the early history of the empire, and the notices given us by the Greek writers, so that Richardson remarks, that there is "nearly as much resemblance between the annals of England and Japan, as between the European and Asiatic relations of the same empire." The first impression produced by a comparison of the two sources of information, in the instance before us, will certainly justify this strong assertion ; but first impressions are not always the most correct ; and as Sir John Malcolm justly observes, "even in our own times, notwithstanding the multiplied facilities of intercourse, and the numerous channels through which information passes from land to land, still, if any one compare the history of a country written by a native, with the occasional notices of foreigners, many discrepancies will be found, and not a few apparent inconsistencies." Instead, therefore, of making the eastern, or the native Persic account of its ancient sovereignties, give way to the western or the foreign Greek, the writer just quoted has proceeded

upon the plan of endeavouring to reconcile the two, and with some success, having brought forward some striking points of contact between them. Without deeming a case of identity established, yet still the accordance of the Kai Khoosroos celebrated in the Sháh Námech of Ferdousi with the Cyrus of Grecian story, is sufficiently remarkable to merit attention in the ensuing sketch.

CHAPTER II.

THE MEDES AND PERSIANS.

As Cyrus was of mixed Median and Persian descent, it will be appropriate to preface his personal history with a notice of the people from whom he sprang, probably identical in language and religion, and near neighbours in geographical position.

The tract of country, the Madia of the Hebrews and Media of the Greeks, a name of uncertain derivation, embraced a large portion of the vast region included within the limits of modern Persia. It extended from the river Araxes, its northern boundary in the direction of Armenia, along the western and southern shores of the Caspian sea, running southward towards Kuzistan, the ancient Susiana. This district, somewhat larger than the kingdom of Spain, was separated into two principal divisions, called Little and Great Media. The

former, or northern portion, is the Atropatene of the Greeks, a name which Wahl conjectures to have been formed from the aboriginal title of one of its provinces, that of Azerbaijan, signifying "the land of the domain of fire," referring either to the prevalence of fire-worship in the locality, or to its numerous springs of naphtha, many of which are in a state of constant ignition. Here, by the side of the great salt-lake of Urameah, three hundred miles in circumference, another of its remarkable physical features, tradition has fixed the birth-place of Zoroaster; and within the period of authentic history, Nazir u Dien, the first astronomer of his day, had his observatory. The position of Little Media will at once be identified by the mention of the modern cities of Tazriz and Erivan as situate within its bounds. Besides Azerbaijan, it included the present provinces of Ghilan, Mazunderan the ancient Hyrcania, and Astrabad, lying along the shores of the Caspian. Great Media, the southern portion of the ancient kingdom, comprehended the modern Irak Adjemi, or Persian Irak, a province which now comprises some of the finest cities of the country, Ispahan, Teheran, and Hamadan, the last the site of the once renowned Ecbatana. The dis-

tract is intersected with mountain ranges, arms of the Taurus, and interspersed with fertile vales and well-irrigated plains, over which is that clear azure sky so celebrated in poetic song, and the records of modern travel. These two portions of ancient Media are separated by high mountains, the chain of Koflan-ku, whose grand forms and stupendous altitude harmonise with the historic fame of the country, with the thought of its mighty empire, and the laws which, like these enduring ramparts, might not be changed.

Persia, in modern geography comprises the region noticed, with nearly all the countries lying between India, Tartary, Arabia, the Caspian sea, and the Indian ocean. But the Paras of the Old Testament, the Persis of the Greeks and Romans, was a comparatively scanty portion of that space, though nearly as large as France, whose natural limits are now represented by the province of Fars. This is Persia proper, and the present is an obvious derivation from the ancient name, Paras, or Pharas, abbreviated into Phars, or Fars. The word Pars or Pares, in the Zend, or old Persian language, signifies "clear, bright, pure as ether," and the particular region designated by it, probably

received the name, from its generally pure atmosphere, and clear serene sky. The modern Fars is a district on the Persian gulf, the coast line of which is a sandy flat, subject to excessive heat, but the interior country consists of lofty heights divided by fruitful valleys and plains, where the climate is moderate and salubrious. A perpetual spring reigns upon the plain where the ruins of Persepolis attest the magnificence of the ancient capital; and the valley of Shiraz, celebrated in the songs of Hafiz, for its rose gardens, and the "sweet bowers of Mosselah," amid the desolation which ages of anarchy have produced, bears witness of not having been unworthy the encomiums lavished upon its luxuriant verdure.

Such were the respective territories originally occupied by the Medes and Persians. Between their domains and the Tigris lay Susiana, the Elam of Scripture, now represented by the province of Kuzistan, a satrapy which passed under the Assyrian and Babylonian government, till incorporated in the empire of Cyrus, of which it became the capital centre.

In the chronicle of nations, the Medes antedate the Persians, having formed themselves into a powerful independent sovereignty, ac-

quainted with the arts of civilised and social life, while the latter were a nomadic mountain race.

Passing by the earlier periods of Median story, over which hang the clouds of fable, we come to a less dark and intricate era, with the commencement of the Kaianian dynasty, about the year B. C. 710, when the relations of native writers preserved by Ferdousi admit of being compared with the pages of western annalists. After shaking off the Assyrian yoke to which they had been subject, and experiencing the evils of civil contention consequent upon being without a settled government, the Medes proceeded to constitute themselves into a monarchy, and elect a king. Dejoces was the person chosen, on account of his reputation for wisdom and justice, having in an assembly of the people addressed them personally, or through one of his partisans, as follows :—“ Forasmuch as under the present system of things we cannot live in the country, let us set a king over us ; so shall the country be well governed, and we ourselves shall follow our occupations without being ruined for the want of law.” This is the statement of Herodotus ; and in all probability, the first Median sovereign of his pages, is the Kai

Kobad of Ferdousi, the Arsæus of Ctesias, and the Arphaxad of the apocryphal book of Judith. The difference of the names—at first sight a startling difficulty—is really of little moment, considering that several names in ancient, as in modern times, belonged to the same individual, that sovereigns had an official title besides their proper personal denomination, and that names are largely corrupted in the hands of foreigners, and through the mutation to which all language is subject in its transmission from age to age.

The leading fact in the life of Dejoces, as given by Herodotus, his elevation to the throne, and the manner of it, has a remarkable parallel in Ferdousi's account of Kai Kobad, whom he mentions as the first monarch of the Medes of the Kaianian dynasty. In an assembly of chieftains, one of the principal leaders speaks as follows:—"Brave warriors! instructed by experience, and tutored by dangers, I have brought together this army, and endeavoured to render it formidable. But all hearts are discouraged from the want of a prince to preserve union. The national affairs are without a director; the army without a chief. How much better was our condition when Zoo occupied the throne! Let us choose, then, some

person of royal extraction, and commit to him the functions of sovereignty. He will maintain order, for a kingdom cannot exist without a head. The priests have suggested for this high dignity, a descendant of Feridoon, a man distinguished for his magnanimity, and for his love of justice." The recommendation was approved, and the address was followed by the election of Kai Kobad—a correspondence of circumstances, which sanctions the presumption of his being the same person with the Dejoces of the Greek writers. To this prince, the foundation of the capital Ecbatana is attributed, and the adoption of that stately seclusion as the fit habitude of royalty, which afterwards characterized the sovereigns of the Medo-Persian empire.

According to Herodotus, after a reign of fifty-three years, Dejoces was succeeded by his son Phraortes, who extended the dominion of the Medes over the Persic tribes, but failed and perished, upon turning his arms against the Assyrians, before the walls of Nineveh.

His son and successor, Cyaxeres, amply revenged his father's death, taking Nineveh, subverting the Assyrian power, reducing its territory to a Median province, with the assistance of his Babylonian allies, thus executing

the judgments denounced in the bold and magnificent language of the Jewish prophets upon the proud empire which had tyrannized over their native land. But a few years later, the confederates of the Mede effected the conquest of Judæa, inflicting direr calamities than had ever been suffered from Assyrian violence, realizing the picture of desolation which Jeremiah survived to behold, and which he has drawn with the fidelity of a witness, the pathos of a patriot, and the grace of a poet :—

“ How solitary doth she sit, the many-peopled city !
 She is become a widow, the great among the nations ;
 The queen among the provinces, how is she tributary !

Weeping—weeps she all the night : the tears are on her cheeks ;
 From among all her lovers, she hath no comforter ;
 Her friends have all dealt treacherously ; they are become her
 foes.

The ways of Zion mourn ; none come up to her feasts ;
 All her gates are desolate ; and her priests do sigh ;
 Her virgins wail ! herself she is in bitterness.” LAM. i. 1, 2, 4.

A remarkable occurrence is mentioned by Herodotus, as happening while Cyaxeres was extending his conquests towards the Halys, being at war with the Lydians, a rival power in Asia Minor. During a battle between them and the Medes, the day was changed into nocturnal darkness, which put an end to the engagement—a phenomenon, caused by a great

solar eclipse, which the philosopher Thales is said to have predicted. According to the calculations of Bailly, the centre of the moon's shadow passed in a right line over the north-east of Asia Minor, the scene of the war, on the morning of September 30th, B.C. 610. There is a strikingly analogous relation in Ferdousi, to the effect that Kai Kaoos, a successor of Kai Kobad, while leading his army in battle, was smitten with a sudden blindness, together with his troops, which had been foretold by a magician. From this correspondence, sir John Malcolm is led to identify the Cyaxeres of the Greek historian, with the Kai Kaoos of the native annalist.

Cyaxeres was succeeded upon the throne by his son Astyages, in whose reign the Persians emerged from obscurity, effected their independence, issued from their native hills under the leadership of Cyrus, a grandson of the Median king, and finally supplanted his empire with that of the Medo-Persian. At the eve of this revolution, three powerful monarchies existed in western Asia, and divided it between them. There was the Median, which extended around the southern shores of the Caspian, and from thence to the Persian gulf; the Babylo-

nian, comprising a tract of country on the east bank of the Tigris, and the region west of the Euphrates, to the shores of the Mediterranean, and the frontiers of Egypt; and the Lydian, occupying Asia Minor from Sardis to the Halys. Each of these empires succumbed in turn to the rising power of the Persians, who succeeded, under their first leader, in bringing the whole of their domains under one sceptre, forming the vastest single dominion that the world had yet seen. Previously, they had been simply a highland people, leading a nomadic life, divided into several septs, or tribes, of which Herodotus expressly mentions ten. Four of these hordes were wandering shepherds. Three others followed the practice of agriculture. The remaining three constituted a noble class, the Pasargadæ being the principal, among whom the noblest family was the Achæmenides, the paternal stock of Cyrus. Each tribe was governed internally by its own sheikh, but united with their countrymen under a general head for defensive and other common purposes, the usual acknowledgment of subjection to the supremacy of Media being paid by tribute, till favoured by circumstances, the clans confederated to throw off the yoke, accomplished

their emancipation, and established ultimately their own sovereignty upon the ruins of every power from the Araxes to the Nile, from the deserts of Tartary to the confines of Greece.

The Medes and Persians, sectional divisions of the same race of people, and closely allied in manners and language, though the former were more advanced in civilisation than the latter, had also a kindred faith. Their old religion, probably a pure Theism, was corrupted by Sabianism, or the adoration of the great lights of heaven, the most natural form of idolatry, which appears to have prevailed at an early period in the regions round about the Euphrates, probably the "fountain-head of population to the post-diluvian world, the centre from which the various families of man diverged." But as the sun sets at night, and the moon forsakes the heavens, and the sun, moon, and stars, are often obscured by an atmosphere charged with clouds, the element of fire, which might be kept perpetually burning, was selected to symbolize the Supreme Power, identified with the essence of light. All the elements—fire, earth, water, and the winds, but especially the first—were objects of veneration to the ancient Persians, who are stated by

Herodotus to have had no statues, temples, or idols, but to have offered sacrifices on the tops of high mountains. Their religious rites and ceremonies were regulated by a powerful sacerdotal class called the Magi. Subsequently the erection of unroofed structures and temples was introduced, to guard the sacred fire from accidental extinction, one of the reforms of Zoroaster, which, as opposed to previous usage, was only established at the point of the sword. As the professed mission of this celebrated sage, was to restore the faith of his countrymen to its ancient purity, we may glance at the leading principles of his theological system, illustrative of those which obtained in a remoter age, to which we shall have occasion to advert as entering into the original creed of Cyrus.

Following the account given by M. de Perron, as the most probable, Zoroaster, or Zerdusht, was the contemporary of Cyrus for a considerable period, but made no figure until after his death. Born at Urumeah, by the lake of that name, the years of his childhood passed quietly in his native town, though an ample complement of extraordinary occurrences marked his youth, according to the relations of his disciples, similar to those which appear in the

history of Mohammed. Afterwards, in profound retirement from human society, twenty years were passed in the solitudes of Mount Elburz, chiefly in a cave, where he declared himself to have been initiated into the will of the Supreme Being, receiving the instructions recorded in the Zend-Avesta, and the sacred fire from heaven, as an evidence of his Divine mission. Issuing at length from his seclusion, Zoroaster commenced his public career in Adjerbijan, erecting a fire temple. He then removed to Balkh, on the Oxus, which became his principal seat, and from thence visited the court of Darius Hystaspes, who became a convert and a zealous propagator of his views. Upon a religious war breaking out, Balkh was taken by the Tartars, its fire-temples were destroyed, and the priests massacred; but Darius hastened to the rescue, repelled the invaders, and restored the sacred edifices, about which period Zoroaster ended his days. The Zend-Avesta, or the "living word," containing his religious code, is said to have consisted of twenty-one *nosks*, or books, of which only one has been preserved entire, and of the others but a few fragments. It is even uncertain whether these writings are the remains of their reputed author, though

supposed to be authentic chronicles of his doctrines.

According to these records, Zoroaster taught the existence of a great first principle, or Supreme Power, without beginning, and without end. From this incomprehensible being, two active powers proceeded, dividing between them the government of the universe. The one, the efficient agent of all that is good, and the power presiding over it, is termed Ormuzd Ehor Mezdao—signifying “great king,” to whom the epithets of “luminous,” and “brilliant,” are applied. The other, co-existent and nearly co-equal with the former, termed Ahriman, the principle of all all evil, is described as “enveloped in crime,” and “the source of misery.” Light is the symbol of the good spirit, and darkness of the evil. Ormuzd has six angels executing his will, and Ahriman six deeves counteracting their influence. Through the medium of the former, Zoroaster assumed to have received various revelations, authorising his institutes. “Protect my flocks and herds, O man of God!” said the holy Bahman, to whose charge was entrusted the animal creation, “these I received from the Almighty; these I commit to you; let not the young be slain, nor those that are

still useful." "Servant of the Most High!" exclaimed the dazzling Ardibehest, the genius of fire and light, "speak to the royal Gusthtasp (Darius) for me ; say that to thee I have confided all fires. Ordain the *Mobuds*, the *Dustoors*, and *Herboods*, (orders of priests,) to preserve them, and neither to extinguish them in the water, nor in the earth. Bid them erect in every city a temple of fire, and celebrate, in honour of that element, the feasts ordained by law. The brilliancy of fire is from God ; and what is more beautiful than that element ? It requires only wood and odours. Let the young and the old give these, and their prayers shall be heard. I give it over to thee, as I received it from God. Those who do not fulfil my words, shall go to the infernal regions."

These are some of the leading principles of Zoroaster ; and as he professed to restore and reform the ancient faith of his countrymen, we may assume them to have been current in the main previous to his era, while referring to him the innovation of establishing fire temples, in which the actual worship of the flame burning in them was speedily grafted upon the doctrine of its heavenly derivation. The dogma of the two potent spirits of good and evil, an

endeavour to account for their mixture in the world, had an existence prior to his date, and seems to be pointed at in a magnificent piece of Hebrew theology referring to Cyrus, revealing the existence of good and evil, under the control of the one God. Happy is it for us in modern times that we are not left to the guidance of our own imaginations in matters of religion, or surrendered to follow the vague, wild, and unauthorised speculations of our fellow-men ! The ancient world "by wisdom knew not God ;" and aided only by human oracles, we should have been equal strangers to the truth respecting the Divine nature, providence, and will. These topics are now clearly illustrated by the word of revelation, which "belongs unto us and to our children for ever," and has been mercifully given to save us from the errors, and deliver from the guilt, under which so many of our race have been concluded. It was the boast of one of old that he was a Greek, not a barbarian, and a citizen of Athens, the eye of Greece. So there is ample matter for gratitude in the fact that we belong to the modern era of human history, and are favoured with the light of inspiration, instead of being immersed

in the moral darkness which has ever attended the unassisted mind of man. Yet may the thought be entertained in truth and soberness, of the final verdict of the Most High being more favourable to Persians and Medes, apart altogether from the knowledge of revealed truth, than to ourselves, should the greater advantages enjoyed by us not be properly improved.

The territory of the Medes and Persians now presents a mournful contrast with its former state—that of cities, towns, villages, and noble structures sunk in ruin, and hastening to decay, and of cultivated fields reduced to solitary wastes; but while these changes have occurred through political vicissitudes, the stormy passage of Greek, Roman, and Mohammedan invaders over its soil, the manners and customs of the modern race are faithful transcripts, in many respects, of those of the early occupiers, and their ancient religion has still its professors in the scattered and miserable hordes of Guebres, a name derived from the Arabic *Káfir*, signifying an “unbeliever.” Upon the conquest of the country by the proud and unsparing followers of Mohammed, while the majority of the

conquered embraced the creed of their masters, some fled into India, where they still exist under the name of Parsees, but a remnant of the fire-worshippers clung to the faith of their ancestors upon their native soil, which has perpetuated itself to the present day. By Shah Abbas the presence and worship of these sectaries were tolerated even at Ispahan; by the Afghan victor also, Mahmoud, they were patronized; and in the last century, Guebre pilgrims openly resorted to the naphtha pits of Baku, as one of the most sacred sites of their venerated element, the eternal fire. But contempt and ill-usage have since largely thinned their numbers, either by inducing an adoption of the Koran, or of emigration to join their brethren, the Parsees of India; and the few remaining descendants of the disciples of Zoroaster have forgot his name, and lead an existence as precarious and despised as that of a Jew in a Moslem capital.

CHAPTER III.

BIRTH AND EARLY CAREER OF CYRUS.

THE year before that which witnessed the second band of Jews—among whom was their king Jehoiakim with the prophet Ezekiel, B.C. 599—travelling to the Euphrates as captives in the train of the victorious troops of Babylon, is fixed upon by Prideaux as the era of the birth of Cyrus. This may be regarded as a close approximation to the date of the event. His father was Cambyses, a chieftain belonging to the principal of the Persian clans. His mother was Mandane, daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes, already mentioned as the sovereign in whose reign that people lost the pre-eminence. The reason of the alliance of a Median princess with a Persian chieftain, an inferior in station, is referred by Herodotus to the alarm occasioned to her father by a dream, which was interpreted by the magi to portend

danger to the empire, and the predominance of the female over the male line of his descendants. To prevent this issue, he refused his daughter in marriage to any of the powerful Median nobles, and chose an alliance for her with a comparatively obscure family.

But another dream troubled Astyages soon after the marriage of Mandane, which was interpreted to mean that her future child would supplant him upon the throne. The narrative of subsequent events, given by Herodotus, derived from legendary sources, is evidently largely fictitious, yet as the importance attached to dreams was a universal feature of ancient life, as the story is in harmony with the sanguinary habits of eastern monarchs, and as similar romantic incidents appear in the pages of Ferdousi, we may suppose the relation to have some basis in truth. To prevent the disastrous issue to himself, predicted by the magi, we are told that Astyages resolved upon the destruction of the expected child, recalled the mother to his court, and, upon the birth of Cyrus, delivered him over to his minister, Harpagus, with orders to put him to death. Consenting, of course, to the will of an arbitrary monarch, but not liking to be its execu-

tioner, Harpagus gave the boy into the hands of a shepherd, who pursued his occupation in the mountains of Media, bordering on the Euxine, abounding with forests, the haunt of savage animals; and directed him to expose the infant in one of the most unfrequented spots, that his destruction might be sure and speedy. Instead of fulfilling his mission, the shepherd, won by the solicitations of his humane wife, adopted the child as his own, and brought him up in his humble dwelling. After the lapse of some years, his existence was discovered by Astyages, with the manner of his preservation; and, though prevailed upon to desist from his intention of destroying his grandson, then a youth, revenged himself upon Harpagus for his neglect by putting his son to death.

Cyrus, transferred to the care of his legitimate parents, was received with tenderness and transport, and the remarkable circumstances of his preservation, nourished in the minds of his family and of the Persians, the idea that he had been snatched from destruction for some important purpose favourable to them. He grew up, excelling in strength and gracefulness of person, trained in the hardy

exercises common to his countrymen, whose good-will was conciliated by his amenity and accomplishments. Meanwhile Harpagus, who had continued in office at the Median court, had not forgotten the injury he had received from his master in the death of his son, and, intent upon revenge, contemplated a revolution to dethrone him. The alienation of many of the nobles from Astyages on account of his cruelty favoured the enterprise, together with the impatience of the Persians under the Median yoke, and the advantages of Cyrus as a popular leader. To excite the latter to revolt, and the former to treachery in the consequent war, were the means adopted by the minister for the accomplishment of his purpose. "Son of Cambyses," addressing himself by letter to Cyrus, "Heaven evidently favours you, or you never could have risen thus to fortune. Astyages meditated your death, and is a just object of your vengeance. He certainly determined that you should perish. The gods and my humanity preserved you. With the incidents of your life I believe you are acquainted, as well as with the injuries which I have received from Astyages, for delivering you to the herdsman, instead of putting you

to death. Listen but to me, and the authority and dominions of Astyages shall be yours: first, prevail upon the Persians to revolt, and then undertake an expedition against the Medes. If I shall be appointed by Astyages the leader of the forces which oppose you, our object will be instantly accomplished, which I may also venture to affirm of each of our first nobility. They are already favourable to your cause, and wait but the opportunity of revolting from Astyages. All things being thus prepared, execute what I advise without delay."

Entering into this design, Cyrus found it a very easy task to induce the Persian clans to rally round the standard of independence. The event answered to the expectations of Harpagus, who was appointed to command the Median forces upon the rebellion breaking out; and who deserted with his confederates to the side of Cyrus in the first engagement, and secured to him the victory. In a subsequent battle fought by Astyages in person, he was defeated, taken prisoner, and deposed, after a reign of thirty-five years, and the Median power thenceforward succumbed to the Persian. The decisive conflict, according to Strabo, took place on the plain of the river Khor or Khor-

shid, from which the conqueror derived the name by which he is known in history, Korshid, that is, the "splendour of the sun," abbreviated by the Hebrews into Koresh, by the Greeks into Kuros, and by the Romans into Cyrus. According to others, the river obtained its name from that borne by the successful prince.

Such is the relation of Herodotus, with which, in several points, the history of Kai Khoosroo, as given by Ferdousi, corresponds, but with a shifting of the scene by poetic license from Media into Tartary. His father, the son of Kai Kaos, being compelled to flee from his native country by the intrigues of the court, found refuge in the capital of the Tartar monarch Afrasiab, whose daughter he married, but by whom he was afterwards slain. His son, Kai Khoosroo, was doomed likewise to destruction, lest upon attaining manhood, he should avenge the death of his sire. But the humanity of the minister, Peeran-Weeseh, interposed to frustrate the cruel intention of the king, and he preserved the child he was ordered to despatch, committing the infant for the purpose to the care of a shepherd, whom he furnished with the means of giving him an

education suited to his rank. Afrasiab, ultimately aware of his existence, was prevailed upon to desist from his violent designs, and the young prince, effecting his escape to the court of his paternal grandfather, Kai Kaoos, succeeded him upon the Persian throne. His first act was to make war upon his maternal grandsire Afrasiab, whose armies in the subsequent struggle were commanded by the virtuous minister Peeran-Weeseh, who had been the instrument of his preservation. The minister was defeated and slain, and eventually the victorious Kai Khoosroo obtained possession of the territories of the Tartar sovereign. The remarkable coincidence in the substance of the narratives of Herodotus and Ferdousi, sanctions the surmise that they refer to the same person, and that the relations may be regarded as traditionary records of historical events. "It is utterly incredible," says sir W. Jones, "that two different princes of Persia should each have been born in a foreign and hostile territory; should each have been doomed to death in his infancy by his maternal grandfather; should each have been saved by the remorse of his destined murderer; should each, after a similar education among herdsmen

as the son of a herdsman, have found means to revisit his paternal dominion, and having delivered it after a long and triumphant war from a tyrant who had invaded it, should have restored it to the summit of power and magnificence."

The preceding circumstances are omitted by Xenophon. Nothing is said of the revolt of Cyrus, but he is represented as chosen to be the military leader of the Medes on account of his fitness for the office, and quietly gains possession of the supreme power. The explanation, no doubt, is, that the rebellion of Cyrus against his grandfather is suppressed, as an occurrence presenting him in an unfavourable point of view, which was contrary to the design of Xenophon—that of exhibiting in him the pattern of a virtuous and perfect ruler.

From the period of his deposition, about B.C. 560, Astyages appears to have been detained in captivity through the remainder of his life, but was in no other instance treated with severity. The Persians were now lords of the ascendant; but though at the head of his countrymen, and of the conquered Medes, Cyrus did not assume the nominal sovereignty until a subsequent era. The next in succession,

the son of the deposed king, and his own uncle, Cyaxeres II., the Darius of the Book of Daniel, ascended the throne, and became the first monarch of the Medo-Persian empire. His nephew contented himself with playing the part of a successful general, prosecuting further conquests, building up the mighty kingdom over which he at length formally ruled; and while appearing the second in command, being the real master, "by that ascendancy," says Hales, "which great souls have always over little ones."

One of the visions of Daniel emblematically represents this political revolution, at the era of which, the prophet was a resident in a region closely adjoining the scene of the decisive battle which established the Persian influence. "And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.—And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and

said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.—The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.” The horn, as the symbol of sovereign power, was common to the eastern nations in the earliest ages, derived from its formidable use as an instrument of aggression, or defence, by animals armed with it, or from the distinction it gives to their appearance. The metaphor occurs largely in the poetry of the Hebrews, and of the orientals in general; and the literal wearing of a horn, at present, as part of the head-dress of the Syrian women, may be traced to the idea of consequence anciently attached to it, though now lost sight of, and regarded simply as a matter of ornament, in the same manner as the warrior’s plume has become an article of female decoration. The two horns of the ram in the vision, one appearing later and rising higher than the other, symbolize the junction of the Medes and Persians in the constitution of the new empire, the latter people having an ascendant influence over the former, and being posterior to them in national existence. “I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any

that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great." The direction in which the tide of conquest flowed under Cyrus and his immediate successors, was westward to the Ægean Sea, northward beyond Armenia, southward into Egypt, and, though not alluded to, eastward into India.

Upon the spot where he conquered the Medes, and laid the foundation of his power over western Asia, Cyrus built Pasargadæ in commemoration of his victory, a city which rapidly rose into consequence, became the store-house of his treasures, and the principal residence of the magi, or the officers of religion, who here established their colleges. In this place, it was long the custom of his successors, on their accession to the throne, to be solemnly invested with the insignia of government, on which occasion, attended by the priests and nobles, they offered sacrifice on the summit of an adjoining eminence. Here, also, Cyrus built a tomb to receive, ultimately, his own remains, a royal usage in ancient times, of which the mighty pyramids of Egypt are the enduring monuments, in relation to the early sovereigns of that country.

The ingenuity of geographers has long been exercised upon the endeavour to determine the particular site of this city, but it still remains in the class of vexed questions. Some writers suppose Pasargadæ and Persepolis to be different names for the same place, and regard the latter word as the Greek translation of the former; others conclude Persepolis to be an amplification of the original plan of the more ancient Pasargadæ; while a host of learned authorities contend for their entire distinctness. The weight of evidence preponderates in favour of the latter opinion, for the historian of the life of Alexander, in tracing his progress through the east, speaks of his marching from the one place to the other. Accordingly, several modern travellers, Morier and sir R. K. Porter, have been disposed to regard the plain of Mourgaub, between forty and fifty miles north-east of Persepolis, where there are considerable remains, as the site of the city built to commemorate the battle which determined the fate of the Median monarchy, and the elevation of Cyrus.

Pasargadæ is expressly fixed by Strabo in the vicinity of the river Kour, or Cyrus; and the plain of Mourgaub is finely watered with

springs and rivulets, mingling their tribute in a broader stream, one of the upper branches of the Kour, which descends into the great plain of Persepolis, now bearing the name under which the author of *Lalla Rookh* has celebrated the scenic beauty of its banks:—

“ There’s a bower of roses by Boud-emir’s stream,
And the nightingale sings round it all the day long.”

Among the ancient remains on the plain, there are those of an elevated terrace or platform of hewn stones, raised nearly to a level with the summit of a rocky hill against which it is built. This has now the name of *Takht-i-Sulieman*, the seat or throne of Solomon; the natives of Western Asia in general ascribing almost every extraordinary place of whose real founders they are ignorant, to the great Jewish king, the fame of whose power and wisdom was firmly lodged in the oriental mind through the captivities of the people of his nation. The materials of the platform are of white marble, which must have been brought from a considerable distance, none being in the neighbourhood, a dark lime-stone composing the adjacent rock. The blocks have been put together with exquisite nicety, carefully clamped, and beautifully chiselled. From its being completely

commanded by adjoining heights, and easily accessible on all sides, Porter deems the idea of the building having been a fortress, untenable; and conceiving it to be a genuine relic of Pasargadæ, the sacred city where the Medo-Persian sovereigns were inaugurated with religious rites, "Why," he asks, "may we not consider this immense platform, evidently raised to enlarge that of the hill, as the spot on which the altar, priests, and royal party stood?" Ouseley adopts a nearly similar view, that of the terrace having been prepared to accommodate the royal pavilion, when the monarch appeared in state before his subjects, at a review of troops, or at the religious festivals. "When it is considered," he remarks, "that Cyrus was a warrior, accustomed to live in camps; that it is still the custom in this country, to desert, during the heats of summer, the walled town for the tented plain; and that the throne of the present Shah is not unfrequently set up in a movable pavilion; it will appear no improbable supposition, that the original design of the *Takht-i-Sulieman* was to serve as a stage or platform for the pavilion which inclosed the royal throne."

Upon the plain of Mourgaub, sir R. K.

Porter found another singular relic of antiquity, the fragment of an edifice, consisting of an isolated square column formed of a single block, a bas-relief occupying nearly the whole of one side, surmounted with an inscription in the arrow-head character. This name is given to those marks which have been found stamped on the bricks of Babylon, and cut upon the marble monuments at Persepolis, alluding to their shape. The sculpture exhibited the profile figure of a man, clothed in a close-fitting robe to the foot, ornamented with a border of roses, executed with the most delicate precision. From a close cap on the head, two horns branched—the oriental type of regal strength, reviving the recollection of the two-horned victorious animal of the prophetic vision. A series of wings, the feathers exquisitely chiselled, appear issuing from the shoulders of the figure, some bending upwards reaching far above the head, and others downward, nearly touching the feet. What this sculpture was intended to represent, it is natural to conjecture, but impossible to decide. Heeren, and other authorities, suppose the winged figures common upon old Persic monuments, as at Naktshi-Roustam and Persepolis, to be meant to represent the

good genii of particular personages; and from the peculiar attributes of the figure in question, the multiple wings, the long and richly decorated robe, the ample horns, together with the right hand uplifted and open as if in the act of benediction, sir R. K. Porter was led to think that in this instance, a superior spirit, the tutelary genius of the country in general, was intended. He was particularly struck with the resemblance of the figure to the descriptions of the cherubim and seraphim in the Old Testament, especially as given by the prophet Isaiah, "each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." A glance at his copy will vindicate the idea from being purely imaginative; and without inferring anything, it is not uninteresting to reflect, that we have every reason to believe, that the prophecies of Isaiah found their way to the founder of Pasargadæ, at a subsequent era, as immediately referring to himself, through the medium of his minister, the prophet Daniel.

There are other ancient remains on the plain known to the present inhabitants of Mourgaub, a considerable hamlet, as the Court of the *Deevs*, or evil genii; *Masjed Madre-i-Sulieman*, the

tomb of the mother of Solomon; and *Zindan-i-Sulieman*, Solomon's prison, the latter bearing a general resemblance in dimensions, structure, and ornament, to an undoubted fire temple at Naktshi-Roustam, and considered to have been an edifice of that class. A uniform inscription appears upon most of the ruins in the cuneiform, or arrow-head character, which professor Grotefend, of Hanover, one of the most successful decipherers of those mysterious characters, proposes to read:—

“ Dominus Cyrus, rex orbis rector.”

Cyrus, Lord, King, Ruler of the world !

Could this translation be depended upon, the question respecting the site of Pasargadæ might be considered decisively settled, though apart from this evidence, the remains on the plain of Mourgaub are so antique, and agree so well with the indications of position afforded by Arrian, Strabo, and Pliny, as to leave little doubt upon the point, that here Cyrus fought and conquered, founded the city which memorialized his triumph, established the Magi, and to which he was accustomed afterwards to resort at the religious festivals, though it appears never to have become one of the capitals of the empire.

CHAPTER IV.

WAR WITH THE LYDIANS.

WITH truth and eloquence, it has been observed of most of the conspicuous personages of antiquity, that their mighty names remain now only as small points emerging a little above an ocean under which their actions are buried ; but we can just descry, by the dying glimmer of ancient history, that ocean to have been one of blood ! The remark applies to a considerable extent to Cyrus, who, though favourably contrasting with many of the potentates of olden time, and not without some personal respect for the just and clement, seems to have early determined to admit of no foreign competitor, but to found a universal monarchy, only to be arrived at through the infliction of human suffering, and a prodigious sacrifice of life. Circumstances were propitious to this ambitious design. The Babylonian sceptre, which Nebuchadnezzar had

wielded with a vigorous arm, had fallen into the grasp of effeminate successors, the slaves of vice and pleasure, and the people had become equally voluptuous and unwarlike. The only power competent to maintain a struggle with the new candidates for empire, with any probability of success, was the Lydian, but the enormous wealth amassed by the monarchs of Sardis, and a long career unmarked with disaster, had contributed to render them vain and incautious through confidence in their own invincibility. On the contrary, the mountaineers of Persia were exactly fitted to become a conquering people. Unacquainted with luxuries, they were free from the temptations to self-indulgence, and its enervating effects; nor had intercourse with the more polished Medes been sufficiently intimate, and of such long standing, to have as yet corrupted their primitive simplicity. They were accustomed to hard toil, a homely dress, and spare diet; trained from early childhood to the use of horses and arms; and now under the direction of a bold, active, and successful leader, they were precisely adapted to go forth from conquering to conquer, among the more civilized, but less hardy races of western Asia.

The Persian costume in contrast with the Median is exhibited by the sculptured ruins of Persepolis, a city the origin of which is completely lost, but considered, on good grounds, to go back to the era when Cyrus had firmly established his power over the east. Upon the side of the double staircase, 212 feet in length, which forms the superb approach to the Palace of Forty Pillars, human figures are represented in procession, the alternate ones agreeing with each other in attire. A fluted tiara for the head, and long flowing drapery for the person, with ear-rings and bracelets, marking an advanced social state, are evidently Median fashions, for Cyrus recommended his countrymen to adopt the robe after their example, when a respite from war admitted of attention being directed to civil affairs. The habit of the other alternate figures is strikingly different, consisting of a plain round-topped cap, resembling the Phrygian bonnet, and a short close-fitting tunic, reaching down to the knees, bound round the body with a strap. This, from its simplicity and plainness, may be regarded as the genuine Persian dress, before an acquaintance with other nations, and the possession of power, had engendered a luxurious taste. Some

of the figures appear in military costume, their arms consisting of a spear, a bow and quiver, depending from the left shoulder, with a shield on the left arm, in the form of a Bœotian buckler. Nothing in the shape of a long sword appears. This agrees with the account given by Herodotus of the weapons of the Persians, who mentions only the poniard in addition, when describing the troops of Xerxes:—"they are armed," he states, "with large bows and arrows, the shafts of which are reeds. They carry a short spear, and for defence use a shield denominated *gerra*; beneath it is the quiver, and on their right side is a dagger hung from a belt."

In harmony with the sculptures of Persepolis, and the statements of profane history, are the representations of inspired prophecy.

"Sharpen the arrows, seize the shields,
 Jehovah hath roused the spirit of the kings of the Medes;
 For against Babylon is his purpose to destroy it.
 The vengeance of Jehovah is this,
 Even the vengeance of his temple." JER. li. 11.

This is the language of the prophet Jeremiah, referring generally to the Medes and Persians, who followed the same mode of warfare. The employment of the plural phrase expressly indicates this, the "kings of the Medes," meaning

Cyrus and his uncle Cyaxeres, the one, the military, and the other, the civil head of the Medo-Persian monarchy. The former people alone are mentioned, as having precedence in the denomination of the empire, and as being alone known to the Jews in the time of the prophet. Again, he states:—

“The bow and the spear shall they seize;
Cruel are they, and will show no mercy.
Their voice shall roar as the sea.
And upon horses shall they ride,
In orderly array, as a man for battle,
Against thee, O daughter of Babylon!” JER. I. 42.

The bows of the Persians are repeatedly mentioned by profane writers, with the general and skilful practice of archery, frequently on horseback. In fact, the bow was their characteristic weapon in ancient times, and is now a favourite with the modern race, though superseded in serious contests by more effective instruments. The sculptures of Persepolis show the ancient method of stringing the bow, and the manner of attaching the leather cover to the quiver, which protects the feathers of the arrows from damage, peculiarities readily observed by sir R. K. Porter, an “old bowman” himself. The prophet Isaiah has a passage analogous to the preceding:—

“ Behold ! I will stir up against them the Medes,
 Who value not silver, and care not for gold :
 Their bows shall dash down the young men,
 And they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb,—
 Their eye spareth not children.” ISA. xiii. 17, 18.

The contempt of wealth, so as not to be bribed by the offer of it to spare the enemy, attributed to the Medo-Persian troops, would more strikingly apply to the native followers of Cyrus, fresh from their mountain strongholds, though distinctive of the Medes, emulating a hardy leader ; and it is somewhat remarkable that Xenophon represents the hero of his romance, addressing the assembled army in the following terms:—“ Ye Medes ! and all who hear me, I know well that it is not from a desire of riches that ye have come out with me to the battle !” To a similar effect is a speech which Herodotus puts into the mouth of a Lydian, who, when his sovereign projected a struggle with the rising power of Persia, endeavoured to dissuade him from the enterprise. “ What will you gain,” said he, “ by waging war with such men as the Persians ? Their clothing is skins, their food wild fruits, and their drink water. If you are conquered, you lose a cultivated country ; if you conquer them, what can you take from them ?—a barren region. For my part, I thank the

gods that the Persians have not yet formed the design of invading the Lydians." That luxury, indeed, for which the Persians became proverbial in later ages—unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled, in ancient or modern times—must not mislead us respecting their character at the foundation of the monarchy. They were then simple in their manners, temperate in their habits, inured to hardships, and skilled in arms, the very people fitted to acquire predominance over the "lady of kingdoms" by the Euphrates, the superannuated dynasty of the Pharaohs by the Nile, and the wealth-prizing sovereign of Lydia. Events soon showed the justice of the advice tendered to the latter, and his folly in inviting a storm the energy of which he had not estimated and could not withstand.

At a period nearly coincident with the revolution which rendered Cyrus conspicuous in eastern story, the throne of Lydia was ascended by Cræsus, a relative by marriage of the deposed Median monarch Astyages. His capital, Sardis, the seat of one of the churches of the Apocalypse upwards of six centuries afterwards, magnificently situated at the foot of the mount Tmolus, overlooked the broad and fruitful plain through which the Hermus flows on its way to

Smyrna, receiving the waters of the Pactolus, a scanty stream which ran through the market-place of the ancient city from the mountain behind it. From this runlet bringing down particles of gold from the adjoining heights, and from valuable silver mines in their bowels, the enormous treasures had been accumulated, celebrated in Grecian song, for which Cræsus became proverbial. On the right bank of the Pactolus a lofty hill rises, an outpost of the mountain range, steep on all sides, and precipitous on that towards Tmolus, on which was a citadel which commanded the capital, and was believed to be an impregnable fortress. The Lydian power, in the early periods of its history, was confined to a slender territory stretching along the course of the Hermus; but successively the Greek colonies on the coast became subject to it, and Cræsus extended it from the river Halys on the east, to the Ægean on the west, and from the northern shores of the Mediterranean to the southern coast of the Euxine, including, with an inconsiderable exception or two, all the nations of the Lesser Asia.

In the prime of life, for he came to the throne when thirty-five years of age, rich and generous,

Cræsus was not only popular with his native subjects, but with the conquered tribes. On account of the moderation which he displayed in the exercise of power, the nominal tribute he levied, and his princely munificence, especially among the Greeks, both of the mother country and of the colonies, he was a favourite. Coeval with his accession to power, was the close of Solon's political career at Athens, and the commencement of the usurpation of Pisistratus. Cræsus cultivated the friendship of the Greeks by magnificent offerings to their sacred shrines, and by inviting their distinguished men to Sardis, where they were hospitably entertained. Unwilling to give up the delightful story of Solon's visit to him, we may reconcile it with chronology, by supposing him to have been a youthful prince, flushed with his first victory, the associate of his father Alyattes in the government, and not then the powerful monarch of Lydia, as represented by Herodotus, which he certainly did not become until some years after the voluntary wandering of Solon from Athens. Inquiring of the sage concerning the happiest man he had ever encountered, he received the memorable reply, "Call no man happy till you know the nature of his death,"—a sentiment

which has since been a text for many a moralist, and which Sophocles introduces at the close of the *Œdipus Tyrannus*:—

“Let mortals hence be taught to look beyond
The present time, nor dare to say a man
Is happy, till the last decisive hour
Shall close his life without the taste of woe.”

The remark of Solon is said to have been remembered by Cræsus in the hour of his misfortunes, with regret that he had despised it.

As a kinsman of the dethroned Astyages, there was not wanting a pretext on the part of Cræsus for being hostile to Cyrus. But other motives, doubtless, pressed far more strongly upon his mind. Young, wealthy, and ambitious, to be the dominant ruler in Asia, became a natural object of desire. In alliance with] the Greek states of Europe, flattered also, open to flattery, and the descendant of a long line of kings, the supremacy in the east would seem to be fairly within reach, and to belong to him by right. But sagacity must have perceived that, unless it were speedily arrested, the Persian power might snatch the prize from his grasp, and become even formidable to the integrity of the Lydian. The

territories already possessed by the two parties touched upon each other. The Halys, now the Kizil-ermak, was the boundary of their respective domains; and Cræsus, actuated by the foregoing reasons, projected a threatening advance, with all his forces, to its banks, to invite the Medo-Persians to contend for the sceptre of Asiatic dominion. He did not, however, commit himself to this enterprise without courting the patronage of the gods, endeavouring to conciliate their favour by costly presents, and seeking to know the probable result of his movements. Accordingly, messengers were despatched to the Lybian Ammon, to Dodona, and to Delphi. Special weight was attached to the opinion of the last oracle. The substance of the response is given by Herodotus. The words are preserved by Suidas, and are thus rendered by Cicero:—
“*Cræsus, Halym penetrans, magnam pervertat opum vim.*” “By crossing the Halys, Cræsus will destroy a mighty power.” The response of the oracle thus left it doubtful, whether the Persian or the Lydian power was intended; but Cræsus, interpreting it by his wishes, concluded upon the destruction of the Persians being the result, and consequently addressed

himself with confidence to the task of coping with them.

Meanwhile, some years had elapsed since Cyrus first tasted the joys of victory. He had employed them in establishing his authority, repressing the disorders attendant upon a change of government, disciplining his troops for further service, and conducting some hostilities against the Babylonians. Upon Cræsus crossing the Halys, and appearing in the Medo-Persian territory, Cyrus proceeded to the frontier, collecting auxiliary forces by the way, and despatching messengers to excite the Greek colonists at Ephesus, Smyrna, Miletus, and the other Ionian cities, tributary to his rival, to revolt from the Lydian yoke. The latter effort met with no success, but there is reason to believe that the viceroy of Susiana, or Elam, joined him with a contingent, abandoning the weakened rule of the Babylonian court. According to common fame, his wife, Panthea, having been captured by the Persians, was honourably treated by Cyrus, and led thereby to induce her husband, Abradatas, to unite himself to his cause, and become a faithful ally and friend. Xenophon relates this incident at length; and some credit may be

attached to it, as we know from other sources that the inhabitants of the province formed part of the grand army by which Babylon was ultimately overthrown. Upon coming up with Cræsus, an engagement ensued which lasted till night parted the combatants, leaving neither in the possession of victory. On the subsequent day, Cræsus retreated, under the impression that adequate preparation had not been made to accomplish the oracular response, and retired to his capital, to spend the winter in augmenting his forces for a campaign in the following spring.

Upon reaching Sardis, envoys were sent by the Lydian monarch to his allies, the Babylonians, Egyptians, and Spartans, requesting aid, and appointing their supplies to meet him, within the space of five months, under the walls of his capital. In the interim, he disbanded his army, and thought only of repose for himself and them, till the spring returned. But Cyrus, apprehending his design, anticipated it by becoming an invader; and crossing the Halys, he penetrated into the heart of his opponent's territory, and was himself the messenger of his arrival to the astonished Cræsus. In another battle, upon the valley-plain of the

Hermus, the Lydians fought with desperate valour, trusting mainly to their cavalry; but the expedient is related of the Persians advancing the camels that followed their camp, carrying the provisions and baggage, against the horse of the enemy, throwing the latter into confusion. The natural antipathy, says Gibbon, of the horse for the camel, is affirmed by the ancients; but it is disproved by daily experience, and derided by the best judges, the orientals. Still it must be remembered that the Lydian horses had never before seen a camel, and, in such circumstances, the account of their panic is perfectly credible. The troops of Cræsus were completely routed, and fled on all sides to the shelter of the walls of Sardis.

The Lydian monarch was now shut up in his capital; his treasures and valuables were placed in the citadel, and confiding in the strength of his position, as capable of enduring a protracted siege, a fresh appeal was made to his allies for succour. But before it could be rendered the Acropolis was surprised, Sardis fell, and Cræsus was a captive in the hands of the Persians. On its steepest side towards mount Tmolus, the rock of the citadel was scaled by a Persian at the head of a detach-

ment, who had seen a Lydian descend for his helmet, which had accidentally fallen, and return. The adventure instigated the bold attempt to mount the precipitous height, which was crowned with success; and as no sentinel watched this part of the summit, believed to be perfectly inaccessible, the fortress was surprised and captured. Polybius relates, that in a similar manner, the citadel of Sardis was subsequently taken by Antiochus. Thus ended the Lydian kingdom, B.C. 546; and the capital, from having been the residence of independent monarchs, became the seat of a Persian satrapy. The city survived, large and splendid, long after the Christian era, but its site is now a scene of desolation, occupied by a few Turkish villagers. Still, from the banks of the Hermus, the hill of the citadel is seen overlooking the plain through which it flows, with the proud heights of Tmolus behind it. - Two lonely columns remain by the Pactolus—the ruins of a temple, perhaps that of Cybele, spoken of as inhabiting by the side of the gold-yielding stream, and the monuments of the dead, the colossal tumuli which marked the burial-place of the Lydian kings, may be identified.

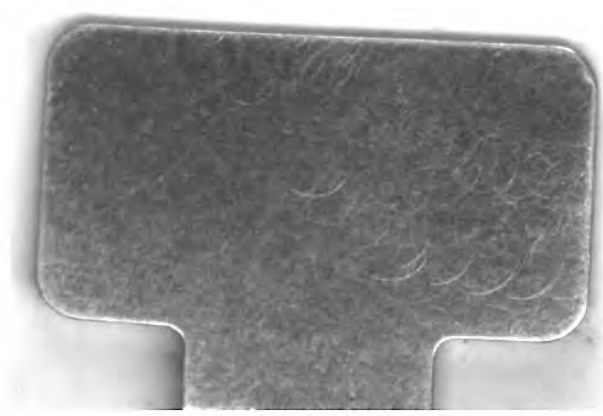
The treatment which the captive sovereign

received from the conqueror is variously related. Herodotus states, that Cyrus caused a mighty funeral pile to be built, upon which he set Cræsus in fetters, and with him fourteen Lydian youths; and the historian conjectures that this might be to perform some vow, or because he had heard of Cræsus's piety, and therefore set him upon the pile, that he might know whether any god would deliver him from being burnt alive. He adds, that upon the pile being kindled, the unfortunate monarch remembered the remark of Solon, and loudly ejaculated his name, which led to inquiry concerning the cause, and to the relenting of Cyrus. He ordered the flames to be extinguished, but the officers found it to be impossible to master them, till Cræsus called upon Apollo in tears, when suddenly clouds collected in the serene sky, a storm broke down, and a torrent of rain extinguished the fire. We must reject this account altogether, for nothing would be more foreign to Persian ideas, than such a profanation offered to the most sacred of the elements in their esteem, the symbol of the Divinity! However, too, unsparing in war, there is nothing in the character of Cyrus to justify the supposition, that he would have per-

petrated such an act of wanton cruelty. That the words of Solon were remembered under the pressure of bitter reverse, and the natural apprehension of worse calamity, may readily be conceived, and, from the close resemblance between the reputed preservation of Cræsus, and the miraculous deliverance of the Hebrew youths condemned to the flames by Nebuchadnezzar, we may venture to believe that the story of Herodotus is an account of that impressive display of Divine power, which he found in circulation in eastern Asia, the names and scenes having been shifted by careless or unfaithful annalists, from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus, Jehovah to Apollo, the plain of Dura to the plain of the Hermus, and from Hebrew to Lydian youths. Respecting the fate of Cræsus, we are told by Ctesias, what may probably be depended upon, that a Median city near Ecbatana was assigned to him as a place of honourable exile, where he ended his days, surviving the termination of his victor's career.

The Persian leader had now the task before him of confirming his authority over the conquered territory, and extending it to the Greek settlements in the Lesser Asia, in subjection to the sceptre of Cræsus, whose mild rule had

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reconciled the proud and polished colonists to a foreign yoke. The Ionian and Æolian cities despatched a deputation to Sardis, offering their allegiance to the new master upon the same terms enjoyed under their former lord—the payment of a light annual tribute, with perfect liberty to manage their own concerns; and now, for the first time, the Greeks and the natives of interior Asia came into formal contact, whose mutual descendants, in the days of Xerxes and Alexander, conducted a tremendous struggle for supremacy. In reply to the envoys, Cyrus, remembering the rejection of his own overtures, at the commencement of the war, addressed to them a significant fable: “The fisherman stood by the sea-side, and played upon his flute, but the fish would not listen, and kept still in the water: then he took his net and drew them out on the shore, and they quivered and leaped, but it was in the agonies of death.” The deputies were not slow in divining the meaning of this fable, and returned to their fellow-citizens with the stern alternative of unconditional submission, or immediate war. The Milesians alone were excepted from this severe demand, for some reason which we are left to conjecture; and

thus the most influential city of the Ionic confederacy was separated from the cause of the rest. Resolved not to yield without a desperate contest, Ephesus, Teos, Priené, Lebedos, Colophon, and the other cities of Ionia, as usual on important occasions, held a council at the Panionian temple, an edifice on the coast opposite the island of Samos, to consult for the common welfare. From thence an application was sent to the mother-country for assistance in the coming struggle. Sparta alone interfered, but rather by way of aggravation than of help, despatching an embassy to Cyrus, desiring him to refrain from harming any Grecian city, the message being couched more in the language of command than of entreaty. The message illustrates the contemptuous light in which an Asiatic barbarian, of a race and country before unknown to the Spartans, was regarded by them, while his reply shows the incapacity of a shepherd-warrior to appreciate the economy of civilized life. He told the ambassador to return and tell his countrymen that he despised the threats of men who had a public place in their city (the *agora*) set apart for the purpose of false swearing and mutual deceit.

So lightly, indeed, was the Greek character esteemed by one, an entire stranger to habits of traffic and literary cultivation, that Cyrus deemed it expedient to leave the subjugation of Ionia, and the other states, in the hands of his lieutenants, repairing himself to the Persian territory, in order to check the incursions of Scythic hordes, and accomplish the conquest of Babylon, the only power, with any pretensions to rival his own, remaining in western Asia. But, before following his course, we must trace the progress of his generals. Scarcely had he departed from Sardis when an insurrection broke out in the city. It was speedily quelled by the commandant Mazares, a Mede, who ordered the Lydians to surrender their arms, the better to insure their subjection, and then proceeded to check and chastise the Greeks, who had fomented the revolt.

Priené was the first city of the Ionic confederacy that fell. It was situated on the coast, the sea laving its walls, though now removed some miles from its ruins, an effect of the additions which natural agencies have made in the course of ages to this part of the main land of Asia Minor. Magnesia and

Meandrum followed next, an inland city of importance and wealth, afterwards given by the Persians to Themistocles to supply bread for his table, when, banished by ungrateful countrymen, he threw himself upon the hospitality of enemies. After the whole valley-plain of the Meander had been ravaged by the troops under Mazares, death by sudden disease put a stop to his career, and Harpagus, likewise a Mede, succeeded to the command.

The war was now prosecuted with the utmost vigour. As the Ionians made no attempt at opposition in the field, but retired to their cities, surrounded by high walls, lofty mounds were raised against them by the assailants, from the summit of which the Persian archers could make havoc among the besieged, and clear the way for the scaling of the walls with ease. This practice appears to have been new to the Greeks, though of long standing among the Asiatic nations. When the Assyrian king threatened Jerusalem, the prophet was commissioned to declare to Hezekiah:—

“ He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shields,
Nor cast a bank against it.”

The warlike habits of the Chaldeans are also thus described :—

“ They gather captives as the sand,
Yea they scoff at kings,
And princes are their derision ;
They laugh at every stronghold,
And heap up earth, and take it.” HAB. i. 9, 10.

Phocæa, a maritime city, was the first attacked in this way. The heroism of the inhabitants has rendered their name memorable in history. Seeing the capture of the city inevitable, upon the mound of the besiegers reaching the top of their walls, they took to their ships, with their wives and children, and most of their valuables, resolved to live in freedom upon some foreign shore. After putting out to sea, and sailing among the isles of the Ægean in search of a hospitable strand, they returned to their homes, surprised and slew the Persian garrison, but, despairing of being able to maintain their ground, they finally departed for a longer voyage, dropping a bar of iron into the sea, and swearing that until it should rise to the surface they would never return to Phocæa. Some of these exiles settled in Corsica, others in Gaul, where they founded the celebrated Massilia of the Romans, the modern Marseilles.

Teos, by the same means, fell into the hands

of the invaders, but, after the example of the Phocæans, the inhabitants, among whom was the poet Anacreon, embarked on board their ships, and became the founders of a new city in Thrace. Advancing southward, preceded by the terror of their name, the Persians rapidly became masters of all Caria, meeting with little resistance. The men of Cnidus had meditated a struggle, and had commenced cutting through the narrow peninsula which joined the city to the mainland, as a measure of defence. But religious scruples interposed, founded upon a reported oracle at Delphi unfavourable to the work. The citizens abandoned it, and quietly submitted to a foreign yoke. Lycia was next entered, where liberty was more highly prized by the people, and death in its defence preferred to a tame surrender. Xanthus, at whose port Patara, a Christian apostle landed—whose ruins of temples, tombs, triumphal arches, walls, and theatres, have recently been brought to light, presenting many parallelisms with Persepolitan monuments, the fruit of Persian influence—made a noble stand for independence. The Xanthians, comparatively a small band, met the enemy advancing along the woody valley,

one of the slopes of which was occupied by their city. Defeated in the unequal contest, and taking refuge within their walls, the resolution was adopted not to survive the calamity they could not avert. Wives, children, treasures, and sacred objects, were collected in the citadel, which was fired, while husbands and fathers, under the obligation of a solemn oath, marched out to die upon the field of battle. Harpagus was now everywhere triumphant, and Cyrus lord of the Lesser Asia.

An army with banners is an imposing pageant to the eye. Often have the senses been captivated by the spectacle, and the mind been called into entire forgetfulness of its barbarous associations, while the pride of conquest is so congenial to unsanctified human nature, that nations have been wont to estimate their true grandeur by the amount of their military glory. But what becomes of that chivalry, so enamouring to man, with its martial music and prancing steeds, when characterised by the verdict of Divine truth? The palmer-worm and the locust, the canker-worm and caterpillar, advancing in a swarm to eat up the verdure of a country, leaving behind them leafless trees and grassless plains, form the

image by which a warlike invasion is denoted. The image is not more terrible than just—ruined cities and desolated hearths, widowhood and orphanage, marking the track of the conquering host. It must be accepted as a melancholy proof of the common apostasy, that, notwithstanding its horrors, an intense appetite for war has marked the history of our species, conducted upon the most purely selfish principles; and no mean evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity appears in the contrast to the human, which its doctrines present, proclaiming the paternal relationship of mankind, their obligation to cherish the forgiving, and forego the retaliating spirit, and to signalize themselves by personal piety and mutual good-will, not by temporal aggrandizement and the lust of domination. The fact demands a grateful recognition, that these views have not been lost upon the modern world, but exercise a gradually increasing constraint upon the policy of the more powerful and enlightened nations,—one link this in that chain of causes, which, at the instance, and under the direction, of a gracious Providence, is destined eventually to bring down upon our divided and often blood-stained world the blessing of a universal and permanent peace.

CHAPTER V.

CONQUEST OF BABYLON.

WE have not the means of following with any consecutiveness the career of Cyrus. He appears only in the light of history while acting in the great events that marked his life. Obscurity rests upon the intervals between the epoch of these transactions. Thus, from the fall of Sardis to the capture of Babylon, a period certainly of not less than eight or nine years elapsed. Of the events of this era, we only know, that, while the lieutenants of Cyrus were compelling the Greek cities of Lesser Asia to submit to the rule of their master, he himself was employed far to the eastward, in reducing the fierce barbarians occupying the plains stretching from the mountains bordering on India to the shores of the Caspian. Having effected this object, and established a frontier on the north-east, with military posts to keep

at bay the tribes beyond the Oxus, it became a matter of policy and ambition to humble the only independent power of any consequence remaining in western Asia. This was the Babylonian, already largely environed by the Medo-Persian dominions, the subjugation of which was deemed essential to the unity of the empire, as well as to its safety and supremacy.

Babylonia Proper comprised that tract of country inclosed between the Euphrates and the Tigris, with a portion of territory on the west bank of the former and the east bank of the latter. On the south, the Persian gulf was its fixed and natural limit; on the north, the confine was less clearly defined, shifting with the various fortunes of its monarchs; while on the west, the empire had been extended to the sea-coast of Syria and Judæa. Such was the region of which Babylon was the capital, at the period when the Persian leader turned his attention to the conquest of that city; but Nebuchadnezzar, whose life terminated as the public career of Cyrus commenced, under whom the monarchy acquired its widest circuit, was succeeded by no representative capable of maintaining its power. Sacred history is silent respecting the

last acts of this renowned sovereign. It leaves us at liberty to surmise, that the overwhelming check administered to his pride by the overthrow of reason, expressly interpreted to him as the judgment of God, produced a permanent moral effect, and that his days ended, in the spirit of that affecting acknowledgment of error which sanctified the return of understanding. Nor is there anything in profane history but what justifies this impression; however, fable appears in the reported descent of the prophetic spirit upon him. He is said to have ascended to the top of his palace, as his last hour approached, and to have foretold the coming destruction of his kingdom, with the agent of it, an event of which he had received sufficient information from the prophetic mind of Daniel. A fragment of Megasthenes has handed down the prophecy:—"O Babylonians, I, Nabucodnosorus, foretel unto you a calamity which must shortly come to pass, which neither Belus my ancestor, nor his queen Beltis, has power to persuade the fates to turn aside. A Persian mule shall come, and by the assistance of your gods shall impose upon you the yoke of slavery: the author of which shall be a Mede, the foolish pride of Assyria. Before

he should thus betray my subjects, O that some sea or whirlpool might receive him, and his memory be blotted out for ever ! or that he might be cast out to wander through some desert, where there are neither cities nor the trace of man, a solitary exile among rocks and caverns, where beasts and birds alone abide ! But for me, before he shall have conceived these mischiefs in his mind, a happier end will be provided !”

Nebuchadnezzar died, according to the commonly received chronology, B.C. 561 ; and twenty-three years afterwards, or B.C. 538, the sceptre departed from his house, by Babylon falling into the hands of Cyrus. The interval was filled up with the reign of Evil-Merodach, murdered after two years’ possession of the throne ; with that of Neriglassar, his murderer and brother-in-law, which lasted four years ; that of Laborosoarchod, slain by his nobles, only nine months after his accession ; and that of Nabonadius, which continued seventeen years, the Labynetus of Herodotus, the Noroandel of Josephus, and the Belshazzar of Scripture.

Babylon existed as a city from the earliest ages, but Nebuchadnezzar, having employed his vast resources upon its adornment and extension,

it became in his time the "golden city," the "glory of kingdoms," the "beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," the "world renowned," and with no less truth is it styled "tender and delicate," or luxurious and wanton, great wealth and prosperity having induced a general corruption of morals and manners. The Euphrates flowed through the heart of the city, dividing it into two parts, of which that on the eastern bank of the stream surpassed the other in magnificence, comprehending most of the new improvements. While ancient Nineveh had the general form of a vast parallelogram, Babylon was built as a perfect square. Twenty-five grand streets ran from side to side in straight lines from the same number of gates, crossing each other at right angles, dividing the city into six hundred and seventy-six lesser squares. Around these squares were the houses of the inhabitants, not built contiguously, but with considerable spaces between them. The interior of each square was an open area occupied with gardens, pleasure grounds, and cultivated fields. This loose mode of building was adopted as a security against fire and siege, as the city included within itself a sufficient quantity of cultivable land, to sustain the population

in case all foreign supplies should be cut off. It was surrounded by broad and lofty walls protected from approach by a deep wet ditch, the mud from which supplied the bricks used in the erection of it, cemented together by hot bitumen. The Euphrates also, in its course through the capital, was lined with walls, and, as a further defence, there were towers at regular distances along the walls, amounting in all to two hundred and fifty. The entrance gates—of which, on each side of the great square of Babylon, there were twenty-five, corresponding with the number of streets—were of great size and strength, and of solid brass, alluded to in the prophecy relative to Cyrus:—

“ I will go before thee, and level the heaps,
Brazen gates I will burst, and iron bars I will sever.”

The extent attributed to Babylon by the two most ancient authorities is as follows, with the height and thickness of the walls.

	Circuit of Walls. Stadia.	Height of.		Breadth of.	
		Cubits.	Feet.	Cubits.	Feet.
Herodotus	480	200	300	50	75
Ctesias	360	—	300	—	—

Greek stadia being of course intended, the circuit of the city, according to the larger estimate of Herodotus, who wrote from per-

sonal observation, was equal to about fifty miles.

Some have suspected the exaggerations of fancy in this enormous extent attributed to Babylon, but without any sufficient reason, considering how abundantly the accuracy of Herodotus has been established in all that he relates as the fruit of personal observation, and also the large space devoted to pleasure and cultivation within the walls. In this way Nineveh was "an exceeding great city of three days' journey." The number of buildings and the population might not be equal to those of our own metropolis, though occupying twice the extent of ground. The language of Scripture respecting "Babylon the Great," quite accords with the statements of profane history as to its size and grandeur, while its site, at the present day, exhibits ruins spread over an immense area. The modern history of Asia supplies a remarkable counterpart on its eastern side to the ancient capital of Babylonia, both in extent and structure. A Venetian nobleman, Marco Polo, the first European who visited China, in the latter half of the thirteenth century, describes a city built by Kublai Khan, the successor of Jingis Khan, the Tartar con-

queror of the country, at whose court he was hospitably entertained. During the winter months, the Khan resided at *Cambalu*, or the royal residence, the Peking of the present day, but learning from the astrologers that this city was likely to become rebellious to his authority, he resolved to build a new one on the opposite or southern side of the river. The new city received the name of *Taidu*, or great court, and all the Chinese were compelled to take up their abode in it, the halves into which Peking is now divided being called respectively the Chinese and Tartar cities. "This city," says the Venetian traveller, describing *Taidu*, "is twenty-four miles (Italian) in circumference. No side is longer than another, but each six miles. Round the city runs a wall, which, at the base, is ten paces thick, but narrower at the top. All the streets of the city are built in exact lines, so that a person standing at one gate of the wall can see the opposite. The sections also for the dwellings are square. In every part are large palaces, surrounded with spacious courts and gardens; so that the whole city is divided into squares similar to a draft-board. The wall has twelve gates, three on each side; and at each gate is a large and splendid palace,

with roomy halls, in which are the arms of the guards. About the city are spacious suburbs, or open places, extending for three or four miles, and joining one another. In these are great caravanserais, where the merchants abide who arrive from different countries, each nation having its own separate one." If, as Heeren remarks, we reckon, in addition to this new town, the ancient city Cambalu by which it was built, together with the imperial residence, which had an immense circuit of its own, and the spacious suburbs and caravanserais, then Peking, as seen by Marco Polo, was larger than ancient Babylon.

Among the works which the ancients ranked as the chief glories of Babylon, there was the temple of Belus, comparable in vastness to the Egyptian pyramids, of which the original tower of Babel is supposed to have formed the nucleus; a bridge over the Euphrates, and a tunnel beneath it; and the fortified imperial palace, built by Nebuchadnezzar, occupying, with its pleasure-grounds, among which were the celebrated hanging gardens, an area of seven and a-half miles in circumference. To gratify his wife, a Median lady, Nebuchadnezzar constructed these gardens, in order that, upon the

flat alluvial plain of Babylonia, she might behold, upon a small scale, a picture of the physical diversity of her native region. They are described as rising in terraces one above another, the terraces resting on arches, and being connected with each other by flights of steps. Each terrace had a sufficient depth of soil for large trees, and upon the highest there was a reservoir, which, being filled by an engine from the river, served to water the plants. A construction of a similar kind is mentioned as having existed at Thebes; and, in after times, such works were imitated by the luxurious Romans, by laying out gardens on the tops of their houses—an extravagance which Seneca and Tibullus expressly condemn. Not less gigantic undertakings were the numerous canals constructed to lead off the surplus waters of the Euphrates, when in flood, to irrigate the arid parts of the country; the huge embankments constructed on each side of the river to keep the stream within regular channels; and the great artificial lake excavated as a further repository for them, four hundred and twenty furlongs, or about forty-two miles, in circumference. This last was the work of Nitocris, the queen of Evil-Merodach and mother of Belshazzar, the only

vigorous mind connected with the royal house after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. The design of the lake, which had doubtless some outlet, and was situated above the capital, was so to lower the bed of the river when turned into it, as to enable the bridge to be erected across the channel, after which the stream resumed its old course, communication with the lake being stopped up, and only re-opened when any extraordinary rise of the river might require it. But this operation, intended to improve the city, proved in the sequel fatal to it, as it supplied Cyrus with the means of accomplishing its capture.

Such was Babylon in its high and palmy state; but the people had lost much of their energy of character when called to struggle with the Persians for their independence, and were no longer like their fathers, the bold and adventurous warriors, so graphically described by the Hebrew prophet, whom their great sovereign had led across the desert to the conquest of Jerusalem and Tyre.

“For behold! I raise up the Chaldeans,
That rude and boisterous people,
Who roam far and wide through the earth,
To seize on possessions that belong not to them.
Frightful and terrible are they,

Their will is their only law and rule.
Swifter than panthers are their horses,
And keener than evening wolves.
Their cavalry prance in pride—
From afar do they come—and they fly
Like an eagle darting on its prey.
All of them come to destroy;
Their faces scorch up as the east wind,
And they gather up captives as the sand."

HAB. i. 6—10.

Amplly endowed with wealth, and influenced by the example of the successors of Nebuchadnezzar, who preferred the festival to the field, the goblet to the sword, the military spirit died away, and during the subsequent existence of Babylon, its inhabitants were characterized by their fondness of magnificence, their artificial wants, their costliness in dress, perfumes, ornaments, and general habits of life. Pliny mentions a suit of Babylonian hangings for a dining-room valued at a sum equal to upwards of six thousand pounds of our money; and Plutarch relates of the stern patriot Cato, that having received the legacy of a Babylonian mantle, he sold it immediately, as far too fine and costly for him to wear.

Isaiah and Jeremiah dwell largely upon the conquest of this luxuriant city, addressed as the "virgin daughter of Babylon," because never, since becoming the capital of an independent

empire, had it fallen into the hands of a foreign foe, until the accomplishment of their predictions concerning it. The latter, writing long before the event, states :—

“ Tell ye among the nations, and publish ;
 And lift up a standard, publish, conceal not ;
 Say ye, Babylon is taken,
 Bel is confounded,
 Merodach is broken,
 Her idols are confounded,
 Her abominations are broken.
 For a nation is come up against her from the north,
 Which shall reduce her land to desolation,
 So that there shall be no inhabitant therein ;
 Both man and beast are fled,
 They are gone in those days.” JER. I. 2, 3.

“ Behold I am about to raise up,
 And will bring against Babylon,
 An assembly of great nations from the north country ;
 And will array them against her, whereby she shall be taken ;
 Their arrows, like those of a skilful warrior,
 Shall not return empty.
 And Chaldea shall be for a spoil,
 All that spoil her shall have their fill, saith Jehovah.
 When ye shall have rejoiced, when ye shall have triumphed,
 O ye plunderers of mine inheritance ;
 When ye shall be grown fat like a heifer that treadeth,
 And shall have neighed like steeds :
 Your mother shall be greatly confounded,
 She that bare you shall be ashamed ;
 Behold her the last of the nations,
 A desert, a land of drought and a wilderness.
 Because of the wrath of Jehovah she shall not be re-established,
 But she shall be desolate altogether ;
 Every one that passeth by Babylon shall be astonished,
 And shall hiss because of her calamities.
 Order ye against Babylon round about,
 All ye that bend the bow ;

Shoot at her, spare not the arrow ;
 Because she hath sinned against Jehovah.
 Shout over her round about ;
 She hath surrendered herself,
 Her battlements are fallen,
 Her walls are thrown down ;
 Because it is the avenging of Jehovah,
 Take ye vengeance upon her ;
 As she hath done, do ye unto her.
 Cut off the sower from Babylon,
 And him that handleth the sickle in harvest time." 1. 9—16.

"Against the land of bitterness go up,
 Upon it, and upon its inhabitants, visit, O sword,
 And utterly destroy their posterity, saith Jehovah,
 And perform according to all that I have charged thee.
 There is a sound of war in the land,
 Even great destruction.
 How is the hammer of the whole earth cut off and broken !
 How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations !
 I have laid a snare for thee, and thou hast also been caught,
 O Babylon, when thou wast not aware ;
 Thou hast been met with, and taken by surprise,
 Because thou hast contended against Jehovah.
 Jehovah hath opened his arsenal,
 And hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation ;
 For this is the work of the Lord,
 Of Jehovah of hosts in the land of Chaldea.
 Come ye against her from end to end,
 Open her fattening stalls,
 Trample her like heaps, and utterly destroy her,
 Let there be no remains of her.
 Slay all her bullocks,
 Let them go down to the slaughter ;
 Woe unto them !
 For their day is come,
 The time of their visitation." 1. 21—27.

"A sword shall be upon the Chaldeans, saith Jehovah,
 And upon the inhabitants of Babylon,
 And upon the princes thereof,
 And upon the wise men thereof ;

A sword upon the impostors, and they shall be infatuated ;
 A sword upon her mighty men, and they shall be dismayed ;
 A sword upon her horses, and upon her chariots,
 And upon all the mixed multitude which is in the midst of her,
 And they shall become like women ;
 A sword upon her treasures, and they shall be plundered ;
 A sword upon her waters, and they shall be dried up ;
 Because it is the land of graven images,
 And in idols do they glory .
 Therefore shall wild cats with jackals dwell,
 The daughters of the ostrich also shall dwell in her ;
 And she shall not be re-established any more for ever,
 Neither shall she be inhabited from generation to generation.
 According as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
 And the neighbouring places thereof, saith Jehovah,
 There shall not a man dwell there,
 Neither shall a son of man sojourn in her." 1. 35—40.

" Before the walls of Babylon set up a standard,
 Keep a strong guard, place sentinels,
 Prepare ye liers in ambush ;
 For as Jehovah hath purposed,
 He hath also done that which he hath spoken,
 Concerning the inhabitants of Babylon.
 O thou that dwellest by the side of many waters, that
 aboundest in treasures,
 Thine end is come, O handmaid, of thy covetousness." li. 12, 13.

" Lift up a standard in the land,
 Sound a trumpet among the nations,
 Enlist nations against her,
 Summon kingdoms against her,
 Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz ;
 Commission a commander against her,
 Cause cavalry to come up like the bristled locust.
 Enlist nations against her,
 The king of Media, the captains thereof,
 And all the rulers thereof,
 And all the land under his dominion.
 And let the land tremble, and be in pain ;
 For the purpose of Jehovah against Babylon standeth sure,
 To make the land of Babylon a desolation,

Without an inhabitant.

The mighty men of Babylon have ceased to fight,

They have remained in strongholds.

Their strength hath failed,

They are become like women:

Her habitations are burned,

Her bars are broken."

li. 27—30.

Familiar with these statements of the prophets, secret exultation must have filled the breast of many a Jewish captive in the city, when Cyrus began to develop his plans against it, and the vast hosts of the north were seen advancing across the great level plains of Shinaar, towards its walls, their spears glittering along the distant horizon. Milman has forcibly expressed the thoughts that might naturally be present to the mind of an oppressed daughter of the Hebrew race at that period.

" Long, long the Lord
 Hath bade his prophets cry to all the world,
 That Babylon shall cease! Their words of fire
 Flash round my soul, and lighten up the depths
 Of dim futurity! I hear the voice
 Of the expecting grave! I hear abroad
 The exultation of unfettered earth!—
 From east to west they lift their trampled necks,
 Th' indignant nations: earth breaks out in scorn;
 The valleys dance and sing; the mountains shake
 Their cedar-crowned tops! The strangers crowd
 To gaze upon the howling wilderness,
 Where stood the Queen of Nations. Lo! even now,
 Lazy Euphrates rolls his sullen waves
 Through wastes, and but reflects his own thick reeds.
 I hear the bitterns shriek, the dragons cry;

I see the shadow of the midnight owl
Gliding where now are laughter-echoing palaces!
O'er the vast plain I see the mighty tombs
Of kings, in sad and broken whiteness gleam
Beneath the o'ergrown cypress—but no tomb
Bears record, Babylon, of thy last lord;
Even monuments are silent of Belshazzar!"

This prince, easy and voluptuous, appears to have abandoned himself to his pleasures, the affairs of the government being principally administered by his mother, the queen dowager, Nitocris; and confiding to the defences of the city as sufficient to baffle the art and power of the Persians, the monarch deemed it unnecessary to check the accustomed revelry of the court, when the enemy appeared before the capital.

The preparations of Cyrus for his expedition against Babylon were upon a scale commensurate with the magnitude and strength of the city. This we gather more from incidental notices than from direct information respecting the number and character of his forces. The native Medo-Persian army was swelled by contingents from the conquered provinces of Asia Minor, from the wild mountain region between the Euxine and the Caspian, and from the great deserts bordering on the Indian Caucasus, eager for the plunder of a city, the most re-

nowned for its treasures throughout the east. An attempt was made to arrest the progress of this varied host in the field; but the Babylonians were defeated, and driven back behind the shelter of their walls, which were closely invested by the invaders. The first aim of Cyrus was to take the place by assault, but this plan was abandoned as impracticable, on account of the height and strength of the walls. To cut off all supplies from without, and compel surrender by famine, was the next expedient; but the inhabitants, having long anticipated the attack, had collected magazines of provisions sufficient for twenty years' consumption, and had sufficient open land within the city to sustain themselves by tillage and pasturage for a longer period, without foreign aid. Two years passed away without the besiegers having made any progress, when stratagem delivered the place into their hands. This was a repetition of the great work of Nitocris, that of turning the tide of the Euphrates into an artificial lake constructed to receive its waters, by which they became so shallow in their course through the city as to allow the foundations of the bridge to be laid. The lake remained dry. The canal connecting it with the river was open,

except at the point where a huge embankment dammed out the current. This had only to be cut away, in order for a similar effect to be produced upon the Euphrates, to that accomplished by Nitocris.

The season of an annual festival, when the citizens were most unguarded, being accustomed to spend the night in the merriment of dance, song, and reckless debauchery, is expressly mentioned by Herodotus and Xenophon as the period selected by Cyrus for the enterprise. He posted two strong detachments of his troops at the points where the river enters and leaves the city, with directions to proceed along its course into the capital as soon as the stream should become fordable. To another detachment he committed the diversion of the river by cutting away the embankment. This effected, the current pouring into the new channel, gradually lowered below, so that the soldiers were able to proceed along its bed into the city without difficulty, the water scarcely reaching up to their middle. In the glee and disorder of the night, the gates in the walls which lined the banks of the Euphrates had been left unfastened, and without a guard. By this means the Persians easily penetrated

into the place, and were themselves the messengers of their coming to the greater part of the inhabitants. Thus Babylon fell into the possession of an enemy, in accordance with inspired announcements of its fate, and then commenced that remarkable train of humiliating events which so strikingly illustrates the "sure word of prophecy."

It will be seen, how closely the preceding relation, derived from profane history, accords with the narrative of sacred writ, from the pen of Daniel. The prophet was at that era in Babylon, watching—as we may suppose, with intense anxiety—the progress of events, acquainted with the name of the assailant without the walls, and with its correspondence to that of the deliverer of his race mentioned by Isaiah. He describes the revelry of the court on the night so fatal to the dynasty, the great feast which the king made to a thousand of his lords, at which he sat with his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drinking wine out of the sacred vessels of the temple which had been brought to Babylon among the spoils of Jerusalem, and praising the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. As the night drew on, this scene of oriental profligacy was

interrupted by fingers of a man's hand, tracing an inscription upon the plaster of the wall of the palace, which Belshazzar beheld with dismay, and eagerly called for the wise men of his kingdom to interpret to him. The writing was in the primitive Hebrew character, which differed totally from the Chaldee, and therefore the magicians could not give the meaning, or even read the record. But upon Daniel being called in, at the suggestion of the dowager queen Nitocris, he deciphered the characters, and unfolded their significance.

Mene Mene Tekel Peres Upharsin.

Mene—"God hath *numbered* thy kingdom."

Mene—The word repeated to give intensity to the sense, and signify that the matter was actually coming to pass—"and hath *finished* it."

Tekel—"Thou art *weighed* in the balances, and found wanting."

Peres—"Thy kingdom is *divided*."

Upharsin—"And given to the Medes and Persians," the word denoting "divisions," being simply the plural form of Peres.

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and Darius the Median (Cyraxeres, the uncle of Cyrus) took the kingdom," as the nominal head of the Medo-Persian monarchy.

With the fall of the capital, B.C. 538, the Babylonian empire terminated, supplying a

number of provinces to the vast territory already acquired by the conqueror. He was now at the height of his military glory, and made a moderate use of his victory, after the slaughter of the royal house, and the horrors involved in effecting the capture of the city. Once in possession of it, the lives of the inhabitants were respected, with their possessions, excepting probably their sacred edifices and idols, for the purer creed of the Persians taught them to hold temples and image-worship in abhorrence. Though originally adoring the sun, moon, and heavenly hosts, yet in course of time, emblems of these objects enshrined in structures consecrated to them, appear to have become common in Babylon, constituting the gods of gold, of silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone, mentioned in Daniel's relation of Belshazzar's feast. In honour of one of these, the banquet was kept, with its attendant revelry, an annual festival, in which the populace shared. In direct reference to the revolution which ensued on that night, the prophet Isaiah remarks, "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth," personifications of the sun and moon; "their idols were upon the beasts and upon the cattle." This seems to be an allusion to what may very

naturally be presumed to have followed upon the conquest of the city, the removal of the idols from their shrines, to be carried in procession as captives by the victorious Persians, as a sign of their own triumph, and contempt for graven images, subsequently demolished and conveyed away as spoil, on account of the precious metal of which they were composed.

In thus connecting the event of Belshazzar's death with the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, we follow the natural interpretation of the record in the book of Daniel, in harmony with Herodotus and Xenophon. But without violating any of these authorities, some writers separate the two events by an interval of twenty years. The sacred history says nothing of the death of the monarch being accomplished by a foreign hand, amid the tumult of war, or of the capture of the capital being the immediate sequence of the impious feast; but simply mentions the accession of Darius to the throne. Accordingly, to obviate some historical and chronological difficulties, Hales identifies the Belshazzar of Scripture with Neriglassar, at whose death, through the conspiracy of his nobles, the awful scene of the writing on the

wall was enacted, when nine months afterwards, his son Laborosorachod dying, and the dynasty becoming extinct, the kingdom came peaceably to Darius or Cyaxeres, a relative, in the natural order of succession. The viceroy of Babylon under him, Labynetus, or Nabonadius, revolting, and proclaiming his independence, then Cyrus marched with his vast army against the city, and accomplished its reduction in the manner described, the rebellious viceroy, a temporary king, being slain on the night of its capture. It is of no importance whether we embrace this view, or the one previously given. Both involve the same leading incidents, nor is the one, perhaps, better supported than the other by historical testimony, which, as far it refers to this era, in point of dates and names, is an intricate labyrinth.

Owing to the importance of the subject, a succinct statement may now be made of the fulfilment of ancient prophecy by Cyrus personally, and by that chain of events of which his conquest of Babylon was the first link.

1. His existence, name, and principal actions, were announced by the prophet Isaiah, together with his consecration by Providence to execute provoked retributions. The announce-

ment ante-dated his birth by more than a century.

“I am he, who saith to Cyrus,
‘My shepherd is he, and shall perform all my pleasure.’”

As an instance of coincidence simply—for the comparison is ancient and common—it may be mentioned, that Cyrus is represented by Xenophon, comparing kings, and himself in particular, to shepherds, bound to provide for the welfare of the cities and people subject to their rule. He is then described as the “anointed,” whose “right hand” Jehovah would strengthen to “subdue nations,” and besides his native subjects, and their neighbours the Medes, the overthrow of the Lydian and Babylonian powers, brought under his sway the various races from the Indus to the Mediterranean, from the Euxine to the Arabian desert. To convey an idea of this extent of territory, Xenophon speaks of its extremities being difficult to inhabit, some from excess of heat, and others from excess of cold, some from a scarcity of water, and others from too great abundance.

“I will give thee deep hidden riches, and secreted treasures.”

The statement refers to the treasuries of

Asiatic princes, for which the most secret places were selected. The amount of wealth accumulated from them by Cyrus in the course of his conquests must have been immense, and is so represented by several ancient writers; for besides the riches of Cræsus, which came into his hands with the possession of Sardis, the other spoils of Asia are rated by Pliny at 34,000 pounds weight of gold, and 500,000 talents of silver, with the cup of Semiramis, and other precious vessels, property estimated as upwards of one hundred millions sterling. Cyrus is further represented under the image of "a ravenous bird from the east," or a swift eagle, as the passage might be rendered, with which description the situation of Persia proper, his military activity, and his royal ensign, accord. Xenophon states that the ensign was a golden eagle on the top of a lance, which was the royal standard in his time, conspicuously displayed to denote the position of the monarch in the camp.

2. The prophetic record mentions the various composition of the force led to the attack of Babylon. It specifies the names of several of the confederated nations, with the general direction from which the army proceeded.

“A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together;”—“Go up, O Elam, besiege, O Media;”—“Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz;” “an assembly of great nations from the north country;” “a people from the north, even a great nation, and many kings from the extremities of the earth;” are some of the passages in question. Elam, or Susiana, a province of Babylon, had been acquired by Cyrus, as has been stated, probably through the revolt of the viceroy Abradates. Ararat and Minni denote Armenia in general, divided into various provinces, of which these were the principal, tributary to the Persian leader. Ashkenaz is probably the Ascanius of Homer, a part of Phrygia conquered in the Lydian war, from whence, in connexion with some adjoining districts, Xenophon reports that forty thousand cavalry advanced to the assault on Babylon. The direction of the march of the army, from the “north country,” accurately states the relative position of the invading host.

3. Prophecy repeatedly alludes to that remarkable operation upon the Euphrates by which Babylon was taken. In striking connexion with the name and achievements of

Cyrus, Jehovah is thus represented as unfolding his purpose by him:—

“ Who saith to the deep, ‘ Be thou wasted ;’
And, ‘ I will make dry thy rivers.’ ” ISA. XLIV. 27.

Again, the fact is referred to, with an allusion to the sea-like character of the Euphrates in the flood season:—

“ Therefore thus saith Jehovah,
Behold, I will plead thy cause,
And I will avenge thy wrongs,
And I will drain her sea,
And I will make her springs dry.” JER. LI. 36.

“ A sword (shall be) upon her waters, and they shall be dried up.”—I. 38.

The hand of Providence in the event is distinctly marked by the writer of the Apocalypse in a passage where it is introduced as a symbolic circumstance:—“ And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”

4. The fall of Babylon on a night of festivity, with the surprise of the inhabitants, and other circumstances of its capture, are specially indicated on the prophetic page.

“ In their heat I will supply them with drink,
 And I will make them drink, that they may exult,
 And may sleep an everlasting sleep,
 And never wake again, saith Jehovah.” JER. li. 39.

“ And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men,
 Her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men ;
 And they shall sleep an everlasting sleep,
 And not awake again, saith the King,
 Whose name is Jehovah of hosts.” li. 57.

Herodotus justly observes that, if the Babylonians had been aware beforehand of the intention of Cyrus, or had learned it while in course of execution, they might not only have saved themselves but destroyed their enemies, for the river being lined with walls, and communicating with the city by gates, had the latter been closed and the ramparts manned while the Persians were advancing along the bed of the stream, their destruction would have been certain and easy. But in the hour of thoughtless abandonment to pleasure they had neglected securing themselves on the side of the river, apprehending no danger from that quarter; and, according to the remarkable announcement, “the gates shall not be shut,” the Persians found them open to admit their passage from the Euphrates into the city. The inhabitants were thus unexpectedly startled from their dream of delight, by the presence

of their foes, masters of the capital, just as prophecy had indicated :—

“ Courier shall run to meet courier,
And messenger to meet messenger,
To acquaint the king of Babylon,
That his city is taken from end to end :
And the passages are surprised,
And the porches they have burned with fire,
And the men of war are stricken with terror.”

JER. li. 31, 32.

This, as Blayney remarks, is a very natural description of what may be supposed to happen on a city being taken by surprise in the middle of the night, for as fast as the alarm spread, people would be posting away with the tidings from all parts to the head quarters; and owing to the vast extent of the city, Herodotus tells us, from information obtained from some of the inhabitants, that the extreme parts of it were taken some time before those who lived in the centre knew of the attack. The “ passages ” surprised, no doubt, mean the streets leading from the river, the gates of which were left open; and the “ porches ” burned, may be explained by a passage in Xenophon. He reports a speech of Cyrus to his soldiers previous to their setting forth, which, though an invention of his own, may have been suggested by what really occurred. Cyrus is made to state to his

troops, that possibly some of them might be afraid of being annoyed, as they passed along the streets, by missiles cast upon them from the tops of the houses. To obviate this, they are directed to fire the porches or vestibules of the dwellings, which, being made of wood of the palm-tree, and coated with bituminous matter, would be readily combustible. By this means attention would be diverted from themselves, and the citizens have no option, but to endeavour to extinguish the flames, or to quit their homes or perish in them.

5. Prophecy expatiates largely upon the humiliation and miseries to be endured by the Babylonians, after a term of the greatest prosperity and self-indulgence. The term was completed when Cyrus conquered the city, and then commenced the predicted reverses.

“Come down, and sit in the dust,
O virgin daughter of Babylon!
Sit on the ground,
Throneless, O daughter of the Chaldeans!
Thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.”

ISA. XLVIII. 1.

“These two things shall come to thee,
In a moment, in one day,
Loss of children, and widowhood,
They shall come upon thee in their perfection.”

XLVII. 9.

However leniently Cyrus dealt with the people

upon submission to his rule, contenting himself with ordering a general disarmament, imposing a tribute to meet the expenses of the government, and the maintenance of a garrison, an insurrection in the subsequent reign of Darius Hystaspes brought upon them in one day, "loss of children and widowhood." Shut up within their walls, and scantily provided for a siege, each of the unhappy citizens, in order to economize their stores, selected from his wives the one he preferred, and a single maid-servant, while all the rest, men and children, fathers and mothers, and even infants, were strangled. Upon acquiring possession of the place by a stratagem, Darius ordered three thousand of the principal citizens to be crucified; reduced the height of the walls; and from that time, in consequence of a diminished population, and of being abandoned as a court residence, Babylon rapidly sank into comparative insignificance.

6. The complete and final desolation of the city is declared by prophecy in the strongest forms of expression.

"And Babylon shall become heaps,
An habitation of dragons,
An object of astonishment and hissing,
Without an inhabitant."

JER. li. 37.

“ Her cities are become a desolation,
A land of drought and a wilderness;
No man shall dwell in them,
Neither shall a son of man pass through them.”

li. 43.

A prospect of returning importance and glory dawned in the days of Alexander, who designed to re-edify the proud capital of Nebuchadnezzar, and make it the head of his own empire. But the decree had gone forth consigning the site to desolateness, as far as human occupancy is concerned, and was not to be reversed. The Macedonian conqueror breathed his last upon the spot, and none of his successors revived the scheme. On the contrary, Babylon underwent a process of extensive mutilation at their hands, its materials contributing to the foundation of other cities. Two splendid capitals, long since themselves reduced to dust, were largely indebted to them in their construction; Seleucia, built by Seleucus Nicator, on the Tigris; and Ctesiphon, which eclipsed it, founded by the Parthians on the opposite bank of the river. Besides these, several towns, at a more modern era, under the dynasty of the caliphs, rose out of the pillage of Babylon. “That the fragments of one city,” says sir R. K. Porter, “should

travel so far to build or repair the breaches of another, on the first view of the subject, appeared unlikely to myself, but on traversing the country, between the approximating shores of the two rivers, and observing all the facilities of water-carriage from one side to the other, I could no longer be incredulous, particularly when scarce a day passed without my seeing people digging the mounds of Babylon for bricks, which they carried to the verge of the Euphrates, and thence conveyed in boats to wherever they might be wanted."

Through this spoliation carried on for a course of ages, and the corroding hand of time, Babylon ceased to exist except in name. In the time of Strabo, the age of the Roman emperor Augustus, it had become so far dismantled that he applies to it what a comic poet said of Megalopolis, "the great city is a great desert." Pliny, a little later, speaks of it as "dead;" and Pausanias, a few years afterwards, said, "Of Babylon, a greater city than which the sun did not formerly behold, all that now remains is the temple of Belus, and the walls of the city." Jerome, writing in the fourth century, states that it was then quite in ruins, and that the walls served only for an

inclosure of game for the Persian kings' hunting. After this era we have scarcely a reference worth notice to Babylon until recent times, when, in every jot and tittle, the accomplishment of prophecy appears complete. Sir John Mandeville, who travelled over Asia in the year 1322, states :— " Babylone is in the grete desertes of Arabye, upon the waye as men gon towarde the kyngdome of Caldee. But it is fulle longe sithe ony man durste neyhe to the toune; for it is alle deserte and fulle of dragons and grete serpentes, and fulle dyverse veneymouse bestas alle abouten." An English merchant, Eldred, in 1583, journeying from Bir to Bagdad, speaks of passing " the old mighty city of Babylon, many ruins whereof are easily to be seen by daylight." Rauwolf, a German physician and traveller, in the year 1574, says :— " By a small village on the Euphrates is the site of old Babylon, a day and a half's journey from Bagdad. The lands about it are so dry and desolate that one may justly doubt the fertility of it, and the greatness of this city, if the vast ruins still to be seen, did not banish all suspicion. There are still standing some arches of a bridge over the river, which is here half a mile broad, and

exceeding deep. The arches are built of bricks and wonderfully compacted. A quarter of a mile beneath the village, in a plain, are the fallen ruins of a castle, and beyond that, the ruins of the tower of Babel, half a German mile in compass, which is now a receptacle of serpents and venomous creatures. All that travel over these plains will find a vast number of the ruins of very ancient, great, and lofty buildings, arched towers, and other such like structures, of wonderful architecture." Within the last century the locality has been repeatedly and most carefully examined and described.

The spot occupied by the millions of ancient Babylon has now for ages been without the permanent occupation of man, in harmony with inspired prediction, and without a human resident, excepting the "wayfaring man," the enterprising traveller, "tarrying for a night." It exhibits, however, the traces of a former population, not, as commonly imagined, by a few isolated ruins, but by a vast succession of mounds of rubbish, the vestiges of buildings, and the remains of walls covering an extensive surface of country, clearly denoting an immense host to have once been aggregated on

it, especially considering the contributions made to other cities. Some remarkable localities may still be identified. The Birš Nimrod, or the tower of Nimrod, has been unquestionably shown to be a remain of the ancient temple of Belus, an enormous mass of brick-work, occupying a mound about half a mile round, remarkable for its utter loneliness. It corresponds with the ancient temple in its dimensions, as given by Herodotus, and in form, for three of the eight stories which it originally had, can still be made out. Another striking ruin, bearing the name of *Al Kasr*, or the palace, may be deemed on good grounds to represent the great fortified residence of the last Babylonian kings. Every vestige shows it to have been a building of the first rank. The bricks are of the finest description, and scattered in every direction; there are fragments of alabaster vessels, fine earthenware, marble, and polished variegated tiles, while, notwithstanding depredation seems to have been carried on to the greatest extent, the store of material remaining is immense. The thought is impressive to the European visitor, that here is the site of that vast pile, and a remnant of it, from the battlements of which

Nebuchadnezzar gazed in pride upon the city which he had built as a witness of his power,—in one of the halls of which Belshazzar held high festival, on the night when the supernatural writing, interpreted by Daniel, revealed the doom of his empire, and Cyrus mastered his capital; while, at present, in place of the architectural glory then extant, nothing appears but a succession of confused ruinous masses, and, instead of a swarming capital, there is a plain abandoned to the cry of the bittern, and the melancholy hooting of the owl.

Nothing is more accurate than the correspondence of present circumstances in this case with the prophetic delineation of them upwards of two thousand five hundred years ago.

“ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,
Shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
It shall never be inhabited,
Neither dwelt in from generation to generation.
The Arabian shall not pitch tent there,
Nor shepherds make their fold there.
Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ;
Owls shall fill their houses ;
Ostriches shall dwell there ;
And satyrs shall dance there.
Jackals shall howl in their palaces,
And wild dogs in their pleasant places.” Isa. xiii. 19—22.

Three lions were quietly basking on the heights of the Birs Nimroud when Porter approached it, and, scarcely intimidated by the cries of the Arabs, slowly descended into the plain. "Most of the sites," says another traveller, "were pierced with holes and caverns, the retreats of 'doleful creatures;' we observed jackals, and were apprised of the presence of lions, hyenas, porcupines, lizards, bats, owls, and other fierce or gloomy animals, in the caves and cavities of these desolations." The soil, composed of the grit and debris of the desolated city, has no principle of fertility; and hence the Arab shepherd, who pitches his tent where pastures may be found, has no inducement to visit a region of barrenness.

Anciently, the whole country between the Euphrates and Tigris, constituting Babylonia Proper, was of unexampled fertility. Herodotus describes it as being, of all countries that had come under his observation, the most fruitful in corn, never producing less than two hundred fold. He speaks of the great size of the ears of wheat and barley, of the immense height of the millet, and of the care bestowed upon the cultivation of the palm. But it was predicted that the territory thus flourishing should become

waste, that the "sower should be cut off, and him that handleth the sickle in harvest time," a consummation which has long been most distinctly realized. It was not natural to Babylonia to be extraordinarily productive, but rather the reverse, owing to the flatness of the country, with the long droughts and intense heats of summer. Its fertility was induced by a careful system of artificial irrigation, patronized by a sagacious monarch, and conducted by an industrious people. The entire district was traversed by magnificent canals, dividing it into sections, and bringing the water of the rivers within reach of every part of it. The names of the principal of these canals are mentioned by various writers, and their vestiges are open to observation at present. But, as upon this gigantic scheme of artificial irrigation, the productive power of the soil depended, so, in consequence of its abandonment, has the country assumed the character of a naked desert, and both sower and reaper been cut off from its surface. It must be evident to every candid examiner of the preceding correspondences, that Hebrew prophecy is just what it assumes to be, not a series of happy conjectures, but a Divine revelation of the future, the fulfilment of which

is an irresistible argument in favour of Scripture truth.

In closing the chapter, it will not be out of place to remark, that the melancholy fate of this capital, together with that of other cities of the ancient world mentioned in the Scriptures, is there recorded under an aspect pregnant with salutary instruction and solemn warning to communities and individuals of the present era. The human historian too frequently overlooks the true cause and real agent of such catastrophes, giving as the only explanation, the weakness which luxury induces in national character, and the superior energy of an ambitious aggressor. But inspired wisdom recognises the rule of Almighty Providence in these events, and pronounces them His judgments, provoked by great general wickedness, in the execution of which the successful warrior is only playing a secondary part. This is the light in which we are enjoined by the "faithful and true Witness," to contemplate the ruins of Babylon, Nineveh, and Tyre, and the fallen estate of the once favoured Jerusalem. The legitimate and important inference is, that all "nations, languages, and people," now, are under the law of God, either as written in his word, or upon the

human heart, and that recklessness of it cannot be practised with impunity. What is true of a particular aggregate of mankind, is true also of each of its members, and both are under obligation, from the desolations made in the earth, to beware of that impious abuse of the Divine forbearance :—“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

CHAPTER VI.

ADMINISTRATION OF DANIEL.

THE two prophets of the Hebrew exile experienced very different fortunes during the captivity of the nation. Ezekiel, of the sacerdotal race, commenced his prophetic career after his deportation, while residing at some place near the river Chebar, on the banks of which he saw his visions, and where a colony of his countrymen was stationed. This river enters the Euphrates about two hundred miles to the north of Babylon. Its water is celebrated by Pliny for its pleasant flavour near its source. Its width is so considerable that Julian, in his fatal eastern expedition, was obliged to cross it with his army on a bridge of boats. Its banks are described by Ammianus as fertile and flourishing, to which the name of a town or district refers, one of the scenes of the prophet's residence, "Tel-abib," signifying "the hill of

corn-ears," "by the river of Chebar." Here Ezekiel lived in comparative obscurity, hearing of the fame and prosperity of his brother exile, Daniel, whom he mentions in his writings, but not sharing in any worldly advancement himself, nor surviving to return to his native soil. The alleged tomb of the prophet is shown a few miles to the south-east of the ruins of Babylon, and is much frequented by the Jews, a considerable body of whom have always been found in this region from the time of the captivity. Assuming the truth of this site, Ezekiel may be supposed to have died during a temporary visit to the metropolis; but the tradition that assigns his remains to this particular spot is of no value, except as a memorial of his existence in the land of his bondage.

Daniel, the most remarkable of the Hebrew race of his time, was far more fortunate, and presents us with the unique case of a prophet enjoying a high degree of worldly prosperity, and being invested with political power. As a member of the first band of captives transported from Judæa, consisting principally of influential families, we may suppose him to have been then a youth of noble birth, if not, according to the tradition of his people, a scion of the royal

house. Selected on account of his personal advantages to be a page of the palace of the king of Babylon, he was taught the "tongue of the Chaldeans," probably a refined dialect of the national language used by the higher ranks. In modern times, at Constantinople, the pages of the seraglio have been commonly captive boys of remarkable beauty, carefully instructed in the language of the court, which differs from the rustic dialects. It has been a frequent occurrence, that youths of this class have risen, through merit, or adventitious circumstances, to occupy the post of pashas, or military commanders, or grand vizier; and thus Daniel rose to an influential place in the empire under Nebuchadnezzar, in consequence of that supernatural wisdom of which the relation and significancy of the monarch's dream afforded such striking evidence. The king made him "a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon." He thus became an important public officer, and was necessarily known by the station he occupied, not only to the subjects of his imperial master, but to the adjoining nations.

It has been thought somewhat remarkable, that Daniel, who had figured so conspicuously at the court of Babylon, should not be personally known to Belshazzar before the fatal banquet, when again he signalized his Divine inspiration. We infer this to have been the case, from the monarch's interrogation upon his appearance in the festal hall:—"Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?" Sir John Chardin conjectures in explanation, that, having been appointed to preside over the "magicians, astrologers, and soothsayers," as well as to conduct a civil office, his deprivation of both might naturally follow upon the death of Nebuchadnezzar, just as at the present, when a Persian king dies, his astrologers and physicians are banished from court, the former for not having predicted, and the latter for not having prevented, his death. This very satisfactorily explains Belshazzar's ignorance of the person of Daniel, who had given up his public employments and retired into private life eight years before his accession to the throne. It also accounts for the knowledge of him possessed by the queen, at whose suggestion the prophet was sent for to interpret

the inscription, the queen-mother Nitocris being intended, who, as the wife of Evil-Merodach, regent of the kingdom during the temporary madness of his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had enjoyed ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the character and merits of Daniel.

The remarkable facts which had occurred respecting the illustrious Jew at the courts of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, as matters of public notoriety, would readily find their way to the ear of the new masters of the empire, and mark him out as one entitled to peculiar consideration. But, independent of this, it was a natural stroke of state policy to reinstate him in his office. It might go far to conciliate the inhabitants of the capital, and reconcile them to a compulsory yoke, to commit the administration of their affairs into the hands of a public functionary whom their greatest monarch had thus delighted to honour, and who had no national connexion with their conquerors. Accordingly, in the arrangements consequent upon the acquirement of fresh territory, and the final settlement of the Medo-Persian monarchy, now without a competitor in western Asia, the former minister of Nebuchadnezzar was recalled to power, and invested with the highest authority

through the entire realm subordinate to that of the sovereign. This was an obvious act of political sagacity, for we learn from the testimony of Ezekiel, that the wisdom of Daniel had become proverbial throughout the east, nor can we form any adequate idea of the influence attached to the name of the inspired seer, in harmony with whose word the mightiest potentate of his age, under the wreck of reason, "with mimic howlings filled the fields," and the sceptre finally departed from his race. But in the eye of Providence, this elevation of a Jew to the most important office which a subject could fill, was intended to accomplish an object which state policy had not yet contemplated—that of restoring the Hebrews to their native land, and re-edifying the house of God at Jerusalem.

After acquiring possession of Babylon, and providing for the retention of his prize, Cyrus is commonly supposed to have connected himself by a new tie with his uncle Cyaxeres, or Darius, marrying his daughter, an only child, thus securing the peaceable succession to the throne to himself, or to his heirs, upon its becoming vacant. She is said to have died before him, on which occasion he lamented her loss with the sincerest grief, and ordered

a general mourning among the people. The empire was now divided into a hundred and twenty provinces, each having its viceroy, satrap, or pasha, and Daniel was appointed to preside over them as grand vizier. This government of provinces by means of viceroys, or pashas, has obtained in the great empires of the east to the present day; and as these officers exercised the authority, and often assumed the state and name of king in their respective provinces, hence, "the great king," and "the king of kings," came to be the denomination of the Persian sovereign. The high station of the Jew, however acceptable to the Babylonians, might be expected to be offensive to the Medo-Persians, who had followed the fortunes of Cyrus, and shared the fatigues and dangers of his campaigns. They beheld the advancement of an alien in blood, language, and religion, with impatience, as so much taken from what was justly their due. The intrigue against him, which led to his being cast into the den of lions, with his providential deliverance, was the consequence; events which form an interesting chapter of his own writings, and must have contributed largely to increase his reputation and influence as a man, a prophet,

and a minister. The history of the occurrence in the book of Daniel, affords strong presumptive evidence, that the Darius of the Hebrew writer is identical with the Cyaxeres of the Greeks. Xenophon represents the latter as weak and pliable, but of a cruel temper, easily managed for the most part, and ferocious in his anger, upon which Horne justly queries :—"Is not this Darius?—the same Darius who allowed his nobles to make laws for him, and then repented—suffered Daniel to be cast into the lions' den, and then spent a night in lamentation for him—and at last, in strict conformity with Xenophon's description, condemned to death, not only his false counsellors, but also their wives and children?" The remarkable law which forbade the king's word to be revoked, and which proved a real limitation of the prerogative it was designed to extol, has marked the oriental despotisms in modern times. Some of the travellers of the middle ages who visited the Mogul emperor, relate, that when he dined four secretaries were at hand to write down his words, which he might never revoke. One of the late sovereigns of Persia, Aga Mohammed Khan, when encamped near Shiraz, declared that he would not move his troops till the snow

was off the mountain. The season proving severe, the snow remained longer than was expected, and the army began to suffer. Still he had affirmed a purpose, and his word was law, and could not be broken. Labourers were therefore collected, who, together with a few fine days, cleared away the snow, and the sovereign marched. This anecdote was related by a Persian chief, who was present, to sir John Malcolm, with the view of giving him a high idea of Aga Mohammed Khan, who knew, he observed, the sacred nature of a word spoken by a king of Persia.

Cyrus was, probably, with the army on the frontiers towards Syria and Arabia, having designs against Egypt, during the persecution of Daniel. With all the facts of the case, he could not but become well acquainted; and the deep impression made by the miracle which saved him from becoming a martyr, appears from the royal edict issued upon the occasion, commanding the people of the realm "to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel." The prophet bore the honours of exalted station meekly, and was proof against the temptation which the possession of power presents to use it for selfish purposes. The

envious courtiers had been completely baffled in the attempt to fix upon him a charge of mal-administration in political duties. The mandate which the vain and easy monarch had been induced to issue, forbidding religious worship under severe pains and penalties, failed, as was anticipated by the jealous intriguers, to produce a trespass of the Divine law; and while thus faithful to his God, to the temporal sovereign, and to the interests of the empire, Daniel showed that the national spirit had not been weakened in his breast by years and honours. The beautiful record concerning the manner in which his private devotions were performed, "three times a day, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem," exhibits the minister of state in the light of a serious religionist and a patriotic Jew. A successful career among the heathen had not weaned his affections from the land of his birth. The waters of Jordan were accounted better than those of the Euphrates and Tigris, nor could the pageantry of Babylon shut out the remembrance of Sion. Not less striking is the proof of this afforded by his prayer, "in the first year of the reign of Darius," when he "understood by books," the writings of Jeremiah, which

specified seventy years as the term of desolation to Jerusalem, that the allotted period must be near its accomplishment. "O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain:—cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate—open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name."

Upon the death of Darius, about B.C. 536, Cyrus formally assumed the reins of government; and from the date of his accession, the simple denomination of the Persian empire became the proper title of the monarchy. Sensible of the value of a wise and useful minister, and aware of the striking events which crowned him with so much distinction, he continued Daniel in the administration of the affairs of the kingdom under him. The feelings of interest and hope with which the prophet regarded his master may be better conceived than expressed, acquainted with the fact from the writings of Isaiah, that Cyrus had become invested with undisputed power for the liberation of the captive tribes. The intercourse which necessarily subsisted between them, may reasonably be supposed to have been improved, to convey

information respecting the peculiarities of the Jewish faith; and to the influence of the minister with the sovereign, the welcome edict, commanding the restoration of the exiled Hebrews to their native country, is doubtless to be attributed. This was issued in the first year of Cyrus. A copy is given by Ezra, from the original document preserved in the Persian archives.

“Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia:—The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the free-will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.”

The framing of this edict may be looked upon as the work of Daniel, but containing an accurate expression of the faith of Cyrus. The document is obviously of great interest and importance.

1. It is clear from the edict that Cyrus had been made acquainted with the prophecy of Isaiah. He speaks of having been charged by the God of heaven to build him an house at Jerusalem, and of his having given him the kingdoms of the earth. This is a plain reference to the record:—

“I am he who saith to Cyrus,
 ‘My shepherd is he, and shall perform all my pleasure,’
 Even he shall say to Jerusalem, ‘Thou shalt be built,’
 And to the temple, ‘Thou shalt be founded.’
 Thus speaks Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus,
 Whom I hold by his right hand—
 Before whom I subdue nations.”

ISA. XLIV. 28.

That the later prophets possessed and studied the writings of their predecessors, appears from the statement of Daniel, “I understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah,” and having the pages of that prophet to consult, he had also those of Isaiah, to place before the eye of Cyrus, containing the revelation of his name, and of his ordination to repair the desolations of Jerusalem and the temple. Every reason, religious and political, would constrain him to bring the prediction under his notice, and to make it as much as possible a matter of notoriety.

2. Cyrus, in the edict, distinctly recognises the existence of One Supreme Being. This was

not a doctrine native to his creed, for in the prediction of Isaiah alluding to him, the Jehovah of the Jews repeatedly affirms, "Thou hast not known me."

"For the sake of my servant Jacob,
And of Israel my chosen,
I have even called thee by thy name,
I have surnamed thee, though *thou knewest me not*.
I am Jehovah, and none else,
Beside me there is no God;
I will gird thee, though *thou hast not known me*,
That they may know, from the rising of the sun,
And from the west, that there is none beside me."

ISA. xlv. 4, 5, 6.

In Persia, the recognition of one governing Intelligence had long faded away from the popular apprehension, and the creed in which Cyrus was brought up, or the Magian doctrine, admitted of two eternal principles, or first causes, good and evil, by whose agency the admixture of good and evil in the world was accounted for. The benign elements of nature, principally light and fire, symbolized the good principle, and darkness the evil. Against this grand and radical error, the magnificent declaration in the prophecy seems to be directed, revealing the doctrine of one God, and of good and evil, represented by light and darkness, as instruments under his control, and not independent or eternal powers:

"I am Jehovah, and none else,
Forming light, and creating darkness,
Making peace and creating evil,
I, Jehovah, am the Author of all these things."

ISA. XLV. 6, 7.

Reflecting upon the certainty of the prophecy of Isaiah, with the revelation of the unity of the Godhead, so loftily expressed, and so interwoven with it, being brought under the notice of Cyrus by Daniel:—coupling with this, those events, during the captivity, by which the God of the Jews vindicated his supremacy, and which were too recent, too public, and too striking in their nature, not to be of universal notoriety; and it is a fair presumption, that in the edict of Cyrus, acknowledging Jehovah to be the God of heaven, the only Supreme and Divine, and the author of his own success, we have the moral effect produced by evidence afforded to a mind open to conviction, involving a renunciation of his former faith for the theology of the Hebrews.

We have no direct information respecting the effect of the example of Cyrus upon his subjects, but that it was not without a decidedly beneficial influence may be reasonably presumed. The credit in which the Jews were held during the subsequent part of his reign, with the political power long wielded by their

great prophet, must have drawn attention to their tenets, and put in circulation, among the people of his vast empire, principles which attacked the foundation of every idolatrous and Manichean system. In fact, the reformation of the Persian religion, a few years after his death, by Zoroaster, a great historical fact—who reduced the two principles of good and evil into subordinate agents, and acknowledged one Supreme and independent Being, self-existing from all eternity—has been with good reason referred to the connexion of the Jews with the Persians, introducing the latter to more correct and influential conceptions of the Deity. Their expectation also of a great Deliverer, so solemnly ratified to Daniel by a Divine messenger, with the time designed for the appearance of “Messiah the Prince,” an event which was their solace in sorrow, and staff in national depression, we cannot suppose to have been kept secret. The knowledge of it becoming at that era diffused abroad, is the most plausible solution that can be offered of the fact affirmed by the Roman historians, that about the period of the birth of Christ, a persuasion was common throughout the east, respecting the advent of some great king being at hand, which, in con-

nexion with an unusual celestial phenomenon, brought the wise men, probably Persian magi, to Bethlehem in search of him. That the light afforded to heathen nations, and the Persians in particular, upon questions of morals and religion, by the medium of the Hebrew exile, was afterwards neglected, is certain, but this affects not its character as a dispensation of mercy to them, which, in some instances, as in that of Cyrus, there is ground to suppose was properly improved.

Upon the issue of the liberating decree, it was welcomed by 42,360 of the exiled race, who departed from the banks of the Euphrates across the desert for the country of their fathers, a joyful caravan, whose feelings are commemorated by the well-known psalm; "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream: then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing." The sacred vessels of the temple were restored. Shesh-bazzar, the Babylonian name of Zerubbabel, of the royal line, called the "prince of Judah," headed the returning pilgrims, together with Jeshua, the hereditary high priest. It deserves remark that the specification of a prince of Judah at

this period, illustrates the fulfilment of the celebrated prediction of Jacob at the close of life in relation to this tribe; "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." Ten of the tribes had already become merged in an indiscriminate mass, but the distinctiveness of Judah had remained intact, through the centuries that had elapsed since the prophecy was uttered, and the various fortunes of social discord, foreign war, and exile experienced, calculated to confound it with the rest. It had its own internal government and "prince," or chief, and so continued until the anticipated event took place, the advent of the Messiah, when, in consequence of his rejection, all distinction was abolished, the nation utterly broke up, and the lineage of Judah was irrecoverably lost. It has been justly said of this prediction and its marvellous accomplishment, uttered in the very infancy of the state of Israel, before a tribe had been constituted, a nation organized, and a country acquired, "What prescience of countless contingencies, occurring in the intervening ages, is implied!—a prescience truly which can only belong to God."

The first care of the Jews upon reaching

their own land was to celebrate the public worship of God, to set up an altar, re-establish the feasts, and provide for the rebuilding of the temple, towards which the leading families contributed 5000 pounds of silver, and 61,000 drachms of gold. The latter are supposed to be Persian Darics, so called from Darius, who first caused them to be coined from the gold acquired through the conquests of Cyrus, each amounting in value to somewhat more than an English guinea. This sum, small when compared with the treasures lavished upon the first temple, was yet a splendid donation, considering that it came from a number of returned captives; and the ability to offer it proves the intensity with which the spirit of money acquirement marked the Jewish character, then, as in subsequent ages, when, in unpropitious circumstances, so much had been accumulated. Perhaps the fact that so many of the people were recreant to their country, and refused to avail themselves of the permission to return to it, is to be accounted for by the operation of the mercantile spirit, for the play of which the large population and water-communications of Babylonia afforded facilities which Judæa had not to offer.

Computing from the first surrender of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 605, when Daniel and the sons of the principal nobility were carried away as hostages in the train of the conqueror, to the issuing of the decree of Cyrus, B.C. 536, and we have a period answering to the seventy years foretold by the prophet Jeremiah as the term of the captivity. The first year of the return was spent in the necessary provision of home accommodation, and in preparing the materials required for the erection of the temple from its ruins, exchanging with the commercial Tyrians, their own substance for the cedars and stone of Lebanon. Early in the year following, the work of preparation was sufficiently advanced to allow of the foundations of the structure being laid, an occasion observed with religious solemnities, when the ancient men who had seen the first house wept with a loud voice, reflecting upon the inadequacy of their means to furnish an equal to it. It does not fall within the scope of our subject to trace the labours of the Jews, further than to remark, that the advancement of the building was delayed by the influence of the Samaritans through the remainder of the reign of Cyrus,

as well as that of Cambyses and Smerdis the Magian. Upon the accession of the next monarch, Darius Hystaspes, a formal application was made to him for permission to proceed. The edict of Cyrus in favour of the work was pleaded. Search was made for it, by his command, among the archives of the court, and upon becoming acquainted with its tenor, he re-issued the decree, anxious to carry out, in all respects, the policy of the great founder of the monarchy; upon which the Jews, freed from the opposition of their enemies, and animated by their prophets Haggai and Zechariah, completed the edifice in the sixth year of his reign, and the twentieth from its commencement.

The liberation of his brethren must have been a singularly gratifying circumstance to the patriotic mind of Daniel. It had long been the object of his desire and prayer. That he did not himself return to Palestine is to be explained by his office in the Persian empire—in which he could be of the most service to his countrymen, and by his far advanced age. He had survived through the long exile of seventy years, and if we suppose him to have been in the dawn of youth when that exile commenced, we have the full complement of

fourscore years attained, when, through natural infirmity, life is largely connected with labour and sorrow. His last prophecy is dated in the third regnal year of Cyrus. He was then "by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel," or the Tigris, at Susa, the favourite capital of his master, which was situated in the plain of that river. There, in all probability, he soon afterwards died, and with that site his name has been connected in the locality to the present day.

Upon the spot where once stood the celebrated Susa, or Shusan, there is now shown the reputed tomb of Daniel, or as he is called in the east, Danyall, situated in a beautiful nook, washed by a clear running stream, and shaded by planes and other trees of ample foliage. The tomb is under a little dome-like building, inhabited by a solitary dervise, who shows the spot with as much reverence as if it contained the bones of Mohammed himself. The structure has no antiquity, being of Mohammedan date. It has no pretensions, therefore, to be the prophet's resting-place, yet the legend that makes it so is interesting, showing how his memory has survived through the revolution of ages, in the scene where he, undoubtedly,

spent much of the closing part of his life, and was most likely buried. There was another site, previous to the present, which tradition consecrated as the tomb of Daniel. The substance of the following relation concerning it is given by Sir W. Ouseley from a Persian manuscript.

In the 18th year of the Hegira, A.D. 640, whilst Omar was Caliph, an Arabian army, under Abou Mousa al Ashari, invaded Susiana. In the ancient capital Susa, (Sus,) that general found, besides considerable treasures of various kinds, an extraordinary sepulchral monument, which, according to local tradition, contained the body of the prophet Daniel. It was a kind of chamber, within the precincts of the castle and palace of the reigning prince, the door of which was strongly fastened, a leaden seal being affixed to the lock. Abou Mousa inquired of the people of Sus, what precious article was guarded with such care in this chamber. They assured him that he would not regard it as a desirable object of plunder; but his curiosity was roused, and he caused the lock to be broken, and the door to be opened. In the chamber he beheld a stone of considerable dimensions, hollowed out into the form of a coffin, and in that, the body of a dead

man, wrapped in a shroud, or winding-sheet, of gold brocade. The head was uncovered. Abou Mousa and his attendants were astonished. The people now informed him that this was the body of an ancient sage who formerly lived in Irak (Chaldea or Babylonia) and that whenever the want of rain occasioned a famine or scarcity, the inhabitants applied to this holy man, and, through the efficacy of his prayers, obtained copious showers of rain from heaven. It happened afterwards that Sus also suffered from excessive drought, and the people, in distress, requested that their neighbours would allow this venerable person to reside a few days among them, expecting to derive the blessing of rain from his intercession with the Almighty; but the Irakians would not grant this request. Fifty men then went, deputed by the people of Sus, who again petitioned the ruler of Irak, saying, "Let the holy person visit our country, and detain the fifty men until his return." These terms were accepted, and the holy person came to Sus, where, through the influence of his prayers, rain fell in great abundance, and saved the land from famine; but the people would not permit him to return, and the fifty men were

detained as hostages in Irak. Such, said those who accompanied Abou Mousa, is the history of the dead man. The Arabian general then asked them, "by what name this extraordinary personage had been honoured by them?" They replied, "The people of Irak called him Daniel Hakim, or Daniel the Sage."

After this, Abou Mousa remained some time in Sus, and despatched a messenger to Omar, the commander of the faithful, with an account of all his conquests in Khuzistan, and of the various treasures that had fallen into his possession. He related also the discovery of Daniel's body. When Omar had received this account, he demanded from his chief officers some information concerning Daniel, but all were silent except Ali. He declared that Daniel had been a prophet, though not of the highest order; that, in ages long since, he had dwelt with Bakht-al-Napar, (Nebuchadnezzar,) and the kings who had succeeded him; and Ali related the whole of Daniel's history from the beginning to the end. Omar then, by the advice of his counsellor Ali, caused letters to be directed to Abou Mousa, to remove, with due respect and veneration, the body of Daniel to some place where the people of Sus could

no longer enjoy the possession of it. Abou Mousa immediately, on the receipt of this order, obliged the people of Sus to turn the stream which supplied them with water from its natural course. Then he brought forth the body of Daniel, and having wrapped it in another shroud of gold brocade, he commanded a grave to be made in the dry channel of the river, and therein deposited the venerable remains of the prophet. The grave was then firmly secured and covered with stones of considerable size. The river was restored to its wonted channel, and the waters of Sus now flow over the body of Daniel.

The career of the great prophet of the captivity, thus summarily sketched in this chapter, should not be dismissed without comment upon the striking example it furnishes of pure and undefiled religion, both in those prosperous circumstances which have so often been destructive to the spirit of piety, and in those difficulties before which integrity has frequently quailed. No blot appears upon his character in either situation. The keen eye of malice investigating his political administration, could discover nothing upon which ingenuity might fasten, and torture into a delinquency. His

sympathy with the misfortunes of his countrymen, remained tender and active amid that personal success which contributes to harden the heart, and to make it selfish, unless counteracted in its influence by the careful cultivation of a sense of moral obligations. His devotional duties were not to be neglected at a monarch's pleasure, or abandoned to escape a lions' den, but in the face of the latter penalty, he stedfastly worshipped the God of his fathers. It deserves remark, also, that it was not an incident for which a season of greater leisure than usual afforded special facility, that three times daily he withdrew to his chamber "to pray and to give thanks," but this is distinctly recorded as the daily habit of a life that must have been severely taxed with secular cares and avocations. How many modern professors of religion may this justly rebuke, who plead a multiplicity of temporal occupations, as an apology, if not as a justifiable reason, for religious remissness! Let them but imbibe the prophet's spirit, and an amended practice will speedily show that disinclination has been the sole cause of former negligence.

CHAPTER VII.

CAPITALS OF CYRUS.

“THE stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times ; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming.” In allusion to the periodical migration of these, and other birds of passage, under the control of seasonal vicissitudes, the Persian kings are compared to cranes by Ælian, on account of their annual changes of residence to secure an agreeable climate. Euripides accurately describes the scenery and temperature of their vast empire, varying from “Persia’s plains, unsheltered from the sun,” to the “frozen soil of rocky Media.” When the advance of summer heat began to render the temperature of the southern levels oppressive, the court removed northwards, to the mountains and elevated valleys, for the sake of coolness ; and as the climate of Media began

to be severe, upon the approach of winter, the warmer air of the plains of the Tigris was sought. These periodical removals to avoid excessive heat and cold, were first regularly commenced by Cyrus, and thus the presence of royalty was transferred to different parts of the kingdom as the seasons changed. In this practice, the great founder of the monarchy was imitated by all his successors down to the unfortunate Darius Codomanus, who lost the empire to the Greeks; while his conqueror Alexander, during his transient possession of power, so far followed the ancient usage, as alternately to play the sovereign in its several capitals.

Ecbatana was the summer residence of the Persian kings. The city occupied an elevated site, and had an imposing appearance from the outskirts. It stood upon a circular hill, was surrounded with seven strong walls, each wall rising above that next without it, by the height of its battlements, an arrangement which the declivity of the ground favoured. What added to its striking aspect, was the circumstance of the battlements of each wall being painted a different colour. Those of the outermost or first were white, those of the second black, of

the third purple, of the fourth blue, of the fifth orange ; while the two innermost and highest walls were plated with silver and gold. Within the last wall, the royal citadel and treasury were included, crowning the brow of the hill. The circumference of the outer wall, the describer compares to the circuit of Athens, but extensive suburbs spread beyond it over the adjoining plain. The palace was adorned with great cost and splendour. The wood-work was of cedar and cypress. The beams and rafters, and the pillars of the inner halls and outer porches, were ornamented with gold and silver, and the roof was covered with silver tiles. Alexander carried off the greater part of this decoration. Subsequently, Seleucus and Antiochus made a prey of the remainder, and out of its produce the Syrians struck their royal coinage to the amount of nearly four thousand talents. But even in the time of Polybius, the temple of Aene had gilded pillars, with many silver tiles, and rich decorations.

Such is the substance of the descriptions of Ecbatana, left us by the ancient writers, and especially by Herodotus, in whose statement there is evident exaggeration, while its general outline may be depended upon. Though the

residence of his maternal ancestors, the Median kings, and periodically the abode of his own court, as one of the capitals of the empire, we are only able in one instance to connect the name of Cyrus with this city. In the book of Ezra, it is mentioned under the name of Achmetha, as the place where the original decree in favour of the Jews was found by Darius Hystaspes, laid up in the royal palace with other documents of state. Probably, therefore, Cyrus was in residence at Ecbatana, when the edict was actually issued.

Ecbatana was spoiled of its architectural glory by a succession of invaders, but received its greatest blow from Tamerlane, at the head of his Tartars, who destroyed its proudest buildings, and converted one of the largest cities of the east into a vast ruin. Its ancient name had previously been supplanted by that of Hamadan, a town which, though a provincial capital of modern Persia, but very poorly represents the departed royal city. "A miserable bazaar or two," says Sir R. K. Porter, "are passed through in traversing the town; and large lonely spots are met with, marked by broken low mounds over older ruins; with here and there a few poplars and willow trees

shadowing the border of a dirty stream, abandoned to the meanest uses, which probably flowed pellucid and admired, when these places were gardens, and the grass-grown heap some stately dwelling of Ecbatana. As I passed the wretched hovelled streets, and saw the once lofty city of Astyages shrunk like a shrivelled gourd, the contemplation of such a spectacle called forth more saddening reflections than any that had been awakened in me on any former ground of departed greatness. In some, I had seen mouldering pomp or sublime desolation; in this, every object spoke of neglect and hopeless poverty. Not majesty in stately ruin, pining to final dissolution on the spot where it was first blasted; but beggary seated on the place which kings had occupied, squalid in rags, and stupid with misery." Yet the features of nature as noticed by the ancient describers may be distinctly recognised, the declivity of the mountain of Alwend, the Orontes of Herodotus, at the base of which lies the present town of Hamadan, its slopes to the summit being formerly occupied by the stately dwellings, the citadel, and royal palace of Ecbatana. Upon being conducted to its brow, Mr. Morier remarks, "I can credit Polybius, who says that its fortifications

were of wonderful strength; I can also imagine the seven circles of walls mentioned by Herodotus, in the innermost of which the royal treasury was placed."

Hamadan contains nothing of interest beyond the reputed sepulchre of Esther and Mordecai, a brick building, crowned by a cupola, and consisting of two chambers, one of which is an entrance-room to the other, in which are the alleged tombs. Sir Gore Ouseley copied and translated a Hebrew inscription, rudely carved on a stone, and inserted in the wall of the inner chamber, stating the date of the building :—
"Thursday, fifteenth of the month of Adar, in the year 4474 from the creation of the world, was finished the building of this temple over the graves of Mordecai and Esther, by the hands of the good-hearted brothers, Elias and Samuel, the sons of the deceased Ismael of Kashan." The date, according to the common Jewish chronology, answers to about eleven centuries ago, but following the computation of the eastern Jews it refers to about the year 250 of the Christian era. The tombs themselves are of dark hard wood, of great antiquity, covered with inscriptions, among which, there were the following verses :—
"Now in Shushan the

palace, there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted among the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his brethren, and speaking peace to all *Asia*." This is a literal transcript from the book of Esther, with the exception of the word in italics, instead of which, the phrase is, "speaking peace to all his seed," an alteration made to magnify the political influence of Mordecai, and gratify the national vanity of the inscriber. There is nothing at all improbable in the idea of the illustrious Jew and Jewess, the one a Persian queen, and the other her uncle, being interred at Ecbatana, a royal city. The tradition of the Jews, that this was the case, deserves respect, for they have continued in this district in great numbers from the time of the captivity, and would be likely to preserve the memory of the place where the remains of persons so eminent in their history repose. But the particular spot cannot be identified from the present building, the inscription proclaiming its erection within the modern era.

The winter residence of the Persian kings

was at Susa, the Shushan of the books of Daniel and Esther. This was a considerable city under the Babylonian empire, the seat of a satrap; and here, during the reign of Belshazzar, Daniel had his vision of the rise and fall of the Persian monarchy. It was constituted by Cyrus, one of the capitals of the empire, in order to be near the mighty Babylon. It was the scene of the prophet's last vision, and as already noticed, according to tradition, the place of his sepulchre. Susa became the favourite abode of the succeeding sovereigns, the place where their private accumulated riches were deposited, finally surpassing Ecbatana in magnificence and wealth. Here were palaces, courts, and parks of vast extent, the royal residence serving as a citadel, which was so strongly fortified, as to compel the Greeks, after having taken the city, to abandon the siege in despair. Polybius represents Aristagoras tempting Cleomenes to foreign conquests, by showing him a brazen tablet, "on which was engraved the entire circuit of the earth, with all its seas and rivers," when pointing to Susa, he remarked, "on the banks of the Choaspes stands Susa, where the great king fixes his residence, and where are his treasures.

Master of that city, you may boldly vie with Jupiter himself for riches."

The river of Susa is named by Daniel, Arrian, and Pliny, the Ulai, or Eulæus, and by Herodotus and Strabo the Choaspes. The names denote the same stream, and refer to its different attributes, the former alluding to its clear excellent water, and the latter to its mountain origin. Herodotus states in allusion to Cyrus, that the great king, in his warlike expeditions, was provided from home with cattle, and all other necessaries for the table, carrying also with him water of the Choaspes in silver vessels, the Persian sovereigns drinking of no other. Milton exaggerates this in the statement:—

"There Susa by Choaspes' amber stream
The drink of none but kings."

The fact, however, is not that none but the monarch drank of the stream, but that the royal lips partook of the water of no other river. Arrian relates, that Xerxes, during one of his marches, came to a desert place, and was exceedingly thirsty. His attendants with his baggage were at some distance. Proclamation was made that whoever had any of the water of

the Choaspes should produce it for the use of the king. One person was found in possession of a small quantity, but quite putrid, yet Xerxes drank it, and considered the person who supplied it a friend and benefactor.

The remains of Susa are at Sus, and extend twelve or thirteen miles along the east bank of the river Kerrah, the Ulai and Choaspes of the ancients. Besides the mausoleum of Daniel, there is nothing to reward curiosity beyond a few blocks covered with inscriptions in the arrow-head character, and two pyramidal mounds, which the inhabitants of the country distinguish by the names of the castle and the palace. The other relics of the city consist of ruinous piles of bricks resembling those of Babylon. Sir John Kinneir observes, "The city of Susa is now a gloomy wilderness, infested by lions, hyenas, and other beasts of prey. The dread of these furious animals, compelled Mr. Monteith and myself to take shelter for the night within the walls that encompass Daniel's tomb." Sir R. K. Porter gives a similarly melancholy detail:—"The site of this once noble metropolis of the ancient princes of Elamis is now a mere wilderness, given up to beasts of prey ; no human being disputing their

reign, excepting the poor dervise who keeps watch over the tomb of the prophet." Thus has Susa been reduced to dust, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Elam, afterwards of a Babylonian province, then of Cyrus and his successors, who connected with it all those sumptuous edifices and establishments demanded by the luxury of the Persian monarchs. The whole country abounds with similar instances of change and reverse, so emphatically described by Firdousi in a celebrated couplet:—"The spider weaves its web in the palace of Cæsar! The owl stands sentinel upon the watch-tower of Afrasiab!"

i We may form some idea of the stately habitations of the Persian sovereigns from the ruins of Persepolis, another of the royal cities, situated in Persia Proper, the native country of Cyrus, probably founded about his era, and distinguished by him as a place of occasional residence, along with Ecbatana, Susa, and Babylon. But it was under the succeeding monarchs that Persepolis attained that grandeur for which it is celebrated by the ancient writers, striking monuments of which are extant, while the other capitals have left no other vestiges but mounds of rubbish. The remains of the palace

are now called the *Tackt-a-Jemsheed*, or the throne of Jemsheed, and from what is left of this edifice, it may be concluded to have rivalled the noblest fabrics of Greece or Rome. There is a terrace, or platform of mason-work, faced with enormous blocks of smoothed stone, varying in height above the plain from twenty-five to fifty feet, according to the inequalities of the ground. The west front, which overlooks the plain, is more than a quarter of a mile (1425 feet) in length, and upwards of 900 feet in breadth eastward, towards a rugged mountain at the base of which it is placed. The terrace is ascended on the western side by a magnificent staircase, formed of two double flights of steps, meeting in spacious landing places. The steps are twenty-two feet long by three inches and a half deep, and from ten to fourteen steps have been cut out of a single block of marble, the ascent of the whole being so gradual that travellers commonly ride up on horseback. From this first terrace, there rise a second and a third, separated from each other by an intervening space. The second supports the most striking part of the ruins, called the *Chehel Minar*, or Palace of Forty Pillars, a group of vast, solitary, mutilated columns, which have sur-

vived from an age of which history has preserved no chronicle, while monarchies have been established and destroyed, dynasties become extinct, and the strongest citadels have crumbled.

The terrace upon which these lonely columns appear is ascended by a staircase corresponding to the one described, but remarkable for the superb display of bas-reliefs upon its front. The sculptures cover it so thickly as at first to bewilder the eye. Men are represented variously attired and employed, some in Median and others in Persian costume. Some bear bows and quivers, spears and shields, others bear gifts and offerings, lead animals of various kinds, and are arranged in long rows resembling a grand procession. The armed figures are supposed to represent the body-guard of the monarch, first formed, as Xenophon relates, by Cyrus, after the conquest of Babylon, who chose ten thousand spearmen from among his faithful Persians for the purpose. The whole is considered as designed to perpetuate the memory of the grand religious procession of Cyrus described by Xenophon, on the ancient festival of the Nourooz, so called from the vernal equinox, when it was celebrated, at which

season the sovereign appeared in state to receive the homage of his subjects, and tributary presents from the numerous nations of his empire.

“But now, we will relate,” says Xenophon, “how Cyrus first marched in grand procession out of the palace ; for the majesty of the procession seems to have been one of the means by which he held his government in such high consideration. First, therefore, he arrayed himself, and his commanders, and other chosen officers, in the splendid robes of the Medes, that they might all appear beautiful and noble. There stood first before the gates, four thousand guards, drawn up four in front, with lances in their hands ; two thousand on each side of the gates. The Persians stood on the right hand, and the other allies on the left of the way. When the gates of the palace were thrown open, first came forth certain bulls, very goodly beasts, four abreast, devoted to paternal Jove, and to such other of the gods as the magi directed. Next to the bulls, horses were led, for a sacrifice to the sun. After these proceeded a white chariot, very costly, with its seat of gold, adorned with a crown, and sacred to Jove. Then came another white chariot, sacred to the

sun, and decorated in the same manner. After that, a third chariot, with horses in scarlet housings ; and behind it, followed men bearing fire upon a large altar. After these Cyrus himself appeared, clad in his royal robes and diadem.

“ When the chariot of Cyrus advanced, the four thousand guards led on before, and two thousand attended on each side ; the chief officers of his person, gallantly mounted, and finely clothed, with javelins in their hands, to the number of three hundred, followed after. Then were led the noble horses maintained for Cyrus himself, with their bridles of gold, and caparisoned in housings wrought with raised stripes ; and these horses were two hundred. After them marched two thousand spearmen. Then came the first formed body of Persian horse, to the number of ten thousand, marshalled a hundred deep, under Chrysantes. After these, marched a second ten thousand, under Hystaspes. These were followed by the like number, in the leading of Datarnus. Then came the Median, the Armenian, the Hyrcanian, the Caduchian, and the Sacian horse. And after these troops went the chariots, ranged four abreast, under the command of the Persian Artabates. Upon

this occasion Cyrus established equestrian and other games among his chiefs and followers; and to the victors he gave oxen and cups, that they might sacrifice and feast. The method of this procession, then settled by Cyrus, continues to this day, excepting only, that the victims make no part in it when the king does not sacrifice. Every nation thought they did themselves an injury if they did not send Cyrus the most valuable productions of their country, whether they were the fruits of the earth, or creatures bred there, or manufactures of their own; and every city did the same." While, in giving these details, Xenophon has drawn largely upon his own imagination, and painted the state of Cyrus after the pattern of some of his successors, the festival of the Nourooz was probably instituted by him, as an occasion for publicly appearing to his troops and vassals; and the published engravings of the sculptures in question at Persepolis, warrant the idea, that they refer to the solemnity, either as celebrated during his reign, or at a later date.

That part of the Persepolitan ruins to which the preceding remarks refer is improperly called the Palace of Forty Columns. Della Valle, in

1621, saw twenty-five pillars standing; Herbert, in 1627, and Olearius, in 1638, saw nineteen; Kempfer, in 1696, and Niebuhr, in 1765, saw seventeen; Franklin, and all other travellers down to sir R. K. Porter, reckon fifteen; and lieutenant Alexander, in 1826, only thirteen. But Le Brun, speaking of the total number in the original building, estimates them, from the remains that lie prostrate in the accumulated dust of ages, as well as from indications of structure respecting the edifice which may yet be traced, at two hundred and five. The fabric was no inhabited portion of the royal palace, for it does not appear to have had either walls or roof. The distance of the columns from each other is the ground for this conclusion. It was probably a vast and magnificent hall, attached to the imperial abode, covered with an awning, and inclosed with curtains, serving as a banqueting house, where those sumptuous feasts were held in which the ancient Asiatic monarchs delighted. There was an apartment of this description connected with the palace at Susa, a grand stationary pavilion, with a marble pavement, columns, and differently coloured hangings, in which the festival was kept by Ahasuerus, which led to the exclusion of his queen Vashti

from the throne, and the elevation of Esther to it. "He made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him: when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty many days.—And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, *in the court of the garden of the king's palace*, where were white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble; he couches were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble." Seldom has a taste for magnificence been more profusely gratified, and all the desires of sense received a more complete ministration, than by the monarchs of the first Persian empire during the brief era of its predominance. But in the history of nations, power and wealth, abused to purposes of vain-glory and sensual indulgence, have never been permanent possessions. Alexander came to Persepolis in his career of victory over its Persian master, and feasted in the banqueting house of the "great king." In the midst of the revels, an Athenian

courtezan boasted of the pleasure she felt in thus triumphing over Persia in the stately palace of its monarchs, and expatiated on the glory of setting fire to it. Infuriated with wine, the conqueror started from his seat, and seized a burning torch. The chaplet of feasting was on his head, and rushing forward with his party in the same way armed, he accomplished the deed suggested, which the draperies and hangings of the hall readily facilitated.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH OF CYRUS.

IN the seventh year after his accession to the sole possession of the empire, the ninth after the conquest of Babylon, and the thirtieth from his first decisive battle, or B.C. 530, Prideaux fixes the death of Cyrus, having accomplished his threescore years and ten. There are few events of ancient history respecting which testimonies are more conflicting than the manner in which it took place. Herodotus found various accounts current concerning it, within a century afterwards, and in the heart, too, of his dominions, but states, that among them all, he is most disposed to believe that which reports him to have been slain in an expedition against the Massagetæ, a warlike people on the west side of the Caspian, beyond the Araxes. The historian relates, that in the first instance, by the stratagem of allowing wines to fall into their possession, the

army of the Massagetæ was defeated, and the prince-commander taken prisoner, a son of the reigning queen Tomyris. Upon hearing of the overthrow of her troops, and the capture of her son, the queen sent the following message to the victor:—"Cyrus, thou insatiable thirster after blood! be not elated by this matter which has occurred. By help of the fruit of the vine, whereby, when ye yourselves are filled with it, ye are so maddened, that as the wine streams down into your bodies, bad words rise up to your mouths—by help of this poison, thou hast deceived and overcome my son, and not by strength in open battle. Now then hearken to the good advice that I give thee: restore my son to me, and depart out of this land in safety, although thou hast brought disgrace upon a third part of the army of the Massagetæ; but if thou wilt not do so, I swear by the sun, the lord of the Massagetæ, insatiable as thou art of blood, I will give thee thy fill of it." After some time, the captive prince was released, but slew himself through shame, upon which, the queen collected all her forces, engaged, defeated, and slew Cyrus, ordered his head to be struck off and cast into a vessel filled with blood, exclaiming, "Survivor and thy conqueror as I

am, thou hast ruined my peace by thy successful stratagem against my son; but I will give thee now, as I threatened, thy fill of blood!" "This account," Herodotus adds, "of the end of Cyrus, seems to me the most consistent with probability, though there are many other and different relations." The occasion of the war with Tomyris is stated to have been her refusal to marry Cyrus, replying to an overture to that effect, that he wooed not her, but the kingdom of the Massagetæ. It is also related, that on commencing this fatal expedition, Cyrus left Persia Proper in charge of his great successor, Darius Hystaspes, then about twenty years old, of which district his father was the satrap, who accompanied his sovereign in the camp. The night after crossing the Araxes, Cyrus dreamt that he saw Darius with wings on his shoulders, one of which overshadowed Asia, and the other Europe. Troubled by the dream, understanding it to import some conspiracy against himself, he sent back the father to watch the movements of the son.

Ctesias agrees with this relation in assigning to Cyrus a violent death, but the circumstances are different. He records his being slain by a javelin, when waging war against the Derbices,

a tribe assisted by Indian allies with a number of elephants; but one of his own vassals speedily avenged his death, gained a decisive victory over the tribe, and annexed their land to the Persian empire.

According to the native account of the great national hero, Kai Khoosroo, the Cyrus of the Persian annals, after a life of conquest, and other achievements, resolved to spend the remainder of his days in religious retirement. In proceeding to the spot selected for this purpose, we are told, that he suddenly disappeared; and his train, among whom were some of the most renowned warriors of the land, perished in a dreadful tempest. This story, as Sir John Malcolm observes, is not materially at variance with that of his being killed in a war with the Massagetæ. The great monarch could not be permitted to fall ingloriously in a battle in which he was defeated. Zealous for his fame, and the reputation of their country, the native writers conceal the disaster of the sovereign under the fiction of his retirement and mysterious loss, while his companions, probably slain in retreat, are made to perish in a storm.

On the other hand, Cyrus, in the romance of Xenophon, dies in his bed as fortunately as he

had lived, surrounded by his friends, to whom he addresses a philosophical discourse on his decease, expiring at its close. But had this been the case, it is inconceivable, that within a century afterwards, Herodotus should have found not only the discordant relation he gives current in the land, but a variety of reports afloat concerning the monarch's end, for every motive we can imagine would be against concealment or distortion being practised. Supposing, however, the hero of a hundred fights, and the founder of a monarchy, to have been slain in disastrous battle, nothing is more likely to transpire than an endeavour to suppress this fact, as blotting the reputation of the conqueror, and endangering the power of the empire; and in the anxiety to conceal the knowledge of an unwelcome event, various versions of it would be substituted for the true one, notwithstanding which some intimations of it would inevitably ooze out. It was quite in keeping with the design of Xenophon, to reject whatever was adverse in the career of the subject of his tale, and to represent him dying a natural death in the favourable circumstances stated. Without depending, then, upon the details given by Herodotus, we have

every reason to trust to his narration as substantially correct, that an expedition of Cyrus against one of the warlike tribes by the Caspian had a fatal issue to himself.

Adopting this view of the case, the only difficulty is, the statement, in which almost all authorities agree, of the tomb of Cyrus being at Pasargadæ, which was visited by Alexander, and rifled by his officers. But we may suppose, either that his body was recovered from the spoils of the battle in which he fell, and transferred here for sepulture, or if actually mutilated by enraged barbarians, as Herodotus relates, policy might dictate a fictitious burial, the better to prevent the truth from transpiring. History records that he selected this city of his own founding for the place of his interment, and erected a mausoleum in his lifetime; and whether his remains ever actually reposed in this spot, its arrangements may be viewed as having been made in accordance with his previously expressed wishes.

“The tomb of Cyrus,” says Arrian, writing from the testimony of Aristobulus, who had visited the spot, “was in the royal paradise of Pasargadæ, (a park attached to the palace,) round which a grove of various trees was

planted. It was supplied with water, and its fields covered with high grass. The tomb below was of a quadrangular shape, built of free-stone; above was a house of stone, with a roof. The door that leads into it is so very narrow that a man, not very tall, with difficulty can get in. Within is the golden coffin of Cyrus, near which is a seat with feet of gold; the whole is hung round with coverings of purple, and carpets of Babylon." After giving an account of various valuable articles it contained, he proceeds:—"In the vicinity was built a small house for the Magi, to whose care the tomb had originally been entrusted, and so continued, since the time of Cambyses, from fathers to sons."

Quintus Curtius relates that "on Alexander's return from India, he halted at Pasargadæ, where he ordered the tomb of the Persian monarch to be opened, that he might render due honours to the ashes of so great a man. What then was the conqueror's surprise, when, on entering, he found nothing but an old shield, a sword, and a simple urn; for he had expected to see treasures of gold and of silver; it having been reported to him that such were the deposits in the royal tomb. But, placing

a golden crown upon the urn, and covering it with his own mantle, he expressed his amazement that a king so renowned should have been buried with such bare simplicity; upon which, Bagoas the eunuch, who accompanied him, made reply:—‘It is not surprising that the sepulchres of kings should be found empty, when we behold the houses of satraps glittering with treasures stolen thence! As for me, I never before saw the tomb of Cyrus, but I have often heard it said, in the presence of Darius (Codomanus), that it possessed wealth to the value of a thousand talents.’” The eunuch knew more than he cared at the time to state. The peculation of one of Alexander’s officers preceded the visit of the monarch, and reconciles the state in which he found the tomb, with Arrian’s description of its gorgeous furniture. While absent in India, it was rifled by Polymachus; but upon Alexander’s return, hearing at length of the sacrilege, he ordered the perpetrator, a Macedonian of high birth, to be put to death.

Within the tomb, an inscription was found, an epitaph, given by Strabo, as follows:—

“O man! I am Cyrus, son of Cambyses, founder of the Persian empire, and sovereign

of Asia; therefore grudge me not this sepulchre." Upon reading this inscription, Alexander is said to have been sensibly affected, and led to reflect seriously upon the mutability of human affairs. He caused another to be cut beneath it, in part a Greek translation of the original, preserved by Plutarch:—

"O man! whosoever thou art, and whence-soever thou comest, (for come I know thou wilt!) I am Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire; envy me not the little earth that covers my body."

The site and remains of Pasargadæ have been already described, but a notice is reserved for this place of the interesting structure, called the *Musjed Madre-i-Suliman*, the tomb of the mother of Solomon, an evident misnomer, because of the probable conjecture of Morier and Porter, who regard it as the identical fabric venerated by antiquity as the last resting-place of the great king. The structures, says the former, correspond in size. A grove assigned to the original sepulchre would naturally have disappeared in modern Persia. A triangular roof belonging to the present building might be called arched, the description of Arrian, in an age when the true semi-circular arch was probably unknown; and

in the lapse of 2400 years, the absence of an inscription would not be a decisive evidence against its identity with the tomb of Cyrus. The plain in which the structure stands, is now, as represented in the ancient account, well watered ; and in a building called the Caravansery, Porter conceives, that the residence of the Magi may be recognised, appointed to keep guard over the mausoleum of departed greatness. Whatever truth there may be in this conjecture, we have here an illustration of the common end of the power and glory of this world. Material monuments have been raised by mighty conquerors, cities, palaces, and tombs, to perpetuate the memory of their names ; but time, war, and the shocks of national misfortune, have either swept them away, or rendered it dubious, whether a few surviving ruins are identical remains of the stately edifices they have fashioned. A far wiser application of means is one of the lessons which Christianity inculcates, the employment of influence and wealth, not for vain-glory, but to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and contribute to the religious improvement of society. These are services which may not survive in the memory of successive generations,

or find a place upon the page of history, but will appear to the praise and honour of the doers, when the general chronicle of human actions is reviewed by the final Judge.

Of the family of Cyrus, we only know with any degree of certainty, that he had several children by two or more wives ; and was survived by his sons Cambyses and Smerdis, and by three daughters, Atossa, Meroe, and Artystone. The elder son, Cambyses, succeeded to the throne: he appears to have been subject from his birth to epilepsy, and a constitutional tendency to insanity, which, aggravated by sensual indulgences, made him the detested tyrant of history. He set the laws of Persia at defiance by marrying successively his sisters Atossa and Meroe, or rather constrained the judges through fear to suspend the laws in his favour, giving sentence upon the point, that although they could find no law which would permit a brother to marry his sister, they had discovered one which enabled a monarch of Persia to do whatever he pleased. His brother Smerdis fell a victim to his jealousy, for, interpreting a dream on his Egyptian expedition to intimate danger from him, he secretly despatched a minion to Susa to put him to death. Subse-

quently he murdered one of his sister-wives, Meroe, in a fit of passion, because she bewailed the fate of their common brother Smerdis, and the rending asunder of the royal house of Cyrus. Upon the death of Cambyses, the male line became extinct; and upon Darius Hystaspes, belonging to a collateral branch, obtaining the throne, he married the surviving daughters, Atossa and Artystone, to strengthen himself in the sovereignty.

By the people of his vast dominion, which included all Asia up to India and Scythia, except Arabia, the memory of the great monarch was held in affectionate respect. The historian who has been chiefly followed in these pages, and who travelled through the empire while his remembrance was fresh, eulogises him for his mild and gentle temper, and for being ever studious of the good of his subjects. The imposts in his reign were light and casual, and only became onerous and regular payments in the time of Darius, on which account the Persians are said to have called Darius a merchant, Cambyses a despot, but Cyrus a parent. Through the Greeks his fame passed into Europe, and is largely the subject of classical reference.

In estimating the conduct of mankind, reference must be made to the age in which they live, the circumstances in which they are placed, and the advantages with which they are favoured. These, we know, from inspired testimony, are particulars which the Supreme Judge of men takes into just and merciful consideration, and in harmony with them his ultimate decisions will be pronounced. In this manner, reviewing the career of Cyrus, we have ground for favourable conclusions. Born and educated amid the darkness of heathenism, trained to war, and taught to regard the battle-field as the theatre of true glory, we find him in "the times of that ignorance," first contending for liberty, and then ambitious of dominion, yet not indulging in the gross and wanton cruelty which has marked the path of many a modern warrior, not tyrannically oppressing the conquered, but reputed to be just and clement. Afterwards brought into intimate correspondence with a Hebrew prophet, whose Divine mission was ratified by a series of miraculous events, authoritative means of right direction were placed within his reach, and the responsibility was incurred of giving them a candid examination, and acting in accordance with them. All

that we know of Cyrus, at this period of his life, and subsequently, justifies the opinion previously stated, that he received the instruction, submitted himself to it, and became a convert to the revelation of Divine truth, as far as it had been manifested. It now remains for the reader to reflect, that in the enjoyment of vastly superior religious means, with the written volume of the Divine will in his possession, in all its fulness, simplicity, and grandeur, he will be expected to walk in harmony with afforded light, or be held criminal in proportion to the amount of slighted knowledge, and the greatness of abused privileges.

More than three-and-twenty centuries have elapsed since the great conqueror of the east, and his counsellor the prophet, terminated their career upon the stage of time. The interval has been marked with events of thrilling importance to the human race, alike declaring the unspeakable graciousness of the "blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords," with the high advantages and solemn responsibilities of people in "these last times;" nor can we more appropriately close the present narrative, than by glancing at our own religious obligations. Prophecies have failed, as far as

relates to new communications, and miracles have ceased, both having fulfilled their appointed office, that of establishing the Divine origin and authority of the Christian dispensation, common to the modern age. A few centuries after the completion of the structure at Jerusalem, which the Persian monarch contributed to raise from its desolations, the "greater glory" appeared within the "latter house," that "Messiah the Prince," announced to Daniel, who made the temple one of the scenes of his ministry of grace and truth, and was "cut off" in its neighbourhood, according to previous testimony, yet not for himself, but "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." In that edifice likewise, the sublime doctrine of salvation through His name, involving the full and free remission of sins, a reconciled walk with God, with a sure and stedfast hope of the life everlasting, was propounded by Apostles, and brought home to the experience of many, who were humbled into conviction, melted into penitence, raised into faith, purified into love, and who ultimately passed from the justified and renewed family on earth, to the glorified family in heaven. From

that fabric also, the verities there dispensed were rapidly propagated in the world at large, according to the anticipatory vision of Ezekiel, of "living waters" issuing out of the "sanctuary," and gaining a wide diffusion. The time, however, came at length, when the temple vanished from the class of material things. It perished utterly, through the rebuke of Providence, incurred by the nation of which it was the pride, for their general rejection of the scheme of revealed religion proclaimed within its walls. But the scheme itself, thus connected with it, has survived material changes, and malignant opposition—the revolutions of power, and the fall of empires—the mortality of friends, and the attacks of foes—and is now proposed to us as the "everlasting gospel," unfolding the way to a final blessedness, with a loftiness which might command the reverence of an angel, and a simplicity which commends itself to the apprehension of a child, advancing a plan of mercy and grace which the most guilty may accept, the most uneducated may use.

To attain the objects of human ambition—political influence, the extension of territory, or the increase of wealth—skilful combinations and long plans of action are necessary as the

rule, which tax ingenuity, and try patience, and which often fail in securing the ends proposed. But quite apart from the onerous and uncertain are the terms upon which the possession hinges of the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." They involve no wearisome pilgrimages to distant shrines, no painful processes of mental application, or of bodily chastisement, but simple obedience to the "truth as it is in Jesus;" the alliance of the soul by faith with his atoning sacrifice and sanctifying Spirit; a "yoke" that is "easy," and a "burden" that is "light," to the chastened and self-examining mind. And how vain and transient in themselves the objects that fire the hopes, and engage the laborious enterprises of the larger portion of mankind! What an emptiness is fame found to be, when obtained, by him who has struggled long and ardently for the prize! How soon the sceptre falls from the hand of the sovereign, the coronet from the brow of the noble, the sword from the grasp of the warrior! Where is the empire of Cyrus, his halls and palaces, his courtly retinue and royal cities? Where are Babylon and Susa? What are Ecbatana and Persepolis?

"The spider has wove his web in the imperial palace,
The owl stands sentinel on the watch-tower of Afrasiab."

“Surely there is an end.” This is true of all earthly things; and when the actual demonstration of it arrives, in that hour so sure to come in the history of man, when “his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth,” an entire and irrefutable consciousness of the vanity of their pursuits, is then, if not before, experienced by those whose vision the temporal has bounded, whose aims this life has engrossed. On the contrary, “an enduring substance”—“treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal”—“an incorruptible crown”—an immortality of sacredness and bliss, constitute the “prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” to which his death is the title, and his word the guide.

How true the statement, then, comparing the circumstances of man to whom the full light of revelation is manifested, with those of the ancients who lived before its era;—“Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.” How just the inference;—“unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.” How wise the admonition;—“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the

Son of man shall give unto you." How solemn the warning ;—"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day !" Let the reader therefore now remember, that while the sentence, which, age after age, has been executed upon the "kings of the earth and their armies," "ye shall die like men," is nigh at hand in its accomplishment to himself, a judgment will follow, deciding the character of his immortality ; and that as one who has lived in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, in a long-evangelised country, the rule applied to him will take cognizance of means and opportunities, and his lot in time will furnish ample ground for shame and condemnation at the Divine tribunal, if the legitimate and gracious end of Christian privileges has not been prosecuted, that of honouring the Lord that bought him, according to the will of God. It is not as a piece of advice, which may be received or rejected at pleasure, that the "word of truth in the gospel" is advanced, but the same authority that issued the laws graven on stone at Sinai, addresses the covenant to us sealed by the blood of Calvary, and enforces

submission to it by solemn sanctions:—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." How needful the inquiry, and important the answer:—"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

SUCCEEDING MONARCHS OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE.

Cyrus was succeeded by his eldest son Cambyses, who annexed Egypt to the empire, a vicious and brutal prince, whose tyranny was so capricious that it seemed like the effect of madness, and he was believed to have lost his reason through habitual drunkenness, or to have been deprived of it by the gods on account of his impiety. Cambyses is very generally considered to be the Ahasuerus of Ezra iv. 6, a name, not imposed at birth, but a surname or title, therefore used of three different individuals in the Scriptures. He reigned from B.C. 530 to 521, and died at an obscure town in Syria of a wound accidentally inflicted by his sword falling out of its scabbard.

Smerdis, the Magian, was the next monarch, an impostor who usurped the throne by pretending to be Smerdis, a younger son of Cyrus,

whom Cambyses had secretly ordered to be put to death. He is supposed to be the Artaxerxes of Ezra iv. 7, a royal title, signifying great or mighty king. After a brief reign of seven months, the cheat was discovered, and the pseudo-Smerdis was slain by seven noble conspirators, one of whom ascended the throne under the name of Darius Hystaspes. He became, after Cyrus, the greatest and most powerful of the Persian monarchs, applied himself to the consolidation of the empire, favoured and encouraged the Jews, who finished their temple under his patronage, and was the first Asiatic who visited Europe at the head of an army. Darius is mentioned Ezra iv. 24; v. 5; vi. 1—5. His name occurs in some arrow-headed inscriptions at Persepolis, one of which, according to Grotefund, runs thus:—"Darius the lord, the brave king, the king of kings, the king of all zealous nations, the son of Hystaspes, the descendant of the sovereign of the world, Jemsheed." He reigned from B.C. 521 to 486, and was succeeded by Xerxes. This ambitious sovereign occupies a large space in the history of the Greeks, whom he vainly attempted to subdue, at the head of perhaps the largest army that was ever brought

together, the infantry alone amounting to 1,700,000. It was after his discomfiture and return from Greece, that the events took place circumstantially related in the book of Esther, so important to the Jews. Usher, Calmet, and others, regard Darius Hystaspes as the Ahasuerus, the husband of Esther; Petavius, Prideaux, and Hales identify the succeeding monarch with him, Artaxerxes Longimanus; but it is difficult to resist the following concise summary of the evidence in favour of Xerxes:—"The Ahasuerus of Scripture cannot be Darius Hystaspes; nor do we trace the character of the mild and humane Artaxerxes Longimanus in the capricious despot, who repudiates his wife because she will not expose herself to the public gaze in a drunken festival; raises a favourite vizier to the highest honours one day, and hangs him the next, commands the massacre of a whole people, and then allows them, in self-defence, to commit a horrible carnage among his other subjects. Yet all this weak and headstrong violence agrees exactly with the character of that Xerxes, who commanded the sea to be scourged because it broke down his bridge over the Hellespont; beheaded the engineers

because their work was swept away by a storm; wantonly, and before the eyes of the father, put to death the sons of his oldest friend Pythias, who had contributed most splendidly to his expedition; shamefully misused the body of the brave Leonidas; and after his defeat, like another Sardanapalus, gave himself up to such voluptuousness, as to issue an edict, offering a reward to the inventor of a new pleasure. The synchronisms remarked by Eichhorn strongly confirm this view. In the *third* year of his reign, Ahasuerus summons a divan of all the great officers of the kingdom at Susa, whom he entertains and banquets 180 days. Esther i. 4. In his *third* year, Xerxes, at a great assembly, deliberates and takes measures for the subjugation of Greece. In his *seventh* year Ahasuerus marries Esther. Es. ii. 16. In his *seventh* year, Xerxes returns discomfited to Susa, and abandons himself to the pleasures of his harem." Milman's Hist. of the Jews, ii. p. 17. In the twenty-first year of his reign, B.C. 464, Xerxes was murdered by Artabanus, captain of his body guard, and succeeded by his third son, Artaxerxes Longimanus, the long-hand. After continuing the war with the Greeks, in which the Persians

were defeated by the Athenians under Cimon, he concluded a treaty with them, and the empire enjoyed uninterrupted repose till his death, B.C. 424, after the long reign of forty years. Nehemiah filled at Susa the important post of cup-bearer to this king, and was authorized by him to repair to Jerusalem with the rank of governor, acting in concert there with Ezra, who had previously been allowed to proceed thither at the head of a large division of Jews who had remained in the land of their dispersion.

Xerxes II., son of the former, succeeded, but in the short space of two months, he was murdered by his half-brother Sogdian, likewise murdered seven months afterwards by his brother Ochus, who ascended the throne under the name of Darius, called by the Greeks Darius Nothus, or the bastard. After a turbulent reign from B.C. 423 to 404, he was succeeded by his eldest son Artaxerxes, surnamed Mnemon by the Greeks, on account of his prodigious memory. The principal event of his reign was, the revolt of his younger brother Cyrus, aided by Greek auxiliaries, who were defeated on the plains of Cunaxa, when the celebrated "Retreat of the Ten Thousand"

commenced under Xenophon, which their leader has related. Artaxerxes had the longest reign of any of the Persian sovereigns, amounting to forty-six years, from B.C. 404 to 358.

Artaxerxes Ochus, the barbarous, succeeded, and was poisoned by an Egyptian eunuch B.C. 338, on account of the cruelties he inflicted upon his countrymen, and the indignity shown to his god Apis. Arses, a younger brother, came next to the throne, and after a short reign of not quite two years was followed by Darius Codomanus, a distant connexion of the royal family, one of the best and bravest of the Persian rulers. The empire of Cyrus was now overthrown as rapidly as it had been erected. After a series of vain attempts to stop the course of Alexander, Darius was defeated B.C. 330; and, after a duration of rather more than two centuries, the monarchy was destroyed, as Daniel's symbolic vision at Susa anticipated.

