INTRODUCTION

OF the whole of that vast period, during which man has lived on this globe, the domain of history forms nothing but an insignificant fraction. The "Golden Age" of those early nations that "had no history" can only be known by us, if at all, through the medium of archaeology. History, in fact, requires certain conditions, which only arise at a comparatively late date. In the first place, it presupposes the existence of forces of individuality and change in social life, which war with the tyranny of tradition and make the life of the morrow something different from that of yesterday and today. It deals with the particular, not the universal; and, though to trace the working of general principles is one of its chief tasks, it is yet only concerned with them in so far as they realize themselves in particular events. In the second place, it requires a tradition, and, as oral tradition must always be shifting and inexact, it postulates the existence of some form of writing. Now writing is a late discovery of mankind, and, even when invented, is for long restricted to the more immediate necessities of business life. It is only late, when actors in great events conceive the ambition of immortalizing their memory, that history, in the form of chronicles of kings and noble houses, arises; later still, when men become curious about past events that have already half fallen into oblivion, that mythological history attempts to lift the thick veil of time. Latest born of all

is contemporary history; ranking at first as paltry and superfluous, it only comes to be written when the shock of some great event awakens men to the truth that the present can be as wonderful and majestic as the distant past.

The unit of history is the state; with the smaller groups—clan or family—it is only concerned in their relations to the larger body. Its subject is the whole life of the state—the state's struggle for existence abroad against competing rivals—its struggle for existence at home, when torn between the conflicting forces of tradition and change. In intellectual and emotional life there is the conflict of new forms of thought with the traditional religion and morality; in social and political life there is the eternal endeavour to harmonize the institutions of the past with the new conditions that arise with the change from nomadic to pastoral life, the uneven distribution of property, the growth of commerce, the invention of coined money and the new power of capital. In each of these spheres, "Ἔρις," that strife, which, for good or evil, is a necessary accompaniment of all active life, is king of all.

No one can write history at all, even on the humblest scale, without at least raising the vexed question as to the exact nature of his undertaking. Is history to be regarded as an exact science, or, even, as a science at all? Or were the ancients correct in their general treatment of it as a branch of literature, pure and simple? Any solution of this problem that is confined to a few lines of dogmatic assertion must of necessity beg the question; but, if only to make our own standpoint clear, we will venture to offer ours. History, inasmuch as it deals with the particular and not with the universal, can never be an exact science. The chemist can assure us that, under certain known conditions, two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen will always form water. Not so the historian. It is not his

special task to define the conditions under which aristocratic misrule and popular discontent will produce a revolution; he has, rather, to analyse the special conditions under which particular revolutions have taken place. And, again, the facts of history are not only particular, but they are human. They cannot be measured with scientific accuracy; and, until some instrument has been invented that can gauge the exact strength of human motives and the exact values of human good and evil, the historian must rely on his taste and judgement as much as on his powers of accurate observation. That there is such a thing as "the scientific method" in history, and even, in a restricted sense, a "science of history," we would not deny; to do so would be to turn one's back on a century of memorable achievement in historical studies. But it is as fatal a mistake for a workman to over-estimate as to disparage the efficiency of his tools. And, lastly, as a corollary to what has been said, we do not believe in impartial or dispassionate history. Human facts are the proper subject of moral judgements and cannot be released from them. The historian can try to be honest in his criticisms; he cannot be absolutely neutral. He knows that the strong wind of his own convictions is always tending to deflect his bullet from the mark; he can allow for the wind, but he cannot command it not to blow. The historian who would narrate events without passing any sort of moral judgement on them is like the scientist who should describe the dimensions of a body, because they can be stated with scientific accuracy, but omit to mention its colour or its texture, because they cannot.

In conclusion, it need only be said that this work on Ancient History follows the ordinary geographical acceptation of that term, including the history of the Nearer East, of Europe and the north of Africa, but excluding the outlying civilizations of China and India.

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF HISTORY

SECTION 1. BABYLONIA

THE chief influence which worked on the early history of Nearer Asia came from the land lying between the Tigris and Euphrates on their lower courses, which we name, after its chief city, Babylonia. Our knowledge of its history is derived from several sources—the cuneiform (or "wedge-shaped") inscriptions written on clay tablets, foundation-records, and stone monuments, the "Βαβυλωνιακά" of the Babylonian priest Berossus, who flourished about 290 B.C., and various references in Greek and Hebrew writers; but much remains unknown and the earlier centuries in particular are periods of darkness, interrupted only by an occasional ray of light. At the dawn of history we find in Lower Babylonia (or "Sumer") a highly developed civilization familiar with the use of metals, an organized government and a number of populous cities; although the earliest known date in Babylonian history can hardly be much earlier than 3000 B.C., it is clear that already at that remote period centuries of civilized life lay behind. The earliest inhabitants of the land, whose origin and racial character we can claim to recognize clearly, were Semitic immigrants from Arabia; but the Babylonian civilization was certainly not their creation, but that of the "Sumerians," who had been forced to give place to them. Who these Sumerians were is a question that cannot be answered with certainty; it has been suggested

Gudea, patesi of Lagash

that they came originally from India. Their language, an agglutinative one, remained in use for centuries after their disappearance, though it was continually being invaded by Semitic forms. At the beginning of our historical knowledge we find a number of independent cities in Lower Babylonia, ruled by governors (patesis), whilst occasionally in one city or other a superior ruler ("lugal" or king) appears, with a number of "patesis" under his suzerainty. Dynasties of such kings are known first at Opis and at Kish, then at Lagash. The dynasty of Lagash, after wars with Elam and the rival city of Umma, succumbed to the latter enemy, and the king of Umma transferred his seat to Erech and assumed the title of "King of Sumer." Political power then passed to Upper Babylonia (Akkad), where the great kings of tradition, Sargon and Narâm-Sin of Agadé, ruled at some date round about 2700 B.C. After an interval of comparative darkness, during which Erech regained the supremacy, the whole country was for a time dominated by a rival Semitic kingdom established in Guti to the east of Babylonia. Lagash in the south appears to have been among the first to achieve her independence, and there a line of "patesis," in which the chief name is that of Gudea, ruled from about 2500 B.C. This royal line gave place to a new dynasty at Ur; Dungi, its second king (2386-2328 B.C.) fought against Elam and bore the title of "King of Sumer and Accad." Dynasties followed at Isin and Larsa; the appearance of an Elamite name in the latter about 1950 B.C. suggests an Elamite conquest of Babylonia. But, if so, Elam could not retain her conquests for long. A little before 2000 B.C. Babylon had declared her independence under a line of Semitic kings, and reduced in turn the cities of Sippar, Kutha, Nippur and Isin. The chief king of this line, Hammurabi (fl. c. 1945 B.C.) had wars to wage with the Elamite king of Larsa and was recognized as suzerain in Assyria and Mesopotamia. After

his death, Babylon began to decline, an independent chief arose in the "Land of the Sea" (on the Persian Gulf), and, about 1746, Babylonia, after having been weakened by a successful Hittite raid from the north-west, during which Babylon itself was taken and sacked, was conquered by the Kassites, Indo-European invaders from the mountains of western Persia. This conquest marks the end of the older Babylonia, and we may pause a moment to glance at its civilization, which was certainly mainly Sumerian, not Semitic, in its origins. Though the ancient religion had its great nature-gods—Ana, Entil and Enki, or Ea, with the goddess Ninni, the earlier equivalent of Ishtar—its local gods played a far more prominent *rôle* than in later ages. Marduk, the god of Babylon, only attained his pre-eminence with the rise of that city to power. In addition to the pantheon, which was under constant revision and faithfully reflected any political change, there was a host of minor spirits or daemons. The most individual feature of the system, at any rate in the later periods, was the interest taken in the stars, in which the gods were supposed to work, and the consequent importance of astrology. Literature consisted mainly of religious hymns and legends; writing was hardly used as yet for history, being confined to the uses of practical life, including magic and divination; but it may be noted that elaborate dynastic lists had already been compiled in the third millennium. Babylonian art can best be understood by a visit to a good museum; its special characteristic was a predilection for the grandiose, the grotesque and the unnatural. Nothing gives us so vivid an idea of the high degree of civilization attained at this remote age as the existence under Hammurabi, the great law-giver, of an extensive and complicated code of private law; for the use of written laws in any form marks a distinct stage in social development.

The Kassite dynasty of Babylon began to rule about

1700 B.C., and was not expelled for some six hundred years; but of most of its rulers we know nothing but the names. About 1580 the Sea-Land on the Persian Gulf was conquered, but to the north and west the influence of Babylon declined. The kingdom of Mitanni, probably Indo-European in origin, arose in Mesopotamia, and Assyria began to draw away from the southern kingdom, at first as a vassal of Mitanni, later in complete independence. Of the relations of king Burraburiash (c. 1400) of Babylon with Egypt we hear something from the Tell-el-Amarna tablets. His grandson and successor, Kadashman-kharbé, was a son of the daughter of Assur-uballit, king of Assyria; when Kadashman fell victim to a conspiracy, the Assyrian king interfered and placed the dead king's son Kurigalzu on the throne. Assyria thus began to assert a predominance over Babylon; but Kurigalzu, in the later years of his reign, seems to have resented this relation and fought with Assyria for possessions in Mesopotamia. The Kassite dynasty was followed by a native Babylonian (the so-called "dynasty of Pashe," c. 1130–1000), its most famous member being Nebuchadnezzar I, and three ephemeral dynasties, of which the last at least was Elamite (c. 1000–960). Of the years between 1000 and 885 we know practically nothing; but the struggle with Elam and Assyria must have continued, and, probably at this period, the Chaldaeans, a new race of Semitic immigrants, entered the south of Babylonia. They add a new factor to the political problem and are generally found attempting, with Elamite help, to contest the claims of Assyria over Babylonia. Between the years 885 and 854 a certain Nabu-aplu-iddin, probably a Chaldaean, ruled in Babylon and held his country against Assyria. But, on his death, one of his sons, Marduk-nadin-shum, called in Shalmaneser II of Assyria to help him against his brother, and, having disposed of his rival, ruled as Assyrian vassal.

The same tale is now repeated over and over again; Elamites and Chaldaeans intrigue against Assyria, Assyria, welcomed by a large section of the native Babylonians, makes attempt after attempt to secure her rule. Between 763 and 746 a series of revolts broke the Assyrian influence; but a reaction followed and Nabonassar (747–734) was reduced to vassalage by Tiglath-pileser IV. In 730 the great Assyrian king crushed a new revolt and reigned himself as king of Babylon till 727 under the name of Pulu. Shalmaneser IV, like his father, ruled in Babylon (727–722), but the troubles that followed on the usurpation of Sargon gave Assyria's enemies their chance, and Merodach-baladan, a Chaldaean, ruled, under Elamite protection, from 721–710. Sargon drove out this prince in 710 and ruled as "governor of Babylon" until his death in 705. Sennacherib suppressed a revolt in 703, defeated Merodach-baladan, and his allies, the Elamites, and set up Bel-ibni, a Babylonian, as vassal-prince. But the new king revolted and was deposed, and a son of Sennacherib reigned from 699 to 694. In 694 war broke out again and this time Sennacherib, resolved to end the constant trouble, destroyed Babylon (689); but his successor, the humane Esarhaddon, restored the famous city in 681. In 668 Shamash-shum-ukin, a son of Esarhaddon, became king in Babylon, while his brother Assurbanipal ruled in Assyria; in 652 he revolted and was defeated, and Assurbanipal ruled in his stead (648–626). After his death, Assyrian rule soon broke down; in 625, Nabopolassar, a Chaldaean, seized the throne and the ancient glory of Babylonia revived after many days. The long ambition of the Chaldaeans, the complete mastery of Babylonia, was at length realised.

In alliance with Cyaxares, the Mede, Nabopolassar turned on the failing Assyria, and, after the sack of Nineveh by the Medes in 606, entered on the southern portion of her inheritance. His son Nebuchadnezzar,