

rendering it comparatively easy for other nations to proceed with the superstructure... It was from the east, not from Egypt, that Greece derived her architecture, her sculpture, her science, her philosophy, her mathematical knowledge, in a word, her intellectual life. And Babylon was the source to which the entire stream of eastern civilization may be traced. It is scarcely too much to say that, but for Babylon, real civilization might not even yet have dawned upon the earth" (Gt. Mon., III. pp. 75 t.).

305. Upon the people of Israel, too, Babylon left her mark. Though mistress of their state and its destroyer, she could not rule their spirits. Their prophets looked forward to her fall and rejoiced. To them, the image of all material prosperity, she was set over against that higher ideal of victorious suffering, of spiritual achievement, the triumph of which in their vision was sure. Thus pictured by them, Babylon has lived on in the imagination of Christendom as the supreme symbol of the rich, the cruel, the lustful, the enemy of saints, the Antichrist, destined to destruction. Who shall say that, thus seeing, these prophets did not behold clearly the vital weakness of that ancient civilization in her, its embodiment? With all her glory Babylon was of the earth and is fallen; Jerusalem, which is from above, abideth forever.

IV. THE FALL OF BABYLON

306. The conspiracy which placed Nabuna'id upon the

Learning reading speed...

Page 286 of 295 • 97%

















































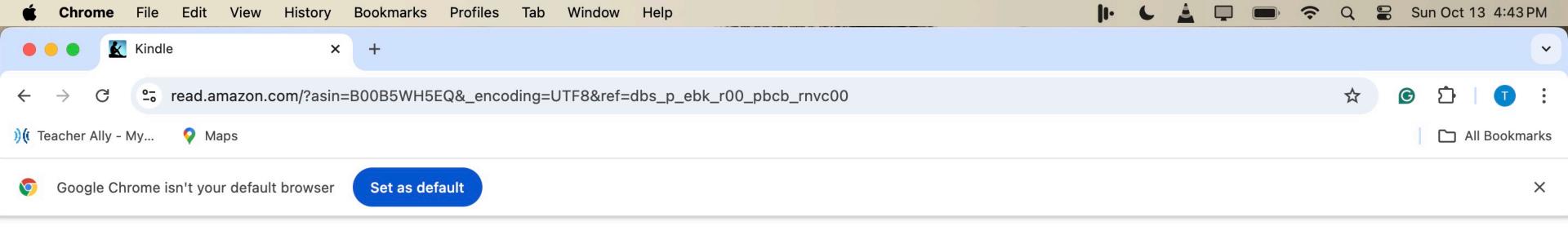












throne (555-539 B.C.) seems to have involved a transfer of emphasis in the politics of the state. Nabuna'id was not a Kaldean but a Babylonian noble, son of a prince, Nabu-balatsu-iqbi. In his long stele inscription, to which reference has already been made (sect. 288), he declares his purpose to conduct affairs after the example of Nebuchadrezzar and Nabupaluçur. In fact, his rather numerous inscriptions present him not only as a devout worshipper of the gods and a restorer of temples, but also as a vigorous and zealous defender of the imperial authority. The empire stood intact within its old limits when he came into possession of it, and in the first years of his reign he paid no little attention to the maintenance of his authority in the west. In the badly

broken first column of his so-called Annals, references made to Hamath and the mountains of Amanus, in connection with military movements, indicate that he was active in Syria, and fragments of Menander suggest that in his reign dynastic troubles in Tyre led to his setting, first, Merbaal (555-552 B.C.), and then Hirom III. (551-532 B.C.), both hostages at his court, upon the Tyrian throne. The impulse to these western expeditions may have been given by the new relations to the Manda (Medes) which the last years had induced, and which may now be described in some detail.

307. During the lifetime of Nebuchadrezzar the alliance with the Manda (Medes) had remained firm, although to Cyaxares had succeeded (about 584 B.C.)

Learning reading speed...

Page 286 of 295 • 97%





























































his son Ishtuvegu (Astyages). The rapid changes which followed upon the death of the great Kaldean monarch, and particularly the transference of the succession from the Kaldean to the Babylonian line, in the person of Nabuna'id, seem to have been the occasion of estrangement between the two peoples. Nabuna'id asserts that in the beginning of his reign the Manda had been in possession of northern Mesopotamia and were encamped about Haran. But one of those sudden reversals of supremacy not uncommon in the beginnings of great empires had taken place in Media. Among the communities that acknowledged the sway of Astyages was the province of Anshan in northern Elam, occupied by the Persians under their hereditary

chieftains of the house of Teispes. The king of Anshan during these years, a certain Cyrus, raised a rebellion against his suzerain (about 553 B.C.) which resulted in the downfall of Astyages and the supremacy of Cyrus and the Persians (550 B.C.). During these troubles the movement of Astyages against Babylonia was given up, and Nabuna'id reports that by 553 B.C. there were no Manda about Haran. He also dwells with satisfaction upon the overthrow of Astyages by Cyrus, king of Anshan, as a divine intervention in his own favor. The way was open for him to send an expedition not only to Haran to rebuild the temple there, but to advance farther into the west. He was doubtless gratified that inner troubles were breaking up the Median Empire,

Learning reading speed...

Page 287 of 295 • 98%



























































as had so often been the case among the loose agglomerations of peoples in the northern mountains, and he felt that henceforth neither their friendship nor their enmity was particularly significant, little dreaming that within two decades the young conqueror would be knocking at his own gates. The career of Cyrus is one of the marvels of antiquity. His victory over his Median suzerain was not merely the substitution of one dynasty for another, nor was it followed by internecine wars in which the fresh and vigorous peoples of the north were crippled. With consummate statesmanship the young king united all elements, inspired them with a common spirit, and out of a kingdom in which tribes and peoples had been joined in loose confederation about a common overlord, he built the solid foundations of the Medo-Persian Empire.

308. The immunity from hostile complications with the Medes, enjoyed by Nabuna'id during the years that followed, he improved by pursuing those works of peace in which his prototype Nebuchadrezzar had gained such renown. With the details of such building operations his inscriptions are filled. The peculiar delight which they represent him as feeling in these works and the unique method which he adopted in the prosecution of them have led scholars to regard him as a political weakling, a cultured dilettante, an archaeological virtuoso, to whom the discovery of an ancient foundation stone was more significant than the conduct of the state

Learning reading speed...

Page 288 of 295 • 98%



























































or the defence of the empire. Further knowledge has proved the accusation unjust, although the facts on which it was based are evident enough. In his zeal for the reconstruction of temples he was not satisfied with clearing off the superficial rubbish of the mound, but must dig down through the successive layers of ruins, until the original foundation had been reached and the inscription of the first builder had been uncovered. Reference has already been made to the value of the data which he thus published (sect. 40) for the construction of a Babylonian chronology. A passage may be here given from an inscription, illustrative at once of his devout piety and his archaeological perseverance and of its scientific value for modern scholars:

For Shamash, the judge of heaven and earth, Ebab-bara, his temple which is in Sippar, which Nebuchadrezzar, a former king, had rebuilt, after searching for its platform-foundation without finding it — that house he rebuilt, but in forty-five years its walls had fallen in. I became anxious and humble; I was alarmed and much troubled. When I had brought out Shamash from within it and made him take residence in another house, I pulled that house down and made search for its old platform-foundation; and I dug to a depth of eighteen cubits, and Shamash, the great lord of E-babbara, the temple, the dwelling well pleasing to him, permitted me to behold the platform-foundation of Naram Sin, the son of Sargon, which during a

Learning reading speed...

Page 289 of 295 • 98%

























































period of thirty-two hundred years no king among my predecessors had seen. In the month Tishrit, in a favorable month, on an auspicious day, revealed to me by Shamash and Adad in a vision, with silver, gold, costly and precious stones, products of the forest, sweetsmelling cedars, amid joy and rejoicing, I raised its brickwork — not an inch inward or outward — upon the platform-foundation of Naram Sin, the son of Sargon. I laid in rows five thousand large cedars for its roof; I set up in its doorways high doors of cedar...

I took the hands of Shamash, my lord, and with joy and rejoicing I made him take up a residence therein well pleasing to him. I found the inscription written in the name of Naram Sin, the son of Sargon, and I did not alter

it. I anointed it with oil, offered sacrifices, placed it with my inscription, and restored it to its place (Nab. Cyl. II. 47 ff.).

He claims thus to have reconstructed, besides this temple of Shamash in Sippar, that of Anunit, also in Sippar, that of Sin in Haran, the temple E-ul-bar in Agade, the tower and other shrines in Ur and the Shamash temple at Larsam.

309. It was not to be expected that in a hot-bed of intrigue such as Babylon was at this time, the various activities of Nabuna'id were pursued with a successful harmonization of all factions. With Nebuchadrezzar as example, he sought to maintain the empire, while at the same time he honored the gods; but in both respects

Learning reading speed...

Page 289 of 295 • 98%





























































he appears to have failed. He called himself "patron of Esagila and Ezida," temples of Marduk and Nabu in Babylon and Borsippa; he gave rich gifts to these deities; yet his rearing of temples to other gods, and especially the attention paid to Shamash, the sun-god, are thought to have arrayed against him the priests of Babylon, as though he were planning to put that deity in the place of pre-eminence given by Nebuchadrezzar to Marduk and Nabu. Nor may his hardly concealed satisfaction at the victory of Cyrus over Astyages have pleased those who remembered Nebuchadrezzar's alliance with Media. He certainly left the conqueror unmolested, if indeed, as some think, he did not give him aid in his rebellion, a policy which, however shrewd, was not acceptable to

the Kaldeans. Thus difficulties were inevitable. A hint of the situation is given in the Annals, where, beginning with the seventh year of the king (549 B.C.), it is said that he "was in Tema; the son of the king, the nobles and his soldiers in Akkad. (The king for Nisan) did not come to Babylon. Nabu did not come to Babylon; Bel was not brought forth." In other words, the usual yearly ceremonial, by which a king renewed his royal authority in "taking the hands of Bel" in Babylon, did not take place. The same omission is chronicled in effect for the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh years (548-545 B.C.), and may have continued, though the breaking of the Annals at this point permits no positive statement. It is difficult to understand how he could have maintained

Learning reading speed...

Page 290 of 295 • 99%



























































himself as king, if this retirement to Tema and the omission of an indispensable ceremonial had been due to his own carelessness regarding affairs of state and his absorption in his temples and books. The facts are more satisfactorily interpreted by supposing that, with his seventh year, on account of universal dissatisfaction he was forced into retirement, and the conduct of affairs assumed by his son, Bel-shar-uçur (Belshazzar), with whom began more active measures towards protecting the state from its Medo-Persian neighbors.

310. The consequences of this change of attitude towards Cyrus soon became apparent. In the year 547 B.C. he appeared with his army at the Tigris below Arbela, and seems to have taken possession of a border state, so that now the troops garrisoning the frontier cities of the Medo-Persian and Babylonian empires stood face to face. The conflict seemed imminent; but affairs in another quarter of the kingdom demanded the presence and activity of Cyrus, and a few years intervened before the final struggle took place.

311. The extraordinary success of Cyrus alarmed all the older states of the oriental world, and they bestirred themselves to resist his progress. The initiative was taken apparently by Lydia, which, under its king, Croesus, was now the great power of Asia Minor. Both commerce and culture had brought that state into close association with the Greek cities as well as with Egypt and Babylonia. The advent of the new and aggressive

Learning reading speed...

Page 291 of 295 • 99%

























































Persian power was disturbing to all parties alike. Accordingly, a quadruple alliance was formed by Croesus of Lydia, Amasis of Egypt, Sparta, as leader of the Greek states, and the war party now in power at Babylon, with the evident purpose of putting a stop to the advance of Cyrus (about 547 B.C.). He accepted the challenge and marched westward against the most formidable and aggressive of his opponents, the king of Lydia, before the troops of the other leaguers could join with him. Croesus, nothing loath, crossed the Halys in 546 B.C., but was beaten and lost his kingdom the next year (545 B.C.).

312. Babylon's time of trial was now at hand. Unfortunately the beginning of the advance of Cyrus into the Mesopotamian valley and the details of the

earlier years of the struggle, as well as the ebb and flow of party strife at Babylon are quite unknown, a gap occurring in the Annals at this point. The inscription becomes again intelligible with the seventeenth and last year of Nabuna'id (739 B.C.). The Babylonian king is now in the capital, and the usual religious ceremonials are performed. Cyrus is on the northeastern frontier. Has Nabuna'id been released from his confinement at Tema in consequence of the breaking down of the plans of his enemies? However that may be, he has gathered into Babylon the images of the gods from the length and breadth of Akkad, excepting those of Borsippa, Kutha, and Sippar, with a view either to their protection or to the aid they may supply to the capital. The action was ill-

Learning reading speed...

Page 292 of 295 • 99%

























































timed from the point of view of the priests of Marduk, Babylon's city god, whose prerogative and power were thus underestimated or even dishonored. Cyrus's attack upon the great system of defences was made at Upi (Opis), at the junction of the Tigris and the Turnat, where he broke through and stood on Babylonian soil in October, 539 B.C. Belshazzar and his army were beaten back. Nabuna'id sought in vain to organize the people for defence. Sippar was taken early in October, and the king fled to Babylon, closely pursued by a detachment of the Persians under Gubaru (Gobryas). It might well be thought that the broad and lofty walls of the capital would long withstand the assaults of an enemy; the narrative of Herodotus (I. 190, 191) tells how, after a

tedious siege, Cyrus, in despair, set about diverting the main channel of the Euphrates and by marching his troops into the city through the river gates, thus laid open, took the defenders by surprise and captured the city. Nothing, however, could be farther from the actual event. Gubaru found friends within the walls who opened the gates soon after his arrival; Babylon fell into the hands of the Persians without a struggle. So deeply had the feuds of parties, ecclesiastical and political, eaten into the body politic that the capital was betrayed by its own citizens. The so-called Cyrus cylinder has perpetuated the memory of this infamy. There, in words written under the hand of Babylonian priests, it is said

Learning reading speed...

Page 292 of 295 • 99%

























































that Marduk, in wrath at the loss of his prerogative and the complaints of his servants, not only abandoned the city, but —

He searched through all lands; he saw him, and he sought the righteous prince, after his own heart, whom he took by the hand. Cyrus, king of Anshan, he called by name; to sovereignty over the whole world he appointed him... Marduk, the great lord, guardian of his people, looked with joy on his pious works and his upright heart; he commanded him to go to his city Babylon, and he caused him to take the road to Babylon, going by his side as a friend and companion... without skirmish or battle he permitted him to enter Babylon. He spared his city Babylon in (its) calamity. Nabonidus, the king,

who did not reverence him, he delivered into his hand. All the people of Babylon, all Shumer and Akkad, nobles and governors, prostrated themselves before him, kissed his feet, rejoiced at his sovereignty, showed happiness in their faces (Cyrus Cyl., 11 ff).

313. A few days later, Cyrus himself entered the city. Nabuna'id had already been captured. He was treated kindly and exiled to the east. Belshazzar was shortly afterward slain, while, as it seems, making a last stand with the remnant of his forces. The new lord worshipped at the ancient shrines, glorified the gods that had given him headship over their land and people, and received in his royal city Babylon the kings, from all quarters of the world, who came bringing their heavy taxes and

Learning reading speed...

Page 293 of 295 • 100%

























































kissed his feet. He called himself by the old familiar titles — "Cyrus, king of the world, the great king, the powerful king, the king of Babylon, the king of Shumer and Akkad, the king of the four quarters of the world,... whose reign Bel and Nabu love, whose sovereignty they longed for in the desire of their hearts." But the words are empty echoes of a vanishing past. It was, in fact, a new master of the nations, who stood upon the ruins of the mighty Semitic communities that for millenniums had ruled the world. A man of another race, to whom the

valley of the Tigris and the Euphrates was no longer the centre of human power and human civilization, whose ideals of the divine and the human world were formed under other skies, and whose empire stretched far away beyond the boundaries of Assyria in its fairest splendor, was henceforth to direct the destinies of the peoples, whose leadership of human history has been followed from its dawn to its setting. A new force had come to its own, and another chapter of human progress began.

Learning reading speed...

Page 294 of 295 • 100%























































