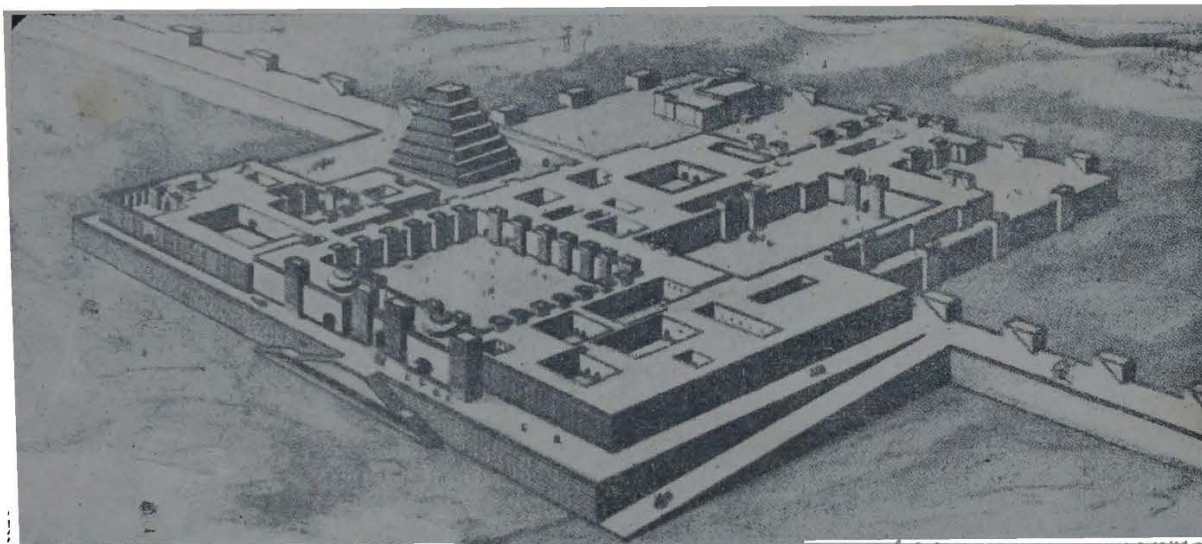


HISTORY SECTION**AN EARLY CIVILIZATION**

The Palace of a King Four Thousand Years Ago. Sargon II built this palace on a great elevated platform covering 25 acres. There were inclined roadways on which he could drive in his chariot from the streets of the city below. Such temple towers as that behind the largest court developed into the towers we see on churches today.

SCHOLARS are unable to tell us whether civilization first arose in Egypt or in that part of the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers of western Asia which we call Babylonia. At all events, there lay one of the earliest cradles of civilization.

Long before 3000 B. C., the predecessors—the forerunners—of the ancient Babylonians (called Sumerians) were living in tiny city-states along the lower course of the twin rivers, in small towns built of sun-dried bricks. They irrigated their barley and wheat fields by extensive canals, and they wrote letters and kept records on tablets of baked clay by means of curious writing. They used a system of counting by 60's instead of by 100's, from which has come our division of the hour into 60 minutes, and of the minute into 60 seconds.

In the center of the plain of Babylonia rose a great tower on a temple, which is regarded as the original tower of Babel where the confusion of languages occurred as related in the eleventh chapter of the book of Genesis of the Bible. This tower was the remote ancestor of our modern church steeples.

Each one of the little towns of the Plain of Shinar—as Babylonia was then called—in that early day owned land for a few miles around it, and the period 3050 to 2750 B. C. is known as the Age of the Sumerian City Kingdoms. The inhabitants had come from the mountains to the east in what was later called Persia. They apparently were not related to any of the groups of people that we now know. The petty states were constantly

warring with one another. They also had an outside enemy to meet in the wandering tribes of the Arabian desert to the west. Finally one of these chieftains from the desert, named Sargon, proved too strong for the Sumerians, and made himself master of the whole plain.

Sargon (about 2750 B. C.) was the first great leader in history, and the first to build up a great nation. His kingdom reached from the Persian gulf to the Mediterranean sea. Gradually his wandering followers dropped their unsettled life and took up fixed abodes in the plains.

They adopted the civilization of their former enemies, gaining new arts of peace and war. They learned to make helmets of leather and copper, which are the earliest known examples of the use of metal for protection in war. From this humble beginning came the armor of the knights of the Middle Ages and our modern steelclad battleships and mechanized armies.

As the kings who followed Sargon slowly weakened, a new desert tribe invaded the land, and in turn established the kingdom of Babylonia, so named from its capital Babylon. About 2100 years B. C. this kingdom reached its height. Agriculture was extensively practiced, commerce flourished, and law and government were highly developed.

The cities of this kingdom have long been nothing but deserted mounds of earth and crumbled bricks. But in these ruins many baked clay tablets have been found containing letters written by the king, and a record of his laws. These writings enable us to bridge the gap of more than 4,000 years and to know something of the daily life of these people.

These clay letters of this ancient king contain orders directed to officials in different parts of the kingdom. There is also an order that the river Euphrates be cleared of its obstacles to river com-

merce. He ordered that taxes be collected, and that those who did not pay be punished. Unjust judges and corrupt officials were ordered to be brought to justice. Other letters deal with sheep-shear-

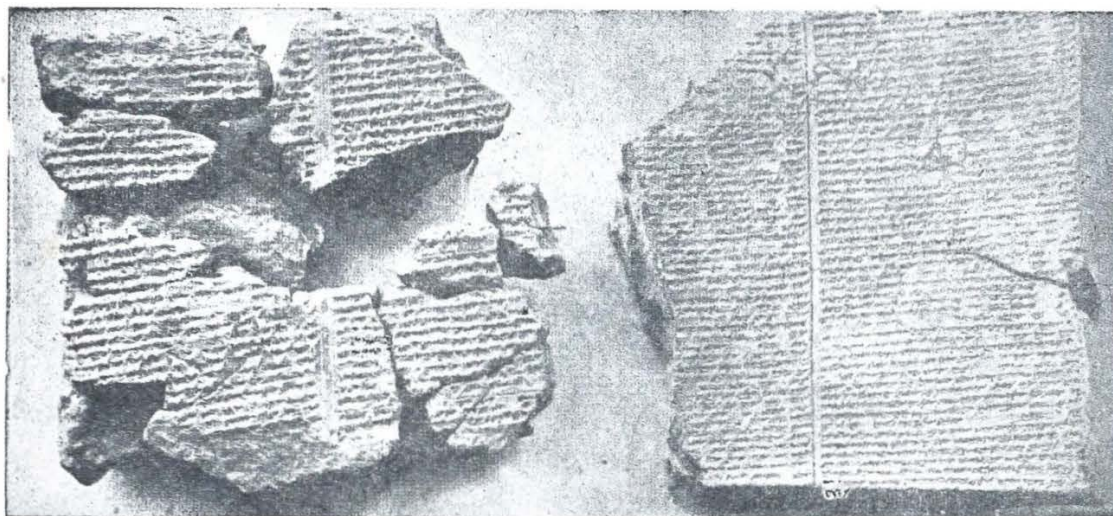
ing, the temples and religion, the regulation of the calendar, and similar matters.

These very old laws are the earliest code of laws for any people which has come down to us. They are thus a priceless aid to making clear the earliest life of civilized man, long before the ancient days of Greece and Rome. In them we find a highly developed political and social system.

There were three classes of people in the community—a ruling class of nobles and officials, a middle class, and slaves. Much attention was given to commerce,



Map Showing the Location of an Early Civilization



The Babylonian Story of the Flood

money, and banking, as well as to agriculture and the canals and ditches needed for irrigating the soil.

Justice was insisted on for the widow, the orphan, and the poor. The position of women in those laws was a high one, and they frequently engaged in business on their own account.

After the death of the ruler, the kingdom went to pieces. The wild tribes again descended from the eastern mountains to the plains, this time bringing with them a strange animal which we call the horse.

A new language, a Semitic language related to the Hebrew of the time of Christ, took the place of the old language.

In the northern part of the valley between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers there had arisen a new nation called Assyria from its chief town Assur. Its people borrowed the calendar, writing, sculpture, and other improvements of civilization from their Babylonian neighbors.

The Assyrians gained skill in warfare until they aspired to rule the whole of what was then the civilized world about

them, just as Germany aspires today to rule all of Europe.

Before Assyria had accomplished this, the little kingdoms of Palestine and Syria had risen to power. Syria especially was rich in busy cities, and carried on commerce with all the known world. They spread far and wide their system of writing—the first system to make use of an alphabet. These cities checked the advance of the Assyrians, and it was not until the middle of the 8th century before Christ that Damascus, the most powerful city of Syria fell. (See the map on page 106.)

Assyria not only conquered Syria and Palestine, but her rule for a time extended even into Egypt. There are two reasons for this military success: (1) they were the first people to learn the use of iron weapons; (2) the organization of their country was based on war and conquest. Like that of the Germans of the present time, their rule was one of "blood and iron." One Assyrian king, Sargon II (722 to 705 B. C.) destroyed the
(Please turn to page 117.)

EARLY CIVILIZATION

(Continued from page 107)

northern kingdom of the Hebrews (called Israel) and carried away as captives part of its people.

Sargon's son Sennacherib (705 to 681 B.C.) destroyed the ancient city of Babylon, and even turned the waters of the canal over its ruins. Sargon II had built for himself a palace far surpassing anything else yet built; the buildings covered 25 acres and were large enough to shelter 80,000 people. But this was not enough for his son Sennacherib, and he built as his capital the proud city of Ninevah on the upper part of the river Tigris. Thousands of clay tablets have been discovered in the ruins of Ninevah. This is the earliest library of which we know, and in it were religious, scientific, and literary works, all carefully catalogued.

The end of this Assyrian empire came in 606 B. C. A desert tribe called the Chaldeans joined with the Medes, a tribe from the East, and conquered Ninevah, the mighty city of the Assyrians. Two hundred years later a Greek historian could not even learn the name of the ruins where once Ninevah had stood.

The new masters rebuilt the old city of Babylon and made it their capital. Here lived and ruled Nebuchadnezzar, greatest of the Chaldean emperors. He enlarged the city and built enormous walls around it, like the walls of old Manila, only larger and stronger. He constructed some wonderful hanging gardens, which the Greeks counted as one of the seven wonders of the world. This is the Babylon described in the Bible as the city of Hebrew captivity, after the destruction of the Hebrew city Jerusalem.

Several Babylonian and Assyrian records tell of a great flood which once covered all the land, and how a man and his family were saved. The flood is represented as sent on earth for the sins of men.

The account of this flood was written on twelve clay tablets found in the ruins of the palace at Ninevah. Pictures of two of these clay tablets are shown on page 107.

The great civilization of Babylonia and Assyria fell, and the land ever since has been ruled by a foreign people.

REVIEW

1. Read and study about this interesting civilization.

RESPECT OUR FLAG

(Continued from page 109)

That ended their conversation. I am sure that in the hearts of those boys is a strong love and respect for the flag of their country, and a desire to have their flag clean of every stain that could cause its dishonor. Young reader, do you have that same respect for the flag?

DO THIS

Study about the meaning of our flag. Then tell it in your own words.

A STUDENT'S PSALM

(Continued from page 109)

How often at night, with tears and supplications, hast thou taken our names, one by one, before the Heavenly Father's throne of grace beseeching Him that somehow our lives might change. And our lives have indeed, changed.

Thou wert kind! Thou wert noble! Beloved teacher, we thank thee, for thou didst struggle with us with patience and loving kindness.

Surely thy untiring efforts have brought us to a realization of our shortcomings. As long as our memory lasts, thy kindness, patience, and love shall be our treasure, our benediction.