

Glimpses of Life in Erech.

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THE appearance in Europe and America of a number of documents found at Warka, the modern name of the ruins of Erech, has brought the old life of that primitive religious centre once more to the notice of the world.

As related in the tenth chapter of Genesis, this city was one of those whose foundation was attributed to Nimrod or Merodach, where its name is second in the list—'Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh.' It is also mentioned in the bilingual story of the Creation as one of the cities built by Merodach, to whom is also ascribed the foundation of its temple Ê-anna. The text of this portion of the legend is imperfect, but the restored order in which the cities were built by the deity was undoubtedly Niffer (identified with Calneh), Erech, the Abyss, and then Êridu, the paradise-city on the seashore. Babylon and the temple of Belus there, Ê-sagila, would seem to have been built last of all (see *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. iv. p. 232*ab*). The order in Genesis indicates rather the city's importance than the order of its foundation.

The tablets which have now come to light belong to the late period, and some thirty of these have come into the possession of Mr. W. Harding Smith, to whom I am indebted for permission to describe them. They are mostly of the nature of trade-documents, but give information concerning the worship and the persons dwelling there during the reigns (Nabopolassar-Seleucidæ) to which the tablets refer.

As these documents are the productions of the trading portion of the community of Erech, their interest is mainly in that direction, namely, the objects bought and sold, their value, the conditions under which the transactions took place, etc. Religious, antiquarian, and social conditions prevailing in Erech, however, are not absent, and points of chronology and (though more restricted) of history present themselves.

Among the more interesting of the trade-documents is the text referring, apparently, to the sale of a necklace or collarette. A sketch on the reverse of this document shows that the object described was in the form of a string of half-open

cornflower-buds, or the like, and consisted of 41 white *nurmar* and 4 other *nurmar*. As the price of this article was 3 *mana* 57 shekels of silver, it was a sufficiently expensive object. The meaning of *nurmar* is doubtful—it may be the name of the flower reproduced, or, perhaps, a Babylonian word for 'pearl.' The tablet is dated in the month Sebat of the 19th year of Nabopolassar.

Another tablet, dated in the 1st year of Nebuchadrezzar, is a contract for 1000 *gur* (cors) of barley; it mentions Ninip-šar-ušur, the governor, and Nabû-nadin-šum, the *šatam* of Ê-anna, the great temple of Anu at Erech.

Of special interest is a tablet dated in the 8th year of the same king. This document records a loan of 1 *mana* 10 shekels of silver for six years, the security being the borrower's house, which was to be occupied by the lender rent-free, because the silver was without interest. Transactions of this nature are not rare among Babylonian contracts, but the great interest in this case is the number of additional clauses introduced. The occupier of the house was to keep it in good repair, but after the 3rd year some compensation seems to have been provided for this expense. The details however, are uncertain, as the lines of writing are very close and crowded.

Of No. 18, dated in the 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar, I give a translation:—

'1 *mana* and $\frac{1}{2}$ and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ shekels of gold, property of the Lady of Erech and Nanâ, due from Nabû-êtir-napšâti, governor of the Land of the Sea, Nabû-šûziz-anni, deputy-governor of the Land of the Sea, and Zilla, son of Iddia, the scribe. They shall repay (the amount) in the month Tammuz. If in Tammuz they repay not, it shall increase unto them at the rate of one shekel of gold monthly for each *mana*.

'Witnessing: Marduk-iriba, son of Zêrûtu, mayor (?) of Erech; Nabû-âhê-ušallim, son of Bêl-iddina, *šatam* of the temple of Amurrû; Imbi-Sin, *ê-bar* of Ur (Mugheir); Banîa, son of Aa; and the scribe, Nabû-nadin-šum, son of Aa. Babylon, month Nisan, day 25th, year 19th, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon.'

It will be noticed that the contract was drawn up at Babylon, not in Erech, and that all the contracting parties must have been in the great capital. The sum borrowed, 1 *mana* 22½ shekels of gold, was to all appearance a large one, and was lent by the temple of the two goddesses named—through what official of the temple is not stated. The witnesses show the importance of the transaction, consisting, as they did, of a high official of Erech, the *šatam* (treasurer?) of the temple of Amurrū or Awurrū (Hadad of the Amorites), and a priest of a temple (that of the moon-god Sin or Nannar) of Ur of the Chaldees. It may be surmised that the repayment was required in the month Tammuz on account of the possibility, that the gold might be needed for the festival of Tammuz, Ištar's spouse, at the time of the summer solstice.

This document, however, is not the only one mentioning the personages—or some of them—here referred to. The other text, already well known, was acquired by the British Museum in 1881, and is published by Strassmaier in his *Inscripfen von Nabuchodonosor*, No. 109, the contents being a declaration before the judges concerning a house bequeathed to a certain *Šapik-zēri*.

Here, again, among what are apparently the witnesses, we find the name of Nabû-ētir-napšāti, the governor of the Land of the Sea; Nabû-šuzzizanni, the deputy-governor of the same; Marduk-iriba, the official of Erech; Imbi-Sin, *ē-bar* of Ur; and, in addition, Bêl-uballiṭ, son of Marduk-šumibni, 'governor of the other side' (*kāpi ša aḫulla*); with five other witnesses. The date is 'Babylon, month Nisan, day 6th, 17th year of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon.'

This was two years earlier than Mr. Harding Smith's tablet, and one might ask, Were the Erechite officials mentioned living in Babylon all this time, or did they, from time to time, travel backwards and forwards between the capital and their official residences? It is not impossible that the high officials, including the governors of provinces, had to be in attendance on the king at certain periods, and in that case would often be present in Babylon.

The care taken by the officials of the temples of Babylonia is exemplified by another inscription from Erech, dated in the 21st year of Nebuchadrezzar, in which security for the repayment of a loan of barley, belonging to Ištar of Erech and

Nanâ, is recorded. This was lent to Zēru-Bâbili (Zerubbabel) and Ana-Bêl-upaqu. Repayment was to take place in the month Tammuz, in Erech, by the measure of Ištar of Erech. Each borrower took the responsibility of the other.

The following reference to the service of the temple Ê-anna is interesting in indicating another kind of responsibility—that of duty therein:—

'The responsibility of Raḫaṣ-ili, son of Nanâ-iddina, and of his sons, Upaqu, son of Nanâ-ibni, takes from the hands of Sin-iddina, director of Ê-anna. He will provide a garment for his Uru-galship, and Raḫaṣ-ili will perform the service in Ê-anna.'

The names of three witnesses and the scribe follow, after which comes the date: 'Erech, month Sebat, day 30th, year 38th, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon.'

To all appearance Raḫaṣ-ili was taking duty for Sin-iddina, and for the purpose required the proper robe of an *uru-gala* ('great protector,' or the like), which Upaqu undertakes to supply. The garment in question is called *uraš*, and is apparently the *urašu* which the lists explain as *šubat âdirti*, 'garment of mourning'—perhaps for use at the time of the mourning for Tammuz.

In these documents, as in others of the same nature, we have again instances of the trade carried on by the temples in the names of the deities who were worshipped therein. A document of this class refers to 18 sheep and 2 kids, 'the property of Ištar and Nanâ,' Erech's chief goddesses. The 18 are described as being UD-GAL, probably meaning 'full-grown white,' and *šindūtu*, 'marked,' probably with the temple-sign. The document was drawn up at the [town] (? founded by) Nabû-ûšêa, and is dated the 5th of Tebet in the 1st year of Cambyses, king of Babylon and countries.

The date-plantations of 'the Lady of Erech and Nanâ' are referred to in another document, and one of these was situated by a city called Dûr-Ugumu. The text records a loan of 58 *gur* of dates from this place to Nabû-êreš, who was to repay them in the month Tisri, 'by the measure of the Lady of Erech,' to Tarittum, with 1 *gur* and fractions added, together with all the other portions of the fruit, including the amount of early (ripe) dates, the sprouts, the tuft, and the dates which had fallen unripe (such seems to be the generally accepted translation of *biltu^m ša hušab, tuḫallu*,

liblibbi u mangaga, but more light upon these terms seems to be needed). In addition to this, there was apparently a portion set aside for the god Bêl, and further, the '1 gur of the *gugallu*' (superintendent, or the like) had to be paid, and the borrower had to do work in the field and show (his work) to Ardîa (the man who had authority as the giver of the field—probably an instance of the corban). The borrower's profit was naturally reduced by all these regulations. This document is dated at 'Bêl-êtir's town of the river Bitqa, branch of the Lady of Erech, month Elul, day 24th, year 6th, Cambyses, king of Babylon, king of the lands.'

Another short trade-document, instead of ending with the witnesses, begins with them, as does also a few other inscriptions of this class already known. These witnesses, four in number, are described as *mâr-banê*, 'freedmen,' or the like. The transaction records the handing-over of 1 *mana* of silver and a silver cup (*kâsu*) of $\frac{5}{8}$ of a *mana* and 1 shekel (= 51 shekels), by Gimillu, son of Istar-ûmu-ibnî, to Nabû-tariš. The odd shekel is neglected in the total, which is given as $1\frac{1}{8}$ *mana*. The date is 'Erech, month Sivan, day 22nd, year 2nd, Darius, king of Babylon, king of the lands.'

This is the latest date of the earlier portion of Mr. Harding Smith's little collection, unless any of the few undated texts belong to the reigns of Darius's successors. In any case, the only later inscriptions are two large tablets of the Seleucid period, one with the date broken away, and the other dated the 2nd of Tammuz in the 162nd year, Alexander (*Aliksandar*) being king. These are like numerous others in the British Museum (for specimens, see Oppert and Menant, *Documents juridiques de l'Assyrie* (Paris, 1877), pp. 291 ff.) and in the collection of the late Mr. Pierpont Morgan (ably edited by the Rev. Professor Albert T. Clay, of Yale, in part II. of 'Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan,' New York, privately printed, 1913). As a rule, these texts of the Seleucid period are very beautifully written, and impressed with numerous seals on the edges—not the Babylonian cylinder-signets to which we are accustomed, but oval or pointed stones set in finger-rings. The art is generally Greek, and much more natural than that of the Babylonians.

The dated text is an assignment of rights to enjoy temple-offerings, by Nûr, great grandson of Nikkîarqusu (*Níkaxos*—cp. Clay, *l.c.* p. 17, where

however, the Babylonian forms are *Nîkîarqusu* and *Nîk'argûsu*), to Êrištu^m-Nanâ, wife of Anu-bêl-šunu, for 7 shekels of silver. As is usual with these documents, the transaction is stated with a wealth of detail, but the first 12 lines are unfortunately much damaged.

The text of which the date is lost records the sale of a house by Nabû-tukti to Rêhat-Anu for $\frac{5}{8}$ of a *mana* (50 shekels) of pure silver. The position of the property, and the boundaries of the enclosed tract in which it stood, are, as usual, very fully indicated. The price was paid in standard staters of Antiochus (*istaterranu ša Anti'ukkusû qurbanûtu*).

Roughly, the gap between the two periods represented by these tablets is about 350 years, and many changes, both political and religious, had taken place in Babylonia between the time of Darius Hystaspis and Alexander Balas, the most important for the country being the practical abandonment of the old capital, Babylon. This had resulted in the downfall of the city's influence, and at the same time of the gods who were worshipped there, as is shown by the names of the people, inhabitants of Erech, which appear on these tablets. Down to the time of Darius and later, we have the divine appellations with which we are so familiar—Bêl or Merodach; Addu or Hadad; Ninip or Anušat (Pognon); Šamaš, the sun; Sin, the moon; Êa, the god of the sea and of wisdom; Nergal, the god of war and death; Zagaga, the god of battle, etc., and, more especially—in excess of all the others—Nebo, the teacher and prophet of the gods. Anu, Istar, and Nanâ, however, the gods of Erech, do not occur in the people's names in greater proportion than (for instance) the name of Merodach. During the Seleucid era, on the other hand, it is the deities of the city—Istar, Nanâ, and more especially Anu, the god of the heavens—whose names are met with, compounded with those of its inhabitants.¹ Babylon the Great had indeed fallen from her high estate, and with her fall the gods of old worshipped there had become discredited. They had not only failed to guard Babylonian independence—they had failed

¹ In the Pierpont Morgan collection (see Clay, *l.c.* p. 21) the names of other deities of Erech appear: Anu; Antu^m, his spouse; Ellîl, the older Bel; Êa; Sin; Šamaš; Addu or Hadad; Maruduk (Merodach); Pap-sukal, the messenger of the gods; Istar; Bêlit-šêri, 'the Lady of the Plain'; Nanâ; Bêltu-ša-rêši, 'the Lady of the Chief (Temple)'; Šarra-âhitu^m (apparently for Šarrat-âhitu^m); and *šîani bîti-šunu*, 'the gods of their houses' (*i.e.* temples).

also to prevent the abandonment of the city after the foundation of Seleucia on the Tigris. In reality the latter was the greater misfortune of the two, as it deprived the Babylonians of the hope of ever holding up their heads as a distinct nationality again.

The seal-impressions generally show Greek designs—female figures resembling Venus, cupids, lions eating their prey, etc., and one of the former, exceptionally, was engraved on a tiny cylinder horizontally.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.

WITH the completion of the fifth volume of *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, edited by Friedrich Schiele and Leopold Zscharnack (Mohr, Tübingen, 1909-1913; M.120), another religious encyclopædia is added to a list already long. It at once suggests comparison with the well-known *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Religion und Kirche*, to which it repeatedly refers, especially in its bibliographies. The *R.G.G.* is much briefer than the standard German work, but also much more radical, and, it must be said, much more provincial. Instead of seeking an Englishman to write the article on England, a Presbyterian for the author of the account of Presbyterianism, etc., these articles are all written by German Lutherans, almost the only exception being the article on the United States, which is from the pen of an American trained in Germany. The articles on Child Labour, Secondary Schools, and the like deal only with Germany; and the scope of the article on Catechisms is so exclusively Teutonic that neither the Westminster Catechism nor the Catechism of the Church of England is even mentioned.

The encyclopædia has a strong leaning towards the saga, *Märchen*, and 'religio-historical' principles generally. These have, indeed, their justification and their value; their use is to be commended, and only their misuse is to be deplored. The extent to which the 'religio-historical' explanation is employed will be evident from such articles as those on Miracles, Jonah, Abraham, Elijah, Moses, and Samson. The Jonah of 2 K 14²⁶, for instance, became the centre of a saga borrowed from India (though the main incidents are anything but Indian). Parallels are, however, to be used with caution, for they do not always prove borrowing; and divergencies should receive more attention

than they do at the hands of the adherents of this school.

Besides the articles coming within the scope of the primary object of the *R.G.G.*, it contains brief summaries of the principal ethnic religions, among the more notable being those on the Germanic and Slavic religions. Other articles of special interest are those on national insurance, socialism, and kindred themes.

Take it all in all the *R.G.G.* is a great book, well conceived and well executed. The range is so wide that the scale of each article had necessarily to be very limited; and perhaps the great number of very short articles is at once its weakness and its strength. Articles on living men have their attractiveness; the worst thing about them is that they go out of date so soon, and give the impression of the whole work being out of date. That impression must be resisted, for there is plenty of matter here that will hold its place for many years to come.

Religion.

IN his *Faṭima et les Filles de Mahomet*, the Rev. Henri Lammens, Professor of Arabic Literature in the Biblical Institute, promised a series of studies in the Biblical Institute. Of these studies the first volume has now been published. Its title is *Le Berceau de l'Islam* (Rome: Pontifi. Inst. Bibl.; Fr. 6.30). Evidently the studies taken together will make a rather notable contribution to the literature of Islam. For this is a large, handsome volume, and it is only one of a number. It is entirely taken up with the climate of Arabia and with the Bedouin. A considerable part of the volume is occupied with a minute discussion of the question whether the climate of Arabia has undergone serious change since the days of Muhammad. For general reading by far the most interesting portion