

(cuneiform) or arrow-headed inscriptions, huge winged bulls and lions, with human heads, bas-reliefs, statues, ornaments, and other articles, which are now to be seen, as one of its most valuable collections, in the British Museum.

3. These objects themselves gave instant and abundant information as to the state of art and the progress of civilization at the time when they were produced, but the cuneiform inscriptions were a different matter. The first to make a real advance in deciphering these was the German scholar *Grotefend*. Wonderful success has since been achieved, and the researches of *Rawlinson*, *Norris*, *Smith*, and later scholars have resulted in the deciphering of a vast number of inscriptions containing the history of ancient Babylonia, Chaldæa, and Assyria, and their kings, and embracing documents of the most varied character.

2. BABYLONIAN EMPIRE.

1. On the part which the *Egyptians* and the *Babylonians* played in the civilization of the olden world *Professor Rawlinson* has written, that "in the first ages of the world's history Egypt and Babylon led the way, and acted as the pioneers of mankind in the various untrodden fields of art, literature, and science. Alphabetic writing, astronomy, history, chronology, architecture, plastic art, sculpture, navigation, agriculture, textile industry, seem all of them to have had their origin in one or other of these two countries."

2. The *Babylonian* Empire was founded in the south of Mesopotamia, the alluvial plain between the Tigris and Euphrates. This country, like Egypt with the Nile, was largely the creation of these rivers by their deposits of rich mud; and the sea formerly extended much farther inland than it now does. Water was supplied for cultivation partly by the natural inundations, partly by artificial irrigating canals. The fertility of the region was famous in ancient times, producing wheat and other kinds of corn, with dates, grapes, and other fruits, and supporting a dense population. The chief building material was bricks made from the clay found on the spot, and springs of bitumen furnished a strong cement.

3. In this region, as we are told in Scripture, *Nimrod*, the "mighty hunter," of the race of Ham, founded a kingdom which included four cities named *Babel* (*Babylon*), *Erech* (*e'rek*), *Calneh*, and

Scriptural
data: Nimrod;
Shinar.