

"And the same day that he had seen the dream he sent his messengers to pray for my friendship!"

Suddenly, in the midst of all this peace and self-satisfaction, Babylonia again rose in revolt, and was joined by Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia. When Assyria emerged, breathless and badly shaken, from the struggle, it was to find Egypt lost entirely, and Babylonia but very partially subdued.

The last public act of Assur-bani-pal was the celebration of a great triumph as a thanksgiving for this scanty victory. In his royal chariot, drawn by four conquered chieftains, he was borne to the gates of the temple of Assur, where he held a solemn thanksgiving. After that we hear of him no more. He probably retired to his palace at Nineveh, and passed his days in the study of literature.



In the hands of his successors the weakened empire trembled to its foundations. Closer pressed the fierce Manda tribes, probably in origin a wild race of nomadic people from the north-east of Asia, whose provinces had been ravaged by Assyrian conquerors. No hand was held out to help the falling empire, for the feeling of the whole western world was expressed in the words of the great Hebrew prophet who said of her:—

"All that hear the report of thee clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually."