

legal transactions. The advancement which they made upon the Babylonians was principally in the direction of a more highly developed imperial government, a more palatial style of architecture, and a greater appreciation of sculpture as a decorative art.

II. THE LATER BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

Recovery of the Empire by Babylon.—During the supremacy of Assyria, Babylon remained in the position of a dependent kingdom; but throughout this period she had preserved the memory of her former greatness, and frequently revolted against the Assyrian monarch. But in these attempts she was doomed to failure, until she found an ally in a people living east of the Tigris. This people was the Medes, who had themselves been subject to Assyria for more than a century; they had now recovered their independence and established an empire of their own. With the aid of the Medes, the Babylonians succeeded in destroying Nineveh and overthrowing the Assyrian monarchy (606 B. C.). The dominions of Assyria were now divided between the conquerors,—Media ruling the countries to the east of the Tigris, and Babylon the countries to the west.

Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar.—In this way Babylon recovered her ancient power, and ruled with increased splendour. The great king Nebuchadnezzar (605-561 B. C.) restored her fallen cities, and made her for a short time



THE NAME NEBUCHADNEZZAR IN
CUNEIFORM

the centre of Eastern civilization. His dominions extended over the valley of the Euphrates and the countries of Syria to the borders of Egypt. The Jews who refused to respect his authority were treated with severity. Jerusalem was taken and sacked; and the tribes of Judah were carried away into captivity. The great king rebuilt the city of Babylon, surrounded it with massive walls, and adorned it with sumptuous palaces. To rival the beauties of nature and to please his queen, a Median princess, he