

Assyrian Empire. — 17. About the same time that Nimrod founded Babylon, Ashur, son of Sem, founded Nineveh on the Tigris. The name Assyria was derived from that of Ashur. For a long time Assyria was subject to Chaldea; finally, it not only freed itself from this subjection but, after having conquered the whole of Mesopotamia, subdued Chaldea about the beginning of the thirteenth century. Thus was the Assyrian Empire formed. Its history is divided into two parts: the first ends with the taking of Nineveh, in 788; the second, with the destruction of Nineveh, in 625.

First Part. — Principal Kings. — 18. During the five centuries which followed the union of Babylon and Nineveh, the Assyrian kings waged cruel wars. They took pleasure in pillage and destruction and exterminated whole populations.



Winged Bull

(discovered in the ruins of Nineveh).

Tiglath-Pileser I extended his empire as far as the Black Sea and the Lebanon Mountains. An inscription attributed to him boasts of his «having swept the surface of the earth». Shalmaneser II twice took and pillaged the city of Damascus, in Syria and obliged the kings of Phœnicia and of Philistia to pay tribute to him. Finally

the conquered nations all rose in rebellion and the Chaldeans and Medes took possession of Nineveh in 788.

Part Second. — Phul. — 19. Nineveh was not destroyed but the Assyrian Empire was divided. The Chaldean Phul, whom several scholars consider as identical with Tiglath-Pileser II, united Babylon and Nineveh under his rule. It was the same Phul of the Bible who imposed a tribute on Manahem, king of Israel.