

Babylonian—no one except Assyria can be regarded as properly a "world empire." Persia carried to a still higher stage of development the military and political system of Assyria. Although she made no contributions to the finer arts of life, she surpassed all her predecessors as a conquering and ruling power. She is, on this account, the prototype in Asia of Rome in Europe. She withstood the rude barbarians of the north—the Scythians—in their inroads into the civilized south. She developed a more permanent system of provincial government than had before existed—which furnished the model of that of the later Roman empire. Her religion was perhaps the nearest approach to Jewish monotheism of all the religions of western Asia. But with all her achievements she represented an old and decaying civilization, which appears in its true light when we see it brought into contact, and placed in contrast with the new and growing civilization of Greece.

IV. REVIEW OF ORIENTAL NATIONS

The Beginnings of Civilization.—In reviewing the history of the Oriental world there are certain general facts which should be impressed upon our minds. In the first place, we see that it is from the Orient that the world received the rudiments of civilization. It is here that men first passed out of the tribal state and developed a higher form of government, by the erection of cities, kingdoms, and great empires. It is here, also, that we see the early development of religion, which passed from crude forms of animal or ancestral worship to a polytheistic nature worship and finally to a monotheistic religion, like that of the Hebrews. We also find here a great advancement in man's economic life, which began with hunting and fishing or the tending of flocks and herds, and passed to the cultivation of the soil, the growth of manufactures, and the development of commerce. Moreover, the people of the Orient gave to the world the rudiments of some of the important sciences, especially astronomy and mathematics. Still further, we see a remarkable progress made in the art of writing, which began with the expression