

THE STORY OF THE NATIONS

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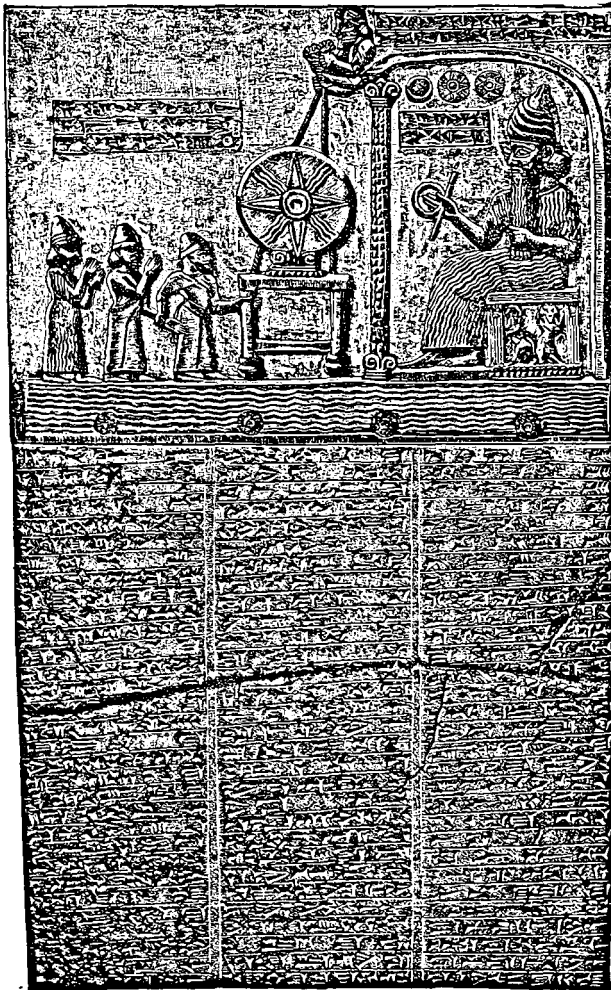
CHALDEA



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SHAMASH THE SUN-GOD.*
(From the Sun Temple at Sippar.)

CHALDEA

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE
RISE OF ASSYRIA

(TREATED AS A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY
OF ANCIENT HISTORY)

BY

ZÉNAÏDE A. RAGOŽIN

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ORIENTAL SOCIETY;" CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE "ATHÉNÉE
ORIENTAL" OF PARIS

"He (Carlyle) says it is part of his creed that history is poetry, could we tell
it right."—EMERSON

"Da mihi, Domine, scire quod sciendum est."—IMITATION OF CHRIST.
("Grant that the knowledge I get may be the knowledge worth having"—
Matthew Arnold's translation)

SEVENTH IMPRESSION

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TO THE MEMBERS OF

THE CLASS,

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF MANY HAPPY HOURS, THIS

VOLUME AND THE FOLLOWING ONES ARE AFFEC-

TIONATELY INSCRIBED BY THEIR FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

IDLEWILD PLANTATION,
SAN ANTONIO.



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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VII.

PROFESSOR LOUIS DYER has devoted some time to preparing a free metrical translation of "Ishtar's Descent." Unfortunately, owing to his many occupations, only the first part of the poem is as yet finished. This he most kindly has placed at our disposal, authorizing us to present it to our readers.

ISHTAR IN URUGAL.

ALONG the gloomy avenue of death
To seek the dread abysm of Urugal,
In everlasting Dark whence none returns,
Ishtar, the Moon-god's daughter, made resolve,
And that way, sick with sorrow, turned her face.
A road leads downward, but no road leads back
From Darkness' realm. There is Irkalla queen,
Named also Ninkigal, mother of pains.
Her portals close forever on her guests
And exit there is none, but all who enter,
To daylight strangers, and of joy unknown,
Within her sunless gates restrained must stay.
And there the only food vouchsafed is dust,
For slime they live on, who on earth have died.
Day's golden beam greets none and darkness reigns
Where hurtling bat-like forms of feathered men
Or human-fashioned birds imprisoned flit.
Close and with dust o'erstrewn, the dungeon doors
Are held by bolts with gathering mould o'ersealed.

By love distracted, though the queen of love,
Pale Ishtar downward flashed toward death's domain,
And swift approached these gates of Urugal,
Then paused impatient at its portals grim;

For love, whose strength no earthly bars restrain,
 Gives not the key to open Darkness' Doors.
 By service from all living men made proud,
 Ishtar brooked not resistance from the dead.
 She called the jailer, then to anger changed
 The love that sped her on her breathless way,
 And from her parted lips incontinent
 Swept speech that made the unyielding warder quail.
 "Quick, turnkey of the pit! swing wide these doors.
 And fling them swiftly open. Tarry not!
 For I will pass, even I will enter in.
 Dare no denial, thou, bar not my way,
 Else will I burst thy bolts and rend thy gates,
 This lintel shatter else and wreck these doors.
 The pent-up dead I else will loose, and lead
 Back the departed to the lands they left,
 Else bid the famished dwellers in the pit
 Rise up to live and eat their fill once more.
 Dead myriads then shall burden groaning earth,
 Sore tasked without them by her living throngs."
 Love's mistress, mastered by strong hate,
 The warder heard, and wondered first, then feared
 The angered goddess Ishtar what she spake,
 Then answering said to Ishtar's wrathful might:
 "O princess, stay thy hand; rend not the door,
 But tarry here, while unto Ninkigal
 I go, and tell thy glorious name to her."

ISHTAR'S LAMENT.

"ALL love from earthly life with me departed,
 With me to tarry in the gates of death;
 In heaven's sun no warmth is longer hearted,
 And chilled shall cheerless men now draw slow breath.

 "I left in sadness life which I had given,
 I turned from gladness and I walked with woe,
 Toward living death by grief untimely driven,
 I search for Thammuz whom harsh fate laid low.

"The darkling pathway o'er the restless waters
Of seven seas that circle Death's domain
I trod, and followed after earth's sad daughters
Torn from their loved ones and ne'er seen again.

"Here must I enter in, here make my dwelling
With Thammuz in the mansion of the dead,
Driven to Famine's house by love compelling
And hunger for the sight of that dear head.

"O'er husbands will I weep, whom death has taken,
Whom fate in manhood's strength from life has swept,
Leaving on earth their living wives forsaken,—
O'er them with groans shall bitter tears be wept.

"And I will weep o'er wives, whose short day ended
Ere in glad offspring joyed their husbands' eyes ;
Snatched from loved arms they left their lords untended,—
O'er them shall tearful lamentations rise.

"And I will weep o'er babes who left no brothers,
Young lives to the ills of age by hope opposed.
The sons of saddened sires and tearful mothers,
One moment's life by death eternal closed."

NINKIGAL'S COMMAND TO THE WARDER.

"LEAVE thou this presence, slave, open the gate ;
Since power is hers to force an entrance here,
Let her come in as come from life the dead,
Submissive to the laws of Death's domain.
Do unto her what unto all thou doest."

Want of space bids us limit ourselves to these few fragments--surely sufficient to make our readers wish that Professor Dyer might spare some time to the completion of his task.



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