

## THE HERITAGE OF MAN-MADE THINGS

The tale of things that man made and left behind him in this parlous Eden is so profuse and long, that we could not recount it in these few short pages of ours. But happily there is no need for that. For these artefacts, with which he expanded his life to greater fulness and in which he set down the record of his life, are not the heritage of the Near East alone; they have become the heritage of the world, and we here in America have our full share of them. Here in Chicago, Professor Breasted is preparing the exhibition halls of The Oriental Institute. If we would spend a day in ancient Egypt, in Assyria or Babylon, and see the works man wrought there in the distant past and how he wrought them, it will be better than many words for us to loiter in that careful, well-chosen display. And if this do not suffice us, we may see other glories to complement those shown here, the glories of an older Babylon, Shumer and Akkad, in the Field Museum of Natural History. Or if we have a day of leisure in New York, we cannot spend it more pleasurably than in the halls of the Metropolitan Museum. Nor would we be disappointed, if instead we should find ourselves in Boston or Philadelphia. We need not step outside America to see the splendid art of Egypt and Babylon and the manner of life that ancient man lived there.

Nor need we lack guidance in the appreciation of the significance of this life. Here again we in America are specially blest. Precisely in this field we have a wealth of excellent books to help us make this heritage our own. For new ways to the understanding of man's rise from primitive animal barbarism to the heights of human culture, the trail is blazed by Professor Breasted in his *History of Egypt*, in his *Ancient Times*, and in the *Conquest of Civilization*. These are clear and adequate guides. While the name and work of Breasted does not stand alone, still he is first in a noble company of peers. No better guide to Persia's beauty may be found than the fine, sensitive, and scholarly soul of A. V. Williams Jackson. Should we want to dig down to its lower levels, we may do this also with Rogers. Or we may loiter on the fertile fields of Shumer and Akkad and ancient Babylon with Leonard W. King. For more exciting sport we may follow with Olmstead the Assyrian wolf on his lion hunts, or, if we tire of this, traverse with him the long, narrow bridge of old Near Eastern states



THE HEAD OF KHEPHREN (Cairo Museum)  
(From von Bissing *Denkmäler*)

and cultures, Syria and Palestine. Even the ruder worth of the Hittites we may, if we desire, glimpse cautiously with Garstang. This is by no means all: astounding is the wealth that fills our Western garner with information on the ancient Near East, its achievements and its rich and varied products. We gratefully acknowledge these broad and strong foundations on which we hope to build an appreciation and understanding of a newer Orient.

But as we pass in review this heritage of Western Asia, now become ours, we may well remember how recent is our knowledge of Ancient Oriental culture. All but a small fraction of its acquisition, its excavation, ordering, and booking, its display in showcase or on printed page, is an accomplishment of this twentieth

century, a gain made in this present generation. Before that time some of us will remember the schooling of a previous generation. Ancient history was then a far different thing. It began with Israel, with emphasis on what we then termed religion; and for the graces, arts, letters, it began with Greece. What went before, we saw but as a little thing and dimly; Egypt and Babylon were strained before they reached our eyes, through the imperfect filter of the tradition in word or work of Greeks and Hebrews. And they appeared a dry and sterile thing. Now, though the short moment of the ancient glory of Greece and Israel is not dimmed, it stands no longer alone as a thing superhuman and unattainable.

These men were, as we are now, pupils of an earlier Orient; they, too, learned from the ancient East. If they wrought well with what they learned, we may well credit them with what they created and strive to do no less ourselves. But never again may we forget, that the cradle of many things of our life is not Greece, but that same Western Asia, which now is again bidding for our sympathetic interest, as again it starts to struggle upward in the scale of man.

Two thousand years before the Athens of Draco and Solon, man, struggling on his narrow fertile strip of land along the Nile and Tigris, worked out the elements of social law and order. If we remember the nearness of the desert and its constant threat, it will make clearer to us the direness of his struggle and the greatness of his achievement. With this in mind look at the magnificent head of Khephren or Khafre, the builder of the second pyramid at Gizeh, in the heyday of Egypt's youth. Men spent their lives in rearing high in the desert air the pinnacle of their pyramid, that years of storms and shifting sands may never bury them from the sight of heaven. They hewed their effigy in diorite so hard, that even the chisels of modern sculptors quail before it. They worked with infinite, cunning patience and with desperate energy to carve out of this refractory material, features so vivid and so lifelike that one cannot doubt that this head is the portrait of a real man. And yet, they set upon these realistic human features and on their massive framework, the stamp of the undying majesty of government and discipline, of law and order. And with it all they have created a work of art of the first order and of enduring beauty, a masterpiece that few have equaled and none sur-

passed. Their rare moments of play and pleasure are registered in vivid color and in living detail on the walls of their abiding residence, the tomb. As their life is controlled by the conventions imposed by the narrow valley in which they live, so is their painting. Within the bounds of these conventions their art moves freely and with



FISHING AND FOWLING SCENE IN EARLY EGYPT  
(From Mrs. Davies' copy of the original)

masterful abandon. A parallel to such variation within confined bounds can be found in music, where master musicians have displayed richness of detail within the convention-bound forms of fugue or symphony.

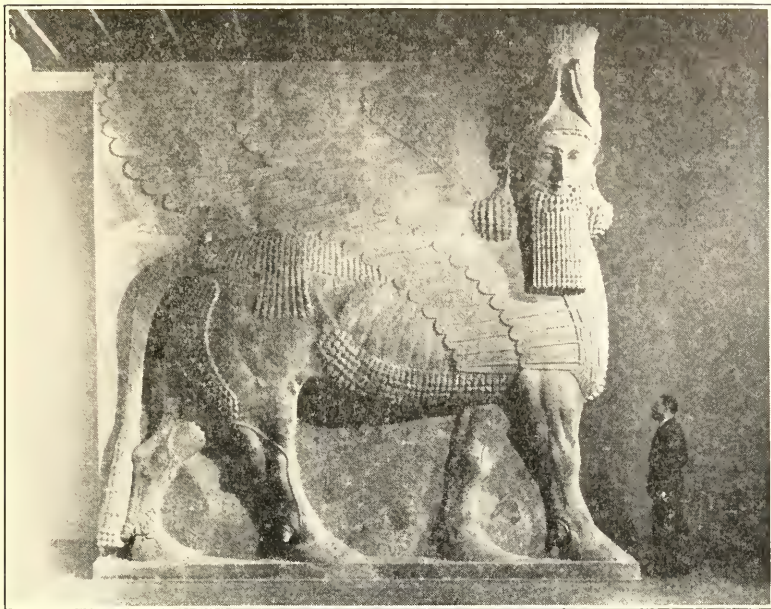
He shows himself to his gods and now to us, who have become his gods, as, in an hour of leisure, man reverts to savage pleasure in the disciplined forms of the chase. In contrast with his controlled movement and the decorum of his attitude and attire, he places beside himself the ruthless greed and ferocity of the wild-cat. To emphasize the contrast, the cat before him breaks heed-



FACADE OF SUN-TEMPLE OF RAMSES II AT ABU SIMBEL  
 (From Breasted: *Temples of Lower Nubia*)

lessly both bird and lotus in its blood-lust, while his lotus-bearing lady stands in soft and lacy attire close behind him to remind him, even in the savagery of the ordered chase, of his well-ordered, clean, comfortable and aesthetic home. And to complete the atmosphere of gracious homelife, his little daughter sits fearlessly beside him even as he flings his snake-shaped throw-stick. So early Egypt shows itself to us in intimate detail as it is at play within the narrow confines of its valley. We cannot show the color, though it may be seen in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in Mrs. de Garvis Davies' excellent copy of the original which is now on exhibition in the British Museum.

Thus valiantly did man in the early youth of civilization in ancient Egypt strive in an endless struggle to create and to keep an earthly Eden in the Nile's narrow valley against the forces that were always threatening to engulf it. In the days of Ramses II, even as man, for the first time, grows weary in the endless struggle, with his forces waning and the fine edges of his artistry de-



WINGED BULL-CHERUB OF SARGON—FROM KHORSABAD  
(Photograph by the Oriental Institute)

caying, he gathers himself together in one last supreme outburst of energy. With degenerative diseases gnawing at her vitals, and the ubiquitous desert microbe attacking every open pore in the length of her slender body, the strength of early Egypt's greatness in ebbing rapidly away. A fitting symbol and companion of this primordial civilization of Egypt, preparing in its senescent stage to submit without recourse to the forces of reaction and decay, are the features of her ageing Ramses set in proud senile self-assurance against a barbarously juvenescent world. But before he and his Egypt are quite ready to succumb, they are seized with a very fury of stone-cutting and of building. For the most striking relic of this period, they march to the south, where there is no more Egypt, no more fertile valley, where the Nile is a mere ribbon of water, threading its way through the bare, eternal sands. There they cut a temple in the sheer rock of the cliff, and before its door, they seat themselves in grotesque, colossal figures, turn their back on one desert, and, with supremely insolent indifference, face the rising sun, beyond the river, over another desert. With

this brief indication of the buried heritage of ancient Egypt, we must refer for further illustration to Capart's *Egyptian Art* or to Grousset's *Near and Middle East* in the series, "The Civilizations of the East."

Meanwhile we follow Ramses's stare eastward. There Assyria presently dreamed of conquest and world-empire. The loot and tribute of her raids she hoarded into her sundry capitals where they served her pleasure in the solemn ceremonial of her sacrifice or in the savage sports of lion-baiting and the wild ass hunt. How lovingly she cut in stone her fleeing onagers or lions, sometimes fierce and rampant, sometimes wounded and dying! We can stop only for a fleeting glance at the symbols of her wealth and power, the great winged bull-cherubs which she placed at her palace gates to warn the original possessors of its looted treasure of any dream of a return to them. By the skill and cleverness of Professor Chiera, the greatest and most impressive of these cherubs was recovered and now stands in the Oriental Institute. But until Professor Chiera issues his report on his modern dig and labors, we must refer for fuller information to the eighty-year-old statements and reports of Botta, or to Bonomis' or Buckingham's interesting stories of Botta's finds in Nineveh.

For Assyria's palaces and empire her cherubs proved unavailing. From the tribute-bearing cities and the defeated and despoiled chieftains of the fertile crescent on Assyria's west no danger threatened her. But her turn came. Her armies were defeated, her palaces and their temples burned and buried, and her dream of world-empire was taken over and realized by the half-nomadic horsemen of the Medes and Persians. Their hard-riding hordes swept across the sparsely-peopled plains of Asia Minor, down to the temples on the southern Nile. Their desert sand-storm host broke only on the rocky fastness of sea-girt Greece.

It was a young Greece that was just putting to new uses the techniques learned in the East. Before the Age of Pericles, she discovered that her planets were not truly planets, which means erring stars, but that the East had already seen them follow stated and recurring courses. In her theaters and temples, in her statues and her paintings, there is more of Oriental mathematics, more of careful ancient Eastern craft than once we knew. Plato, like Herodotus, knew what he owed to Egypt and to Babylon. Oriental mu-

sic, with new intervals and cadence, led Plato's Pythagoreans to a new conception of the scale, of harmony and discord. Thus on the warp of learned and loaned lore of the East the eager, penetrating spirit of Greece wove that perfect web of art and science, of thought and word. Then her mind was seized with the divine madness of the East which resulted in the splendid moment of Alexander's conquests. They availed Greece but little, for she could not hold for long what she had seized. What she had soon to let go, the stronger and more stable power of Rome seized and consolidated. Rome like Greece was of the West. And so the Nearer East seemed doomed to supine slavery in the grasp of Eternal Rome. Her dream of world-empire seemed to be taken from her never to return. But was this seeming true?

If we reflect a little, perhaps most of us will recall that this Greco-Roman world marks the era in which were produced or perfected and propagated those great monotheistic salvation religions, true world-empire religions, whose outstanding forms, Christianity and Judaism, are still living forces in our Western World. These are in their older forms typical products of the Near East. Their beginnings lie some centuries further back. Following still earlier leads, it was a Jew, whom we call the second Isaiah, who first clearly saw this vision of an universal God-King and a world-wide empire of religion. The conditions under which he dreamed and wrote were very similar to those of the Greco-Roman era. The little Jewish Kingdom had been wiped out and ground under the heel of the Neo-Babylonian world-empire. A Persian world-empire, in turn, had taken the place of the New-Babylonian. At that time and under those conditions the Jews began to formulate clearly for themselves the idea of a single God ruling all the world. Again, as the Persian world-empire disappeared and was replaced by Greek and Roman rule, its devotees found solace against their political degradation in the salvation religion of Mithraism. A number of other forms of similar beliefs and hopes appear under a variety of names both before and after the rise of Christianity. The place and time of greatest activity in the formulation and spread of such teachings is the Roman empire at the beginning of the Christian era. The most successful forms of such religions, both in regard to the wide areas over which they spread and in prominence of results secured, are Judaism which compassed land and sea to



make one proselyte,<sup>1</sup> and Christianity, about which nothing further need be said in a Christian land.

From the point of view of this survey, the essential faith and hope of all these religious beliefs and hopes is much the same. Subject peoples, peoples who have lost their own political independence and power, escape the sense of slavery and bondage by creating for themselves an ideal "Kingdom of Heaven." God is the King of Heaven, the King of Kings, such a world-ruler as never was on earth nor could be. To the power of earthly Caesars there were limits, to the new God-King there were none in time or space. Earthly world-emperors might be unjust, unmerciful; the ruler of the heavenly world-empire had no defects and made no mistakes. His law was laid down in an errorless, revealed Book which was of universal validity. He was served by few and simple rites. Whoever performed these rites and acknowledged this law, be he bond or free, rich or poor, peasant or king, became thereby a blessed and honored free citizen of this everlasting Kingdom of Heaven, an inmate of the glorious and eternal City of God. This life on earth was but a passing show in any case. If men seemed down-trodden, humble, overworked, and weary here below, that was but a veil of error, which might obscure for a little while, but could not perceptibly change nor make the slightest impression on the glory of the eternal world-empire of the spirit, which lay as the unchangeable fact just beyond the veil.

By this world-empire of a new faith and hope, by this spiritual world-dominion of the humble and the lowly, Hither Asia escaped from Greco-Roman bondage, while yet the Roman legions camped, marched and countermarched upon her soil. With the imponderable strength of this belief, the Near East conquered Rome and her entire empire, while Roman shackles still seemed to enslave her. With it, indeed, she conquered our whole Western World so thoroughly that even now this Oriental dream-empire of ideas and ideals is still potent in all our minds in many subtle ways,—so effectively that even now to many in our midst this seems the sum and substance of religion, and nothing else is worth the name. And thus another heritage of Western Asia has become our heritage, ours more than hers.

Then, while this empire of the spirit became the cherished treas-

<sup>1</sup>See the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 23, verse 15.

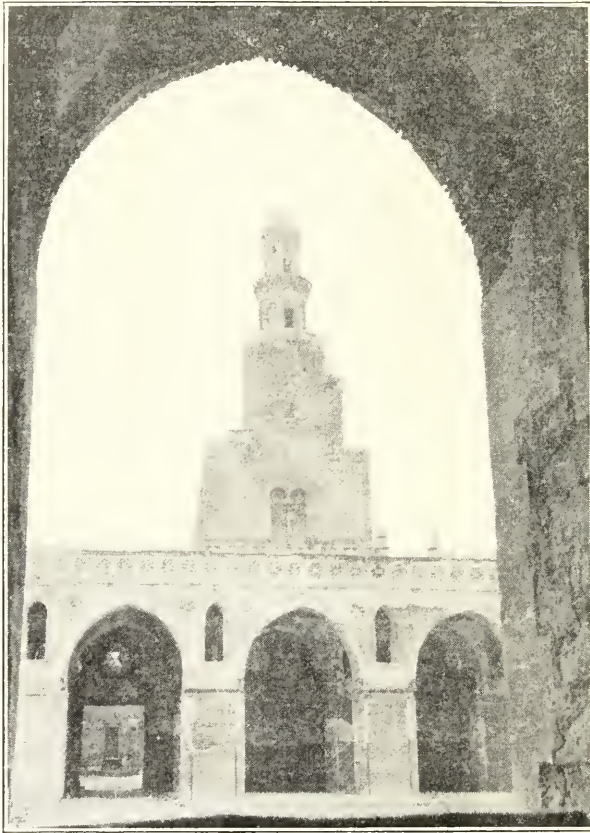
ure and the heritage of the Western World, the indomitable spirit of the Nearer East withdrew into the heart of the Arabian desert, recreated there a kingdom of faith and hope in nomad style and with nomadic features. This is the Islam of the Arabs, and so aptly was it fashioned, that to this day throughout the length and breadth of Western Asia, wherever nomad sands and steppes prevail, there the Islam of Arabia's prophet, Mohammed, is the prevailing faith.



THE DOME OF THE ROCK AT JERUSALEM  
(Photograph by Florence Lowden Miller)

Nor did this suffice her. With new energy and new unity inspired in her by her new religion she succeeded in bursting once more Rome's dam against the desert and in creating for herself another world-empire greater than Rome and Persia together. Like the empire of her new religion, this latest empire of Hither Asia, had its foundation laid deep in nomadic soil. How firm and well laid they were is shown by three outstanding characteristics in its long career. First, Islam presently became practically coterminous with the two great desert-steppe areas, the nomad lands of Western Asia. Second, three peoples of nomadic stamp succeeded each other in some form of rule over it for almost ten centuries, the Arab, the Turk, and the Mongol, and to this day, these with two others of nomad origin, the Persian and the Berber, they share

the dominion over Islam's present scattered parts. Third, despite all divisions and difficulties, as long as the horse and camel were the chief ultra-human instruments of power and means of locomotion, so long in some form or other did this near Eastern Cali-



THE MOSQUE OF IBN TULUN IN CAIRO  
(Photograph by Florence Lowden Miller)

phal world-empire maintain itself as one of the great powers of the world.

In the nearer East, Islam, from the Danube to the Atlas, was the successor of the Eastern Roman Empire. As they took over this dominion, just as Greece and Rome once learned their A.B.C's from ancient Asia, so now the tables were turned and the untutored sons of Asia learned from Rome and Greece. But this is not

the complete story of their science and art. There are still among us Westerners those who do not see anything of worth before this modern day, except that which is Greece. To those who believe that Islam and its culture is nothing but a poor copy of things Greek



THE MOSQUE OF EL-AZHAR IN CAIRO  
(Photograph by Florence Lowden Miller)

we are content to show four examples of the most distinctive product of the Mediaeval Moslem world, the Mosque.

We take you first to Jerusalem and there to one of the world's most effective building sites most efficiently used, the Dome of the Rock, often wrongly called the Mosque of Omar. It was designed not for a mosque but for a pilgrim shrine; and though its age is

venerable, Omar neither saw it nor had anything to do with it. Still it was constructed less than a century after the Arab conquest, which makes it just about 1200 years old. The Arabs were still pupils and beginners in the arts and crafts of settled civilization. This is, indeed, one of the first public buildings they attempted. If you look closely no doubt you can discover elements that are of Greek or Roman derivation. But look at it in its en-



THE SULTAN AHMED MOSQUE IN STAMBOUL

tirety and you will see this is not Greek nor Roman nor Persian: this cannot well be called by any other name than Moslem. This is a new feeling, new work, new art, created by new needs. This has a dignity, a greatness, a beauty, not borrowed from others, but all its own.

Now let us go to Cairo some two centuries after this. A Turkish soldier-governor named Ibn Tulun is building a garrison town. For this town and his retinue he needs a mosque. You see it before you, as it stands today with rosettes and arches, pointed or horseshoe-shaped, and a tower of Babel set over them to look upon the Nile. No doubt each separate element existed somewhere in some such form before. But so combined they may not be found

elsewhere. A new spirit and a new necessity is here creating a new architectural design.

At some distance north of Ibn Tulun's garrison city is the actual Cairo, the city of the Fatimid Sultans and Shiite Caliphs, the predecessors of Saladin. There will be few who will not recognize the great university and mosque of El-Azhar built about a century later. It has been ruined and repaired, destroyed, rebuilt, and extended, since first it was conceived. But its major effect and its unique impressiveness persist. Where will you find another such school and church as this in all the world?

One more example of another, wholly different type! This is in Constantinople in the early years of the seventeenth century. And this mosque we show you is not Saint Sophia's church nor is it a mere copy of Saint Sophia. The Ottoman Turk is not, as superficial observers have said, a mere copyist. Those who made of Stambul, the greatest cathedral city of the world, who placed on its long hillcrest that great series of metropolitan places of worship, were empire builders, worthy successors of Pharaohs and Caesars. That you may see this we place before you here the great Sinan's Sultan Ahmed Mosque. We cannot show you its distinctively Ottoman fayence interior, but we ask you to place beside it, from Grousset or where you will, a picture of St. Sophia. Then you may judge the new light airiness and serene beauty, the new conception and execution that is here.

As it is with the mosques we used as symbols, so it is with the arts and sciences, the crafts and culture of this latest world-empire of Western Asia which was one of its greatest. It taught us many things. We used to go to school to it, for formerly it led the world. Our forebears learned from it their algebra, which we still call by its purely Arab name. Our scientists were steeped in its lore. Our sonnets are written in its measures and our *do re mi* is its alphabet. No small part of our modern culture rests on foundations built of its gifts to us.<sup>2</sup> Now it, too, is gone, and its traces are crumbling with the passing of the camel and the horse. Now its children have roused to find themselves fallen behind in the march of a moving world. Their mosques and their caravanseries are neglected while past them run motor roads and near them rails are laid. Their camels and their horses are crowded off the ancient trails by motor cars and terrified on their pastures by aeroplanes.

The machine age is upon them; it presses them with its speed; it changes the nature and the meaning of the water on their frontiers and of the soil under their feet; it awakens them, nomad as



A DESERTED CARAVANSERIE

well as settler, to the need of catching up and keeping pace. Out of the twilight of sleepy, weary, nomad empires it has snatched them into the sunlight of a blazing, new day. They must and would become moderns, and they find us leading them. So they come to school to us, as once we went to them. Their children ask us puzzled questions, as once our students asked their masters.

### THE HUMAN HERITAGE

If now they ask us who are supposed to know much, what is the man-made heritage on the thin sown lines in the desert, what shall we answer them? It is difficult to answer briefly. So constrained, the writer would say: Their heritage in man-made things is the wreckage and remnants of past world-empires, empires of ideas and ideals, and empires of this earth and its materials. What this heritage, old and richly varied, may be worth in the values of the new world pressing on them, lies not in things, but in themselves.

The most important heritage of East and West in this age of great changes and machines is the human heritage. We have studied much of nature and how she can be made to work for us; we have studied things that men made, and what might become of

<sup>2</sup>For further detail on Europe's debt to Islam, the reader may be referred to Arnold and Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford Press, 1931.