

GUSSING THE AGE OF CIVILIZATION

The Latest Discoveries Say It is About Nine Thousand Years.

OUR CHRONOLOGY NEEDS REVISION

Thrilling Story of Professor Hilprecht's Excavations at the Oldest City of the World, and the Astonishing Light They Throw Upon History--Chapter in Science as Interesting as Fiction.

From the New York Herald.

On Aug. 30 last some details were given of the remarkable archaeological discoveries of a commission sent to the University of Pennsylvania to make excavations on the site of the old Nippur, the oldest city in the world. This commission, which the Rev. John P. Peters, D. D., was the first director, and Professor Herman V. Hilprecht, the permanent Assyriologist, discovered the most interesting and scientifically sensational fact that the ancient Babylonian mound contained not only the old cities known to history, but also a still more ancient city in which were found cuneiform inscriptions dating back to the year (estimated) 3,250 B. C. This discovery conclusively shows that civilization is centuries older than we believed, for the beginning of the world has, until these discoveries, been placed at the year, and this date appears in all our modern editions of the Bible.

But greater things have developed since Dr. Peters' first announcement of information it published at that time. Since then Professor Hilprecht has returned fresh from the scene with further information of the most interesting nature. He reached here last week.

Professor Hilprecht's first announcement, on being interviewed by the Herald, was that he had discovered a new and authoritative age of 2,000 years more to the age of the world. Dr. Peters' computation on the information at hand, of the beginning of civilization at 7,000 B. C. Professor Hilprecht now declares that his knowledge of the development of cuneiform writing justifies him in saying that the earliest writing found could not have been developed in less than 3,000 years.

This places the beginning of civilization at about the year 3,000 B. C.

PROF. HILPRECHT.

Professor Hilprecht is one of the half dozen men in the world who have mastered all the elements of cuneiform inscriptions that he can at a glance determine the age of the writing. It was his knowledge of the cuneiform inscriptions that he brought to support his announcement.

The discoveries were made in the university's excavations at Nippur. Eight years ago, when it was decided to send out an expedition for Babylonian research, Professor Hilprecht and the Rev. Dr. John P. Peters, then professor of archaeology at the university, decided upon Nippur as the spot that offered promise of the most ancient finds.

They were not mistaken. The English, German and French scientists at work in Babylonian research have had the chance of finding anything nearly so ancient as the bits of vases that the American excavators dug up under the Temple of Bel.

From the beginning of religion in the East there has been a firm belief, which thousands of years have not been able to shake, that the records of the past must be ever destroyed. The vases on which were written the temple archives were kept for thousands of years, and were broken only by accident. The worshippers believed that never could any temple prosper or bring peace and happiness to its worshippers if the records of the past were destroyed.

The same practice is still adhered to in Constantinople and other modern cities, which are continually rising on their old walls. The records of the past are being torn down and taken away in seldom offered in the East.

BUILDING ON RUINS.

In days when Noah built his ark the kings and high priests of Babylonia had the same belief, and some of them in making alterations in the temple left such inscriptions on the walls as: "But previous kings have not kept the boundary of temple; they have not searched out its foundation stone, and gathered their altars to lay on the lines on the true places of the former temple; and the gods were not in favor, and did not look upon the people." And so they built their own temples with a care and precision that they thought would meet with the approval of their deities.

All this may not seem at first to have very much to do with the work of the Pennsylvania expedition, but it has. If it had not been for this belief of the worshippers of Bel there would have been no such rich veins of the strata of civilization as the scientist unearthed there, unwearying their finds with more pride and joy than they would have in discovering a gold mine. From seven thousand years before Christ the inscriptions of the world's history, scratched in clay and baked to a hardness against which time and weather have had no effect, had been placed here, and were sent out for the enlightenment of races that should come afterward.

It was this spot which, of all the other places in the world, has the richest return for the enthusiasts' money and labor, that the two archaeologists of the University of Pennsylvania decided upon in their council before the first party was sent out, eight years ago. Fortune placed the enterprise in the right place, and Hilprecht and his sturdy assistants were the work done properly. They fell to and began to pick and pull the temple to pieces in one place and another as they went. It was built, and who built it. They had guessed pretty definitely that it was built by the Semites, and they found the idea truer than they had hoped.

ONE TEMPLE'S LESSON.

High outer and inner walls surrounded the temple, and in parts are so standing. The hilltop, over the tower, is ninety-seven feet above the desert level and fifty feet above the surrounding debris. The Arabs call the hill "Daughter of the Prince."

On the exterior the temple gives little indication of its real antiquity. The walls as they were found at first seemed to have been built by Kadeshman-Durgu, who lived only 1,200 years before Christ.

It took very little work, however, to show that the bricks bearing his name formed only a thick veneer, or extra wall, on the real body of the temple. They were put there by the pious king to prevent the wearing effects of wind and rain and sand, and were also the means of showing to the people that the bitumen, a foot thick, that kept it from getting through the wall and the foundations.

The temple "proper" had been built, they found, by King Ur-Gur, who flourished 2,800 B. C. over that part of Kengir--the land of canals and bulrushes--

later called Babylonia, for a younger but greater city than Nippur. The Pennsylvanians dug away until they had reached Ur-Gur's foundation, and the temple, as well, it was of baked brick, like the walls, and eight feet thick. Directly under it was Sargon's platform--two courses of massive baked bricks of a size and shape like nothing ever before found in Babylonia or anywhere else in the world, a thick, each had a convex top, being shaped like a loaf of bread half risen from the pan. In addition to King Sargon's name in cuneiform characters, both the deliberate imprint of the thumb of the slave who made it.

DUMBFOUNDED.

The scientists were dumbfounded. Sargon, archaeologists had taught, was a myth, for there had never been anything found in the East to corroborate his name. Naramsin, they said, by the most liberal count, was the oldest in the line of known monarchs. History could trace him back no farther.

But here in hard brick were the works of both Sargon and of Naramsin, the son of Sargon. The truth of the matter was settled beyond question, and, by it, the date of the building of the platform, for the scientists knew that if Sargon lived at all it was thirty-eight hundred years before Christ.

They had reached the latest remains that they could have expected, but they went on to lower.

Under the courses of great bricks laid by Sargon they found strata about thirty feet thick, containing vases and inscribed fragments that had gradually been deposited there by centuries of inhabitants. As they went further down, proving with each spadeful the history of a kingdom and a people that had gradually been swept into a dark and impenetrable darkness, they found broken pieces of the tablets or vases, on which temple records had been kept.

Under the cuneiform inscriptions grew more primitive at every foot.

Hilprecht, who knew that at one time the cuneiform writing had had its origin in the passage of signs that before the bottom of the vein was reached the pictures would be found. The pits, two of them, side by side, and having a width of about one hundred square yards, were sunk until they were thirty feet below the platform which formed such an important mile post in comparison with the passage of signs that before the clay came to an end and all traces of human life disappeared.

The excavators were now cutting into the development of cuneiform writing, and carrying out earth that since the creation of the world had lain undisturbed by man. They had not yet unearthed writings in which the pictures were whole, nor even the form in which round objects were pictured in curved lines, a stage that must have preceded the time when the attached strokes were used for all characters.

ANCIENT INSCRIPTION.

They found that the present desert level was not the one that had existed in the early days of Nippur. There was an older desert thirty feet or so below the present line, and on this plan Nippur had been founded.

But they found that the oldest of these fragments, those taken from the bottom of the pit, were scratched with cuneiform characters, dating 6,000 years before Christ. Professor Hilprecht has no hesitation in stating this, and adds that it is based on a very conservative calculation. Sargon lived 2,800 B. C., and high above his platform of bricks the gradual action of the busy life of the city, the industry of the inhabitants, the accidents of building changes, and the annual sand storms had heaped forty feet of drift and debris upon the opening of the Christian era. Four thousand years, the professor counts, was required to pile those forty feet of earth. On that count, he thinks, the air to suppose that the thirty feet of gradual deposit found under the platform was 3,000 years old.

He has fixed the date of the Cappadocian tablets definitely at 2400 B. C. No other ancient writing where the tablets are to be found.

ADVENTURES.

Professor Hilprecht, while at work in Constantinople, was an officer of the Turkish government. Before he left Constantinople he was asked to go to the Turkish officers, diplomatic friends and scientists. He wears in his scarfpin a garnet carved with the pledge: "We are true to you while you are true to us."

THREW AWAY A FORTUNE.

But the Poor Fellow Did Not Know What He Was Doing. For lack of a little knowledge a Norwegian fisherman has just lost \$90,000. This is a high price to pay for ignorance, and it is a lesson to be learned by the fisherman who would have paid it, perhaps.

This man had never heard of ambergris, or if so he had, it was a notion of what the valuable sea-product is. He is, however, an observant man, and one day, recently, while rowing about the harbor, he saw a peculiar black and yellow substance, well streaked with black and yellow.

For some unknown reason he decided that this curious substance might probably be made into soap, and he carefully gathered the floating mass, about one hundred pounds in weight, into his boat. Naturally enough his soap experiment failed, and in disgust he threw the presumably worthless material back into the water, reserving only about six pounds for further experiments.

The more he tested the strange substance the more did his wonder grow. The aromatic odor, and the fact that it was not roused his peculiar interest. At length he rowed to the nearest town with a sample, and there learned that the material was of a high quality, and that it was worth \$35 an ounce, for it was nothing else than the precious ambergris of the East. He had six pounds of it, and he had made a fortune of \$210,000. He had thrown away a fortune.

OLD TIME KINGS.

King Sargon, for all his piety, practiced an enterprise that would be frowned upon in these days. Centuries before he lived one of the kings of Nippur, King Naram-Sin, gave to the temple a rock socket of stone, a round block on which the lower corner of the door turned. Stones were rare in Babylonia, for the land was alluvial. The old king wanted all the credit for his gift, so he had his name carved on it with a votive inscription that the gods might make no mistake.

Sargon also wanted to present a door socket to the temple, but he could find no stone, so he had the socket cast in iron, and the temple was built with iron sockets, until the Assyrian expedition found the stone under the debris and turned it over.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

[Under this heading short letters of interest will be published when accompanied, for publication, by the writer's name. The Tribune will not be held responsible for opinions here expressed.]

Benjamin Griffith's Statement.

Editor of The Tribune. Sir: There has been so much comment regarding the contest for alderman of the Fifth ward that I have concluded to make a statement to the voters of said ward explaining the treatment I received from the hands of some of the voters of the Third district of the same ward, spent some of my time in the First district and about 5.30 p. m. I went to the Fourth district, where I reside, to get some things for my family. The answer was: "It is here for me to tell." I asked how are things in the Third, and was told that it was rough there, some of the citizens have sent for policemen. I then

went over to the Third district to ascertain what was wrong. The first to meet me was Walter Davis, a son of Ezekiel Davis, Evans' father, and he surrounded me and told me that the booth was full of drunken men; also that the board was drunk, and asked me to go in and get them out. I then entered the booth and at once found that I was in a hot shop.

OTHER RESEARCHES.

Hilprecht has found time to hunt through the ruins of the city and villages, and has brought home with him objects which are worth thousands and which were bones of contention between the archaeologists of the greatest universities in Europe. Some came by devious ways, as Turks are ever devious in matters of trade, in the matter of the sale of the tablets, and he must be photographed for fear of the jealous measures that German and French collectors might take. One of the most interesting objects is a marble vase, the only vase in existence dated in the time of Artaxerxes. It is valued at \$2,000, and is inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphics. It was in private possession and thifty German buyers had for two years been hesitating to buy it.

Benjamin Griffith's Statement.

There were about fifty persons in the booth, all more or less under the influence of drink, who had crowded about the table. I forced my way through, and the first thing that attracted my attention was the Swedish register, which I carried with me, and a number of Poles and Huns, who were not citizens, and one of my friends by the name of William Reed, challenged me to a vote. I made the following request: "Gentlemen, will you please get out of the room and give the board a chance to do its duty and let the citizens vote as they please." This, in my opinion, moderate request, was greeted with the utmost profanity which I will not soil your pages by repeating, and was told that I had no business there whatever, to which I replied: "I had a right there as a citizen and candidate for alderman."

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\$1.25 kind now \$5c

1.75 " " 1.25

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2.50 " " 2.00

2.00 " " 1.50

1.50 " " 1.00

buy this strange sea-product, and should such an opportunity as Fisher- man Kinghorn's come to any of you, we trust that you may be more fortunate than was the ill-informed man who incontinently threw away a fortune when it was within his grasp.

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DRAMATIC GOSSIP.

Nevada is singing in Russia. "Cuba's Vow" is a new play. Florence Bindley is in vaudeville. "Charles' Aunt" ran four years in London. Neil Burgess has produced "Odd Miss Pond."

There's a "Fat Women's Burlesque company." W. H. Crane says the drama is not degenerating. H. C. Miner will retire from the theatrical field. Milton Nobles and Frederick Bryton are in vaudeville.

The Swedish government is about to abolish "music halls." James B. Mackie will be seen in "Little Jack Horner." Frascidian Thomas W. Keene never eats fish, fowl or game. Henry Irving may not return to the stage for several months.

Blanchina dramatization of Maurice Crawford's "Dr. Claudius." The Hungarian government is making arrangements to establish a big piano-forte manufactory at Budapest. Herbert Hall Winslow, who has written sixteen plays, has just submitted the scenario for a new comedy to Roland Reed. Joseph Callahan, the actor, was married to his leading lady, Miss Beatrice Ingram, in Lexington, Ky., on Jan. 2.

The Imperial Vaudeville company includes Vernon Lockhart, Richard Hatlowe, Shyl Johnstone and William Prate. Revivals include the "Clemenceau Case," "The Two Orphans" with Kate Claxton. May Yobe will shortly sing at a New York music hall. She will be accompanied by her husband, Lord Francis Hope. The Bostonians have almost decided on "The Serenade" as the title for their new opera by Victor Herbert and Harry B. Smith.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich has written a poetic play on Judith and Holofernes, and Olga Nethersole will do it in London next season. Rose Coghlan will replace Mrs. John Drew in the "Sporting Duchess."

The new Paris Opera company will cost in the neighborhood of \$2,000,000 francs. Its completion is not looked for now much before the expiration. Van Bells, whose "Broken Melody" ran 150 nights in London, has disbanded his company. He will play the "cello" at a New York music hall.

A number of Caro, Mich., ladies have organized a club, the members of which are all pledged to remove their hats at all public entertainments they attend. There were but nine large theater fires during 1887, of which three occurred in Russia, two in the United States, and one each in Roumania, Scotland and Belgium.

Within next year, says Mascagni, "I hope to have finished 'Vestris,' an opera on a Roman subject in four acts, on which I have been working for five years." Charles Frohman has secured the American rights of Victor Sardou's new play, "Spiriteuse," which is to be produced this month by Sarah Bernhardt at the Renaissance theater in Paris.

Sarah Bernhardt, in enumerating her claims to fame, put much emphasis on the assertion that five months ago she re-

fused an offer of 1,000,000 francs for a short series of performances in Germany. The directors of the Royal Opera of Berlin requested Verdi to make some modifications in the score of his opera "Luis Miller," and the famous composer has replied by a short and decided refusal.

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PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD. Schedule in Effect November 15, 1893. Trains Leave Wilkes-Barre as follows: 7.30 a. m., week days, for Sunbury, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and for Pittsburg and the West. 10.15 a. m., week days, for Hazleton, Pottsville, Reading, Norristown, and Philadelphia, and for Sunbury, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Pittsburg and the West. 3.15 p. m., week days, for Sunbury, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Pittsburg and the West. 3.15 p. m., Saturdays only, for Sunbury, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and Pittsburg and the West. 6.00 p. m., week days, for Hazleton and Pottsville. J. R. WOOD, Gen'l Pass. Agent. S. M. PREYOST, Gen'l Agent.