

*Accepted
East. Boston*

In the study of the history of a nation, one's attention is apt to be focused on the wars and upheavals which occurred, and on the lives and exploits of the rulers. The next step is to examine the artistic life to learn something of the building of the temples and palaces and to see the cultural developments of the nation. Comparatively rarely does the average student of history go beyond this point and realize that underneath this structure of politics and aesthetic life there was an economical foundation which was necessary for its existence. No civilization could possibly be carried on without food. It is fundamental to the history of any people to learn what this food consists of and where, and how it was secured. It may not be quite as romantic or as appealing to the imagination to investigate the agricultural life of a nation, as to study its political structure and its artistic development, but it is fully as important to the understanding of the life of any race.

When we examine the history of the great nations of antiquity, we find that the places where they played their parts as nations were determined by the fertility of the land and by the presence of a plentiful water supply. The two great civilizations of Egypt and Babylonia grew up along the banks of the rivers where agriculture was easy. The Greek writers regarded Babylonia as the real El Dorado of agriculture. They tell marvelous stories of the wonderful fertility of the land, stories which have to be greatly discounted, but which nevertheless point to the important fact that it was the