

EGYPT, AND SOME ACCOUNT OF THE BOOK OF THE DEAD.

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For ages the land of Egypt has commanded the attention of antiquarians, historians, warriors, statesmen and travellers. To this day, thoughtful men of many countries turn towards Egypt a longing lingering look, for since the dawn of civilization shed a glimmering light upon the earth, in the far background of the picture of man's doings, where all is hazy, indistinct, and almost lost in the aerial perspective of the past, Egypt shows a distinct if faint outline. Who but has felt some interest in that land? In youth we eagerly read of Joseph, and his brethren who sold him as a slave into Egypt; of his eventful life; his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams; his exaltation; his provision against famine, and relief of his family who for fear of hunger had gone down into Egypt to seek food. And with what zest we read on how Joseph made himself known to his brethren; and how the Israelites settled in Egypt and increased in numbers, so that they threatened to overrun the land; and how Pharaoh, having recourse to sterner measures than modern Malthusians have ventured to suggest, commanded that the male children of the Israelites should be put to death; and further on we read how the mother of Moses, to screen her child from that cruel edict, hid him in an ark of bulrushes, which she floated on the Nile, where he was found by the King's daughter, who adopted him as her son; of his sympathy for the wretched, his gifts as a leader and lawgiver, and of the Israelitish oppression and exodus. These narratives are indelibly impressed on the memory. We never forget them, and they whet the desire to learn something of the researches of Champollion, Lepsius, Petrie and the other Egyptologists of the nineteenth century.

Hardly less interesting than Egypt itself is the river by which it has been formed; for the saying of Herodotus, more than two thousand years ago, that Egypt is the gift of the Nile, is literally

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true. We marvel at the Thames and Mersey, as thronged highways of modern commerce ; at the beauty of the Rhine ; at the stretches of the Amazon or St. Lawrence ; and at the Ganges, held in veneration as a sacred stream by millions ; but the Nile has characteristics which are unique and which surpass them all. Through that immense region of desert which stretches from the Atlantic Ocean across Africa and far into Asia, the Nile is the only river powerful enough to force its way northwards from the equator to the sea. Starting from the mountains which skirt the great central basin of Africa, the Nile traverses in all a distance of four thousand miles. From the confluence of the Blue and White Nile at Khartoum to the embouchure of the river into the Mediterranean, it extends over fifteen degrees of latitude, and, taking into account its numerous bends, runs in that course about 1800 miles. A short distance below Khartoum it receives one tributary, but after that, for more than a thousand miles, it is fed by neither stream nor brooklet, as there is nothing on either hand but an arid desert. As Leigh Hunt pictures it in his beautiful sonnet :

“ It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,
 Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream,
 And times and things, as in that vision, seem
 Keeping along it their eternal stands, —
 Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands
 That roamed through the young world, the glory extreme
 Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,
 The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands.
 Then comes a mightier silence stern and strong,
 As of a world left empty of its throng,
 And the void weighs on us ; and then we wake,
 And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along
 'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take
 Our own calm journey on for human sake.”

From Khartoum to the sea the Nile falls more than twelve hundred feet, and as the geological strata dip from south to north the higher up the river the older are the rocks. A thousand miles up stream, the cataracts rush through Nubian granite and syenite, while at the lower part of the river, from Cairo to Edfu, the rocks are of nummulitic limestone, so called from the myriads of coin-like shells they contain. The pyramids were built of that limestone. Further up the river than the limestone, but before the granite region is reached, is the Nubian sandstone, which extends into the desert for

thousands of miles. It was from that sandstone the Temples of Upper Egypt were built. Through these rocks the Nile flows at an average rate of three miles an hour. The valley through which it runs varies in width from four to thirty-two miles. Rawlinson estimates the average width of the Nile to be a mile; of the Nile Valley to be seven miles; and the cultivated breadth of the Valley, in consequence of its being flanked with sand from the desert, he thinks does not exceed an average of five miles. In places, the banks are 1,000 feet high, and resemble huge canal embankments.

From the Cataracts to the point just north of Cairo, where its bifurcation begins, the Nile from its earliest history has undergone but little change. Below that point there has been great change. Seven channels are mentioned by ancient writers; and although there are still numerous small streams, there are but two navigable channels, which empty into the sea at Rosetta and Damietta. The old courses have long been dry. From Cairo to the Mediterranean the low flat land through which these channels flow, from its similarity in outline to the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet, is called the Delta of the Nile. Its base is not a straight line, as the shore bulges out into the sea. The extreme points, east and west of the Delta, are about three hundred miles apart, and from the southern apex of the Delta to the sea is about one hundred miles. The point where the river forks is said to have formerly been six miles higher up the stream. The course of the mouths of the great river is continually changing. A fourth part of the Delta is covered with shallow lakes, and the water encroaches towards the west.

The almost unexampled fruitfulness of the Nile Valley is due to the Egyptian climate and to the fertilizing mud left on the fields after the yearly inundations of the river. The tropical rains of Central Africa fall from the middle of May till the middle of September. The Nile, swollen by these rains, continues to rise from June till September, when it remains stationary about a fortnight. In early October, fed by melted snow from the mountains, it rises again for a few days and reaches its highest level, after which it subsides, at first steadily, and then more rapidly, till in January, February and March the fields dry up, and at the beginning of June the river is at its lowest level. At Cairo the average rise of the Nile is 23 or 24 feet, some years it rises 26 feet, and occasionally but 22 feet. In Upper Egypt where the river is narrower the water rises

to a greater height. At Thebes it reaches 36 feet, and at Syene 40 feet. In the Delta, near the sea, the average rise of the water is only about 4 feet. The night of the 17th of June is called "the night of the drop," as according to an old Egyptian myth, a tear of Isis falls into the Nile on that night and causes the river to rise. Astrologers profess to calculate with precision the hour of the fall of the sacred tear. At Cairo, on that night, a multitude throng the bank of the Nile, and numerous old and curious practices are indulged in. From inscriptions found on ancient Nile columns, similar festivals, it appears, were celebrated as early as the 14th century before Christ.

Besides the fertile lands along the river there are five Oases in the desert beyond the Nile Valley that are fruitful. Brugsch says these spots derive their name from the old Egyptian word Wâh, "an inhabited station." Some of these are small, and most of them are thought to owe their fertility to subterranean communication with the Nile. The Fayum is the largest Oasis. It, however, has surface connection with the Nile. It is an oval district comprising 840 square miles, is very fertile, and was the seat of the great temple called the Labyrinth, which Strabo describes, and which Herodotus calls one of the wonders of the world.

The ancient people of this wonderful valley of the Delta, and of the Oases, are said to have numbered eight millions; a greater population than they boast to-day, if the large foreign element in Egypt be included. Modern historians, anthropologists and philologists have worked hard to trace back the history of man beyond the old landmarks, and in some directions their efforts have been crowned with success. Latin authors tell us something concerning the early condition of Britain, France and Germany; and the literature shewing what contributed to the making of these countries daily increases. Schrader, and a score of others, following with untiring patience the clew of language, have plodded their way back to the prehistoric past, and give an interesting picture of early Aryan civilization. We know but little of the aboriginal tribes of this Western world; but Champlain, Charlevoix and the English Voyagers, will set at rest the future enquirer who attempts to follow the wave of civilization, which, in the last two centuries, has resistlessly overspread this continent. But hitherto, attempts to discover the origin and descent of the ancient Egyptians have been futile. The sphinx still refuses to

give up her secret. Ethnologists and philologists do not agree as to the affinities in race and speech of the ancient Egyptians. The linguists maintain that no African race oppressed by tropical heat, has ever developed a civilization like that of Egypt; and that the structure of the Egyptian language is Asiatic, and close akin to the Semitic languages. One philologist points out its analogies to the Aryan tongues. The word *Chami*, 'black,' used by the Egyptians to designate their country in contradistinction to the white sands of the desert, resembles, it is said, the old Indian *syâma*, having the same meaning; and *gupta* or *kopte*, the chief element in the word Egypt, is akin to *gupta*, used as a suffix to *vaisya*, the designation of the Indian agricultural caste. Ethnologists perhaps incline to the views of the Egyptians themselves, who believed they were the offspring of the Gods, and indigenous to the soil. However that may be, it is certain that in the XVIII dynasty Thothmes the third sculptured types of races tributary to his arms; and defined several types of the Asiatic and African races as sharply as they could be portrayed to-day. When the structural affinities of the Egyptian language are thoroughly compared with those of other tongues, clearer light will be thrown on the subject; for if language be not an infallible racial test, it generally decides a nation's ancestry, as fairly as the Ephraimite was detected by his sibboleth, and as Peter the Galilean was betrayed by his speech.

It is remarkable that Egypt bursts on our view at once as a highly civilized country. Like the fabled goddess who sprang perfect from the brain of Jupiter at her birth, Egyptian civilization first manifests itself at almost its highest pitch of perfection. The reign of Menes, the founder of the 1st dynasty, is placed at about 4000 years before the Christian Era, and only a few hundred years before the building of the great pyramid. But behind him there must be a background of ages of unrecorded growth to bring Egypt to that stage of national life. For our oldest history of Egypt, apart from the monuments and papyri, we are indebted to Alexandria Ptolemy Philadelphus, the second of the Græco-Egyptian Kings, who was a liberal patron of art and literature. He gathered at his court the most famous men of his time. Amongst them was at least one—Euclid the Geometrician—who is better known in the world to-day than he was then. Ptolemy filled the famous Alexandrine Library with the treasures of antiquity, and caused to be

translated into Greek the Septuagint version of the Jewish Scriptures, and a work on the religion and chronicles of Egypt. For that work he secured the services of an Egyptian priest named Manetho, the beloved of Thoth. It was this Chronicle of the Egyptian Kings which the priests of Memphis had permitted Herodotus to see. His works have been lost, one poem perhaps excepted, and the list of the kings as imperfectly transmitted by Josephus, Eusebius, and Julius Africanus. No country has such ancient records as those of Egypt. The monuments were built to defy time, and the papyri and embalmed dead, by the dry climate and desert sands, are hermetically sealed against decay. As Prof. Whitney says: "The oldest writings by man are held by dead hands in the valley of the Nile." But with these advantages there remains a wide gulf between Egyptologists regarding Egyptian chronology. From 1842 till his death in 1884, Lepsius devoted himself to the study of Egyptology, and made a methodical comparison of the lists of Manetho with the ancient monuments and papyri, especially with a papyrus at Turin, which is in fragments from age, and is held in high repute. The chronology adopted by Lepsius has not escaped criticism, although with minor modifications it has been widely adopted. He places the age of Menes, of the First Dynasty, at 3892 B. C., and the end of the XXX Dynasty, the closing reign of the Persian kings, at 345 B. C. The Greek, Roman, Byzantian and Mohammedan periods of Egyptian rule which followed are not in dispute.

Difference of opinion regarding Egyptian chronology has mainly arisen in this way. Some scholars regard the kings given in the list of Manetho as reigning in succession, and take the sum of their collective reigns to be the true time elapsed from the first to the last on the list. Others contend that several of the kings mentioned reigned in different parts of Egypt at the same time, and must be reckoned as contemporaries to rightly compute the time covered by all the dynasties. It is not strange that knowledge concerning Egypt is incomplete, as it was only to the last generation of scholars that Egyptian records ceased to be sealed books. The burning of the Alexandrine libraries and the extinction of the priesthood destroyed the old learning. The written speech of the Egyptians was changed and carried on in Greek characters, with half-a-dozen of the old letters for sounds the Greek alphabet could not express, and, known

as the Coptic, that language survived as a living language amongst a small school of priests until last century.

Egyptian writing is of three kinds, called Hieroglyphic, Hieratic and Demotic. The Hieroglyphics were cut in stone, or, for sacred purposes, depicted in outline on vestments and papyri. They were called by the Greeks *grammata hieroglyphica*—letters sacred sculptured. The two other forms of writing are cursive and quicker methods of conventionally representing the older characters. The Demotic, the younger of the two systems, does not appear in use till the ninth century B. C. From cursory inspection, the monuments and writings were found to shew a variety of Hieroglyphic characters, and closer scrutiny proves that they are even more than was suspected. A Leipzig publishing firm keep in stock for Egyptian printing a font of 1479 different Hieroglyphic signs. They include representations of divinities, men, women, birds, beasts, fishes, insects, and forms of the chief objects before the eyes in Egyptian life

With such a bewildering variety of signs, it is little wonder that Egyptian writing for centuries was thought to be a form of picture-writing only ; and that its characters were supposed to be ideographic and not phonetic. Prof. Mahaffy, in one of his essays, shews, with his usual ability and force of illustration, how transition from the lower form of picture-writing may advance to the suggestion of abstract ideas, by depicted objects of sense ; and may further become a conventional alphabet to symbolize sounds, and set in train those faculties of our intellectual and emotional nature, which a clever writer by his pen has the power to excite. It was after a time learned that figurative, ideographic and phonetic signs are all found in hieroglyphic writing. How this discovery was made is an interesting story.

In 1799 a French officer of artillery, when digging a trench in Fort St. Julien, at Rosetta, found a block of black basaltic granite, on which was a trilingual inscription. He was not heedless of his treasure trove, for his General had brought with the army the best artists and *savants* of France, expressly to describe the antiquities of Egypt. Their description filled twenty-two immense folio volumes sold at \$1,000. It was the grandest work of its day, and, though in part superseded, remains one of the great books of the world. Nelson rudely awoke Napoleon from his dream of Eastern empire, and after

the army on whom "forty centuries looked down" had retreated, the Rosetta stone was sent in 1802 by Hamilton to England, where it remains in the British Museum. On the face of the stone is inscribed in Greek, in Demotic, and in Hieroglyphic characters, the decree of the priests of Memphis after their coronation of Ptolemy the Illustrious, with the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt at Memphis, in the temple of Ptah, 200 years B. C. Porson and Heyne made out the Greek text of the inscription, and in 1802 DeSacy, the French Orientalist, and Ackerblade, a Swede, who understood Coptic, analyzed some of the names in the Demotic text. Young, the physicist, best known by his theories concerning light, published in the Transactions of the Antiquarian Society, in 1815, a supposed translation of the Hieroglyphic text. He and Champollion worked simultaneously, though by different methods, but the brilliant Frenchman carried his system beyond the point at which Young rested. Young, however, independently discovered that the cartouches or lines surrounding some of the signs, contained the proper names of Kings. The truth of that had been suspected by Zœga, a Dane. Young's greater discovery was that the figures within those lines represented, not ideas, but sounds. That was the hinge on which the secret turned. Champollion hoped this might some day be found true, yet was not sure but such hope might turn out to be an illusion. In 1814, only a year before, he wrote:—"My studies day by day strengthen the flattering, though perhaps illusive hope, that from those tablets on which Egypt represented only material objects, will yet be recovered the sounds of the language and the expression of Egyptian thought." Champollion was on the threshold of discovery, but Young was the first to cross into the vestibule of the temple. The credit given to him by Sharpe, the Egyptologist, can hardly be gainsayed:—"It is to this stone, with its three kinds of letters, and to the skill and industry of Dr. Young, that we now owe our knowledge of hieroglyphics. The Greeks and Romans, who might have learned how to read this kind of writing if they had wished, seem never to have taken the trouble and it was left for an Englishman to unravel the hidden meaning after it had been forgotten for thirteen centuries." It was not till December, 17th, 1822, that Champollion read to the Academy his celebrated paper, published under the title of "A letter to M. Dacier." He was an excellent Coptic scholar, and in his later years

was so familiar with the demotic characters that notes for his own use were often written with that alphabet. It is said that some of these notes fell into the hands of a French Academician, who published them as an original Egyptian text of the Antonine period. In his paper at the Academy, he gave readings of many names, and of some other words, and shewed the hieroglyphic alphabet to be phonetic, and in some cases syllabic. On the same night of his reading at the Academy, the discoveries announced in his paper were communicated to Louis XVIII, who, as a mark of esteem, sent Champollion a snuff-box on which was the royal monogram set in diamonds. That was a princely gift; though one he more highly prized came in the words of Chateaubriand: "His discoveries will have the durability of the immortal monuments he has made known to us."

All the signs used in Hieroglyphic writing are pictures good or bad of actual objects. A sign may stand alone as a picture to represent the object meant, or it may be placed at the end of a word, which is the phonetic name of an object. Signs are also used figuratively. A circle means the sun; and figuratively it means a day; a vase tilted so that liquid is pouring from it signifies a priest; the ostrich feather means justice, and the leg of a man in a trap means deceit. Another use for signs is as "determinatives." That use is common mostly after proper names. Thus the names of birds are followed by the picture of a bird; of fur bearing animals by a figure shewing a bit of the pelt of an animal and its tail. But in all inscriptions, most of the signs are phonetic, and the sign for each sound is some familiar object. Thus *moulag* is the Egyptian word for owl, and an owl is the sign for the *m* sound, the first sound in the name of that bird. Some signs represent syllables, as the *crux ansata*, the handled cross, in *ankh*, life. Rawlinson says there are at least a hundred signs of this kind. Numbers from one to nine are written with a short vertical stroke for each digit, those from four to nine being written in two rows, one over the other. Occasionally Hieroglyphic writing is found in vertical columns, but it is generally in horizontal lines, to be read from left to right if the signs face to the left, and from right to left if they face to the right; addition of a pointed ellipse, an open mouth means the sign is used phonetically.

The grammatical structure of the language has been partly

unravelling. The article is declined, and substantives and adjectives form their plural by adding an additional letter. Pronouns are used independently, or as suffixes to the verb. The first person of the verb is distinguished by a sign representing the figure of a man speaking. Heine said it was fortunate that the Romans learned Latin in their cradles, for had they learned that language as he did, they could never have found time to conquer the world. Taking into account the number of signs with which this language is written, and that they may be used in a representative, symbolic, determinative, or phonetic sense, and that sounds of the phonetic alphabet have more than one sign, may we not paraphrase Heine's words, and say, had the Egyptians not learned their language in their cradles, they could never have found time to build the pyramids and make their valley the garden of the earth.

The efforts of Young, Champollion and their coadjutors have been followed by success. Starting as they did, and within the lifetime of living men, to examine a dozen signs, which they conjectured might be phonetic symbols of an ancient alphabet, these earnest men were pathfinders who broke the way to a knowledge of the language of one of the oldest and most important of ancient nations. How long Hieroglyphic writing was in use none can say. One of the Oxford museums has a monument, thought to date from the second dynasty. That may admit of doubt, but monuments of the fourth dynasty incontestably shew that this form of writing has existed, at least, for 3000 years before the Christian era. The literature to which that language is the key remains in great part on the walls of Egyptian Temples, Pyramids and Tombs, and on the cerements and papyri buried with the dead. The large number of Egyptian books stored in the museums and libraries of Alexandria, when the Ptolemies made that city the most renowned seat of learning in the ancient world, in successive tumults, were destroyed by Roman, Mohammedan, and, I fear it must be added, by Christian hands.

During the last half century men of ability and learning have devoted their lives to the study of Egyptian history. They have worked assiduously, and have garnered their treasures where they will be safely kept and can be freely studied. Even the Nile mud has had to yield up monuments and cities buried so many ages that their names were forgotten. Some of the shadowy, half mythical

personages of the older historians, their later brethren by the force of their genius and persistency of their industry, have made as real to us as Julius Cæsar or William the Conqueror. We can follow their actions, call up a mental picture of the world they lived in and pass our judgment on their motives. Their most sacred haunts, the interiors of their temples and mausoleums, shrouded for ages in silence and darkness, have re-echoed to the footstep of the intrusive unhallowed stranger, and have revealed their beauty to the flash of the magnesium wire and the lightning rapidity of modern photography. But it is hard to make the events of a score of centuries march before the mental vision in consecutive course, and harder to describe the development through long ages of the inner and spiritual life of a gifted people. The night of Egyptian darkness was long, and the darkness was a thick darkness, to be felt. The dawn has indeed broken, and we have glimpses of a civilization whose very magnificence almost staggers our belief. But the most skilful historian can give only a faint sketch, with many a broken line, of these long ages, and we can never hope to enjoy as complete a picture of Egypt as Gibbon gives us of declining Imperial Rome.

One striking trait in the character of the Egyptians was their care of their dead. To understand whence that care arose, we must know their views of the constitution of man. Dr. Maspero, an authority on these questions, says the Egyptians regarded every human being as consisting of the body; the *Ka*, or double of the body; the Soul, *Bi*, represented as a hawk with a human head; and the *Khoo*, the "Luminous," a spark from the fire divine. The Dr. further says that the Egyptians also believed, that if left to themselves after death any or all of these component parts of a human being might pass into dissolution, when the man would die a second time, be annihilated. Their piety to their ancestors averted that. Embalming preserved the body, and prayers and offerings saved the other constituent elements of the human being from second death.

In Egypt embalming of the dead was a profession, and the fraternity were so jealous of their rights that the services of the proper functionary of the district had to be secured in each case of death. During the long periods of Egyptian history, new drugs and processes were discovered, but the end aimed at—the preservation of the body from decay—remained the same. The late Dr.

Birch, of the British Museum, says the early embalmers in their practice depended on salt, wax and wine. In the middle empire naphtha and bitumen were used, and later, as the art declined, cheaper substances were relied on. The time of embalming occupied about 70 days, which were spent by the family as days of fasting and mourning. After the antiseptic preparations were finished, a plate on which was engraved the mystical eye was placed on the body; amulets were strung upon the neck; and, as the heart was the seat of life, the sacred scarabæus, with special signs and ceremonies, was placed over the heart. The body was then enwrapped in six or seven hundred yards of linen, on the outer bandage of which a scribe wrote the name of the deceased, sometimes adding his age at death, and the year of the King's reign when death happened, and the mummy was then ready to be encased. The cost of embalming, according to Herodotus, was from \$100 to \$1,200.

Not the least singular of the charms for adornment of the dead was the sacred beetle, the scarabæus, placed over the region of the heart. In Egyptian its name was *kheper*, a word supposed to be derived from *khepra*, "to become," and it was made the emblem of earthly life and of the changes of man in the life to come. The original of these singular adornments, the common black beetle of Egypt, lays its eggs on the brink of the Nile, surrounds them with dirt, rolls the ball up the steep river bank beyond reach of the inundation, to the edge of the desert, and, leaving them to mature in the heat of the sun to perpetuate its race, dies in peace at its appointed time. This industrious little creature the Egyptian priests choose as their emblem of creative power and of immortality. It was made a hieroglyphic sign, meaning "to be" and "to transform." Miss Edwards says:—"His portrait was multiplied a millionfold, sculptured red over the portals of temples, engraved on gems, moulded in pottery, painted on sarcophagi and the walls of tombs, worn by the living, buried with the dead."

The scarab is the symbol of duration, and to wear one was a preservative from death. Around this primary idea a thousand conceits clustered, and as charms they were used without limit. Scarabs or conventional representations of them, scaraboids, were cut out of schists and many other materials, and of all sizes. They were glazed and colored in a variety of ways, according to the fashion

of the times. Their study has become a fascinating and instructive branch of Egyptian Archæology. Mr. Petrie, in a volume published a few months ago, gave exquisite drawings of more than 2,300 specimens. He has given only such as bear the names of Kings and private persons; but the best specimens of the great Egyptian Museums are in his book. All the dynasties, and most of the Monarchs of the dynasties, are represented and classified in chronological order. It behooves us not to be altogether heedless of scarabs, for has not Miss Edwards, with great mock gravity, in an appreciative review of Mr. Petrie's book given warning that "Civilized mankind" is divided into those who care for scarabs and those who do not. "The former are a select minority; the latter are dwellers in outer darkness, and so ignorant that they are even ignorant of their ignorance."

The same solicitude devoted to the preservation of the dead body was given to its place of sepulture. To the Egyptians the homes of the dead were more important than the homes of the living. A dwelling house for the living was but a resting place which was unimportant, and its structure might be inexpensive and mean. The place of sepulture for the dead was an eternal abode, of superlative importance, and, like the temples of the gods, could not be made too costly or too elegant. Crushed by the tooth of time, and showered over by the sands of the desert, Memphis, the glory of ancient Egypt and seat of her early Kings, so utterly perished that its very place of existence was in dispute, till the shovel of the modern explorer revealed its site beyond doubt. But the tombs of its adjacent necropolis exist in hundreds, and amongst them stands the great pyramid, a marvel of what Egyptian art produced 5,000 years ago, and which in our days of colossal structures, Ferguson, the historian of architecture, says, remains the first building in the world. According to the best Egyptologists, an Egyptian tomb, besides being a resting place for the body, had to include rooms for the soul, which were closed on the day of burial, and which it was sacrilege to afterwards enter; a reception room of the Double, where friends of the deceased and the priest brought their offerings; and a passage connecting the two. The reception room accessible by friends was sometimes above ground. Much variety in tombs, according to the place of burial and station of the deceased, was permissible, but the general features of construction carried out

were the same in all, and every Egyptian, according, to the national beliefs, was theoretically entitled to such an eternal dwelling. But theory and practice, like faith and works, often differ, and the typical Egyptian tomb was virtually for only the wealthier dead. Maspero gives a pathetic picture of the lot of the poor. The funeral rites once over they were disposed of in ransacked tombs, or huddled *en masse* in shallow pits in the sand, and covered only with their bandages or a few palm branches. A pair of sandals of painted card-board or plaited reeds, a staff and a simple ring, the toy image of some favorite god, a mystic eye or scarab, and a cord twisted round one of the limbs to protect from necromancy—such were the funerary trappings of the pauper dead.

The greatest of the Egyptian tombs, the pyramids, have called into existence a literature of their own. More than thirty volumes aim to shew the purpose for which these massive structures were built; and in addition to books, there are magazine articles and pamphlets without number, written to accomplish the same end. The conjectures of these writers are numerous and some of them fanciful. It is contended that the pyramid of Cheops, *Khufu*, the great pyramid, 454 ft. high and 750 ft. wide, divinely reveals a system of weights and measures for the human race, and for all time. Another thinks that they were granaries to provide against famine, and another that they were astronomical observatories. The best Egyptologists, however, stand aloof from such theories. They agree that the 66 pyramids found in Egypt were tombs and were built for no other purpose. The nature of Kings, their souls, bodies, and whole constituent parts, were not supposed to differ from those of other men, and their royal tombs, the pyramids, like other tombs, contain a chapel, passage, and sacred vault. They differ greatly in size, as the smallest is only 30 ft. high, and it is difficult to conceive why the Pharaohs, during the thirteen centuries in which these tombs were built, should have chosen sepulchres of such different proportions.

In constructing their tombs, when space permitted, the chapel was built over the vault, and a shaft connecting the two was sunk, sometimes in front of the tomb door, and sometimes into a corner of one of its chambers. In instances the chapel was built apart from the tomb, and occasionally at a considerable distance from it. It was into the chapel that on feast days relatives, friends and priests

brought offerings, and placed a repast on the offering table, of which, after the living had departed, the double was supposed to partake. But those recently dead were found to engross most of the attention of the living, and when action was taken, similar to that our forefathers used to take in our own Christian times by establishing foundations to have such ceremonies performed by the priesthood, it only put off a little further the day of forgetfulness and consequent annoyance to the dead, whose double might, it was thought, through such neglect, be reduced to seek food from the garbage of the town. To obviate such a calamity recourse was had to painted and sculptured representations of offerings in lieu of the offerings themselves. At first decorations were confined to the chapel of the tomb, but afterwards on the vaults pictures were painted and passages were inscribed from the Book of the Dead and from other works, intended to strengthen the soul during its probation in the other world. This practice goes back to the time of the early dynasties. The inner walls of some of the pyramids are covered with inscriptions. At a later date such texts were written upon sarcophagi, and on some of the early tombs whole chapters from the Book of the Dead are inscribed. Later on still, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries B. C., these books of the dead were written on papyri attached to the person of the mummy, placed between the folds of the bandages, or laid near the coffin.

A fair general view of ancient Egyptian literature may be obtained from the "Records of the Past," a series of volumes published in London and edited by Birch, Renouf, Sayce and other scholars of reputation. The Book of the Dead is, however, the most interesting volume of Egyptian literature as yet discovered. As early as 1805 M. Cadet published "A figured copy of a roll of paper found at Thebes in the tomb of a King," and made some curious speculations concerning its contents. Other copies followed, the chief of which was "*Das Todtenbuch der Ägypter nach dem hieroglyphischen papyrus in Turin, 1842.*" The edition by Lepsius contained 165 chapters, and he was likely the first modern editor who understood the text. Every museum of note in Europe has now a copy of the Book of the Dead, and numerous *fac similes* have been published. But no single papyrus hitherto found contains all the chapters of the book, and the Congress of Orientalists, held at London in 1874, commissioned M. Naville, a distinguished scholar, to prepare a com-

plete text of the whole book. M. Naville confined his attention to MSS. of the time of the XVIII-XX dynasties, and published according to the canons of modern criticism, a text from papyri of that period. After carefully studying 26 papyri of the British Museum, 17 in Paris, 5 in Leyden, 5 in Berlin, and many kept in other museums, as well as the inscriptions at Thebes, his work was published in 1886. It contains 186 chapters, and costs about £12.0.0.

A few months ago the trustees of the British Musuem published in *fac simile* a papyrus of the Book of the Dead. I have pleasure to submit it for the inspection of the Hamilton Association. It was executed for an Egyptian named Ani, a scribe, and director of the granaries of the Lords of Abydos. Like other copies, it does not contain all the chapters, but is illustrated in a finer manner than most other copies are, and the 175th chapter, it is said, has not before been issued in so complete a form. Mr. le Page Renouf has written an able introduction, and gives a full translation of many of the more interesting passages. For reasons assigned at length by Mr. Renouf, the date of the papyrus is referred to about the end of the fourteenth century before Christ. No copy of the Book of the Dead is found on any papyrus before the XVIII. dynasty, although, as has been stated, sculptured passages are found at much earlier date. In the vignettes Ani is accompanied by his wife Tutu. She is called a *kemait*, a musician, or one who belongs to some chapter of a Temple. In her right hand she carries the sistrum, or Egyptian lute, and in her left hand she holds flowers with a symbol to propitiate the Gods.

The aim of the Book of the Dead was to give might to the departed and to aid him in the life after death, but it is hard to trace whatever unity there may be between the chapters, and some of them might be detached from the rest with as little detriment as a hymn can be taken from the Vaidic books, or as one of the Psalms can be read alone without impairment of its beauty. That it records the belief of the Egyptians concerning the common lot after death, reflecting a faith that with little change obtained for centuries, there can be no doubt. The first scene shews Ani and his wife before a table of offerings, and after an invocation to the sun comes the great scene of the psychostasia, or weighing of the heart. There is nothing in the papyrus grander and more impressive than this scene. The heart is weighed against an ostrich feather, which symbolizes law, by

the jackal headed Anubis. Thoth records on his tablet the result of the trial; and the soul of the deceased, destiny, fortune and the cradle, are on one side of the balance as witnesses. To the right is Amemit, the devourer. He has the head of a crocodile, the body of a lion, and the hind quarters of a hippopotamus. After the trial Thoth declares: "The heart of the deceased is weighed and his soul standeth in evidence for it. His case is straight upon the great balance." Then the gods proclaim: "Unalterably established is that which proceeds from thy mouth. Righteous and just is he, and without rebuke before us." Other scenes shew Ani before Osiris; and the artist gives a running picture of an Egyptian funeral, with the attending Priests and mourners, till with last adieus the mummy is handed over to Anubis, the god of the tomb.

The deceased then goes forth into the first stages of life in the other world. The Greeks are said to have been taught the doctrine of transmigration by the Egyptians, who believed that when freed from sin by successive transmigrations, a course that might run on for ages, the soul would have the option of returning to its former body, or of being absorbed into the infinite: hence their care to preserve the body. In this papyrus there is depicted the strange conceit of the soul fluttering over a mummy case on its return to the body. It is said of Ani that he may transform himself "into all the forms he pleases;" and many of the chapters refer to such transmigrations and many mystical teachings only imperfectly understood. In the thirty-first scene a second weighing of the heart is described. Whether that is intended to represent a second trial after a stage of further probation in the other world, I cannot say. Plates 31 and 32, in which the second weighing scene is depicted, are remarkable for what is called the Negative Confession. As it is a most interesting exposition of the ethics of ancient Egypt I transcribe it in full. Pleading before his judges, the deceased says:—"I am not a doer of what is wrong, I am not a plunderer, I am not a robber, I am not a slayer of men, I do not stint the quantity of corn, I am not a niggard, I do not seize the property of the gods, I am not a teller of lies, I am not a monopolizer of food, I am no extortioner, I am not unchaste, I am not the cause of others' tears, I am not a dissembler, I am not a doer of violence, I am not of domineering character, I do not pillage cultivated land, I am not an eavesdropper, I am not a chatterer, I do not dismiss a case through self-interest, I am not

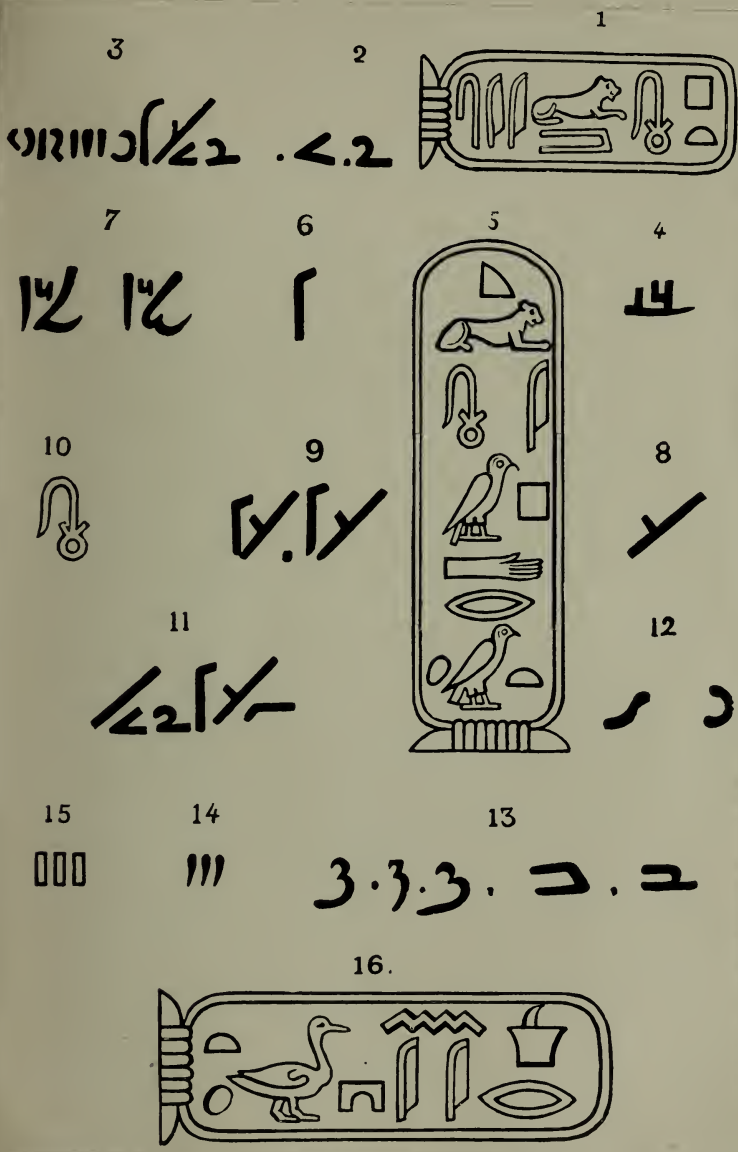
"obscene, I am not an exciter of alarms, I am not hot in speech, I do not turn a deaf ear to the words of righteousness, I am not foul-mouthed, I am not a striker, I am not a quarreler, I do not revoke my purpose, I do not multiply clamour in reply to words, I am not evil-minded or a doer of evil, I am not a reviler of the King, I put no obstructions upon the water, I am not a bawler, I am not a reviler of the god, I am not fraudulent, I am not sparing in offerings to the gods, I do not deprive the dead of the funeral cakes, I do not take away the cakes of the child or profane the god of my locality, I do not kill sacred animals."

Amongst trials which our traveller in the other world undergoes, he has to pass through a veritable valley of the shadow of death, "for it is all abyss, utter darkness, sheer perplexity." He is also tried by fire, which the artist represents pictorially, but has compensation by a sojourn in the Egyptian Elysian fields, where he ploughs and sows and reaps, and through which runs a canal, "the limit of which cannot be stated," and in which are fish and no serpents. The papyrus ends with a picture of Hathor, a personification of the sky, in the form of a hippopotamus. On her head she holds the solar disk, and in her left hand she holds the symbol of life.

The time has not yet come for a satisfactory exposition of the Egyptian religion; but as some of the acutest intellects in Europe are engaged in its study, we may hope that light will yet shine into the dark places. Their more important gods received homage in different localities under different names. Each *canton*, or *nome*, had its own college of priests and tutelar divinities, so that we come to regard their religious system, at first sight, as a heterogeneous polytheistic mass. They personified sun, moon and stars, the earth and sky, light and darkness, and, according to Renouf, recognized a divinity wherever they discerned a fixed law either of permanence or change. But behind and above these adored personifications of natural objects and forces there was the recognition of one great power. That admits of no doubt. It is true some incline to believe the *esoteric* doctrine of the Egyptian priests was materialistic; that they held matter to be endowed with intelligent, inherent creative force, and to be eternal. On the other hand many passages from their writings are monotheistic. Referring to the powers higher than the popular divinities, a power to whom no temple was raised, one of

their papyri reads : “ He was never graven in stone ; his shrine was “ never formed with painted figures ; he has neither ministrants nor “ offerings.” And if it be asked what was their name for the great uncreated Creator of all things, Brugsch replies it was inscribed on a scroll which the initiated took to the grave, and which reads “ NUK PU NUK,” “ *I am that I am.*”





CARTOUCHES.

1. OF PTOLEMY. 5. OF CLEOPATRA. 16. OF BERENICE.

(The first plate in Champollion's "Système Hieroglyphique.")



ANI AND HIS WIFE

BEFORE A TABLE OF OFFERINGS.

(*From the British Museum fac simile.*)

