

A CRISIS IN EGYPT?

OR,

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF THE EXODUS.

BY

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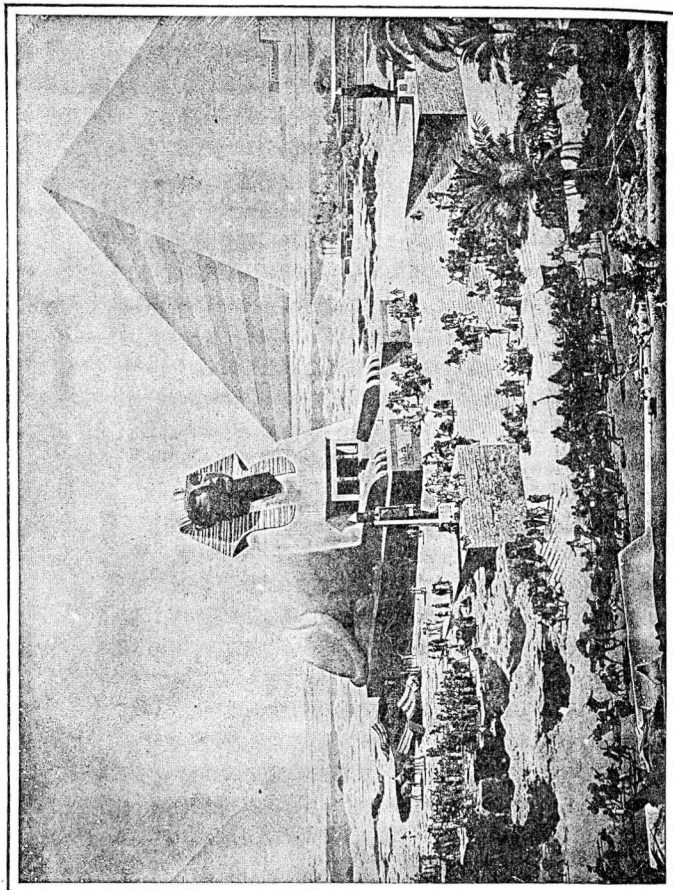
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INTRODUCTION.



RIGHT still comes to us from the Monuments of Egypt. The land of the Khedive is familiar to all at the present day, and this intimacy is increasing year by year. The proceedings in Cairo are flashed across the globe, and the appointment of a Premier becomes a matter of interest in the poorest home in the cities and towns of Europe and America. The eyes of scholars everywhere are turned towards the banks of the Nile, because of the startling discoveries which have been made there during the past few years. First, men unearthed the Tell-el-Amarna tablets,* giving us the official correspondence of the Court of Egypt in the fourteenth century before Christ. Then we were charmed with specimens of art belonging to the artists of a naturalistic school, in the employ of the great disc worshipper Khuenaten, the earliest religious heretic. Then came news of the discovery of a very ancient version of portions of the Old Testament, and more recently from the same country, the so-called Gospel of Peter.

The facilities for reaching the sunny land have been so greatly improved that thousands of persons now make an annual visit, in order to escape the rigour of Northern climes, and artists, authors, and playwrights vie with each other in presenting to us the scenes which they have witnessed, or the mental pictures which they have conjured up whilst floating in the *dahabeahs*.

The work of the Egypt Exploration Fund, and the founding of a chair of Egyptology in the University of London will doubtless lead to renewed interest being taken in the parts of the Old Testament which refer to Egypt. It is believed that the result of this research will strengthen the conviction that the writers of the first five or six books in the Bible were well acquainted with that country and the customs of its people, especially at the time with which the Book of Exodus professes to deal. This increase of knowledge will, doubtless, have an

* Or Tel-beni-Amran. on the E. bank of the Nile, half-way between Thebes and Memphis.

appreciable effect upon books and pictures illustrative of Bible incidents which occurred in the land of the Pharaohs, and the artists' skill will be most potent in disseminating these ideas, because the painter uses a universal language. Then, too, his cultivated imagination, the long period devoted solely to one topic, and the careful elaboration of the subject, all tend to produce a result which is well nigh impossible to the preacher, teacher, or lecturer. When, therefore, we find that an artist of the first rank (Professor Edmund Berninger, of Munich) has spent many years on the banks of the Nile, and has had the privilege of being directed in his choice of material by a *savant* who is also a poet and a scientist (Dr. George Ebers), we may reasonably expect that his picture, entitled "Ancient Egypt," will repay the most careful consideration. It is painted with such marvellous skill, that one can scarcely believe that many portions of the landscape and architecture are not real. He professes to show on one continuous circular canvas all that might have been seen from one standpoint within the famous city of Memphis, on the morning when the exodus of the Israelites occurred. Memphis was one of the largest and most important of the cities of Ancient Egypt. We are able to judge of its extent, not only from the historical accounts, but also from the vast area of the cemetery which has remained. The city has long since disappeared, and in this case it is an ancient city, not so much buried as carried away, for we have reason to believe that the larger buildings were destroyed, and the stone conveyed across the Nile to build the Mosques of Cairo, so that the most ancient portion of Cairo represents the city of Memphis, even though it be on the opposite bank of the river, and at a distance of some ten or twelve miles from the site of the ancient Egyptian Capital.

We shall consider the *import* and *significance* of the varied scenes in five sections :

- 1.—An Egyptian Villa, and the death of one of the firstborn.
- 2.—The Palace, and the last meeting of the Pharaoh and Moses.
- 3.—The Temple of Ptah and the religion of Egypt.
- 4.—The departure of the Memphite contingent.
- 5.—The Pyramids and the great Sphinx.





CHAPTER I.

AN EGYPTIAN VILLA, AND THE DEATH OF ONE OF THE FIRSTBORN.

MEMPHIS was probably a long narrow city, bounded on the Eastern side by the Nile—sufficiently elevated to be safe in the time of inundation—on the Western by the Desert, extending from a group of Pyramids on the South known as the Sakkarah, to those on the North, the Gizeh, and we are supposed to be in the portion of Memphis, lying between the Gizeh Pyramids and the river. It should be borne in mind that an ancient Egyptian city would occupy about ten times the area of a modern European one, with the same number of inhabitants, because the appendices of the temples, the sacred lakes, parks, fields, &c. were all enclosed within the town. Then, too, the houses were not many stried as we frequently find them to-day, and all those of the higher classes stood within beautiful gardens.

No trace of these Ancient Egyptian villas has remained, but there are well preserved pictures of them on the inner walls of the tombs, and by their aid it is possible for an artist to give a faithful idea of their original appearance. Berninger has given two illustrations of ancient Egyptian houses on a large scale. A villa consisted of a stoutly built ground floor surmounted by an open terrace, or verandah, behind which there would be two or three rooms. The under part was used as a store and sleeping-place for the slaves, and the ascent was made by an outside stair. The windows were small and few in number, as this was a land of light; and the roof flat as rain rarely fell. Looking more closely upon the scene on the terrace, we are reminded of the event of the preceeding evening—a number of mourners are bewailing the loss of one of the first-born, the incense burning on both sides of the body. In striking contrast to this scene, is another at the base of a large sphinx, where several poor persons are standing or kneeling beside the form of an ill-clad boy who has also been stricken by the plague; in the one case the child is laid on the carefully arranged bier in a villa; in the other, on a bare slab in the open air; in the former instance the body will be speedily removed to the embalmers, and, after a long period of preparation, will be taken with great pomp to a splendid tomb, whilst the latter will be hastily carried to the desert and deposited in a pillaged sepulchre, or simply covered over by the sand. In another direction we

see that a funeral procession has reached the entrance to a rock-cut tomb, the foremost persons bearing lighted torches. (It must be said, however, that we cannot be sure about the method employed for the illumination of these subterranean caverns. Some are disposed to think that torches were not used to illuminate the tombs, as the pictures on the walls show no evidence of the presence of smoke or soot.) Thousands of scenes such as these were witnessed on this eventful morning, but the artist has presented us with these three only, as typical of the remainder, being desirous to show as far as possible the normal condition of an Egyptian city. His purpose is to supply a background for the Biblical narrative, and he is suggestive rather than exhaustive. The sacred writer concentrates our attention upon the doings of the Israelites, and the Egyptians are considered relatively to them; but we must not imagine that the great machine of complex Egyptian life stood still because a few thousand Semites were on the march. The natives were accustomed to see droves of slaves brought into their cities, and shifted from one centre to another, and although it be true that these movements had not formerly been preceded or accompanied by such startling events as the plagues, still we believe that in the house, the palace, and temple, the duties would be pursued very much as usual. The artist is doubtless justified in representing a large number of persons as turning from their stalls in the market place to witness the departure, and children are seen leaning over the parapet of the house for the same reason; and he shows us that varied feelings obtained; some are glad at the out-going, as there will probably be an end of the plagues; whilst others are cursing the Israelites on account of these visitations, but, the Egyptian house-servant must go through the appointed task regardless and unconscious of the great purpose of Israel's God. That is one lesson which the artist teaches us. We see slaves on the steps of the house, carrying water-pots, others baskets of clothes, others bearing burdens of various kinds, and in the courtyard are women grinding corn. With them the day would close as it began, they would still be bond servants; but for the Israelites a new era had dawned—the day of their redemption. It is in this contrast, which is placed before us by the artist that we discern the great purpose which underlies the sacred narrative. We are led to ask how and why were these people chosen for deliverance and others left to toil, and groan, and die? These non-Israelitish slaves, or their parents had been led in the triumphant march of Seti or Rameses, from the north or the south, and driven to hard tasks in Egyptian quarries and factories. But, for them no plague had been wrought, no Moses sent, no Passover prescribed. Perhaps we have not previously thought of these poor creatures, but God saw them and heard them, though their names are

not known to us, and by leading out His chosen He was preparing to fulfil the promise made to Abram and his seed, which promise contained a blessing also for them. Now we look again at the Egyptian villa, and we observe that whilst grief and sorrow for the first-born reign within, and slavery and oppression is manifest on the one hand, there are signs of pleasure and gladness on the other. In the well-tended garden may be seen Egyptian lovers, apparently unconcious of all that is going on around them. If we had thought of these young people at all, we should have been inclined to make them break their appointment on that morning, or postpone their meeting. Not so, says the artist. It is true that the well organized plans of Moses were being carried out, and not without observation on the part of members of "Egyptian Society," but most of them would remain unaffected by the departure of these workers, and the world was not moved to its centre, because the purpose of its Maker was advanced a stage. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Could we peer back through the centuries we should find that the dwellers on the Southern banks of the Nile, and the myriads living in that great continent were engaging in their hunting, fishing, and tribal wars, all unconcious of what was happening in the North-East corner; that the Canaanites were building the cities and planting the vineyards which others were presently to occupy; and what shall be said of the teeming millions of China and India with their wonderful civilizations, and what of the Western hemisphere and the Islands of the Sea? It is as though a giant search light were turned upon the seething mass on the World's stage, and made to follow the movements of a tiny group, slowly moving between living walls in an out-of-the-way corner. A few rays fall upon the crowds on either side of the beam, and the stream continues to advance, and their shadowy forms are discerned and noted, but imagination cannot grasp the number who are in the darkness beyond. Thus was it ever. Activity was everywhere present, but not everywhere manifest. God chose His special recorder and said:—It is along this line, in this direction that my purpose shall be accomplished, keep thine eye on this people, on this tribe, on this man, and what thou see'st write. The revelation is in the writing *i.e.* (the Bible) because it was in the doing, *i.e.* (The Exodus), and because the light was given to the seer to discern the working of God that he might afterwards make a record of those acts. Such, then, are the thoughts which arise on contemplating this scene in the Egyptian capital of three thousand years ago. We see mourners within the death chamber; and the glad young hearts in the midst of spring verdure, and feel that both are possible; and we behold the house-slave resuming the weary round, whilst the sons of Jacob march forth from the midst of a people of strange tongue to the country of which God hath said that He will give it them.

CHAPTER II.

THE PALACE, AND THE LAST MEETING OF THE PHARAOH
AND MOSES.

IN the early part of the present century it was customary for travellers to describe all the imposing buildings on the banks of the Nile as Royal Palaces, but more careful observation has proved that this view was not correct. Those wonderful structures are temples, and there is no evidence to show that the kings inhabited the sacred shrines, so that the form of the buildings in which the Pharaohs lived cannot be accurately determined, as hardly any trace of a Palace can be found. The reason probably is, that the kings were more concerned with the preparation of their tombs than with the durable construction of their earthly abodes. But there is one building at Medinet Habou which by many is believed to have been used as a Palace, and is known as the Royal Pavilion; and the artist has embodied its main features in the building which we shall now consider. This is one of the many proofs of his careful choice of material. In all cases he has selected that which has the largest measure of probability, when it is impossible to be absolutely certain..

We have a representation worthy of the great capital, and of its occupants. It is true that Memphis was less important than Thebes at the time of the Exodus, but it had even then a venerable past; indeed, to write the history of Memphis would be to write the history of Egypt. The Palace of the Pharaohs may not have been at all times on the same site, but it was probably near the chief Temple, and also near the river, and we may be certain that the platform on which it stood was sufficiently elevated to place it out of danger at the season of high Nile. Hence the long flight of steps which the artist has shown. Then, too, it must be guarded, and we have a very correct representation of an Egyptian fort on the river side, and the soldiers are seen on sentry near the battlemented wall. The architect has provided against one contingency, the garrison against another; and, now we observe that provision has been made for security against spiritual foes by the establishment of a special royal sanctuary which adjoins the Palace. There is a measure of fitness in introducing the building commonly known as Pharaoh's bed (from the island of Philæ), which may atone for the slight anachronism in point of time. It is such a unique piece of masonry, and well-known to all who have examined illustrated works on Egypt; and, as it is about twenty-three hundred years old, may fairly be allowed a place in a picture of "Ancient Egypt." The drawing is perfect, the blending

of colour harmonious, and the illusion so great that most persons think it is built up, and not the creation of the artist's brush. It, too, has a lesson in its architecture, for the screens between the beautiful columns point to a desire on the part of the priesthood to conceal the worship from popular gaze, and thus to augment their own power and influence by increasing the mystery. The pylons or towers on each side of the gateway, and the terraces form a façade which we are to regard as one end of an extensive quadrangle, the centre of which would be occupied with gardens, artificial lakes, summer-houses, large stores, and apartments for the courtiers and servants. The pylons are decorated with scenes from the life of Seti I., the son of the founder of the XIX. Dynasty, but no trace of his father, Rameses I., can be found in the whole picture, and we know little about him. Seti's son, Rameses II., is depicted on the pylons on the extreme right and left, and is also represented in colossal granite statues; and his grandson was the occupant of the building on the day of the Exodus. We refer to Meneptah I., or, to give him his full title, Ba-Ra-meri-en-Amen, (Son of the Sun), Ptah-meri-en-hetep-her-mat. The first name, *i.e.*, the *prenomen*, and the last, *i.e.*, the *nomen*, were enclosed in ovals called *cartouches*. We frequently find before the prenomens signs pronounced *suten net*, "King of the North and South," *i.e.*, "King of the universe," and in addition to all these a number of high-sounding titles. The name by which the monarch is known to us is probably derived from the class of buildings which we are just now considering, for Pharaoh comes from per-āa, or "Great House," the palace in which the king lived being used to denote the king himself, just as the "porte" or gate of the palace is synonymous with the Turkish Sultan; only as the Egyptian palace was really formed of two palaces joined together, it will be correct to say that the people described their monarch as "the Double Great House."* A very slight acquaintance with the names and titles of the king will suffice to show how he was regarded by his subjects. We have observed that he was called "Son of the Sun," and indeed he claimed to be the descendant, and visible representative of the solar orb on earth, and as whatever the sun passed over or through was divided into two, and grammatically took the dual form, so when the king wore his two crowns it signified that he was "King of the North and South;" and his dwelling, we repeat, was called "the Double Great House." We are standing before the palace, and we notice that a large crowd of Memphites have assembled



* Here we find two signs, which signify *House*, over them another meaning *Great*, then follow the determinative of the idea of a sacred person, and the three last signs mean *Life, Safety, Health*; thus all the signs taken together signify Pharaoh—God bless him!

near it, and we have time to study the appearance of the sight-seers. Every grade is represented in the throng. We notice the wealthy Egyptian gentleman, borne on the shoulders of slaves, in a costly purple-coloured palanquin; close by there is a poor beggar woman with a child on her lap, who is receiving a metal ring (money) from a man ascending the steps leading from the Nile; close by, a little group of musicians are chatting together, one of them has a kind of mandolin (called a Nefer), and another the sistrum; then we notice several men and women with palm branches; next a woman with a basket of cakes; several are seen with waterpots on their heads, or in their hands; and all are made to keep at a proper distance from the approaching procession by the policemen who have long sticks in their hands. Near the private chapel we see the various orders of Egyptian soldiery, some with bows and arrows, others with spears, and axes, others with standards representing some of the nomes into which the country was divided in early times, but none of these is so full of interest as the charioteers, with the splendid vehicles and fine horses with rich trappings, who are awaiting the approach of His Majesty. No wonder that the Egyptian boys are most numerous in this portion of the crowd, and that they are represented as seeking the best positions by climbing on each others' shoulders to the top of a wall, just as boys do now. How long these people have waited we cannot tell. It is very early in the morning, but not too early for the ardour of these sight-seers, nor too early for the King. During his stay in the city he has many functions to perform, for he is the chief judge in the country, and the head of the army, and the great high priest, and this morning, he who is "The Friend of Ptah" purposes to attend at the shrine of his patron divinity. The grand procession, which was formed in the interior of the palace, has advanced down the long flight of steps and halted for a brief period. Foremost we see an officer with a small body guard, then two musicians, one with a drum, the other with a trumpet, called by the Hebrews Chazozrah (Num. c. x., v. 2.), then comes a noble tame lion, led by his Nubian keeper, possibly the lion (Tearer-in-pieces), so often referred to in the battles of the king's father, which was trained to make an attack when the engagements commenced; hence it would be led in triumph in times of peace. Behind the lion are two more musicians with harps on their shoulders, and they immediately precede the Pharaoh who is carried by eight Egyptians. The King is followed by his Queen, borne under a splendid canopy carried by eight Nubians, and each of them is surrounded by courtiers bearing fans and palm branches, and followed by a company of priests with various articles to be used presently in the service of the temple. Long rows of harpists are seen within the avenue of carved

tions and sphinxes, and a great many of the spectators are stretching out their hands in adoration to their Monarch.

In a short time one begins to realize that something has happened, or we may say, is happening, for the bearers of the palanquin in which the Pharaoh is seated are standing still, and the sovereign has turned himself in his gilded chair, and is looking intently upon a little group of men standing at the base of the steps. These men are unlike the Egyptians in appearance; they have loose flowing robes, and long hair, and beards, and they carry staves. We are sure that they must be important personages or they would not be allowed to approach the King, nor would he pause and listen so attentively to the foremost man, who is evidently addressing him with great earnestness. The speaker is Moses, and his brother Aaron is seen in the centre of the little group, the attitude of which is one of marked contrast with that of the crowds of Egyptians round about; they stand erect and dignified, whilst the Memphites, who are near enough to see and be seen are stretching out their hands and inclining their bodies in an adoring manner. This, then, is the centre of interest in Berninger's great work—the last meeting of Moses and Pharaoh. We note, first, that it takes place in Memphis. As to the authority for this, we think it sufficient to say that, as the Bible is silent on the point, there is as great probability in favour of this town as for Tanis or Bubastis, and that the artist has embodied the view of very early Jewish and Christian commentators, and also of not a few writers of Biblical romance. Next, we observe that the meeting is outside the palace, and takes place early on the morning of the Exodus, and not during the night of the last plague. The alternative would have given us Egypt by moonlight, and the interior of the "Double Great House" by lamplight, an abnormal state of things indeed, which would have left us in the dark as to the ordinary appearance of a city of the Pharaohs.

Berninger has, however, placed us under obligation by enabling us to realize to the fullest degree possible the chief characteristics of the landscape, the charming atmospheric effects, the imposing architecture, and courtly pomp amidst which Moses was brought up, and to which he returned when eighty years old to deliver his message, and perform his wonderful works. It is indeed only as we are confronted with these evidences of the high state of civilization (note, *e.g.* the presence of the women in the processions, and in the crowds, and observe they are not veiled), which obtained in the time of the Pharaohs of the Oppression, and bear in mind also the accumulated influence of the past, which reached back to the period when Menes founded "the fair abode"; it is only thus that we can estimate the value of the sacrifice attending his

choice in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. But for that refusal he might have held a social position inferior only to that of the monarch whom he is now addressing ; and we venture to believe that morally and intellectually he was vastly superior to the man whose heart was hardened, and in order to show that, we will glance for a moment or two at the previous relations of these two representatives and leaders, who now meet for the last time.


When Moses received his commission he protested that he was not "a man of words," and Aaron was commanded to act as his spokesman, and in the narrative we usually find their names occurring together, but in course of time we read, "Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people." He appears to have advanced in faith in God as one plague followed another, and to have acquired boldness in dealing with the King of Egypt. This will be apparent to all who read the book of Exodus (chapters 4-11).

The conferences appear to have been held for the most part early in the day, for we read (c. 5. v. 6.) that after seeing the King for the first time, Pharaoh commanded *the same day*, that the taskmasters should stop the supply of straw. Soon after we read that there was an audience given to the officers of the Israelite brickmakers, and as the deputation were leaving they met Moses and Aaron, who were approaching the palace, and upbraided them for bringing about an increase in the hardship of their lot. Now we turn to chap. 7, v. 15, and find that Moses was told to meet Pharaoh early in the morning, and on the bank of the Nile, and it is evident that he did so, for we read in v. 23 that "Pharaoh turned and went into his house." Again in Exodus c. 8, v. 20, we find a similar command, "Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh ; lo, he cometh forth to the water," and it is repeated in chap. 9, v. 13, thus giving ample ground for the artist's idea of the meeting occurring in the morning, and in the open air. It is interesting to observe that Moses went not only out of the palace, outside but the city before spreading abroad his hands unto the Lord ; he left behind the temples and their priests, and the myriad forms of idolatry, that he might be alone with his God. Soon, however, the divine message came again, and he and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and after another warning he turned and went out from the King, but Pharaoh's servants said to their monarch, "How long shall this man be a snare unto us ? set the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God : knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed." They appear to have prevailed upon Pharaoh to alter his mind, and Moses and Aaron were sent for, and introduced again, but were speedily driven out of the palace. Then followed the locust plague, and Pharaoh was glad to send for Moses in

haste. Then followed the darkness, and once more Pharaoh called for Moses, and told him on this occasion to take heed to himself. But Moses is no longer slow of speech, and fearful of consequences, for we observe that on announcing the last plague he says to the King of Egypt, "And all these, thy servants, shall come down unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out." Then we read that Moses left the palace in hot anger. After this he appears to have devoted himself to organizing the 600,000 on foot that were men, and his plans must have been perfectly carried out in order to secure absolute uniformity, and universality in the observance of the Passover, which shows that he must have gained also the confidence of the Israelites, or they would never have prepared for their departure. Then came the night during which the firstborn were smitten, and the great cry heard in Egypt, and there appears to have been a settled conviction in the minds of Pharaoh and of his people that Moses and his God had caused the calamity, and once more the King sent for the Israelite prince. But why send for Moses, does he wish the dead to be restored, does he fear another onslaught, or is it that he may curse him, and, if possible, punish, or even kill him? Nay; his attitude is that of the supplicant, he has become the pleader, and Moses is the greatest man in the kingdom. The deliverance, so long promised, has come, he witnesses the hurried movements of his people, partly in response to his own orders, partly on account of the urgency of their Egyptian neighbours—who are all awake, and in a state of great excitement—and then, at daybreak, together with Aaron and one or two companions, he makes a final journey to the Double Great House, and passing down the cleared roadway, he meets the King at the base of the steps. The procession halts, and the Pharaoh turns upon his portable throne to listen to the words of a subject whom he fears, and whom he desires to be gone. We are struck with the appearance of the shepherd who has secured entire control of his kinsmen, of the proud monarch, and of *himself*, and we note the import of the fixed gaze, and the right hand uplifted, whilst with the left he grasps his staff, ready to depart, and overtake the contingents which are now on the march under the direction of their respective elders. Such, then, are the means adopted by Berninger, to convey the idea that Israel's God has triumphed over Egypt's idols, that Moses and Pharaoh have changed places, that the decline of one nation has commenced, and that another is born. It is a grand spectacle; a restoration worthy of Egypt, and of the artist, but the final impression on the mind of the thoughtful observer will probably be the moral worth of the two chief actors, concerning whose end there is one feature common to both, namely, that no man knoweth the place of their burial unto this day.

CHAPTER III.

THE TEMPLE OF PTAH AND THE RELIGION OF EGYPT.

S we pass from the palace we get a glimpse of the river Nile, with palm covered islets here and there, and on the further side the limestone hills now known as Mokattam and Toura. Even at the time of the Exodus these heights had been quarried for more than two thousand years, and it is impossible to tell how many millions of tons of stone had been carried across to the western plateau for the erection of the pyramids, and the important buildings of Memphis, foremost amongst them being the original shrine of the primeval god Ptah. The artist has set before us the supposed condition of this Temple at the time of Meri-en-Ptah, "the Beloved, or Friend of Ptah." We shall notice first its surroundings. It is in the fashionable quarter of the city, or it may be more correct to say that the upper classes have congregated about it. On the left we see the houses of the priests, and in the foreground a substantial villa in the midst of a beautiful garden, and this house we may perhaps regard as the residence of an official scribe. On the right of the sacred enclosure, that is on the bank of the river, are the military quarters, and we have already noticed some of the Egyptian guards pacing near the approach to the Nile. The priests, and scribes, and soldiers constituted the upper class of the Egyptians, though not exactly a caste, but the priesthood was the most influential of the three sections of the community, and the high priest of Ptah held the most important sacred office in the country.

The temple would doubtless at first consist of a single cell or holy place to which additions were made by various kings, who supposed that their victories in warfare were due to the interposition of this particular god. Amongst the more recent will be noticed the work of Rameses II., the supposed Pharaoh of the Oppression, and we may add that he is generally believed to be the great Sesostris of the Greeks. Battle scenes in the life of this great warrior and builder, are depicted on the pylons or towers on each side of the gateway. It is said that when fighting against the Kheta—possibly the Biblical Hittites—he was cut off from the main body of his army and found himself between the first and second lines of the enemy, and that he was deserted by his charioteer, but proved himself equal to the occasion by fastening the reins round his body, and so by swaying himself, controlled the horses, and not only successfully defended himself, but struck terror to the hearts of the enemy, inspired his own troops, and won a great victory. A very minute account of the battle was written at the time by the Poet Laureate named

Pen-ta-our, and his poem, which is one of the oldest in the world, is sometimes called the Iliad of Egypt. Some of the principal incidents were depicted by the artists on the walls of the temples, and the representation which we are considering was fresh from their hands on the day of the Exodus. On the upper part of the left hand pylon we see the King in his war-chariot, alone; on the right, he is returning in triumph; and the whole of the lower portion, gives the battle in greater detail. This part of Berninger's work is very valuable because it enables us to understand what a temple was like in the time of Moses, far better than any number of photographs of ruins can do; we get the ancient Egyptian scheme of colours, and the scale employed for the human form, and the peculiar methods adopted to compensate for the absence of perspective. We note how the Egyptian painter flattered his King by making him appear colossal as compared with his enemies, and also by making it appear that he is despatching a host of Kheta single-handed. It is significant that the scene chosen is not a domestic one, such as we find elsewhere, *e.g.*, ploughing, or fishing or boat building, &c.; it serves to remind us that Moses was brought up in stirring times, and further, that although from the standpoint of the Bible student of to-day, Rameses II. appears a terrible oppressor; yet he was a vigorous man, and attached to the religion of the country, although he praised himself as well as his gods. Pentaour puts the following into his mouth:—

“Tall gateways, flag-decked masks, I raised to thee,
And obelisks from Abu I have brought,
And built thee temples of eternal stone.”

One other quotation from this poem will serve to show the same truth:—

“Great am I—mighty are Egyptian Kings—
But in the sight of thy commanding might,
Small as the chieftain of a wandering tribe.
Immortal Lord, crush Thou this unclean people:
Break Thou their necks, annihilate the heathen.”*

It is only when we realize that the Pharaoh claimed to be the visible representative of the Sun, that he received divine honours, that he was the only person who had a right to enter the inmost shrine of the temple, and that all other priests performed their duties as deputies for him; it is only when looked at from this standpoint that we can fully understand the hesitancy of Moses, when told to ask Rameses to let the people go to serve their own God in the wilderness. He knew that the King would not only be loth to part with such a host of workers, but would resent the proposal to recognise any other Divinity; indeed we read that Pharaoh

* From the third Sallier papyrus, translated by Professor Lushington, vol. ii. of “Records of the Past,” p. 65, and by Rev. H. D. Rawnley, M.A., “Notes for the Nile,” p. 270.

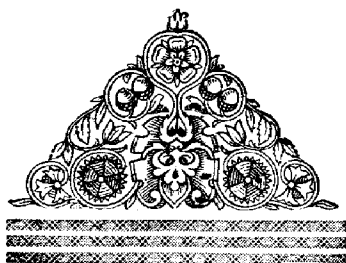
said—"Who is the Lord that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go?" One other point must be noted in connection with this ancient Egyptian picture, because it has some bearing upon the Exodus. We have observed that Rameses was victorious, if he had not been, no picture would have been painted, for the Egyptians did not record their failures; indeed so far as we can tell there is but one instance in which a state of disorder and chaos is noted, and according to some scholars, the incident mentioned in what is known as "The great Harris Papyrus," is not only analagous, but also co-incident with the Exodus of the Israelites. At any rate there would not be the least room for surprise, if silence were maintained by the Egyptian scribes concerning the Hebrew migration, as such a course was the one usually followed.

Having considered the decoration of the temple, we now turn to its service, and we at once find something wholly different from what we are accustomed to in this country. These sanctuaries were not intended for the ordinary folk; they would see and hear very little, except on the great festivals when there were imposing processions. We are able to form some idea of the ceremony, as a procession is at this moment passing through the gateway of the temple of Ptah, and proceeding down an avenue of sphinxes. We notice soldiers, and dancing priestesses and musicians, and then comes the god, secured on a pedestal and borne by priests, who are clean-shaven and attired in white garments, and the image is surrounded with other priests carrying fans and burning incense. We can imagine that, as the Israelites passed along the streets at this early hour, they would hear the music and chanting, and it would be the last that would fall upon their ears until a new song, set to new music, was chanted by Miriam and the women with their timbrels on the farther side of the Red Sea. Some will ask again, Is it likely that all this occurred on the morning of the Exodus? and we have only to reflect for a moment to see that it is highly probable. Amongst the Egyptian gods there was a never-ceasing conflict; for, as the sun sank in the West each eve, he was supposed to be overcome by Set the evil principle, and just as surely was Set slain each morning by the valiant young Horus—that is to say, by the rising sun. All disaster was associated with darkness—or, rather, darkness was a form of evil—and we can well imagine that, as there had recently been one period of intense and prolonged darkness, the Egyptians may have feared during the night of the last plague that the death of the first-born was but the first step in a new series of evils, but when the sun shone out once more they would rejoice because Horus was again triumphant. Hence the priests are praising the sun who is now sailing through the heavens in his golden barque, and the Memphites are adoring the visible represen-

tation of the solar deity in the person of Meneptah, but in a few days there will be a loud chorus in the desert:—

“Who is like Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”

“Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.”—Exodus, c. 15, verses 11 and 13.



CHAPTER IV.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE MEMPHITE CONTINGENT.

WE have now a very fair idea of the chief features of the great city of Noph, or Memphis, and it is time to turn our attention to the very long and deeply interesting processions which are issuing from the gateways, and causing great clouds of dust to rise so that in some places the people cannot be distinctly discerned. It is a procession totally unlike those royal and religious ones we have previously considered. It is not so orderly, and the people are differently attired, and different modes of travelling are adopted. Some are seated on camels, others on asses, whilst others are driving clumsy-looking four-wheeled ox-waggons. Many are carrying burdens, and others are driving, or, perhaps, leading flocks or herds, and a few are assisting other persons who are older and somewhat infirm. Then we are amused at little mishaps that have occurred, for in one place we see that an ass has thrown off a lad, and he is stretched on the sand, whilst another beast is very stubborn and refuses to depart in haste from Egypt. The drawing of animals of various kinds is very lifelike, and we are glad that the artist has introduced these incidents, because it helps us to withdraw the Biblical narratives from the misty regions to which they have been relegated, and to realize that the departure of these Israelites was as actual as the outgoing of a caravan from an Eastern city at the present time. We believe that many of the Egyptians were glad at the departure of the Israelites, and would be jubilant, but many more were equally angry, because they regarded them as the prime cause of the loss of their children, and these angry people have congregated by the roadside, and especially in the market place on the left of the city gate, and are holding out their hands in a threatening attitude. But these freed slaves will never more feel the lash of the taskmaster, and soon they will pass from the reach of the curses of the idolaters. We are inclined to believe that on the whole the contingent with which we have to do were formerly employed in various mechanical arts. It is certain that a considerable number of the Israelites were not engaged either in pastoral work or in brick-making, for those clever men and women who prepared the tabernacle in the Wilderness must have learnt their trades whilst in bondage—their occupations were doubtless very different, although the conditions of labour were the same. We may suppose that Bezaleel and his company had been brought up in Memphis, for this city was chiefly devoted to the arts, just as On was celebrated for its learning. They had been accustomed to labour in the forge and carpenter's shop, and stonemason's

yard, and the foundry for gold and precious metals, and the high skill which they had achieved is presently to be turned to account in the service of the sanctuary in which their God is to meet with His people. The same thoughts apply to the stuff which is being carried in the waggons and on the backs of the muscular young men. The gold and silver and precious things which were made in these heathen workshops, and worn by their Egyptian neighbours until a few hours since, are soon to be dedicated to a higher use, and many of the flocks and herds that are bleating and lowing will in a few days be offered up for sacrifice to the God who is delivering their owners from the oppressors' yoke, and the tents which were hastily struck and folded, and secured on the backs of the camels, will soon be arranged in proper order in the great encampment. But there is one treasure in this procession which is of greater importance than any we have yet noticed. It is the bones of a former prime minister. It is the case containing Joseph's mummy. This coffin has been kept in security during a long period, and now, fastened to a bier, and borne on the shoulders of eight men, and attended by others, who are armed, is on its way to a resting place in the Promised Land. The promise made by the brothers of Joseph is being kept, because the Divine promise given to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob is being fulfilled. (Gen., c. 46, v. 1-4.)

It seems strange that Jacob the father of the great ruler, Joseph, should be honoured with a royal funeral, and that similar respect, so far as interment in the Patriarchal tomb was concerned, was not rendered to the latter, but the retention of the coffin in Egypt was a constant reminder of the firm trust which Joseph had in the purpose of God, to lead up his descendants to a country which they might call their own. A short distance before the canopy under which we see Joseph's coffin, there is a similar covering secured to the back of a camel on which is seated Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron. These persons appear to have occupied an important position in their tribe, apart from the fact that one of them had been trained in the Egyptian court. This woman, Miriam, is generally believed to have instructed the mothers and daughters of Israel, just as Moses did the men, in all matters peculiar to themselves. She is attended by a number of young women, clad in white garments, and playing various kinds of musical instruments, and they in turn are preceded by armed men, and other Israelites. We are to think of them as advancing during the course of the day, a little farther towards the North, and then they would reach a point on the bank of the Nile, opposite the city of On or Heliopolis, which was situate upon the Eastern side of the river. It is certain that there would be a good deal of traffic between Memphis and On, as they were both

very important places—the former being the chief port and manufacturing centre of Egypt, the latter the seat of learning—and it would be a very busy day for the ferrymen who had to convey the Memphite contingent across the mysterious river. We remember that the water of the Nile would be at a low level at that season, as it was in the spring, hence it would be comparatively narrow, and the boats and rafts would be propelled to and fro in a brief space of time. The idea of some Israelites having to cross the Nile as well as the Red Sea is a new one to most Bible readers, as there is no record of it in the narrative, and some are ready to ask “was another miracle worked”? Indeed that question has been frequently asked by persons who have gazed at Berninger’s work, whilst others have enquired whether there was a bridge over the Nile at that time, just as there is now from Cairo to the West bank. We think not. On consulting any good book upon Egypt containing illustrations we are tolerably sure to come across copies of ancient pictures of boats and ships of various kinds. Some we see like gondolas, with embroidered silk sails—and by the way we note that the shape of the ancient sail was totally unlike that of the modern *dahabeah*, it was oblong in form,* and served as the determinative of the idea of air, wind, to sigh or blow—others were arranged for the conveyance of cattle, and in one instance we see horses and chariots on board. Indeed, when we remember that the Egyptians were accustomed to convey blocks of stone weighing 700 or 800 tons, the difficulty of transferring a company of Israelites with their goods and chattels entirely disappears. There was no need to make a special point of this in the Divine record, as it merely meant a few hours extra work for the Nile boatmen. But this incident serves to remind us of the highly condensed character of the narrative in Exodus, and we are surprised to learn how much has been compressed into a few verses. And if we find ourselves wondering whether the people were conveyed willingly by the ferrymen at a low rate, or grudgingly at exorbitant fares, a useful purpose will have been served, as in too many instances these Israelites and their Egyptian neighbours have but a shadowy existence even in the minds of Bible readers, and it will be found that the effort which is made to understand their changed relations on the day of the Exodus will serve to resuscitate both parties; and if some readers conclude that there were no Israelites living on the west of the Nile, and hence none to cross it, or if they conclude that the boatmen were only too glad to ferry them gratis, to get rid of the people whose God had recently turned their river into blood, the result will be equally beneficial, for we who read the



* In the inscription of Aahmes, the son of Abra, a ship is referred to, called the “Crown of Memphis.”

narratives of the Old Testament are in danger of losing our sensitiveness through long familiarity. The account in the book of Exodus is a marvellous piece of condensation, and we need the highly-cultivated imagination of the artist, be he poet or painter, to fill in the gaps, nay, to make us realise that there are outlines in the Bible, drawn by a Master Hand, which require careful filling in. If we had lived between three and four thousand years ago, and had witnessed the departure for ourselves, we should have regarded it as a great migration and nothing more; we should not have been conscious of its significance owing to the dullness of our comprehension; and it is just because the writer of the Pentateuch was lifted on to a higher platform, and received a clearer vision, and beheld a wider horizon—it is because he received this gift, and so became aware that these events stood in a peculiar relation to what had happened before, and to what should follow, that he recorded them. He did not make the history, it was happening before his eyes. God was in that history, revealing Himself, revealing His purpose, and this man beheld it, because he was furnished with the faculty, because he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, he had to be convinced in a most definite manner that the God who was revealing Himself in these events was identical with the God of his father, and the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and by various signs he was thus assured. He had also to convince the elders of Israel that the God of their fathers had appeared to him, and that he was constituted His prophet. But all this was easy compared with his mission to “the Double Great House.” No wonder that Moses desired to screen himself behind a spokesman. Pharaoh behaved just as the prophet had anticipated. “The Lord,” said he, “I don’t know Him.” “Never heard of Him.” “I am God in these parts.” “Get to your work!” “Ye taskmasters, see to it that ye increase the burdens of these fanatical slaves.” The Israelites had no temples, no priests, no Sabbaths, no form of worship whatever, and by their rulers were, doubtless, thought to be incapable of a religious idea. “In a whole city full—nay, in a whole country full—Church they had none.” It is almost too much to say that they had a God. Some of them must have thought that He was dead, or asleep, or on a journey, for He had not appeared to anyone, so far as we can tell, since He met Jacob on his way down to Egypt. But as the weeks passed by it became evident not only to the Israelites but to all, that He was visiting them once more; and after the plague of lice the magicians in the Palace said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God,” and after the plague of locusts Pharaoh said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God;” and finally, when the chariot wheels were driving heavily the Egyptians said, “Let

us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians." And the effect was similar upon the minds and hearts of the Israelites when they saw this great work, the people "feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord, and in his servant Moses."

We see now that the object of the writer of those early pages of sacred history was to connect the God who appeared to Abram with the God who had created the world; that the God who made the promise to the Patriarch confirmed it to Isaac, and was also the God of Jacob, and was likewise the God who met Moses on his return to Egypt, and told him to say unto Pharaoh, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, my first-born: and I have said unto thee, let my son go, that he may serve me; and thou hast refused to let him go: behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born" (Exodus, c. 4, v. 22-23). The God who had spoken a world into being, who had spoken in Providence, in History, was presently to speak in thunder the words of the Law, and thus we see that the revelation was progressive, and accordingly the record shows signs of that process of development, it reveals more and more clearly the Divine purpose, which was, to care for a religion which contained elements destined to transform the whole world. Centuries before the Exodus the only visible sign of the existence of this true religion, was to be found in the migration of a sheikh and his company from Ur of the Chaldees, the bare matter-of-fact, common-place event of a man on a journey, but it was like the movement of a flake of magnetic ore, which, when freely suspended by a hair, or balanced by a pivot, reveals the possession of properties which cause the mass to vibrate, and finally to come to rest in obedience to the laws of a powerful terrestrial magnet. Thus the conduct of Abram was a sign of his faith, the reward revealed the presence of his God, and afterwards, when we witness similar faith and similar conduct in Isaac, and in Israel's case, when he came to Beersheba, on his way down to Egypt, we see that the same laws are at work, and that a uniformity of action is the result. And God was not unmindful of His people during the centuries that elapsed from Joseph to Moses; the man Israel had become a nation, and the movement of a mass was sluggish compared with the action of an individual, but during the last eighty years of the Oppression, He was preparing a highly sensitive needle, the like of which had not been seen before, the polarity of which should be unmistakable, the height of whose pivot should *reveal its presence to all*, and the constant tremor of which should *reveal also the nearness and power* of the Operating Agent. And all this was made evident by character, by conduct, by a man nurtured in the Double-Great House refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, by a man who was a highly educated prince refusing to become a priest, by a man re-

fusing to adapt himself to his environment, or rather, by setting himself to adapt the environment to his own ideas ; at every step it was a choice of conduct, and it led him into the wilderness, and " a member of the University of On " became a lodger in a Sheik's tent. Once more there is a violent movement and the equilibrium is not restored till the man sets out on a journey and a mission, the issue of which, was a transformation of himself, and the transportation of his people ; and when we stand on the landing stage at On, and witness these busy scenes, as the men, women, and children spring from the boats, and the cattle and stuff is unloaded, and we see them hasten through the streets, joined by others who had been in bondage in the city of the Sun-god-Ra ; and when these combined companies are joined by a third from Bubastis, and a fourth from Zoan, and they march from Rameses to Succoth, we cannot help saying, " the axis of ' the World's Magnet ' lies this way," and these people are obeying its laws. Now we have found an answer to the great question : Why is a deliverance being wrought for these slaves, whilst others are left to grind the corn, and carry water, and drag stones, and build temples for the Pharaoh and his nobles ? It is because in the latter case there would have been the transference of so many human beings from one point of the globe to another, *and nothing more*, whereas, in the former instance, we have a company of men and women who are not only descendants from a common ancestor, and bound together by a common hardship ; but a company inheriting the same traditions, believing in one and the same great promise, possessed of the same religious ideas, trusting in a message purporting to come from a God who had appeared to their fathers, Israel, and Isaac, and Abraham, yea, a God who claimed to be their Father, a God who was about to make a solemn covenant with them.

It is impossible for us to determine how far the conduct of the Israelites had been affected by their latent religious possibilities, during the period when they had no sacrifices, no priests, no sanctuary, no Sabbath, no written law ; but there was an element in their constitution which responded to the action of God, something which made a further revelation of Himself possible to them, and through them to others, something which made them capable of being the best possible means for revealing His nature and will to the peoples round about, and was destined to provide a channel for conferring a blessing on all mankind. The Egyptians knew a great deal about false gods, and were degraded by the worship of some of them, *e.g.*, the bull Apis, but the little which the Israelites knew about the true God elevated them—not only above the Egyptians with their highly organized religious system—but above all the peoples on earth, and it was *this feeble counterpart of Himself* for which

God worked the wonders, and by every act of obedience to the Almighty but Invisible God, these people not only displayed their own character, but presented a partial view of the nature of the true God, first to their neighbours, and now, as in an elementary reading book—to ourselves. Although Moses begged of Pharaoh that the people might go out of Egypt to sacrifice, he does not appear to have shown any anxiety for them to commence, his greatest concern was to get a perfect idea of God's Nature as expressed in His will, in order that he might lay it before the people, and so found a spiritual Kingdom. But the revealed Law only served to show the febleness of the human heart, and the necessity for the Holy One to communicate His own Nature to perform His own Will, and centuries had to elapse before another son, God's only and beloved Son, was called out of Egypt. The will which operated in Him was not only in conformity, but identical with that of His Father, and to study the one was to study the other. A *perfect medium* was produced at last—a being capable of receiving a full revelation of God, and as a record of His life has been left, *we* have a more perfect revelation of God.



CHAPTER V.

THE PYRAMIDS AND THE GREAT SPHINX.

IT is not at all probable that the Israelites were conscious that so much was involved in their departure from Egypt. Neither can we be sure that Moses was fully aware of the importance of his mission, in relation to the great redemptive purpose, which was destined to embrace the whole world. But some features were clear to the mind of the Prophet. He was convinced that his God was faithful to His promises, that He was merciful towards those who kept His commandments, that He hated idolatry, and required that man should walk uprightly. Then, too, Moses had a great regard for the honour of the Lord, he pleaded for his people, lest the Egyptians should triumph, and say "Jehovah is not equal to the task of conducting the Israelites to Canaan." And there is good reason for the belief that the story of the wonders wrought in Egypt had spread far and wide, because we learn that when Joshua entered Canaan, a certain tribe came three days' journey to meet him, that they might form a league, and when the imposition which they had perpetrated was discovered, they pleaded that fear had driven them to act thus, for said they, "Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded His servant, Moses, to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you"—Joshua 9, v. 24. The deliverance from Egypt was wrought not because of the righteousness of the Israelites, but because of God's promise to Abraham, because the people cried for release from their grievous burdens, because a fully equipped leader was now available; and we may be quite sure that it was accomplished at a time best calculated to produce a good effect both upon themselves and their neighbours, and the nations round about.

But the people did not march forth like a conquering host, zealous for their God, and supremely desirous to see His Kingdom established, they had been too long crushed in spirit, their faith was not established, and their aims were not exalted. They may have refrained from idolatry, when surrounded by it, but after three months in the wilderness, with nothing in particular to engage their attention, the subjective worship of an Invisible God was found to be impracticable for them at that stage of their religious education, and they clamoured for the excitement of an idolatrous festival. If they had brought idols with them there would have been no need for the appeal to Aaron to fashion one,* and

*Yet see Joshua, c. xxiv, v. 14; Nehemiah, c. ix., v. 18 and 30.

Aaron seems to have become tired with waiting for some function to perform. Moses must have credited them with more rectitude than they were capable of, or he would not have been so surprised and angry on discovering the cause of the revelry when he descended from the mount, and he soon found that it was necessary to reduce worship to rules, and religion to a system; in fact the people were children, and needed to be taught how to live, and to live in a manner well pleasing to God.

Their Egyptian masters inherited a highly complicated religious system, and had a multitude of priests to act on their behalf, or rather they acted in the stead of the Pharaoh, for he alone was thought fit to approach the gods, and as we have seen, himself received divine honours. But the attention of the Egyptians was devoted to the consideration of *the future life*, rather than to pleasing the gods in this life, and they trusted largely to the merit of incantations which would presently be uttered over their mummies for a safe entrance to Amenti (the Egyptian Elysium). It was a religion of mystery, because understood by the initiated only, a religion of gloom, darkness, and the underworld. Indeed, the poorer folk, if they attended a religious service at all, were in the habit of going for that purpose, to the chamber adjoining the family tombs in their cemeteries. The only rites which they were free to take part in were funerary.

The refrain which came so frequently from the dissatisfied Israelites when they reached the wilderness, would almost lead one to suppose that they believed there was some advantage to be had by dying in Egypt rather than in the wilderness. At any rate, we can estimate the force of their enquiry, which was substantially, "Were there no graves in Egypt, that thou has brought us into this place to die?" The Memphite section would have a very clear recollection of the importance which was attached to the vast Royal cemetery behind the city in which they had laboured. Even, at the present day, it is the largest and most wonderful, not only in Egypt, but on the face of the whole globe. What must it have been at the time of the Exodus, when Memphis was a thriving centre with its shipping and manufactures? At that time there were thousands of persons engaged in keeping the necropolis in order, and it was a *city of the dead* in the strictest sense. There were miles of tombs arranged in streets, and pyramids rose here and there like gigantic cathedrals. Each day would bring armies of workmen who were engaged in sinking shafts and boring subterranean passages, or erecting little houses like truncated pyramids, and now called by the Arabs *mastabas* (on account of resemblance to benches), whilst others were engaged in carving magical texts on the inner walls,

or painting scenes from the lives of the owners. Then, too, there would be numerous funeral processions, some with great pomp, others of a simple character; and beside all these there would be a constant stream of visitors, not only from Memphis, but from numerous cities on the Eastern bank of the Nile, for the memorial services of the dead were attended to with devout punctuality by the relatives of the deceased. In addition to this we must remember that the pyramids themselves were all inviolate at that period, and the services of the pyramid temples were sustained by an hereditary priesthood. The city of the dead was equal in extent, and comparable in importance with the city of the living, and its foundation contemporary with the birth of the nation. The kings of the first twelve dynasties lived and ruled in "the fair abode," and were buried on the western outskirts of the capital, and scores of the Royal resting places can be seen at the present day, but in a more or less mutilated condition. They occur in groups—the most northern being Abu Roash, next the Gizeh, farther south the Zawyet el Aryan, farther still the Abousir, and then comes the celebrated Sakkarah group, and lastly the Dashour. They extend in a long row, on the edge of the rocky plateau that skirts the Lybian desert, and the breadth of the necropolis—which surrounds them, and of which they form a part—is in some places very great. A well-known traveller has said, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem' so were the pyramids round about Memphis." We are not concerned just now with their dimensions, nor their comparative ages, nor with their present mutilated condition. We wish to know their meaning to the people who lived during the reign of Menepthah. Of course they were impressive on account of their great size, and the variations in size and form may also have conveyed some teaching as to the relative power and duration of sovereignty of their respective owners. But there was one fundamental idea which led to the erection of them all—the *belief in the immortality of the soul*. The necessity for resisting the process of decay of the body is the explanation of embalming; and that costly method would be of little service if the embalmed body was not placed in some safe receptacle. No more suitable form of building can be conceived than the pyramids, as each succeeding layer of stones served to make the position of the Royal mummy-chamber the more secure, and when the pyramidion was put on and the angles of each layer filled in, the sides would present a smooth surface, and, as the Arab proverb declares, "only the eagle and the snail could reach the top." The prospect of security was also greatly enhanced by constructing false passages, so as to mislead a thief in case the pyramid was broken into, and also by the clever mode in which the entrance to the real

passages were sealed up. Where the architectural idea came from is not certain ; it may be that it was imported from Babylonia, and that the earliest pyramids resembled the seven-stepped temples,* each platform having its sides painted with a different colour, to symbolise the sun and moon and five planets. This opinion is supported by the famous Assyriologist, Dr. Fritz Hommel, and, by the way, he tells us that there was a city in the East, with a name corresponding to the one founded by Menes. Berninger has coloured the First or great pyramid, and also the Second, in such manner as to suggest the seven bands. The original colours of the outer casing have not been recorded, but Herodotus and others tell us that the smooth coating was of variegated stone, and we can readily believe the statement, as we are familiar with the Egyptian love for many colours. This fondness arose from a desire to overcome the monotony of nature, for the dweller on the Nile lived under a cloudless sky, and had no green valleys or woody hill sides, and his famous river received no tributaries. But in no feature was this sameness so apparent as in the vista of sand. Immediately behind the great northern metropolis was the desert, and no traveller had ever been far enough towards the West to find the end of it. It was to the Egyptians a great unknown. Then, too, it was the abode of the departed Sun, the great God was supposed to lead the way to the underworld, and to rule its inhabitants, and the desire of every Egyptian was to be with Osiris in Amenti, that is, the West.

The sinking of the sun in that quarter, together with the boundless expanse of the desert, may have had much to do with the fixing of the location of the Elysium. From whatever cause, the west certainly continued to be the favourite side of the Nile for burying the dead, hence we frequently find that, whilst the city proper was on the eastern bank, the necropolis was on the opposite side, and hence arose the necessity for a journey across the Nile in the funeral boat, so frequently depicted in Egyptian art, and which affected not only the poetry of Egypt but possibly that of Greece also. Some writers are of opinion that between the western boundary of Memphis and the plateau on which the pyramids were built there was a sacred lake or a canal ; but, be that as it may, most mummies had to be taken by water as well as land before reaching the tomb. However, it is certain that in the case of Memphis or Mennefer, the necropolis, which embraced the pyramids, was on the west of that city as well as of the Nile, and we are able to form some idea of the extent of Memphis from the immensity of its burying-ground, which is even now the most wonderful in the world. A great number of the pyramids have been opened and plundered by the Persians, Arabs, and Romans ; and Egyptologists are now engaged in unravelling the

* See 'The Expository Times,' Jan., 1893, p. 151.

mysterious texts inscribed on the inner passages and chambers. We call them mysterious not because they are written in characters which are no longer in use, for the hieroglyphs can be deciphered, but mysterious because the sense of the translated words is difficult to determine. They contain detailed accounts of the topography of the other world, and directions for the traveller who is to thread the maze ; and in future years scholars may be able to determine with more certainty what the Ancient Egyptians thought of the soul's condition after death. But the broad, clear fact remains that they did believe that the soul continued to exist after death, and the antiquity of embalming and also of the pyramids testify to the greater antiquity of the belief of which these were the outward and visible sign ; and, for this is the point just now, the Israelites were brought up in these surroundings. Thousands of them had gazed upon those mountains of stone and marvelled at them, and pondered over their meaning. They spoke of the antiquity of the dwellers on the Nile, of the absolute power of the early kings, of the skill of the builders, of the greatness of the conception of the architects who designed them, and of the intensity of the belief which was embodied in them, and the children of Israel must have been greatly impressed when they first beheld them, and the mental picture would be ineradicable. Many of the slaves were born within a mile of them, and had seen them every day as their smooth sides glistened in the sun, and they had watched them by moonlight, and they could not help knowing how they were regarded by the idolatrous folk amongst whom they lived and toiled. We wonder what opinions they formed of the Egyptian doctrine of the Future. We wonder if they were able to resist the influence of the belief held by this highly-intellectual nation during their sojourn in the land of the pyramids.

There are many Biblical critics who have expressed surprise as to the silence of Moses concerning the doctrine of a Future Life—that is, as to the condition of the soul after death. But we venture to suggest that sufficient importance has not been attached to the expressions used in the Pentateuch concerning the death and burial of the Patriarchs. Abraham bought a piece of ground in *Canaan* to bury Sarah out of his sight, and he was afterwards placed in the same tomb ; and yet it is stated in Gen. xxv., v. 8, that “*he was gathered to his people.*” Moreover, God had promised Abraham, “*Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace,*” Gen. xv., v. 15, but his people were buried in *Ur of the Chaldees*. Then we read that Ishmael gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people. The same language is used concerning Isaac, and in course of time, when Jacob knew that he was about to die, he expressed the desire to be taken back to his

own country, and to be buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah. We read in Gen. c. 49, v. 33, "And when Jacob made an end of charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." Thus we see that in these instances the writer makes a distinction between *dying*, and "gathered to their people," and this last expression is employed *before the burial took place*. The case of Jacob is particularly interesting in this respect. For the first time in the history of Egypt there was a grand funeral procession *from* the land that was filled with costly tombs, a procession that astonished the tribes of the countries through which the imposing cortège passed, and which caused the Canaanites to say, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians." But the writer of the Book of Genesis tells us that Jacob was gathered unto his people, not only before the burial was accomplished, but also before the process of embalming was commenced. Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob all lived and died *in faith*, and the steadfastness of their belief in God's promise must have been evident to the sons who surrounded their couches and witnessed their last moments, and the memory of their last messages would be precious to the Children of Israel. They did not betray any fear that the intercourse which they had enjoyed with their God is now to cease for ever; and Jacob did not crave for any interposition on the part of the Egyptian priesthood, although he must have been acquainted with the claims which they put forth as to their control of the destinies of the dead. Then, in due time, whilst the Israelites were living in peace and plenty in the land of Goshen, their illustrious relative, the deliverer of famine-stricken Egypt, the famous Prime Minister, Joseph, called his brethren, and said, "I die: but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."^{*}

We wonder at the integrity of Joseph, and also that he contrived to maintain his hold upon the truths which he had learned in the shepherd home in Canaan. One would not have been surprised if the conduct of his brothers had made him bitter in heart towards them and their religion. Then, too, he was so thoroughly Egyptian in appearance and bearing that they failed to recognize him when they came to buy corn, he bore an Egyptian name, had an Egyptian wife, and as Governor came in contact with the best minds in the country. Why did he desire

* Gen. c. 1, v. 24; also c. xxxiii., vv. 18, 19; c. xlvi., v. 22, and Josh. c. xxiv. v. 32.

to be buried outside of the land which had conferred such honours upon him? Why did he not exact from his brethren a promise that the most scrupulous care should be observed in the process of embalming his body, and that priestly intercession on his behalf should be made in perpetuity? And why did he direct his brethren to bury him in Canaan? Is it not highly probable that his monarch and a grateful nation would have been only too glad to have prepared a costly tomb, and to have arranged for funeral rites which would have vied with those provided for the Pharaohs? But Joseph was an Egyptian in appearance only. It is evident that he maintained the belief inherited from his ancestors, in spite of the influence of his surroundings. Having already enjoyed the presence of his God in this life, he displayed no fear that such intercourse was about to cease, neither did he believe that the aid of Egyptian ritual was essential for the continuance of the fellowship. The Egyptians looked forward to the privilege of being with their gods in Amenti; but Joseph said that his God would in course of time visit the Israelites in this life. He and his brethren may have had but little light upon the nature of the after existence of the soul, but they believed that in some real sense those who had departed this life were with God, and alive to Him, though dead to themselves. Their God was the God of the living, and when he called Himself the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the Israelites believed that in some sense these men still lived. Having such a belief we can understand the calmness with which, some years after the Exodus, Miriam, and Aaron, and Moses went forth from the camp to be joined to their fathers and their father's God. Even if there be no dogmatic teaching in the first books of the Old Testament concerning Immortality and future blessedness, we must not lose sight of the influence which such behaviour would have on the minds of the people. Moses did more by his example when he walked up the bare mountain side in the presence of the whole congregation, than if he had remained amongst them for another forty years to preach against the worthlessness of the doctrines of Egypt, and the superiority of his own belief. Moses went up the mountain of Abarim, when the command was given, because he trusted that he should be gathered to his people, even as Aaron died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people, and because he did not fear to obey the summons of such a God. Forty years before he had been impressed with the claims of this God, not only a claim of Holiness, and Oneness, and Almightyness, but also of relationship with Abram and Isaac and Jacob. Moses had already been permitted to hold intercourse with Him, and he must have believed that he was to be gathered not only to his people, but to his people's God, even as "Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him."

Let us now return to the narrative of the Exodus. We are accustomed to regard the last plague as the chief cause of the release of the Israelites, because, immediately after the death of the first-born, both Pharaoh and his people were extremely anxious for Moses and his company to depart, but perhaps we have never tried to estimate the effect of this sudden and most extraordinary increase in the death-rate, upon the religious beliefs of the two classes. The Israelites must have believed not only that the hour of their deliverance was near, when they prepared the passover meal, but, also, that their God was able to deliver them from the power of death, or they would not have sprinkled the blood as Moses had directed.

As they passed from town to town on the way out of Egypt, travelling eastward, they would pass crowds of mourners journeying to the west to bury the victims of the last plague, and we may be sure that a very considerable number would be taken to the Memphite necropolis. As we stand before the northern part of this famous cemetery, we observe that the Gizeh group of Pyramids are all oriented, and that the Temples attached to them face towards the East. Then, too, the doors of the Mastaba tombs are open towards the sun rise. We can understand this when we call to mind the Egyptian belief as to the soul. Just as the sun sank or died in the West, and rose or was born anew each morning in the East, so they expected that the soul would return from time to time and re-animate the body which had been carefully embalmed, and safely deposited. Hence the worship of the morning sun—the youthful Horus who daily slew the enemy of his father, Osiris—was a most important feature in the religious system of Egypt. The symbol of “Horus on the horizon” or “Hor-em-khut” (gr-Harmachis), was the composite figure which the Greeks called a Sphinx.

Some years ago, it was customary to explain numerous ancient symbols by the aid of the signs of the Zodiac, and as the name by which the Greeks described this composite form, is a word in the feminine gender, it was supposed that the Sphinx was a combination of Leo and *Virgo*. But it was utterly wrong to attach a Greek meaning to this most venerable and colossal Egyptian god. It was carved out of the solid rock, that is to say, out of the limestone of the district, and by many scholars it is believed that the sculpture was executed by the earliest dwellers on the Nile, viz. :—“The followers of Horus.” At any rate, it is a representation of the god Horus on the horizon, the god of the morning sun, and possibly the facial expression originally bore some resemblance to the monarch who caused the work to be done. It is certainly a man’s head, or rather the head of a king, on the body of a lion, and at the time of the Exodus was probably kept in good condition.

The face was painted red,—the colour usually employed for males,—and it had a beard, and also the uræus snake on the Royal forehead. From the pedestal to the crown of the head, or the top of the Klast (head-dress) it measures 70 feet, and the body is 100 feet long, whilst the paws project another 50 feet, and between them was formerly a small temple and an altar. Fifty yards south of this monster was a temple, built of granite and alabaster, one of the oldest sanctuaries in Egypt, partly temple and partly tomb, and as the roof of this simple solid structure was many feet lower than the base of the Sphinx, it is certain that there must have been a flight of steps leading from the ground level of three hundred years ago, up to the shrine situated between the paws. On either side of the steps before the Sphinx in Berninger's Picture, there are statues of Seti II. the son of Meneptah, and resting in the shadow of the mighty rock a number of Shasu, the Bedouin of those days. We not only see the gigantic god "*Hu*" as he appeared to the ancient Egyptians, but we see also a number of the inhabitants of Memphis crowding upon the steps before the oldest piece of sculpture in the world.

It is impossible to determine for how many centuries he had watched for the rising of the sun, before the day dawned on which the Israelites departed from a land of bondage to the better country; but we know that the tiny grains of sand from the vast desert have since then covered the mummies of his worshippers and well nigh engulfed himself, but his massive though mutilated head, facing towards the East, alone remains to fix the ancient boundary line between the city of the living and the dead. The glory of Mennefer has departed;* Noph has buried her people, but the descendants of those redeemed slaves who marched past the mighty sentinel on their way to Canaan, are with us to-day; they shall still celebrate the anniversary of the Passover, and remind us that the promise made to their fathers is not yet exhausted. But the time is fast approaching when the knowledge of the true God shall extend over the whole universe, and another day will yet dawn when the spirits of all men shall return *not only from the East*, but also from the West, and from the North and the South, and from the uttermost part of the earth.

Thus the two chief classes of buildings which we have considered—viz. the Temples and the Pyramids—speak to us concerning the Egyptian belief in a god or gods, on the one hand, and of the immortality of the soul on the other. They remind us that the people who built them expected to enter upon the enjoyment of a state of blessed-

* The same as Memphis or Noph. See Isa. c. 19, v. 13; Jer. c. 2, v. 16; c. 44, v. 1; c. 46, v. 14; c. 46, v. 19; Eze. c. 30, v. 13; c. 30, v. 16.

ness in the presence of those deities, provided that due care was exercised for the preservation of their mummies. In contrast to the stately buildings and grand processions of the Egyptians, we have looked upon a company of travelling Semites, who believed in One Invisible God—Who even now, Himself cared for their bodies—Whose presence could be enjoyed in common life by the whole of their tribes, and they, trusting His power to lead them to a better country, are a pattern to us, that we may exercise similar faith both for the Present and the Future.

The God that rules on high,
That all the earth surveys,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And calms the roaring seas.
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love ;
He will send down His heavenly powers,
To carry us above.

