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THE NEW BIBLICAL GUIDE.



THE NEW  
BIBLICAL GUIDE.

VOL. IV.

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BY THE  
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*"What are we to Believe?" "Modern Discoveries and the Bible;"  
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## PREFACE.

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THE land, at the present moment, is being faintly stirred by "the forward movement" of the higher criticism. The critics believe that the time has come to make their appeal to the people. They are begging the aid of "the Intelligent" among the congregations, and of the teachers in the Sabbath Schools to help them in popularising the new unbelief. "The Intelligent" and the teachers are apparently inclined to ask why they should assist in a work so diametrically opposed to all that the Scripture and the churches have hitherto asked of them. It gives me great pleasure to present to them, in the present volume, some weighty reasons why they should decline to pull down, and should rather continue to build up, believing acceptance of the Bible, and faith in the God and in the Redeemer whom the Bible reveals.

JOHN URQUHART.

## ERRATA.

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Page 191, line 5 from top: transpose "north" and "south."

Page 198, bottom line, for "Apepi" read "Ahmes."

Page 212, line 4 from bottom, for "edge" read "hedge."

Page 259, line 16 from top, for "gears" read "bears."

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*(Continued).*

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# THE NEW BIBLICAL GUIDE

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## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOSEPH.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE SONS OF JACOB IN EGYPT.

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IN beginning this volume we resume the narrative at a point which is prophetic. The story of Joseph merges for the time in the history of his people. Till now we have been following the career of an individual. The beauty of his character has attracted and touched us. The lessons of his life have impressed and inspired us. But in upon the scene there now crowd these men who are seldom admirable, and to whom our hero is indebted only for his misfortunes. It is a foretaste of what lies before us when we shall company with their children and marvel at the forbearance and gentleness of Israel's Shepherd.

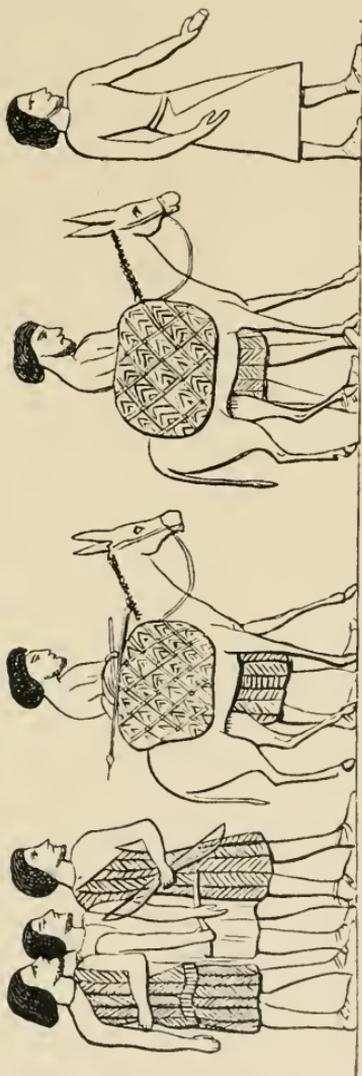
The drought has blighted the harvests and dried up the pastures of Canaan, and Jacob has to send his sons down into Egypt that they may fetch corn to keep his and their households alive. They entered the land, no doubt, very much as our engraving on

the following page represents men of a kindred nationality, and of nearly the same time, entering the land of the Pharaoh. To understand Joseph's action, we must place ourselves for the moment at his point of view. Let us recall where it was that he and these men last met. It was at the side of the pit in which they had thought to let him die, and whence they drew him to what might have been a hopeless slavery. But, notwithstanding that bitter experience, Joseph (as is quite evident from what follows) is not thinking of himself but of his brother Benjamin. The first sharp glance with which he encountered them showed him that he alone was wanting. Has that murderous hate been transferred to the boy whom he had loved and caressed, and for a sight of whose face his heart had often yearned and was yearning then?

He will deal wisely with them. He will place them in a position where, in self-defence, they will be compelled to give a full account of themselves, and to prove their statements. This will enable him to get at the truth. All this has passed with lightning speed through the mind of Joseph. His resolution is taken and his plan is adopted while they stand there stating their errand. He determines to treat them as spies who had come "to see the nakedness of the land." "And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies: to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said unto him, Nay,

my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither" (Gen. xlii. 8-15).

It might seem that a great nation like the Egyptians must have been well able to hold the comparatively powerless wandering tribes on its eastern border in contempt, and that the Governor's alarm was an



STRANGERS COMING INTO EGYPT—from the Monuments.

evident piece of acting. But the records show that there was no fear more natural. Documents belonging to the period prove that the districts to the east of Egypt were by no means the desolations that they are to-day. They were fruitful, and thickly populated with prosperous and warlike tribes. The sending of spies before an invading force, too, was a practice of the time. An inscription of King Horsiatef, of the twenty-sixth dynasty, tells us that, when he had resolved upon the invasion of the land of Makheti, he sent "spies to the number of fifty with horsemen."\* So apprehensive were the Egyptians also of attacks from the very region from which Joseph's brethren came, that a great wall was built extending from the head of the Red Sea to lake Menzaleh, or still further north. In a papyrus in the Berlin Museum, to which I have more than once referred, Sinuhit, giving an account of his travels, says that he journeyed on foot until he came "to the wall which the Prince had built to repel the Sati."† Referring to the same passage, Maspero says that it shows that the eastern frontier of the Delta was "then protected by a line of fortresses." He also writes: "Amenemhait I. had completed the line of fortresses across the isthmus, and these were carefully maintained by his successors. The Pharaohs were not ambitious of holding direct sway over the tribes of the desert, and scrupulously avoided interfering with their affairs so long as 'the lords of the

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\* *Records of the Past*, vi. 94.

† Chabas *Mélanges égyptologiques*, 3<sup>o</sup> Serie, t.i. p. 82.

sands' agreed to respect the Egyptian frontier."\*

These facts show that the fear of invasion, and of spies as forerunners of an invading host, was a long continued experience of Egyptian statesmen. And, strangely enough, we find that it existed in the very days of Joseph. His contemporary, Sekenen-Ra, the Viceroy of Thebes, so treats Apepi's ambassador and his train. He salutes him with the question: "Who sent thee here to this city of the south? How hast thou come to spy out?" †

The Scripture narrative thus holds up the mirror here also to the very thought of the time. Even in the oath—"by the life of Pharaoh"—with which Joseph pressed home his accusation—we are brought face to face with the life of the age. Chabas, in his *Melanges Egyptologiques*, has shown that the expression was much used by the Egyptians. "By the life of Pharaoh!" says Tomkins, "was a well-known Egyptian oath. It is curious that *ankh* (the Egyptian word for 'life') means 'to swear,' 'oath,' as well as 'life.' The accused takes an oath 'by the king's life' not to speak falsely. A man swears 'by the name of Pharaoh.' A workman in a necropolis had sworn by the name of Pharaoh, and was reported by an officer to the prefect of the town. It was beyond the competence of the subordinate, he said, to punish the workman for this offence. It would seem that great lords might swear by the Pharaoh without rebuke:—

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\* *The Dawn of Civilization*, p. 469.

† See Tomkins, *The Life and Times of Joseph*, p. 62.

' That in the captain's but a choleric word,  
Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.'

Certainly solemn and judicial use of oaths was commended, but perjury, and careless, or wanton, swearing were prohibited, and included among sins in the 'Ritual' of the Egyptians.\*

The following from the same author, who has long ago taken his place as a respected authority in Egyptology, will be read with interest. Referring to the words, "And they knew not that Joseph understood them, for he spake unto them by an interpreter" (Gen. xlii. 23), he says:—"The employment of an interpreter at court was not only natural and necessary; but we find it expressly brought before us in Egyptian scenes; as, for instance, in that of the thirty-seven Asiatic foreigners introduced to the Egyptian governor, to which we have before referred. Here we see the interpreter, 'Khiti the scribe.' It is very curious to find in the highly important cuneiform tablets lately discovered at Tel-el-Amarna, north of Thebes, and dated between the time of Joseph and the Exodus, that an interpreter is sent from Mesopotamia into Egypt, and called *Targumannu*, a dragoman.

"There is a small detail in the narrative of the intercourse between Joseph and his brethren, which is at first sight almost amusing. Joseph inquires: 'Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?' And they answered: 'Thy servant, our father, is in good health; he is yet alive.'

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\* *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63.

“The inverted order, ‘Is it peace to him? Is he alive?’ is very unusual; but it seems also to be quite Egyptian. Chabas gives us some most interesting extracts from letters written in the time of Merenptah . . . by a lady in an Egyptian outpost in Syria to friends at home in the Delta. In these familiar communications the very phrase in question occurs more than once. She writes:—‘I am very well off; I am alive;’ and again, about a friend: ‘His majesty’s aide-de-camp Setemna is in good plight; he lives; don’t trouble yourselves about him; he is quartered with us at Tamakirpé’—the garrison in question.

“It is true that the Egyptians thought so much, and with so little fear, of death and things beyond, that to them the question, ‘Is it peace to such an one?’ might not seem to render superfluous the further inquiry, ‘Is he alive?’ Anyhow, this coincidence is to me very pleasing.”\*

But the narrative given in the book of Genesis leads us still further into the inner life of the time. When the sons of Jacob came the second time, Benjamin was with them, and the apprehensions of Joseph were, to a certain extent, laid to rest. Benjamin was alive, although his presence raised further questioning as to Jacob’s reluctance to permit him to accompany the rest. He gave way to the impulse of his heart, and resolved to show them kindness, and to invite them to his house. It is evidently a great establishment. Joseph has his Major

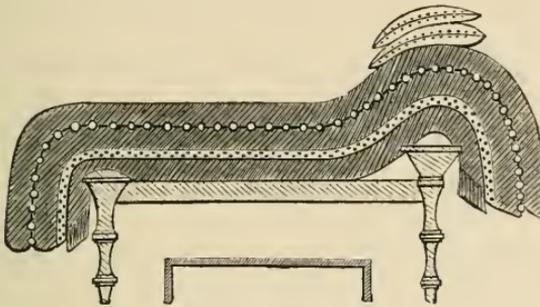
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\* *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 64.

Domo, "the ruler," or "steward," "of his house." Not only is there room in the banquetting chamber for the eleven men, but also for what is evidently a considerable number of "Egyptians," who were in Joseph's service and who formed his court. The accommodation, indeed, seems practically unlimited—for there are three separate tables. "They set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, who did eat with him, by themselves" (Genesis xliii. 32).

Denon, in his travels in Egypt, finds everywhere tombs and stupendous temples, but no palaces. Again and again he asks the reason of this, and wonders whether the ancient kings and nobles inhabited the temples, or whether their own abodes were of such a mean order that all have long since crumbled into dust. In face of the remarkable absence of palatial ruins, it is a natural inquiry. Apart also from this fact, one is curious to know whether the general life of the time was of the kind indicated in the sacred text. The reply is, that, for the great nobles of Egypt, life was planned on the most sumptuous scale. The remains of palaces are more numerous than Denon imagined, and the paintings in the tombs, and many articles discovered in the explorations, have enabled us to visit the Egypt of Joseph. The houses covered a large area and were of several stories. The apartments of the ground floor were lighted by small railed windows. The bedrooms were on the first floor. These were adorned with large windows of coloured glass. At

the sides of the house were granaries and out-houses. At the top an open terrace completed the building. The walls of the interior were decorated with paintings and frescoes of ornamental designs in brilliant colours, distinguished for their endless variety and excellent taste. The articles of furniture were very numerous, and were made of wood grown in Egypt, and of rare woods imported from abroad, or of metal, and were adorned with carving and gilding.



EGYPTIAN COUCH.

The couches, furnished with mattresses, were frequently made in the forms of lions, horses, bulls or sphinxes, resting on four feet—the animal's head, raised somewhat higher, supported the pillow. These articles were adorned with colours and gold and enamel. The various other articles which were used in sitting, dining, and bedrooms, were marked by the same elegance and luxury. The large arm-chairs, covered with rich stuffs, were adorned with carvings which represented incidents in Egyptian history or mythology. Images representing vanquished enemies supported the seat in token of servitude. The feet

took the form of the neck and head of a swan or some animal. Other arm chairs were made of cedar, inlaid with ivory and ebony, the seats being formed of thickly-plaited rushes. Loo, round, and card tables, baskets of all sizes, mirrors of burnished metal, a thousand trifles in which the value of the material was matched by the labour of the artist, were placed here and there throughout the spacious apartments, and were all in keeping with the splendour of the rest of the furniture. Mats and carpets of vivid and various colours, or the prepared skins of lions or other wild animals, covered the wooden floors of the rooms. Vases of all sizes—of gold, of bronze, of rock-crystal, and of other precious material, ornamented with enamels and precious stones, and executed with great elegance—completed the furniture of a great Egyptian house. The museums of Europe contain specimens of all these objects.

The paintings also show the dwellings of the Egyptian magnates filled with all sorts of provisions for the table. The domestic arrangements were of the most stately and elaborate order. There were three or four young priests, who presided over the domestic worship of the gods. Then came the scribes, who had charge of religious and of civil affairs. The confidential slave stands at his master's side. The steward of the house is distinguished by the baton, with a crook at the end. This he holds in his hand as the mark of his authority. After these come a host of servants who have various

duties in the home, the garden, the fields, and the pastures.

The words spoken by Joseph to his steward:—“Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon” (xliii. 16), indicate extensive preparations, and suggest that the Egyptian banquets were arranged upon a somewhat magnificent scale. There is also an indication of strict adherence to punctilious arrangements in the marshalling of the guests. It is not for one moment intended, for instance, that these strangers, honoured though they were to be, are to dine with the Egyptians.

The great dignity of Joseph, as *Ab en Perao* and governor of the entire country, made separation in his case a necessity. A special reason is given for the separation of Joseph's guests from the Egyptians who dined with him: “because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians” (Gen. xliii. 32). The Egyptian regarded every foreigner as impure. Herodotus was struck by their rigid seclusion in this respect. They would not use a Greek knife or plate, nor taste meat which a Greek knife had touched. “For the illustration of this passage,” says Osburn,\* “there is no necessity to assume that the impurity of the Hebrews consisted in their being shepherds, by ordinary occupation, with the Chaldee, the Greek, and other ancient commentators. This gloss encumbers the narrative with a formidable difficulty, inasmuch as

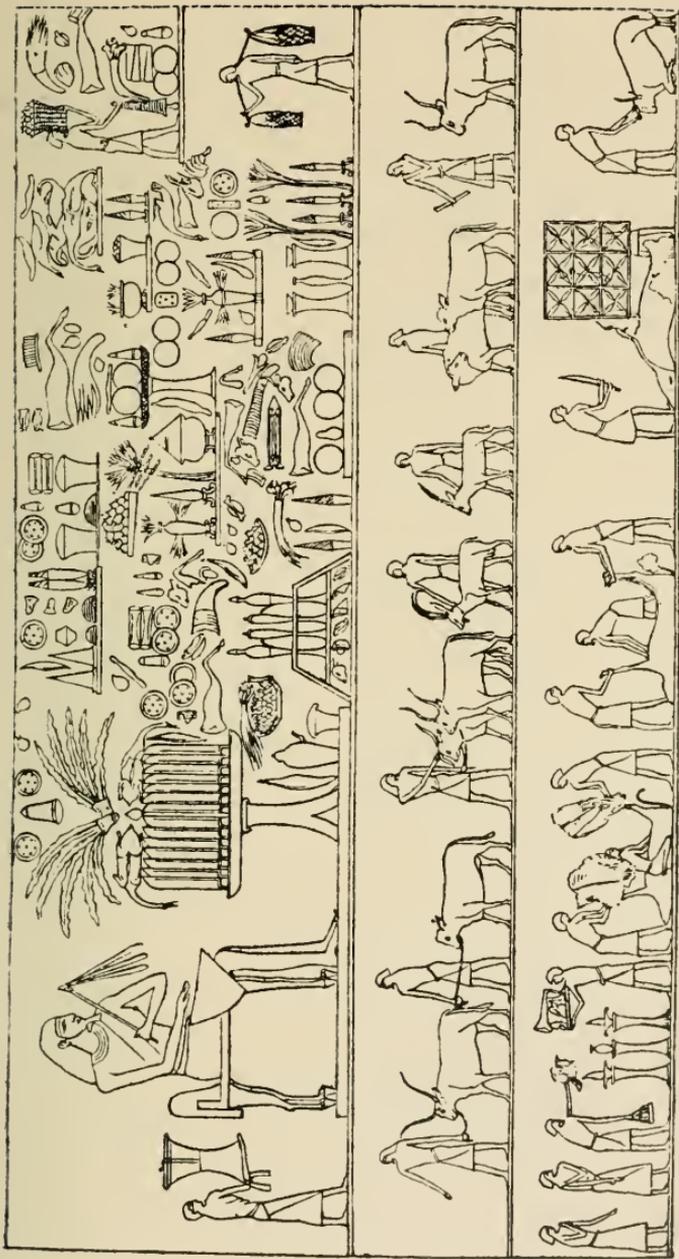
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\* *Israel in Egypt*, pp. 70-74.

Pharaoh greatly favoured the Canaanites, and admitted as his courtiers Canaanite shepherds, both by birth and descent. It was in religion only that the shepherd was unclean in Egypt. Foreigners generally were likewise accounted unclean and unfit for any intercourses beyond those of war and of traffic, by her utterly intolerant mythology. The name of a foreign nation, written in hieroglyphics, is always accompanied by some opprobrious epithet, and determined by a man in bonds. . . . All foreigners, and at all times, whether of peace or war, are thus written on the monuments. We may, therefore, clearly infer that it would be accounted pollution to sit at table with them.

“ ‘And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin’s mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him’ (verses 33, 34).

“The monumental illustrations of this custom also are as beautifully complete as any of those that have yet engaged our attention. The annexed engraving represents the tri-monthly banquet held in honour of the dead, in the noble hall of the tomb of the prince and chief physician Nahrai, at Beni Hassan. He was attached to the court of Pharaoh Amenemes II., who reigned in Egypt about a hundred years before the times of Joseph. The enormous quantity and variety of the viands are no exaggera-

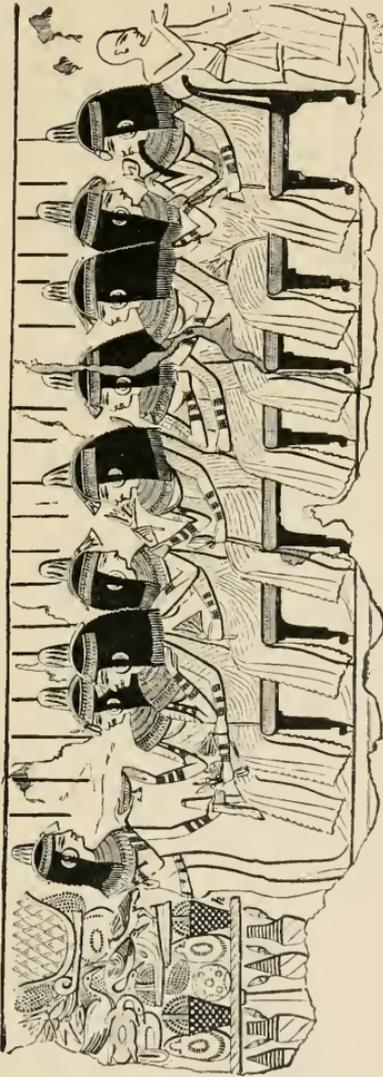


AN EGYPTIAN BANQUET (top section) ; PREPARATIONS MADE FOR IT (second and third sections).

tions. Whole crowds of retainers waited without the hall, to receive their portions of food at these banquets. The vaults underneath the hall were of dimensions large enough for the mummies of all the retainers of the house of Nahrai; and all persons having relatives in the tomb were entitled to partake of the banquets. Within the hall the entire family of the Nahrai attended upon their parents in the order of their primogeniture. The observance appears to have been—the youngest received the dish from the cooks and passed it to the child next in age. In this way it passed from hand to hand to the first-born, who stood before the father, and served the dish to him. The master of the house first cut off a portion for himself and the mother of the family, if she sat at the same table with him. In the banquets of Nahrai she sat at a separate table, and was attended in the same manner by her daughters, probably because she was a princess in her own right. The dish or joint was then placed by the first-born at the feet of his parents, and the whole family remained standing until they had eaten. It was then once more presented by the first-born to the father, who cut from it, and placed upon slices of cakes of bread portions for each of his children, which, being distributed, and another dish served to the father, the whole party sat down together—the children to eat of the first dish, the father of the second. The retainers of the house were afterwards served by the domestics, but always in the presence of Nahrai himself. That similar state and ceremony

were observed in the banquet which Joseph gave to his brethren, there cannot be a doubt. They handed the dishes to him and he sent them their portions on the bread which was piled before him. It will be noticed that the bread on the table before Nahrai is cut in slices."

Some frescoes from Thebes, now in the British Museum, bring an Egyptian entertainment vividly before us. The guests, male or female, are seated, and are attired in rich raiment. It is well to remark this posture of the guests. The Jewish custom was to recline at meals; but in the words, "They sat before him" (Gen. xliii. 33), we have the



LADIES AT A BANQUET (from an Egyptian painting).

same minute and unfailing accuracy which has challenged our attention again and again. The attitude

of the guests will be seen in the preceding engraving. They also inhale the perfume of the lotus flower. A slave hands a goblet of wine, while provisions of all kinds are arranged on the sideboard.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

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JOSEPH'S brethren had spent a happy day with the great Egyptian noble; and in the early dawn of the next morning they and their caravan had passed out of the city on their homeward way. But Joseph had one more test to apply that he might know what lay in the hearts of those men. It was true that they had fulfilled his request and had brought Benjamin with them. His brother was alive and well. But why had he not accompanied them on their first visit? If Jacob had feared to entrust Benjamin with them, and had only done so now because otherwise no provision could have been had for their households, he had no doubt sufficient reason for distrusting them. Might it not be that, having secured a supply, they would now take advantage of Benjamin's defencelessness and deal with *him* on the homeward way as they had formerly dealt with Joseph himself?

In any case he will test their disposition towards

their brother. "And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money" (Genesis xlv. 1, 2). This was done; and then, on the following morning, just after the sons of Jacob had passed out of the city gate and were on their way to the east, he ordered them to be pursued. They were terrified by the tidings that a robbery had been committed and that suspicion had fallen upon them. Conscious of their innocence, and confident that the strictest search can only result in making that innocence manifest, they say: "God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen" (xlv. 7-9).

Their sacks were set down and opened. "And he" (Joseph's steward) "searched, and began at the eldest, and left off at the youngest" (verse 12). Each man is overwhelmed with confusion, and the whole are plunged in shame as the search proceeds. For there again was each man's money in his sack's mouth; but when the steward's hand is thrust into Benjamin's bag and emerges holding on high the lost cup, shame becomes despair. There is nothing to be done now but to return to the city and to entreat for

mercy. With rent clothes they enter the palace and the presence of Joseph. "And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found" (verses 14-16).

Joseph frees them all save the actual thief. "And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." Now here the test is at last reached by which they will be proved. If they seek their brother's hurt, here is one of the best opportunities which they will ever have. They have only to accept the decree now passed and to go. But this they resolutely and passionately refuse to do. They show a love for their brother, and a reverence and tender solicitude for their father, that are a glad surprise to Joseph. Judah pleads with Joseph. He recounts the story of Benjamin's coming, pictures his father's reluctance to let him go, and shows the utter impossibility of their returning without him. "Now, therefore," he said, "when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; It shall come to

pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die. . . . Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father" (verses 30-34).

It is enough. Joseph's suspicions are swept to the winds. The old affection wells up within his heart and runs over. The court is cleared of every stranger; and, alone with his brethren, Joseph crowns the astonishments of that morning by revealing himself to them.

No one can read that story and doubt its truth. And yet the so-called critics set it aside as a fable. While, therefore, the Bible is specially here its own best witness, it will help those who may be impressed by critical assertions, to note how the narrative is steeped in the thought and life of the very place and time of which it speaks. To impress upon his brethren that they are in the grip of a knowledge that is greater than they think, Joseph makes allusion to his divining; and the cup which is placed in Benjamin's sack is described by the steward as that by which the divining was accomplished.

But a moral question meets us here. That Joseph participated in the magical practices of the time is not to be imagined. But it is quite possible that the extraordinary gift given to him of reading Pharaoh's dreams, and the equally astonishing wisdom with which he ruled, may have led to a universal belief in

his magical powers; and the steward may have, therefore, only expressed his sincere conviction when he spoke of his master using the cup for divination. But what of Joseph? Was it truthful and right for him to hint at possessing a power to which he could lay—and to which he desired to lay—no claim?

That question may lead us to note one feature of the narrative which otherwise we might fail to recognise. *Joseph seems to have felt as we ourselves do.* The reader will mark that he does not assert that he divines. He asks: "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?" It is quite true, however, that he suggests, if he does not assert; but this was only part of the stratagem by which he made his brethren disclose their true character. It belonged to the part which he had assumed: and if we are prepared to say that the assuming of such a part is wrong, we shall condemn Solomon's judgment and many another eventful episode in history, as well as Joseph's treatment of his brethren.

But the narrative has been assailed on another side. It has been said that there is no trace of any such practice as this of divining by cups. One has exclaimed: "Who has ever heard tell of auguries obtained by means of a cup?" Another has declared that such an interpretation "could only be probable if one were able to prove by the testimony of any history worthy of credit that the Egyptians at that time or at any more advanced epoch have used this form of divination." It may be noted first of all

that such objects of art were plentifully displayed in Egyptian palaces, and could, therefore, easily be taken by dishonest guests. This, as we have already seen, was the case. The houses of the great were filled with such articles, and boasted an abundance of cups of gold, of bronze, of alabaster, of enamelled earthenware, of porcelain, and of glass. Many of these have been found in the tombs, and can now be seen in any of the chief European Museums. They are in many cases most gracefully formed, and must have been valuable as works of art. It will be noticed also that the cup is described as a silver one. Articles in silver appear to have been somewhat rare. There is one in the Louvre Museum beautifully engraved, which belonged to an official who was highly esteemed by Thotmes III., who reigned about a century after the time of Joseph.

Turning now to the assault made by critics on this part of the narrative, it is well to note that their learning is after all a very limited thing. Iamblichus, a Greek philosopher, who lived in the first half of the fourth century of the Christian era (and who had no thought of bringing a confirmation to the Bible), mentions divining by cups in his book on the Egyptian Mysteries. Pliny also, who wrote in the first century A.D., has a passing reference to the practice, implying that it was then thoroughly well known. He writes: "Anancitis" (a precious stone) "is used in hydromancy" (divining by water), "they say, for summoning the gods to make their appearance; and synochitis" (another precious stone) "for

detaining the shades from below when they have appeared.”\* He also tells us that it was practised by the Emperor Nero among other forms of magic.† Not only were precious stones put into the cup, but small pieces of gold and silver were also dropped into it. The forms in which these arranged themselves were noted, and intimations were drawn from them as to coming events.

The practice has also lived on. It was met with in the extreme south of Egypt by Norden, a Danish traveller, who visited that country in 1737. He and his friends were in a position of great danger and desired the aid of Baram, the chief of the place. He rejected their presents as too small, and proceeded to insult the messenger whom Norden had sent. Baram was then told that they were under the protection of the Sultan. He replied in anger: “I care nothing for the arms of the Sultan. I am Sultan here, and I know well how to make myself respected. I know what sort of people you are. *I have consulted my cup*, and I have found that you are those of whom one of our prophets has said: ‘Franks will come with small gifts and with sweet and insinuating manners, and will go everywhere, examining the condition of the country. They will afterwards go and make their report, and will cause a great number of other Franks to come who will conquer the country and exterminate us all.’” The practice of divining by cups has lived on in most European countries; and it was not uncommon in

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\* *Natural History*, Book XXVII., chap. 73.

† *Ibid.*, Book XXX., chap. 6.

rural districts of England and Scotland in the beginning of the present century.

And there was really never any reason for this critical objection. A divining cup was found at Babylon, showing that the practice was by no means confined to ancient Egypt. As we have seen it was known in Greece ; and, indeed, it was so well known there that it bore the special name *kulikomanteia*, or "cup-divining." The custom was really universal. A writer in a learned journal declares that it would not be difficult to find examples of it to-day in Egypt. "We are able to say," he continues, "that there was no kind of divination more common in all the east. In a Chinese work, written in 1792, and which contains a description of Thibet, among the number of mediums used for divining the following is cited: 'they sometimes look into a bowlful of water, and mark what appears.'"\* Among the ancient Persians the cup was the chief means used for divining ; and the Persian poets make constant allusion to a celebrated divining cup which had belonged to the mythical hero Djemschid. They declare that this cup had passed successively into the hands of Solomon and of Alexander the Great, and had been the means of their successes and their glory.

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\* *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, October, 1829, p. 261.

## CHAPTER III.

THE GIFT OF GOSHEN.  

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ANOTHER incident in the meeting of Joseph and his brethren is the reverence which they pay to the great Governor of Egypt. "They bowed down themselves before him to the earth" (Genesis xlii. 6; xliii. 28). Here it is plainly implied that such prostrations were part of the customs of the place and time. Something more than ordinary indications of respect were evidently insisted upon by Egyptian ceremonial.

That this was indeed the case is shown by a painting from Thebes now in the British Museum. It belongs to a time only a little later than that of Joseph. It represents Rutennu, strangers, like Joseph's brethren, from the east, offering presents to a king or to some great Egyptian dignitary. Which it is, it is now impossible to say, as the painting has been partially destroyed. There remains, indeed, only the central portion of the picture. It is broken off in front just where the king or official must have been represented, and behind we have broken figures, which show that more Rutennu took part in the ceremony than we now see. As it now stands, the painting represents eleven men and a child. They are arranged in two lines. The three in front of each line are kneeling in attitudes of fervent adoration.

The first bends down and kisses the ground; the other two throw up their hands in supplication. The rest stand holding up the gifts which they have come to offer.

These Rutennu, like the brethren of Joseph, are Semites, and so thoroughly does the scene which is



EGYPTIAN WALL-PAINING (NOW IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM) SHOWING STRANGERS FROM SYRIA BOWING DOWN AND PRESENTING GIFTS.

depicted accord with that described in Genesis, that one is tempted to conclude that they represent one and the same event. Such a conclusion would be hasty and unfounded: but no one who has looked upon the painting can resist the conviction that here the Scripture shows us as in a mirror both the place

and the time. This prostration was rigidly enforced by Egyptian customs. Brugsch \* gives a translation of an inscription on the tomb of a great official and son-in-law of the king.

It says: "He was esteemed by the king more than any other servant. He became private secretary in everything that Pharaoh was pleased to do. He charmed the heart of his master. His Holiness accorded to him *to touch his knees and dispensed with*



PROSTRATION BEFORE A GODDESS.

*his kissing the ground.*" Brugsch adds: "We see from this remark, that according to the pharaonic ceremonial, all persons admitted to the presence of the king were obliged to prostrate themselves in

the dust,  
and to  
kiss the  
ground  
which

was trodden by the proud feet of their master." Upon the tomb of another great official, Mentuhotep, who lived in the time of Usertesen I., we read: "When he arrived, the great personages bowed down before him at the outer door of the royal palace." †

We may now refer to one of those Scripture difficulties which arrest the attention even of the most careless reader. Joseph recommends his brethren to tell Pharaoh: "Thy servants' trade hath

\* *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, i. 86.

† *Idem* i. 141.

been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen." So far all is natural enough. As shepherds they would have a place assigned to them in a part of the country fitted to sustain their flocks; and, as Joseph's brethren, the best part of the land adapted for that purpose would be given to them. But the counsel is enforced by what is seemingly one of the strangest reasons ever given by a wise, or even a sane, man. "For," says Joseph, "every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians."

On the face of the matter, there was wisdom for Israel in the confession. The deeper and broader the separation between them and the Egyptians, the less likely were Israelitish belief and morality to suffer. Joseph no doubt ardently desired that the Egyptian sojourn, made necessary for the bread which perisheth, should not rob them of the higher portion of faith and hope which God had given them. But, while the confession was wise, was it not most impolitic to make it just then? They are presented in a formal audience to the king of Egypt. Everything depends on the word which the royal lips will speak. According to the impression made on the king's mind will be the portion assigned to them and to their children. Joseph knows this, and is anxious about it. He is so anxious about it that he carefully schools them in what they are to say; and yet he bids them make a statement the immediate effect of which will be that every Egyptian will regard

them with contempt and abhorrence! What can it mean?

It is a significant fact that these words led a sagacious commentator on the Scriptures, Calmet, to a discovery which recent investigations have fully confirmed. He was aware of what the fragments of Manetho's history, which have come down to us, have said about the hated dominion of the Shepherd kings. Calmet declared his belief that the hatred of the Egyptians was due to the oppression they suffered from these children of the east, and that *the Pharaoh of Joseph was one of the Shepherd dynasty*. Understanding the facts in that way, he saw how, in the confession that they were shepherds, Joseph achieved two things for his father and his brethren. He recommended them to the king, and at the same time made the monarch see the expediency of assigning to them a district which would prevent close contact with his Egyptian subjects. As we have already seen, Apepi *was* one of the Shepherd kings, and Calmet's explanation is now established. But how was it that it required Calmet's learning and clear insight to guess the truth? *How did the difficulty get into the Scriptures?* Will any one of the distinguished critics who are toiling so hard to convince the British public that the Pentateuch was written somewhere about a thousand years after the time of Moses—will anyone of them just pause for a moment and consider this point? If Genesis *was* written then, why was this not made plainer? Surely the writer must have explained to the Baby-

lonian Jews that the Pharaoh of that far-off time was himself a descendant of Shepherd forefathers. With the critics' belief, these unexplained words form a difficulty which they will one day have to reckon with, and with which they had better reckon now. Otherwise, it may yet compel them to unsay the things for which they now so strenuously contend, and may turn the building, which they are now rearing, into a monument of the builders' folly. With the Bible account of itself, there is no difficulty whatever. Written by Moses for a people who knew well under what dynasty their fathers sought a shelter in Egypt, and who had suffered so much from kings "who knew not Joseph," no explanation was required. In view of the things of which they thought daily and of which they spoke daily to their children, the words were already luminous.

There is nothing on the monuments to show that shepherds were held in abomination by the Egyptians. The swineherds were despised and looked upon as unclean. They were prohibited from entering the temple, and forbidden to mingle with the other classes of the population. But, apart from this, there appears to have been no prejudice against native shepherds. It would seem to have been a race, not a class, prejudice, and the term "shepherd" must be taken in the sense of "Nomad," the Egyptian *Shasu*. All foreign peoples were regarded by the Egyptians as impure. A description of a painting, representing the bringing of tribute, reads thus: "The bringing of the collections of the impure of

the land of PHEME." These people are believed by Osburn\* to be from the neighbourhood of Mount Hor. This race prejudice would be intensified in the case of the Shasu, the Nomadic shepherds of the East, by the injuries which the Egyptians had suffered from their predatory inroads both before and after the conquest of Egypt by the Shepherd kings. "The Nomad shepherds who wandered near the frontiers were generally hated," says Lenormant,† "by the Egyptians, as Moses and Herodotus both state. This antipathy, as old as the earliest times of the monarchy, and always existing in the east between the inhabitants of cities and the Nomads or Bedouins, extended also to foreign settlers in the marshes of the Delta, most of whom were descended from the shepherds of Avaris."

There are two other incidents, in connection with the interview, which also demand notice. When Apepi heard what the occupation of Joseph's brethren had been, he said: "If thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle" (Genesis xlvii. 6). If we met such words in connection with the record of an interview with our own Queen, we should immediately conclude that Her Majesty possessed large herds, and set special store by that portion of her possessions. A similar conclusion forces itself upon us in regard to Apepi. He plainly has very considerable possessions in cattle, and they are of such value in his estimation, that it is a matter of royal concern to have active

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\* *Monumental History of Egypt*, ii. 292. † *Ancient History of the East*, i. 293.

and capable overseers set over the herdsmen. We have already seen that the Shepherd kings had long since accommodated themselves to Egyptian customs, and that this partiality for cattle is not to be attributed to Apepi's Shepherd descent, but must be regarded as a feature of ordinary Egyptian civilisation.

Is there any evidence, then, that the magnates of Egypt, and especially the kings, concerned themselves with the keeping of cattle? The manner in which the taxes were levied shows that the king, in any case, must have been the largest proprietor of cattle in the land. The taxes were levied with the utmost thoroughness, and were paid, not in money, but in kind. "The canals paid tithe in fish; the arable land in grain; and the marshes in cattle."\* Ameni, a governor of a district called Mah, under Usertesen I., says: "The chiefs of . . . of the temples of the divinities of the nome of Mah gave me thousands of bulls with their calves. I was praised for that on the part of the royal palace, because of the yearly delivery of cows in milk."

The nobles of Egypt numbered their herds of cattle among their most valuable possessions. "The nobles held, as their hereditary possessions, villages, and tracts of land, with the people thereto belonging, bands of servants and herds of cattle."† The stewards of the nobility are depicted on the monuments sometimes themselves noting on a tablet, at other times superintending the operations of the

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\* Lenormant, *Ancient History of the East*, i. 296.

† Brugsch, *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, i. 22.

scribes who note down in like fashion, the number of the heads of cattle which pass before them. That the Pharaohs have always had numerous herds is shown by the presents which they made from time to time to the temples. In the Harris papyrus, Rameses III. tells that he presented to the Temple at Thebes, a herd of 86,468 cattle, and another of 421,362. On other two occasions he presents totals "of all sorts of cattle," amounting to 2,892, and 45,544 respectively.\* Other inscriptions show that the nobles followed the example of the kings. Nes-Hor, a great official under a Pharaoh who was a contemporary of Hezekiah, king of Judah, records that he presented to the gods oxen and geese "in great numbers." †

Here again, then, the Pharaoh of Genesis is the Pharaoh of the actual life of the time. He had large possessions in cattle, and men skilful in their treatment of them were of the utmost value to the king. Let us now turn to what is said about the land of Goshen. There are several implied characteristics of that part of Egypt which it is well to note. It would separate the sons of Jacob from the Egyptians. They were to obtain possession of it through confessing that they were Nomads, and therefore an abomination to the Egyptians. Besides, Joseph is plainly planning for their seclusion. He desires that they may be near him in Egypt; but he desires with equal ardour that, though in Egypt, they may live apart from the Egyptians. But, if the land of Goshen was to meet this desire, and was inhabited at all, then its popula-

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\* *Records of the Past*, vi. 36, 47, 54. † *Ibid.*, 82.

*tion must have been largely non-Egyptian.* Other races must somehow have had possession of that part of the country. This is a feature to which I would ask special attention. *If there was, in the eighteenth century B.C., a part of Egypt specially suited in this respect for the settlement of the Israelites,* who will not see in that fact a proof that this book is not a collection of legends, but a reflex of the events which it records—a reflex so clear and faithful that we are forced to admit, that no truer book than this was ever placed in our hands? This is one of those facts which are worth tons of argument. If it is but once fairly faced, the result will be such a belief in THE BOOK that the biggest names and the acutest theories will assault our trust in vain.

A second inference from Joseph's selection of Goshen is that it was most probably situated on the east of Egypt. He would hardly be likely to select a settlement which would place any large part of the country between the Israelites and that land to which, he was well assured, they would eventually return. This is also clearly seen in the statement that, when Jacob came from Canaan to settle in Egypt, "Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen." Goshen, therefore, lay to the east of Memphis. We have, accordingly, to look for Goshen somewhere on the eastern borders of Egypt. A third and last characteristic we must also notice. It is plainly implied that Goshen was specially suitable for cattle. It must have been the pasture ground of Egypt; for it

is taken for granted by Joseph that, as soon as Pharaoh learns that they are shepherds, a settlement in Goshen will be assigned to them. "And it shall come to pass," he said, "when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? that ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers; that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen" (Genesis xlv. 33, 34).

Brugsch, in his *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, has shown that the state of things, so clearly suggested by the words of Scripture, is the very condition now revealed by the researches of himself and others. Goshen—at least the part of it inhabited by the Israelites—is spoken of as the field of Zoan. It is now known that this name has handed down to us the true Egyptian title of the town which the Greeks spoke of as Tanis. The Egyptian word was Zean or Zoan. Tanis, or rather Zoan, was an ancient city. It was built, the Scripture states, seven years later than Hebron (Numbers xiii. 22). Now let my readers mark what follows. "The town of Tanis," says Brugsch, "is everywhere in the Egyptian inscriptions designated as an essentially foreign town, the inhabitants of which are represented 'as the people in the eastern border lands.'" There were fortresses erected, no doubt for the purpose of controlling these sojourners, and the Egyptian commandant also bore the title of "Governor of the foreign peoples."

This eastern border land *was* inhabited, then, by a

non-Egyptian population. But when we look more narrowly into this matter, we see a further reason for Joseph's anxiety that his brethren should settle there. These foreigners of the eastern border land were Semites. *They were of the same race and of the same speech with the children of Abraham.* Many of the places and towns had essentially Hebrew names. Succoth ("tents"), the name of an important town, is a case in point. Near it was a lake called Charma, or Charoma, which is meaningless in Egyptian, but becomes at once intelligible when we seek for its meaning in Hebrew. It signifies "the piercing." "We meet everywhere on the eastern side of the Delta," says Brugsch, "with towns and fortresses, the names of which point to very ancient Semitic colonies." But there are also more decisive proofs of the presence there of races closely allied to the Hebrews. The cities of the dead contain memorial stones and coffins and papyrus rolls, which "show unmistakably the presence of Semitic persons, who were settled in the valley of the Nile, and had, so to speak, obtained the rights of citizenship."\* Another, and even more striking proof of their presence is the fact that Egyptians gave Semitic names to their children. But the following extracts from Brugsch may be regarded as placing this matter beyond the reach of doubt. "The inclination of the Egyptian mind to Semitic modes of life must, in my opinion, be explained from their having long lived together, and from very early existing mutual relations of the

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\* *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, i. 209, 210.

Egyptian and Semitic races. . . . The endeavour to pay court, in the most open manner, to whatever was Semitic became, in the time of the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties, a really absurd mania. They (the Egyptians) introduced Semitic words in place of Egyptian words already existing in their own mother tongue and in the writing of their country; and turned even Egyptian words into Semitic, by transposition of the syllables, if we may use such an expression. But the worst of it was that the most educated and best informed portion of the Egyptian people, the world of priests and scribes, found an especial pleasure in decking their history with Semitic words, which they used to employ in the place of good Egyptian expressions. They used Semitic expressions like the following: rosh, 'head;' sar, 'a king;' beit, 'a house;' bab, 'a door;' bir, 'a spring;' birkata, 'a lake;' ketem, 'gold;' shalom, 'to greet;' rom, 'to be high;' barak, 'to bless;' and many others."\*

We also find proofs that Semitic settlers were welcomed to these border lands. A governor, writing to Menephtah, the son of Rameses II., conveys the intelligence that he has permitted Nomads from Edom to settle there. He sends this as a bit of really good news, which is certain to please the king. "I will now pass," he says, "to something else which will give satisfaction to the heart of my lord—that we have permitted the races of the Shasu of the land of Adumo (Edom) to pass through the

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\* *Ibid.*, i. 210, 211.

fortress . . . . to nourish themselves, and to nourish their cattle on the property of Pharaoh, who is a good Sun for all nations." \*

To this I may add that "frequently these foreign subjects were promoted to important offices in connection with the Government." † In the light of these facts, we can understand Joseph's solicitude that his father and his brethren should settle there. It is also clear from the Governor's letter, which I have just given, as well as from other references, that the district was one which afforded rich pasturage for cattle. Now let our readers call to mind the three things implied in the Scripture narrative. They were these: Goshen lay to the east of Egypt; it contained rich pasture lands; it was inhabited by a non-Egyptian people. Could any narrative be more thoroughly sustained? The book which, without one word of description, but in the simplest record of words and deeds that was ever penned, has conveyed to generations and peoples, who had no acquaintance with the place or the time, so full and accurate a notion of what they both were—that book is steeped in truth. Other books may be true: this is more. "Thy word is truth." We feel that the Thought, which in those pages touches ours, has grasped that time and place as merely human thought hardly could. Away in the deep, still, Norwegian lakes, the reflection is so perfect, that it is impossible, without close inspection, to say where the mountain slope ends and the reflection of it begins. And such a

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\* *Ibid.*, i. 215.

† *Ibid.*, i. 221.

still, deep lake is the Mind from which this narrative first flowed out upon the sacred page. Men stumble at miracles; and they have sneered at the miracle of an inspired Book. But there is an answer to our heart's cry in it, for which human smartness and learning are but a poor exchange. God not only speaks to us here: He reveals Himself. We see into His heart. Our Father's hand is not only laid upon us: we look up into our Father's face, and lay our head upon our Father's bosom.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### JOSEPH, THE SAVIOUR OF EGYPT.

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IN a previous chapter I referred to the recently-found tablet (which makes mention of a seven years' famine) as "a pious fraud." It may be well to explain, however, that the fraud is neither a Jewish nor a Christian one. It was made in the interests of Egyptian idolatry, and its date can hardly be brought lower than the beginning of the Christian era.

There was an ancient custom by which the temples were endowed with twelve schoeni of land on each side of the river. A schoenus was about 12,000 yards, according to Herodotus. The grants would seem to have required renewal, and perhaps the Ptolemies were somewhat lax in their observance of this ancient custom. Some member of the priesthood,

more zealous than honest, appears to have imagined that the Greek successors of the Pharaohs would be none the worse of having the spur applied to their flagging devotion. A tablet was accordingly manufactured and conveniently found. It told how a message was once received by the Governor of Nubia from king Tesor of the third dynasty.\* The message draws a painful picture of the condition of Egypt during *a seven years' famine*, and asks the Governor to send information about the rising of the Nile and the gods who influence the inundation. The king receives the report, and makes an offering to the divinities of Elephantine. He is rewarded by a vision in which the great god Chnum explains that the famine should cease, and that corn should grow in plenty according to the heart's desire.

The king awoke with renewed courage. He immediately issued a decree endowing the god with the arable land on both sides of the Nile to the extent of twenty schoeni. Nor was this all. *He* was generous, whatever the Ptolemies might be. The inhabitants of the district were commanded to offer a tenth part "of the produce of all barns, and of whatsoever the fisherman catcheth within his nets, and what the hunter taketh, of whatsoever the angler or the fowler acquireth, of all game and capture of wild animals upon the hills." Even that was only a part of the royal bounty. Everything that could well be tithed was made to contribute to the wealth

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\* This is the reading of some scholars; but just here the characters are nearly obliterated, and the date is disputed.

of the priesthood, and the decree was ordered to be engraved and set up in a conspicuous spot.

Such is the famine tablet. It was a fraud, the object of which was to ensure a continuance of the ancient privileges of the priesthood. But, fraud though it is, it is nevertheless a testimony to the truth of Scripture. There had been an ancient seven years' famine. For there must have been some such basis as that for the pious fraud. The very definiteness of the period indicates this. Had the famine been as much a fiction as the alleged decree, it is hardly likely that its duration would have been so definitely given. There was evidently a well-defined tradition of an ancient seven years' famine, which the forger seized upon to form the basis of his bit of falsified history. But it is time that we should now turn to the account of Joseph's administration. We are not only told that he saved the lives of the people: we are also informed how the work was done. The account is brief, but clear and packed full of details; and every detail must, if it is true, reflect the life of that far-off time. Any book, for example, which would profess to record one of Queen Elizabeth's royal progresses, or her treatment of her subjects in some great crisis, must show us the England of *her* day, and not of ours. If this book of Genesis, then, is true history; if, above all, it is written by inspiration of the Spirit of God; we shall see some proof of that, in its unflinching accuracy. Every detail will be like a rent in the veil of the past, through which we can look and see the Egypt of

that very time. And if some friends, who talk very confidently about their reconstruction of the Old Testament, are right; if Genesis were written by some Babylonian Jew who knew less about the Egypt of Joseph's time than you or I; then that, too, will be abundantly clear. The said Babylonian Jew will enter upon details to his own confusion. The scene which *he* paints will bear the stamp of his own experience. It will reflect his Babylonian surroundings; and, so far as it pretends to be a picture of ancient Egypt, it will be a delusion and a falsehood.

We notice, first of all, that the Egypt of Genesis is evidently a place of great natural fertility. The land yields so much that a fifth part of the produce laid aside each year, during the seven years of plenty proves to be sufficient to make up for the lack during the seven years of famine. It is enough, indeed, with the scant harvest near the river banks, to turn Egypt into a market where the famished people of the surrounding countries may supply themselves with bread. "All countries," we are told, "came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands" (Gen. xli. 57).

This has been pointed to, by members of the critical school, as one of the inaccuracies of which they make so much. How could a *fifth* of the abundance of one year, it is asked, make up for the entire crop-failure of a succeeding year? And although it should afford a scanty subsistence, how, even with riverside vegetation, could it provide a market for other nations? The plain answer is that, of no land

of merely ordinary fertility could such things be true, and that the land of which they were true, must have been one whose fertility almost surpassed the bounds of what is credible or possible. In other words, the land here reflected in the mirror of the sacred narrative is one of a fertility so extraordinary, that what was true of it was not true of almost any other. Was this, then, the fact? Have we here legendary extravagance, or the sober truth of history?

Of the Egypt of the present time, notwithstanding the decay that has blighted its agriculture, as it has blighted everything besides, Osburn\* writes, when referring to the canals in the Delta: "By their agency an amount of fertility is communicated to the Delta, certainly not surpassed, we believe scarcely equalled, by that of any other portion of the earth's surface." Again, speaking of the effects of the yearly inundation, he says: "The river has just subsided within its banks, and the effects of the inundation exhibit themselves in a scene of fertility and beauty such as will scarcely be found in another country at any season of the year. The vivid green of the springing corn; the groves of pomegranate trees, ablaze with the rich scarlet of their blossoms; the fresh breeze laden with the perfumes of gardens of roses and orange thickets; every tree and every shrub covered with sweet-scented flowers: these are a few of the natural beauties that welcome the stranger to the land of Ham. . . . Yet is it the same everywhere, only because it would be impossible to

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\* *Monumental History of Egypt*, i. 6.

make any addition to the sweetness of the odours, and the brilliancy of the colours, or the exquisite beauty of the many forms of vegetable life, in the midst of which he (the stranger) wanders. It is monotonous, but it is the monotony of paradise.”\*

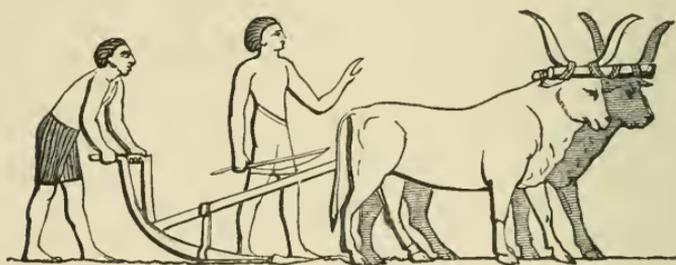
What Egypt is to-day is but a faint reflection of the Egypt of Joseph’s time, when the fertilising waters were caught in magnificent reservoirs and borne in well-kept canals to every part of the land. The gift of the Nile was well understood, and every advantage was taken of it. “The wealth and prosperity of the country were founded on agriculture and the breeding of cattle. . . . The walls of the sepulchral chapels are covered with thousands of bas-reliefs and their explanatory inscriptions, which preserve for us the most abundant disclosures respecting the labours of the field and the rearing of cattle, as practised by the ancient Egyptians. . . . The priests regarded the plough as a most sacred implement, and their faith held that the highest happiness of man, after the completion of his pilgrimage here below, would consist in tilling the Elysian fields of the subterranean god Osiris, in feeding and tending his cattle, and navigating the breezy waters of the other world in slender skiffs.” †

We produce some of these representations which show how high a place agriculture held in the esteem of the ancient Egyptians, and how the strength of the people was thrown into this pursuit. With the marvellous gift of that annual flood, that unclouded

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\* *Ibid.*, 8, 9. † *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, i. 17, 18.

heaven and this zeal for tillage, blessed and inspired by religion itself, how could ancient Egypt fail to pour forth an abundance which no other part of the world has ever equalled? So fully are the labours of the fields portrayed upon the monuments that, had the art been lost, these would have taught it to the world again. All the details, from the preparing of the ground to receive the seed, to the reaping of the harvest and the storing of the grain, are displayed in sculptures and in paintings. The reader will find, for example, upon the following page, a harvest scene



EGYPTIAN PLOUGHING.

from an ancient fresco, which any visitor to Paris may see in the Louvre. The reapers cut the corn with small scythes. Behind them come women and children who bind the corn in sheaves. Porous clay vases, containing water to refresh the labourers, are seen resting on tripods. One of the reapers is represented in the act of drinking. A woman brings provision for the workers. The processes of threshing, winnowing, and storing, are also shown.

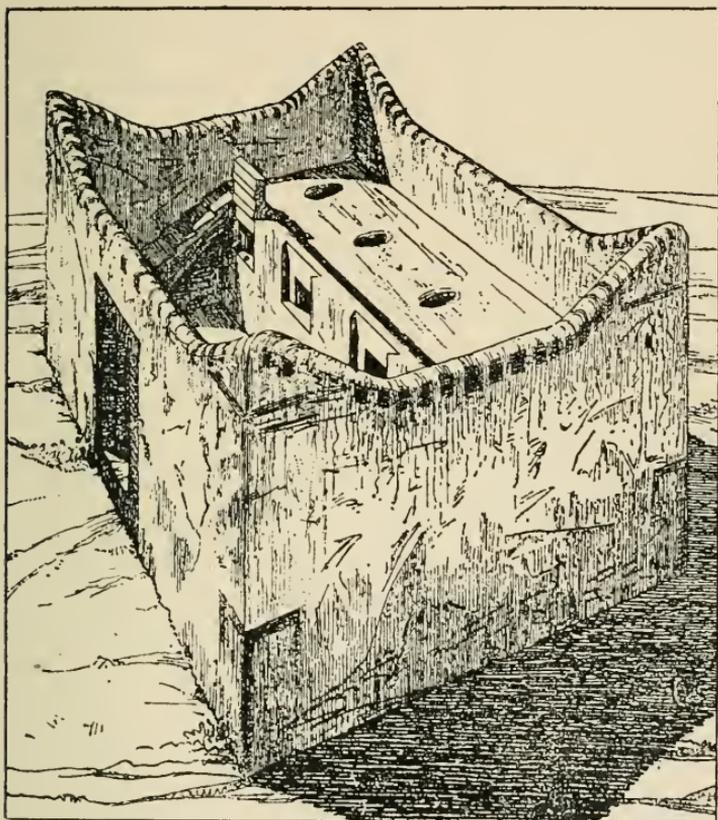
It will be noted that the scribes are at work, marking diligently each measure of winnowed grain



granary window the number is chalked or painted to show how much the magazine contains. The office of farm scribe seems to have been regarded as one of importance. On a tomb at Eilethya there is the following inscription: "Thotnope, measuring scribe." Now *so faithful is the Genesis picture of ancient Egypt, that even that feature stands clearly out.* We read: "And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, *until he left numbering; for it was without number*" (Genesis xli. 49). Here we are clearly told that Joseph followed the ordinary plan till the very abundance of the years of plenty made it impossible to follow the plan any longer. He numbered till he had to give up numbering. You have there again the unmistakable stamp of the place and time.

We may also notice that the narrative implies that Government granaries were among the institutions of Egypt. He really held, among other great offices, that of superintendent of the royal grain storehouses of Egypt. "The food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. . . . And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians" (Genesis xli. 48, 56). This seems to have been always an important office under the Pharaohs. And the wisdom of Joseph's council must have been the more striking, that provision for the evil days could be made by means which were already provided in the institutions of the country. The superintendent of the royal granaries was an important officer of the court of the Pharaohs.

Several names of these superintendents have been handed down to us by the monuments. On one we read: "Chemnecht, royal official, having charge of the granary." There is a statuette of another of the



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GRANARY.

same name and the same title. The tomb of another bears the following: "Chaemha, controller of the granaries." This last inscription shows very clearly the importance of the office. It tells us that Chaemha made his reports directly to the king, and that he

had under him various classes of employés. His title: "the eyes of the king in the cities of the south, and his ears in the provinces of the north," indicates that he had control of the entire country, and that the office of controller of the granaries carried with it very large powers.

In connection with this, let me quote the following from Mr. Tomkins's excellent volume on *The Life and Times of Joseph*. He says: "Mr. Naville writes: 'The other day I came across a picture which reminded me strongly of Joseph and his employment. It has been taken from a tomb. There you see the king, Amenophis III., sitting on his throne, and before him one of his ministers, Chaemha, who seems to have had a very high position. He is called the *chief of the granaries of the whole kingdom*. Behind him are a great number of officials of different classes bringing the tribute of the whole land. This man seems to have had nobody above him, as he speaks to the king himself; and he had under his command all the tax-gatherers, and all that concerned the granaries. Besides, he had this strange title, *the eyes of the king in the towns of the south, and his ears in the provinces of the north*; which implies that he knew the land perfectly; and that, like Joseph, he had gone throughout all the land of Egypt.'"\* The office existed long before Joseph's time, so that the Divine wisdom, which spake by him, took up an existing institution and made it effective for the saving of the lives of millions. The title "Overseer of the

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\* Pp. 48, 49.

granaries" is one which frequently occurs, and is borne by men holding the very highest positions in ancient Egypt. There is a monument in the British Museum of one Anharnekht, who was "Overseer of the granaries" in the time of the twelfth dynasty, that is, before the days of Abraham.

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## CHAPTER V.

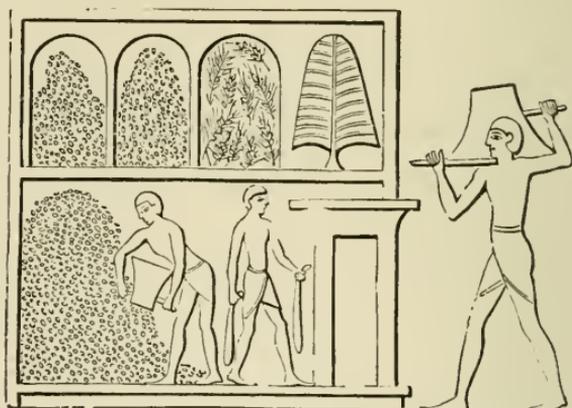
### JOSEPH'S STATESMANSHIP.

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I HAVE already touched upon the famines to which Egypt has been occasionally subjected, and we have glanced at the misery and horror which they entailed. It is not an inviting picture, and there would be no occasion to go back to it, were it not for the foolish objections which are sometimes urged against the measures adopted by the man who, under God, was the means of saving the land.

The huge population of ancient Egypt, living in careless abundance and looking forward to what seemed the assured plenty of the coming harvest, found itself at such a time face to face with death in one of its most appalling forms. In the year 1199, a famine occurred in consequence of a deficiency in the usual rise of the Nile. The scenes that ensued have been described by an eye-witness, Abd-el-latif.

The inhabitants of the villages and of the country flocked to the towns. Many emigrated to Syria and to the neighbouring countries. Pestilence soon followed in the wake of the famine. "The poor," he says, "pressed by the famine, which grew ever greater, ate carrion, corpses, dogs, offal, and dung. They went further, and even ate infants. It was no rare thing to surprise people in the act of eating children roasted or boiled. . . . I myself saw a little child



STORING GRAIN—*from a Frescoe in the Tombs at Thebes*

roasted in a basket. . . . When the poor began eating human flesh, the horror and astonishment were such, that the crime formed the theme of conversation everywhere. But, afterwards, people became so accustomed to these things, and even acquired such a taste for this horrible food, that it was taken as a matter of ordinary nourishment. . . ."

The further details are really too horrible for translation. What has been given will suffice to show from what calamities Egypt was saved through

the instrumentality of Joseph. The country was delivered from threatened depopulation and crime, which would have defiled and weakened it for ages. The astonishing abundance which filled the land during each of the years of plenty did not make Joseph forget his mission. The man of faith had ever before his eyes the days of dearth of which as yet there was no sign.

Let us now turn to the administration of Joseph. His wisdom in providing for the times of scarcity no one has questioned. Many, however, have called in question his justice in his subsequent transactions with the Egyptian people. But let us look at the facts. Joseph at first sells corn to the people and to strangers. But by and bye the money is exhausted both in Egypt and in the neighbouring land of Canaan. The Egyptians come to Joseph in their misery and tell him that, though they need corn from the royal stores as much as ever, they have no money to purchase it. "And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail." This was done. "They brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year" (xlvii. 13-17).

So far, Joseph's conduct has escaped censure. We now come to the crowning transaction on which condemnation has been profusely poured. When the cattle were gone, the famine remained as severe as ever. The time of distress was rapidly diminishing;

but, if the people were to see again years of plenty, some means of sustenance must be found meanwhile. So they came to Joseph, this time with a plan of their own. They said, we have only our lands and our lives left. "Wherefore," said they, "shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate" (verses 18, 19). Joseph did as they proposed. All the land of Egypt became Pharaoh's, "for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof" (verses 20, 21). Joseph then made a covenant with them on the ground of their land and of themselves being the property of the king. He gave them seed, and exacted the fifth part of the produce as rent, and made the covenant a statute for all after generations.

This transaction has been condemned in every particular. It must be confessed that to us, with our institutions and ideas, it looks a hard bargain. Advantage seems to be taken of the people's necessity to press them backward step by step out of every possession and out of every right. But our ideas and institutions may mislead us. Our government differs radically from that of Egypt. The latter was paternal. The king was father: the whole of Egypt was his household. The compact was not so one-

sided as a like transaction would be between the government and the people of this country. Rights were believed in ancient Egypt to involve co-extensive duties. The difference is seen in the gratitude of the Egyptians. It is no hard bargain in their estimation: it is rather an unexpected deliverance. Their cry was: "Thou hast saved our lives!" And in that matter we must admit them to be better judges than we.

No objection can fairly be urged against the rent which is exacted. Edersheim says, in his *Jewish Social Life* (p. 52), that, during Syrian rule, the Jews "paid one-third of the produce of all that was sown, and one-half of that of the fruit trees." The present practice in Palestine explains the gratitude of the Egyptians. If the cultivator supplies labour, cattle, and seed, he pays one-fifth of the produce *as rent for the land alone*. If, on the other hand, the landlord supplies cattle and seed, he gets four-fifths, while the cultivator has to content himself with one-fifth. Here, then, we have some light on the joy which the Egyptians manifested. They received three times more from Joseph than people in their position receive from the landholders of Palestine to-day. If the Syrian cultivator can subsist, then the Egyptians had the opportunity of becoming wealthy, and of regaining their former wealth and luxury. This they no doubt knew, and therefore their gratitude.

But it is urged that Joseph had no right to extinguish their independence. He deprived them of their freedom and of their land. He broke up

their connection with their native districts, and transplanted them to remote parts. Here again we have to judge with caution. Modern ideas of freedom were utterly alien to the ancient Egyptian. His highest felicity was to be a servant to Pharaoh. With regard to the forced migration of the people it has been maintained that the Scripture statement is to be understood of the gathering of the people from the country districts into the cities where the food was stored, and that this plan was followed "from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof."

I cannot recommend that interpretation. It is ingenious; but it savours strongly of an attempt to evade a difficulty. The nature of the case seems to require the ordinary interpretation. If the sale of cattle and effects and land was not to be a mere form and a sham, it was necessary that the plan indicated should be adopted. The people had to pass out of the farms, and from the ownership of the things which were no longer theirs. So far, however, we have been judging this matter without the slightest regard to the circumstances of the time. When we take these into account we shall find the policy of Joseph triumphantly vindicated.

The curse of Ancient Egypt, as Osburn has pointed out, was the turbulence of its nobility. "The vast estates and possessions of the princes of Old Egypt, the number of their dependents, and the authority, regal in everything but the name, which they exercised over them, we have found recorded on their

tombs, and noted upon them. It has been the constant result of this state of things in the annals of mankind, that such princes become turbulent and bad subjects."\*

Now, it was important for *Israel's sake that this should be changed*. They had come to dwell in the land for centuries, and it was essential that there should be a strong and stable government. God arranged that this should be brought about without persecution or revolution. The people were broken away from their dependence upon the nobles, who could help them in their straits as little as they could help themselves. They were linked in a closer relationship to the king than they had ever sustained towards the nobles. The transplanting of the people was necessary to break up the old and faulty associations. It made a new beginning, not only for the individual, but also for the State.

There now remains what is still more important than the vindication of Joseph—the vindication of Scripture. A change is alleged to have been made, which went down to the very roots of Egyptian life. Was it ever made? A custom is said to have been instituted, which continued to the time when Genesis was written: is there any proof of its institution and of its continuance? The answer to this is full and explicit. The statements of Genesis are statements of fact. All the Greek historians and travellers who touch upon the customs of Egypt, speak of this peculiarity in the Egyptian tenure of land.

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\* *Monumental History of Egypt*, ii. 102.

Herodotus, who wrote about 450 B.C., says that the soil of Egypt was divided among the inhabitants by Sesostris, who assigned square plots of equal size to each, and that the king obtained his revenue from the rent annually paid by the occupiers. How Sesostris acquired the land, or the right to so divide it, he does not say. Diodorus, who travelled in Egypt in the year 50 B.C., ascribes the division of the land to Sesoösis, and says he divided it into 36 nomes, or divisions, and set monarchs over each to superintend the revenue and to govern their provinces. He also says that the only landowners were the priests, the king, and the warriors. Twenty-six years after the visit of Diodorus, Strabo entered the country, and noted that the occupiers of the land held it subject to a rent. It will be observed that the attention of all three was drawn to the fact, which the Scripture has explained. The people of the country were not the owners of the land. Unlike Greece, or Rome, or Syria, or any other known country, Egypt had no landowner but one—the king. There is an exception mentioned in the Scripture. We are told that the priests had food allotted to them by Pharaoh and, therefore, did not require to part with their land. This Diodorus confirms. But it will be observed that he says the warriors were landowners, as well as the priests. When this is looked into, however, it is found that they were not landowners in the same sense. Herodotus explains that each warrior had assigned to him twelve squares of land, each containing one hundred cubits. These

were given by the will of the king, and the only difference seems to have been that the soldiers paid no rent, while the rest of the people did.

All this is indirectly confirmed by the monuments. They show that under the ancient and middle empires a feudal system prevailed. Large territories were owned by hereditary princes. Their possessions passed to their heirs by descent or marriage, and the real power of the country was thus retained in the hands of a few great families. I have already indicated that this state of things led to turbulence, to frequent plots and rebellions. *After the time of the Hyksos kings, under whom Joseph served, this state of things has disappeared.* The feudal system is no longer found. Rameses III. speaks of himself, in the great Harris Papyrus, as the proprietor of the Egyptian soil. "I have caused," he says, "trees and shrubs to be planted throughout the entire country. I have allowed men to seat themselves in the shade. . . . I have given life to the entire country. . . . The country has been well satisfied during my reign. . . . Toil for him (his son Rameses IV.) as one man, in every kind of labour. . . . Make for him all sorts of handiwork. He will reward you with daily nourishment." The language of the king is that of the lord and master of the country and the people.

Osburn has pointed out another indication of the truth of Scripture.\* Apepi, or Apophis, the Pharaoh of Joseph, was a great builder and constructor of monuments. Where did he procure the means for

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\* *Monumental History of Egypt*, ii. 92, 96.

his vast architectural labours? Supplement the indications brought to light by explorations with the account in Genesis, and all is made plain. The unparalleled wealth which rushed in upon the royal treasury during the seven years of famine, and the necessities of the people, who demanded toil by which they might fight their grim battle with starvation, explain everything.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE LAST DAYS OF JACOB AND OF JOSEPH.

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**G**OD had given his tried servant rest, though that too was in a land in which he was a stranger. Nevertheless it *was* rest which the power of his son guarded, and which his thoughtful kindness deepened and beautified with all that Egypt, then at the height of its splendour, could supply. The patriarch, like the setting sun, went down in glory. But it was from the first a going down, and the hour came when love might weep but could no longer minister. Jacob felt the approach of death, and there was one last fear that he desired to have removed. "And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: But I will lie

with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head"(Gen. xlvii. 29-31).

In translating "Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head," our version has followed the present reading of the Hebrew text. Up till the fourth century of our era the Hebrew had none of the vowel signs, a series of points or dots which are placed below or above or in the middle of the Hebrew letters to show how the words were to be pronounced. After that time these were supplied. It seems that here the Jewish Rabbis, who inserted the vowel points, and so perpetuated the knowledge of the ancient pronunciation, have made a mistake. The very same letters stand for "staff" and for "bed." The New Testament reference to this passage shows that the word was used in the former meaning—"By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." That staff had been his life-long companion. He had taken it when he set off a fugitive from his father's house. It was the only thing that he had carried away. It had spoken to him when he returned. "With my staff," he said in his pleading with God, "I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands!" (Genesis xxxii. 10). It now spoke to him again. It told of God's abounding mercy and unfailing truth; and "he worshipped, leaning upon the head of his staff."

Some little time seems to have passed between that interview and the close. But, though delayed, the last hour came. "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people. And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel" (xlix. 33—1. 2). Here there are references to Egyptian customs which show how fully the life of that ancient people was known both to the writer and to the readers for whose use the book was in the first instance intended. Note that it is not one physician, but several, to whom the command is given. Ordinarily, one doctor is enough for a household, and even in ancient times, when our nobility had large establishments, more than one medical attendant would have been reckoned quite an unnecessary provision. Had such a representation, however, been made of a princely house in Egypt, it would have shown ignorance of one of the special characteristics of the country. "The Egyptians," writes Wilkinson, "paid great attention to health, and 'so wisely,' says Herodotus, 'was medicine managed by them, that no doctor was permitted to practise any but his own peculiar branch. Some were oculists, who only studied diseases of the eye; others attended solely to complaints of the head; others to those of the teeth; some again confined themselves to complaints of the intestines, and others to secret and

internal maladies.'”\* One result of this concentration of attention upon special portions of the body was a degree of skill that made the physicians of Egypt famous in the ancient world. It is said that both Cyrus and Darius procured medical attendants from Egypt.

The book of Genesis carries us much farther back than the descriptions of Herodotus, who visited Egypt only in the fifth century B.C.—twelve hundred years and more after the time of Joseph. Herodotus speaks of the physicians as being in receipt of Government pay, and as being a special order of Government officials. But even then, as we see in the instances of Cyrus and Darius, princely houses had for themselves a requisite number of medical advisers. In the earlier period to which Joseph belonged this would be much more customary. The priests formed just such a body in the state, and yet we know, as we have already seen, numbers of them were attached to the great households of the land.

Almost everything connected with the process of embalming, and with the funeral customs of the Egyptians is now fully known to us. Mr. Budge, in his valuable book on *The Mummy*, describes the ceremonies as they were observed some 300 years later than the time of Joseph. “We must imagine,” he says, “that we are living on the east bank of the Nile, near the temple of Amen-Ra, ‘lord of the thrones of the earth,’ in the fifteenth century before Christ. One morning before the day has dawned,

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\* *The Ancient Egyptians*, Vol. II., p. 354

even before the officials who conduct the early services in the temple are astir, we are awakened by loud cries of grief and lamentation, and on making inquiries, we are told that Ani, the great scribe of the offerings of the gods in the temple of Amen-Ra, is dead. As he was receiver of the revenues of the gods of Abydos, as well as of Amen-Ra of Thebes, first prophet of Amen, and the precentor who stood on the threshold of the temple morning by morning to lead off the hymn of praise to the sun, his death naturally causes great excitement in the temples and in the immediate neighbourhood. . . .

“The news of his death spreads rapidly through the quarter, for all the women of his house rush frantically through the streets, beating their breasts, and from time to time clutching at their hair which is covered with handfuls of the thick dust of the streets. . . . In the house, parties of mourning women shriek out their grief, and all the members of the house add their tears and sobs. . . .

“Meanwhile, it was decided that Ani’s funeral should be one of the best that money could purchase . . . his relatives ordered that his body should be mummified in the best possible way. . . . The body is first washed and then laid upon the ground, and one of the assistants traces with ink on the left side, over the groin, a line, some few inches long, to indicate where the incision is to be made in the body ; another assistant takes a knife, probably made of flint, and makes a cut in the body the same length as the line drawn in ink by his companion. . . . The

chief intestines and the heart and lungs were then carefully taken out and washed in palm wine, and stuffed with sweet smelling spices, gums, &c. They are next smeared all over with an unguent, and then carefully bandaged with strips of linen many yards long. . . .

“The brain is next removed through the nostrils by means of an iron rod curved at one end, and is put aside to be dried and buried with the body : at every step in these processes religious formulæ are recited. The body thus deprived of its more perishable parts, is taken and laid to soak in a tank of liquid natron for a period of seventy days. At the end of this time it is taken out and carefully washed and dried, and it is seen that it is of a greenish-grey colour ; the skin clings to the bones, for the flesh beneath it has shrunk somewhat, but the hair of the body is well preserved, the nails of the hands and feet still adhere to the skin, and the face, though now drawn and very thin, has changed but little.

“Longitudinal slits are next made in the fingers and toes, and the fleshy parts of the arms, thighs, and legs, which are then stuffed with a mixture of sweet spices and natron, and sewn up again. The cavity in the skull is now filled up with a mixture of spices, powdered plaster and natron, and the nostrils through which it was inserted are plugged up with small linen pledgets dipped in some astringent.”\* Artificial eyes are inserted in the eye-sockets. The

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\* *The Mummy*, pp. 158-162.

breast and stomach are filled with a similar mixture of spices and bitumen.

But elaborate as these preparations were, the body is not yet ready for its long resting place. We have reached the end of the preliminary processes only. "Now," says Budge, "the bandaging begins. The body is first of all smeared all over with unguents. Pieces of linen are then torn into strips about three inches wide, and one edge of each strip is gummed. On one end of each of these the name of Ani," that is, of the deceased, "has been written in hieratic characters to facilitate the identification of the mummy during the process of bandaging; a number of these strips are dipped in water, and the embalmers having bandaged the fingers, hands, and arms, and toes separately, begin to bandage the body from the feet upwards. The moist bandages cling closely to the body, and the gummed edges enables each fold of the bandage to obtain firm hold; the little irregularities are corrected by small pledgets of linen placed between the folds and gummed in position. These linen bandages are also held in position by means of narrower strips of linen wound round the body at intervals of six and eight inches, and tied in a double knot. . . . One end of a very thick bandage of eighteen to twenty-five folds of linen is laid under the shoulders, and the other is brought over the head and face, and rests on the upper part of the chest; this is held in position by a bandage wound round the neck, and tied in a double knot at the back of the neck.

“The same plan is adopted with respect to the feet, but, before the bandage which secures all is tied, thick pads of linen are laid on the top of the feet to prevent injury happening to them when the mummy is made to stand upright. The bandaged arms having been pressed closely into the sides, and the fore-arms and hands having been laid upon the stomach, the bandaging goes on again. . . . More folds of linen are laid on the body perpendicularly, and more bandages are wound round the body horizontally, until, little by little, it loses its shape beneath them. When a length of about three hundred cubits has been used in folds and bandages, a coarse piece of linen is laid on the body and is sewn up the back. Over this again a saffron-coloured linen sheet is laid, and this, having been deftly sewn over the head, down the back, and under the feet, is finally held in position by a perpendicular bandage of brownish-coloured linen passing from the head to the feet and under them up the back to the head, and by four horizontal bandages of the same coloured linen, one round the shoulders, one round the middle of the body, one round the knees, and one round the ankles. Thus the mummy is complete.”\* The quantity of linen used in embalming in the most expensive style, that, namely, which was used for the wealthy and which was no doubt the method adopted in the case of Jacob, was enormous. M. Mariette had the bandages which had swathed one of the mummies measured, and found that they extended

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\* Pp. 163-165.

to a total length of about five thousand *mètres*, or more than three miles! It will be noticed that Mr. Budge speaks of the body lying seventy days in natron, while the Scripture says that the embalming was completed in forty days. But the longer of these two periods is equally irreconcilable with the statement of Diodorus that the body was steeped for about thirty days. The words of Herodotus, upon which Mr. Budge and others lean for the representations which he gives, are capable of being understood in another way. The seventy days seem to cover the whole period of the mourning. The three periods named may be taken, indeed, as completing our information. The body was actually steeped in natron for about thirty days. The other ten days were taken up in the after operations. The seventy days were the entire period of mourning.

Another noteworthy fact is brought before us in these words: "And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again. And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear" (l. 4-6).

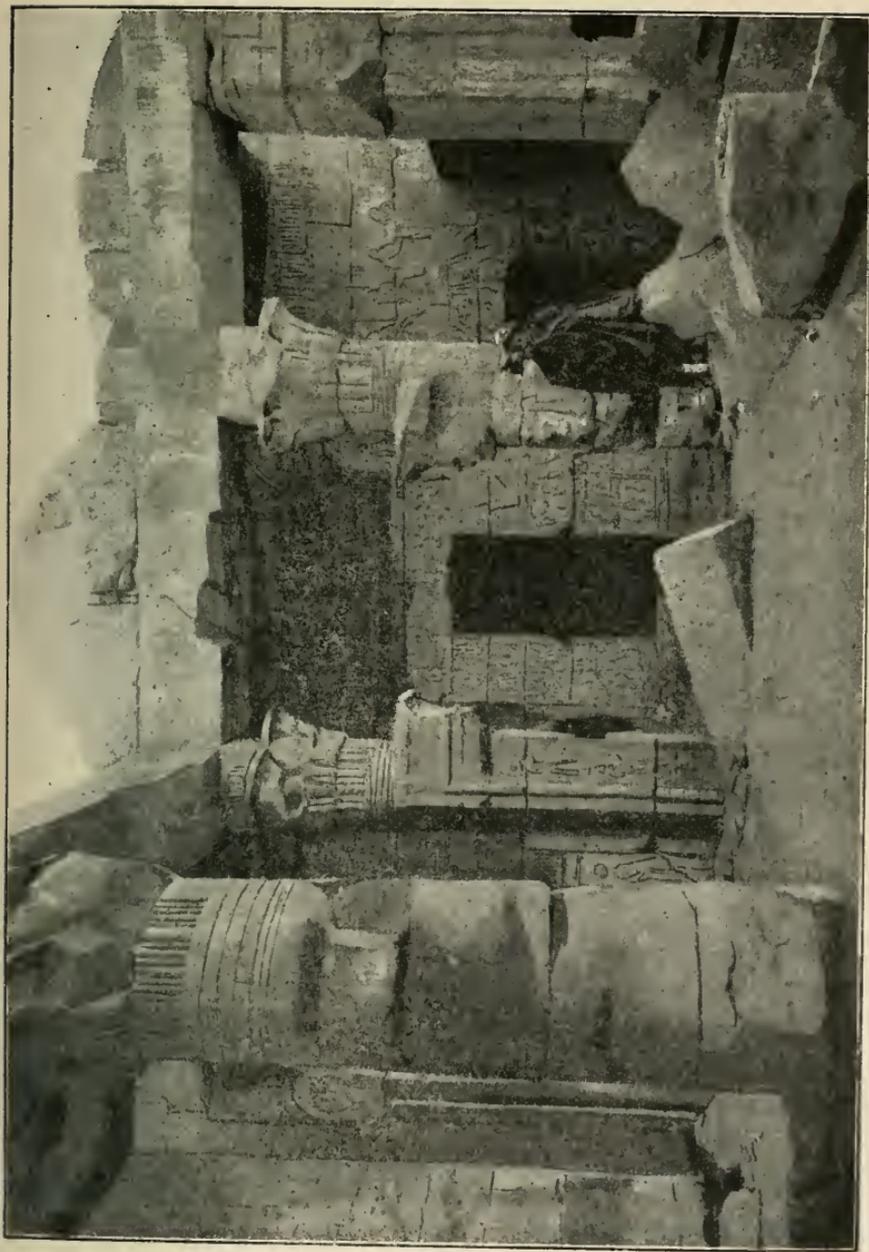
Now, why did Joseph speak to Pharaoh's house, and entreat them to convey his request to the king? When Joseph desired the royal favour for his

brethren, he himself went in unto Pharaoh. "Then Joseph came," we read, "and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen. And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh" (Genesis xlvii. 1, 2). Here there is no seeking for intermediaries. He has the right of access to the great monarch—and none had fuller right to that than he—and he uses it not only for his own approach, but also for the presentation of his brethren. Why, then, is this change? What has happened that Joseph cannot himself speak with the king, or even present himself before him?

The recollection of what has been already said regarding Egyptian customs will supply an answer. In times of grief or of mourning the Egyptians went unshaven. During the interval between death and interment the family, says Maspero, "pass the long days of waiting in tears and sadness. They take no baths, and scarcely wash themselves. They abstain from wine, meat, and wheaten bread, living on black bread and water. The men allow the hair and beard to grow. The women abstain from dressing their hair, rouging their eyes and face, or dyeing their hands with henna. Twice a day they meet in the mortuary chamber to weep together. The master's death has suspended the whole course of the ordinary life of the house."\* This unshaven condition, and

the other acts of mourning made it impossible for him to present himself before the king. And they could not be dispensed with. Not to speak of Joseph's own keen sorrow in his loss of him whom he lived to please and to honour, it would have outraged the most sacred feelings of the entire country had the great minister of Egypt dispensed with the external marks of mourning. Here again nothing is said to explain why Joseph could not personally present his request to the king. Those for whom the Book was originally intended—the Israel of the Exodus—knew the customs of the land and were well aware that he could not enter the royal presence unshaven. It will also be noted that we *have* an explanation in regard to the embalming—“And forty days were fulfilled for him (Jacob); *for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed*: and the Egyptians mourned for him three score and ten days” (Genesis 1. 3). This explanation regarding the forty days was required even for the Israelites of the Exodus. In this matter of embalming, their customs were not identical with those of Egypt. They had preserved the practice of direct burial which they had retained from the earliest times and have continued with unbroken loyalty to our own day. But this was a matter which lay outside their experience; and, as to the details of what happened in the course of the embalmment of the princes among their Egyptian masters, multitudes of them must have been ignorant. An explanation in this case is accordingly given.

We find a reference to another Egyptian custom in



TEMPLE AT DEIR EL-MEDINEH.  
*(Reproduced by permission from the photograph by the Cosmos Co.)*

the message to Pharaoh. Joseph shows the necessity he is under of temporarily leaving Egypt by mentioning that his father's dying charge was: "In my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me." The cave of Machpelah was the burial place of which Jacob spoke. It is very unlikely that he had digged any grave for himself therein. But it was the burial place of his fathers (Genesis xlvii. 30), and therefore his own appointed and desired burial place. Joseph had to translate this by putting it in a way which an Egyptian would understand. The Egyptian spent money, thought, and time upon the preparation of his tomb. Among the first things which a king thought of and saw to when he ascended the throne was his final resting-place. To fail to be buried there—in the prepared chamber—was the greatest of earthly calamities. And so, to make plain the necessity under which he lay of carrying his father's body up to Machpelah in Canaan, he had to indicate it thus as the only possible place of interment: "My grave which I have digged for me."

When Jacob's body was removed for burial, there was an imposing procession. "And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen." This means that even the women attended the funeral. The funeral of a

wealthy man, or of one of the nobles was a great occasion—one of the greatest displays, indeed, of ancient Egypt, and the women of the house had their place in it. Women were also in request as mourners. Describing an event of the kind, Maspero, in the same account from which I have just quoted, says: “Khait (the widow) and her children walk anywhere, in front, behind, or at the sides of the coffin; then follow the friends of the family, cane in hand, wrapped in long festival cloaks; and lastly, the crowd of sightseers.” It was quite in keeping with the customs of Egypt that “There went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company” (Genesis 1. 9).

The great mourning made by the Egyptians is specially noted. “And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-Mizraim (the mourning of Egypt), which is beyond Jordan” (verses 10, 11). This also was in exact accordance with the customs of Egypt. “The procession,” continues Maspero, “passes through the winding streets at the slow pace of the oxen, stopping all traffic and circulation, stopping itself upon the smallest pretext. . . . Funerals at Thebes are not silent processions, in which grief is scarcely betrayed,

save by a few furtive tears. The dead require a noise, sobs, and extravagant gestures. The family not only hire mourners, whose trade it is to cry aloud, to tear their hair, to sing their lamentations, and conscientiously to pourtray the utmost despair, but the relations and friends of the deceased do not hesitate to make a spectacle of themselves, and to disturb by their sorrow the indifference of passers by. Sometimes one of the groups, sometimes the other, utters some brief sentence suitable to the occasion. 'To the West, the dwelling of Osiris; to the West, thou who wert the best of men, who always hated duplicity.' And the hired mourners reply in chorus: 'Oh, chief, as thou goest to the West, the gods themselves lament, as thou goest to the West!' The ox-driver, goading on his oxen, says, to encourage them, 'To the West, oh, bulls, that draw the catafalque, to the West! Your master is behind you.' 'To the West!' repeat the friends; 'the excellent man who loved truth and hated falsehood lives no more!'"\*

There is one other incident, the mention of which fitly ends our study of the life and times of Joseph. The saviour, under God, of Egypt and of Israel passed his aftertime apparently in uninterrupted prosperity. He died, when he had attained the age "of an hundred and ten years"—an age which, strangely enough, filled up to the brim the measure of what, according to immemorial tradition in Egypt, constituted earthly felicity. "The venerable Ptah-hotep, the oldest of known moralists, who lived in the an-

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\* Pp. 138, 139.

cient time of the fifth dynasty, says, 'I have passed a hundred and ten years of life by the gift of the king.' And in a court poem addressed to Seti II., the scribe assures him 'thou shalt dwell a hundred and ten years on the earth.' As Pierret writes: 'It is the number of years invariably adopted by the formulary of the inscriptions, whenever there is asked of the gods the boon of a long and happy existence.' " \* God seems in this way to have crowned Joseph in the sight of all Egypt with the Divine approval.

But the end came, "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this 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" (verses 24, 25). His prosperity had not spoiled him. His faith in God's promise fills that death-chamber with glory. He leaves a word behind him which will live on and lighten the darkness of Israel's coming calamities. And Israel accepts the assurance, and prepares for the accomplishment of their great brother's request. "So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (verse 26).

We have already noted how the chief incidents in the history of Joseph foreshadow those in the life of Jesus. It may be possible to see even here light shed on Israel's hope. When God does visit them in the latter day and bring them up to the land which He

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\* Tomkins, *The Life and Times of Joseph*, p. 135.

sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, Israel will, so to say, carry the Crucified with them. But the point to which I have to ask attention in closing is the statement regarding the coffin of Joseph. The Hebrew word, *arōn*, shows that a wooden and not a stone coffin, or sarcophagus, is meant. In the insufficient knowledge which prevailed not very long ago regarding Egyptian customs, this was supposed to be a difficulty. The rule, it was imagined, was to place the body in a coffin of stone. The testimony of Herodotus might have been sufficient to dispel that illusion. He says: "The relatives inclose the body in a wooden image which they have made in the shape of a man. Then, fastening the case, they place it in a sepulchral chamber, upright against the wall. This is the most costly form of embalming the dead."\* That "wooden image" was the coffin in which the embalmed body was placed. "During the seventy days," says Budge, "which have been spent in embalming Ani's body, the coffin makers have not been idle, and they have made ready a covering of wood to be laid on the mummy, and two beautiful coffins. The covering, in the form of a mummy, is slightly vaulted, and has a human face, bearded, on it; it is handsomely painted outside with collar," &c. . . . "The inner coffin is equally handsome, and carpenter and artist have expended their best labour upon it; before Ani was embalmed he was measured for it, and due allowance having been made for the bandages, it fits the mummy exactly. It is in the

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\* 11. 86.

form of a mummy, and the sycamore planks of which it is made are about two inches thick; the bottom is of one piece, as is also each of the sides, the rounded head-piece is cut out of a solid piece of wood, and the foot-piece is also separate; all these parts are pegged together with wooden pegs about two inches long."\*

Here again, therefore, the Scripture, and not the objector, or the finder of difficulty, is justified. And as it is here, so it is everywhere. So long ago as 1868, Ebers, in publishing his *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, made the following significant confession in his preface: "It is with reluctance," he said, "that I publish this laborious work. I expect undoubtedly to gain the goodwill of many friends of the Bible; but, on the other hand, I cannot conceal from myself that I shall not escape severe criticism. I offer, so to say, in spite of myself and yet voluntarily, to those who wish to close the gates against free criticism, many things which will be agreeable to them; for I show that the history of Joseph, in particular, even to its smallest details, has painted with the greatest exactness the conditions of ancient Egypt."

Dillman's is a well known name among the great authorities of criticism. He published a commentary on Genesis in 1875, and here is his judgment regarding the book. "The narrators," he says, "show themselves very familiar with the manners, the customs, and the ideas of the Egyptians. *There is not a single detail which can be made to prove the contrary.*

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\* *The Mummy*, pp. 163, 166.

A certain number of descriptions and references are astonishingly faithful and striking." These admissions have been multiplying and will multiply. It will not be the first time in human history that theorists have been answered and put to silence and shame by discoverers. This battle has but one possible issue. Every ascertained fact in Egyptology, which touches upon matters referred to in the Bible, has illustrated and confirmed the Scripture. And when every discovery ranges itself on the side of the Bible, no one can doubt where the victory will ultimately rest.

ISRAEL IN EGYPT.



## CHAPTER I.

### “THE IRON FURNACE.”

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UNDER that expressive figure, the persecution in Egypt is repeatedly referred to in Scripture. In warning the children of Israel not to defile themselves with the idolatries of the other nations, Moses reminds them that it is the Lord who “hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace (crucible), even out of Egypt” (Deuteronomy iv. 20). The phrase sets the condition of Israel before us in a picture that stamps itself upon heart and memory. There is no fiercer flame than that which smelts the iron. No ordinary fire will do. It must be urged and driven by hot blasts till, in the white heat, all resistance is impossible, and the ore can no longer retain its treasure, but has to pour it forth like water. To say that Israel passed through fires of tribulation was not enough. The people were swathed in flames as fierce, and seemingly as resistless, as those of the smelting furnace. The Egyptian taskmasters knew their trade. Killing by labour was one of the ordinary State punishments of that country. In this conflict between man’s hate and God’s protecting love, there was nothing that the Egyptians did not try. Let us note, too, before we pass on, how the phrase betrays the Divine sympathy. *God does not minimise our distress.* There may be those who pass lightly over

another's trouble. But love never does, and least of all His love who numbers the hairs of our head and treasures up our tears.

In our last chapter we left Israel a family—or rather a group of families—we now find them a people. The old ties which had bound them together in the early days must have grown weaker as their numbers increased. In the small hamlet we know everybody; in the big city we know few. But before they leave Egypt they must be bound together again with the ties of brotherhood; and they must be brought into circumstances such that they will gladly forsake the land where they have sojourned so long, which they have learned to love, and where they have acquired possessions and wealth and multiplied relationships. Otherwise there will be a schism. Part of the people may go, but many may cleave to the land of their birth. Therefore, God in His wisdom suffers the iron furnace to be kindled, and His people to be cast into it. We have now to ask what confirmations of this part of the sacred story the monuments supply. We shall find the answer as full and as triumphant as any which we have yet met with. Recent explorations have shed a flood of light upon this part of Egyptian history, and have uncovered one of the very treasure cities which the enslaved Israelites built for their Egyptian master. But to enjoy this light to the full we must resolutely keep the pathway of faith, and refuse to follow unbridled speculations. There is a question with which I shall deal by-and-bye, and upon which much,

we might say everything, depends. Who was the Pharaoh of the oppression? Several answers are given, and none of those who give the replies are lacking in confidence. There are two or three Pharaohs, separated from each other by centuries, whom various authorities identify with seeming certainty. The result is, of course, that the student is ready to give up in despair. But there is a clue through this labyrinth which, if we have faith enough to hold it fast, will bring us out into the light of day. Scripture has fixed the date of the Exodus. Solomon, we are told, began building the Temple in the fourth year of his reign, “And in the 480th year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt” (1. Kings vi. 1). Now Solomon’s reign began in 1014. The fourth year of his reign was, therefore, 1010 or 1011. If we now add the 480 years, we are brought to 1490 or 1491 as the date of the Exodus. But there is another account (in Acts xiii.) which seems to conflict with this, but which really confirms it. There the Apostle Paul is speaking to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. The various periods in their history are recounted, and the duration of each, as recorded in the Scripture, is given. A careful study of these figures shows that the interval between the Exodus and the fourth year of Solomon, in which the temple was built, was really 573 years, and not 480. In the record in Kings (if that in Acts is correct, as it must be) ninety-three years are thus blotted out!

It may be imagined that the blotting out of these

93 years is a mere gratuitous supposition, the only reason for which is the necessity of finding some explanation of a Scripture difficulty, or, as some might express it, of a glaring contradiction. But that impression will disappear when the passages are carefully studied and compared. The account in Acts xiii., setting forth the long-suffering of God, states *the entire duration* of the interval. But the account, in 1. Kings vi. 1, has plainly a very different purpose. The time is mentioned in connection with the erection of the Temple. That Temple was the symbol of God's presence in the midst of Israel. It was the palace of the great king. But if—during the interval between the Exodus, when God was visibly present in the pillar of fire by night and of cloud by day, and now when He filled this Temple of Solomon's with His glory—there had been times when God had withdrawn Himself from Israel, then we could understand the blotting out of these years just here. The Israelites knew their history. They had often reckoned up the time that had passed since the Exodus. They quite understood that the interval was 573 years and not 480; and this difficulty presented by the statement would lead them to pause and to consider what the motive could be for refusing to include these 93 years. And if the answer was got that these were years in which, on account of their transgressions and idolatries, God had forsaken them, then the lesson would be read and would not be easily forgotten.

But was it possible to find out what those 93 years

were? This was possible then and it is possible still. The numbers of the years in which *all* Israel, on both sides of the Jordan, were given over into the hands of their enemies—when God had forsaken them, and other lords ruled over them—are all carefully noted in the Book of the Judges. Here is the list:—

They served Chushan-rishathaim	8 years,	Jud. iii.	8.
„ „ Eglon, King of Moab	18 „ „ „		14.
„ „ Jabin, King of Canaan	20 „ „	iv.	3.
„ „ The Midianites	7 „ „	vi.	1.
„ „ The Philistines	40 „ „	xiii.	1.
	<hr/>		
Total	93 „		

We have therefore to add, not 480, but 573 years to the date of Solomon’s reign to get the exact date of the Exodus. Adding, thus, this number to 1010, or 1011, we find that it occurred in the year 1583 or 1584 B.C.

The Pharaoh of *the Exodus* was, therefore, king of Egypt at this time. The Pharaoh of the oppression was a predecessor, who engaged in extensive public works which may be expected to have left some trace of their existence. This will furnish a test, the application of which may render assurance doubly sure. But if at this time, 1584 B.C., we find a Pharaoh who towards the end of his reign was plunged in misfortune, of whom Egypt itself was ashamed, and whose kingdom passed at his death into a time of weakness—then we shall feel that

once more the stone records of Egypt have vindicated the Bible.

The chief—indeed I might say the sole—reason for setting aside this date, is the supposed difficulty of accounting for the great increase of the Israelites during their sojourn in Egypt. The dates given in Genesis and Exodus are thoroughly consistent. They show that the 430 years mentioned in Exodus xii. 40 (“now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years”) embraces the entire wanderings of the people from the day Abram left his fatherland to that on which his descendants passed out from “the iron furnace.” The dates in Scripture make it clear that this period was almost exactly divided between Canaan and Egypt. Two hundred and fifteen years were spent in the former country, and two hundred and fifteen, or two hundred and ten, in the latter. But two hundred and fifteen years has seemed so preposterously brief a period for seventy persons increasing to three millions, that the Scripture dates have been abandoned by many, and the entire chronology has been thrown into confusion. One wild hypothesis has found favour in one quarter, and another in another.

We shall face the difficulty when we come to it, but meanwhile I may say that I abide by the Scripture chronology. It is too harmonious to admit of the slightest suspicion of mistake. In this way we shall have firm ground beneath our feet, and when we come into the dimness and darkness of Egyptian history to search for the Pharaohs of the oppression

and of the Exodus, we shall have, in the chronology of the Bible, a lamp kindled which will help us to lay our hand upon the men we want.

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## CHAPTER II.

### WHERE AND WHAT WAS GOSHEN?

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THERE are two matters which now claim our attention—the place of the Israelites' sojourn, and the kind of life amid which the persecution found them. The first of these questions is a somewhat important one. To follow the Exodus, we must first clearly understand from what district the Israelites set out. We must, to begin with, ascertain the starting point. In what part of Egypt, then, did this lie—in other words, where was Goshen?

“Goshen,” I may say, is not a Hebrew word, so that it must be a native Egyptian name for some well-known district. We shall immediately see whether recent discovery in Egypt has any answer to our question; but, meanwhile, let us hear what the Scripture has to say. There are several references in Genesis and Exodus which clearly indicate that Goshen lay somewhere *in the eastern part* of the Delta, that is, in the extensive plain of northern Egypt, which was watered by the seven branches of the Nile that poured the waters of the great river into the Mediterranean. We have seen that we had

good reason to believe that Joseph dwelt at Memphis, the site of which is in the neighbourhood of Cairo. Joseph himself, then, was in the eastern part of the Delta. Now *Jacob stopped at Goshen on his way to Joseph* (see Genesis xlv. 28, 29). Goshen must, therefore, have been still further east than Memphis. This is also borne out by the fact that nothing whatever is said about the Israelites crossing any branch of the Nile, when they left the country. Had they done so, it would have formed too important an incident in the journey to have been omitted. Goshen must, accordingly, have lain further east than the most eastern of the seven streams of the great river.

This opinion is strengthened when we remember that the Israelites, encumbered with flocks, and herds, and baggage, and accompanied with women and children, reached the shores of the Red Sea after one or two marches. Goshen was undoubtedly close to the eastern boundary of Egypt. But can we go further than this and lay our finger, so to say, upon the very spot where the people of God sojourned so long and suffered so much? There is one most valuable piece of information in Genesis xlvii. 11. There we are told that "Joseph placed his father and his brethren . . . in the best of the land, *in the land of Rameses.*" "The land of Rameses" was, therefore, either another name for Goshen, or was that district of Goshen in which Jacob and his family settled. But the Septuagint and the Coptic versions indicate that Pithom, one of the cities built by the Israelites, was in the land of Rameses. As we shall afterwards see,

this city has been recently disinterred by M. Naville. Near Tel-el-Kebir, where we drenched the sand with Egyptian blood, he found a number of large mounds, which bear the name of Tel-el-Maskhuta. These were explored, and the ancient Pithom was bared to the light of day. That discovery settled the question as to the locality of the land of Goshen. But M. Naville was enabled to go further. There is a name mentioned by Ptolemy and others—Phacusa or Phagusa—in which scholars thought they saw a trace of “Goshen.” Pha, or Pa, is the Egyptian article “the,” so that the name was Kusa or Gusa. This place M. Naville found in the village of Saft-el-Henneh, which stands on the site of a large ancient city. The name of Pa-Kes is found there on inscriptions. This he proves to have been the ancient capital of the land of Goshen. It shows the great importance of the place in ancient times that, though every palace, and house, and wall, and fortress have passed away long centuries ago, a great market is still held on the mound once every week.

This identification is accepted by leading Egyptologists. Having now found the place where the Israelites dwelt, can we picture with any certainty their life in Goshen? The present aspect of the country, as well as the witness of ancient times now brought to light by recent discoveries, confirms the testimony of Scripture as to the exceeding fruitfulness of the land. “The traveller,” says M. Naville, “who leaves the station of Zagazig, and journeys towards Tel-el-Kebir, crosses, in all its width, what was the

old land of Goshen. This part of the country is still particularly fruitful; it abounds in fine villages, the sheiks, and even the common inhabitants, of which are generally very well off." The present fertility of this part of Egypt, notwithstanding the desolation of the country, is an abiding testimony to the marvelousness of its ancient fruitfulness. There is a papyrus now in the British Museum, and which belongs to the time when the Israelites were in Egypt. It tells us that the country of Rameses was populous, abundantly watered, and celebrated for its productions. The region round Bubastis (the Pi-Beseth of Scripture), which was also in the territory of Goshen, was called, by the ancient Egyptians, *Sekhet Nuter*, "the Divine Meadow." This region was "personified in the temple of Edfou under the figure of a woman with an inscription which reads: 'The meadow of the east, very beautiful, which bears the flowers of the meadow *Sekhet Nuter*.'" \*

Vigouroux, in his great work *La Bible et les Decouvertes Modernes*, a work to which I take the opportunity of once more acknowledging my great indebtedness, has drawn a charming picture of life in Goshen. The following is a summary of his description. An Arab author has said that Egypt may be pictured in three words. It is, first of all, a sea of sweet water; then, a carpet of flowers; and, last of all, a dusty plain. The Egyptians divide the year into three portions. The inundation lasts four

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\* *The Life and Times of Joseph in the light of Egyptian Lore*, by Rev. H. G. Tomkins (Religious Tract Society).

months (July, August, September, October.) There are four months of vegetation (November, December, January, February); and then four months of harvest (March, April, May, June). During the inundation the water covers the entire country. As it retires from the submerged fields, it leaves behind it a layer of fertile mud. The country is immediately covered with a rich vegetation. By-and-bye, the water of the river runs low, the moisture is absorbed from the land by the sun, and everything is scorched by torrid heat. Anciently, this last period was provided for by huge reservoirs, which were filled during the overflow, and which kept a most perfect system of irrigation canals fully supplied during the dry season. Even now, though these canals, like so much else in Egypt, are only a tradition, the desolation of the harvest months is not complete in the Delta and in the old land of Goshen. There is a magnificence about Eastern scenery which never leaves it. The heaven, which is of the purest azure, is bright and radiant. The atmosphere is perfect in its transparency, and the sun's rays paint the landscape, now in colours of gold, and now in roseate or violet hues. The trees of this favoured land are always green. The majority blossom and bear fruit several times a year. The fig-tree and the mulberry alone lose their foliage for a short time, and put forth their leaves again in February. It is quite true that the trees are not numerous. But there is not a village that is not embosomed in the midst of a grove of palm trees, and which does not present to

the ravished eye acacias, tamarisks, orange and lemon trees, pomegranate trees, some magnificent sycamore, the mimosa with its golden flowers, or the banana with its huge leaves. Birds of brilliant plumage, the sacred ibis, the red flamingo, and other species, still give life to the banks of the river and the grassy plains. The lotus covers even the canals and the pools with its spacious leaves and its white and blue flowers. When the Nile has retired to its channel, all sorts of useful grain grow and thrive with a rapidity and vigour that are simply marvellous. Wheat, barley, spelt, maize, beans, lentils, peas, flax, hemp, onions, shallots, pumpkins, cucumbers, melons, and the papyrus plant spring up, increase, and bear fruit as if in emulation of each other. We are ready to fancy ourselves transported to the opening days of creation, to that time when the earth, in its first youth, brought forth, in a sort of effervescence, every variety of flowers and fruits. Egypt is in very truth, what the Scripture has called it, a garden; it is a paradise. Everywhere there is life; everywhere abundance. While vegetation is developing, the insects buzz, the birds flutter, the branches of the river are shadowed with light papyrus barques, which are dexterously managed by vigorous rowers, the water-wheels turn incessantly, and spread abroad fertility, and the men in the country give themselves to all the labours of pastoral and of agricultural life.

The villages look exceedingly picturesque in their verdant nests, but the houses are by no means in harmony with the splendour and magnificence of the

landscape. In this particular, past and present may resemble each other more closely than we think. It is true that the eye rested on the immense pyramids rising in the distance. In the towns, columns were met with, and obelisks full of bas-reliefs and carefully-engraved hieroglyphics, vast tombs, and statues of alabaster and of red and grey granite, genuine works of art. There were temples rendered magnificent by the riches and splendour of their ornaments, by their splendid pictures, their superb gateways, and their long avenues of mysterious sphinxes. But in the midst of all these riches and marvels of art, the poor people of the Pharaohs, the prisoners of war brought from the depths of Ethiopia or of Syria, and, like them, the children of Jacob, dwelt in miserable mud huts.

But, in spite of the poverty of its dwellings, there is nothing more graceful than an Egyptian village. On the banks of the canals, dikes and terraces are raised. These serve as roads along which the caravans pass, and camels and asses with their conductors. The women, clad in their picturesque costume, go in groups to draw water at the neighbouring fountain. The children, entirely naked, play under the shade of the date palms. By the side of the canal a *Tell*, or mound, rises from the plain, a shelter from the inundation. It is surrounded with palms and sycamores, and the Egyptian houses are concealed amid the bushy foliage. These houses are truly frail abodes, worthy of those who see in the habitations of the living merely an inn for a day,

destined to shelter the traveller while waiting to press on to his repose in the abode of the dead, to those tombs which they called "the eternal mansions."

The Egyptian huts are of a dark grey colour, and are composed of four earthen walls, built of the mud deposited by the Nile and dried by the sun. If they are smitten by a single storm, or if rain falls, these fragile shelters subside into a shapeless mound of earth, that is to say, they become what they were before. Fortunately, rain rarely falls in Egypt; but, were it otherwise, the frailty of the hut is a small matter. When some accident levels it to the ground, the materials which suffice the swallow in building its nest are enough for the Egyptian in building his dwelling. They are close at hand, and the damage is repaired in a few hours. The houses are in this way raised each on the debris of its predecessor, without the slightest pains being taken to clear away the old buildings to make room for the new.

These mud houses are generally built close together. Ordinarily, they are divided into two apartments—their size rarely allows of more. The exterior has generally some gay adornment in keeping with the character of the inhabitants, who, as history shows, have always been given to joy and lightness, a feature which we find among the Hebrews even in the desert. Although the thought of death was always present to the Egyptian, it never darkened the present with its shadow. He forgot even the *corvée*, the forced labour and the hard taskmaster, in this little home so lovingly embellished with enamelled pottery, which

in various shapes adorns the doorway, the windows, and the walls. But what constituted the greatest happiness of the inhabitant of Egypt was his *amm*. For him the hearth, so dear to the people of the north, had no existence. The *amm* takes its place. This is the little shaded garden which surrounds his mud hut. The evening hours, which were spent there by the Egyptian, lived in his memory even more than the hours we spend round the fire live in our own. An ancient papyrus tells how the Egyptian, compelled to travel to a far country, looks back with fond regret to his *amm*. Rameses III. boasts that he "planted the entire country with trees and shrubs, and permitted men *to seat themselves in the shade.*" The monuments call it "the lotus of the house," and the *amm* still awakes the smiles and the songs of the oppressed fellah.

It was there, under the grateful shade of their well-loved trees, that the Hebrews sat round the pots filled with the food which they afterwards so fondly recalled in the desert. They feasted there on the small onions of Egypt, so esteemed of old that they are specially mentioned among the presents which Rameses III. made to the Temple of Thebes. They were among the offerings which the Egyptians were wont to make to their gods and to the dead, and they still retain their ancient reputation. As a reminiscence of Egypt, there could have been nothing more in keeping with the customs and life of that land than the cry when the mixed multitude fell a lusting: "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt

freely ; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick" (Numbers xi. 5). We find them all painted on the monuments as if the Egyptian artists were as much moved by the recollection of the tasteful viands as the Hebrews themselves. Samples of these vegetables of the time of the Hebrews have been perfectly preserved in the tombs, and are now in European Museums. Fish abounded in the canals, and in the arms of the Nile, and were also included among royal presents to the Temples and offerings to the gods.

In the midst of those bounties the Israelites multiplied and flourished. Had no calamity fallen upon them, Moses would have called upon them in vain to arise and seek another country. God had to cut them out of Egypt by chastisement. Whence and how that chastisement came we shall now see.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### HOW LONG WERE THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT ?

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WE have seen, in the life of the Egypt of the present, something of the life which the Israelites must have lived in the Egypt of the distant past. They throve amid the ease and abundance and balmy brightness of that favoured land. The tyrant and the taskmaker were as yet undreamt of. On the contrary, they were favoured settlers. The

best of the land was bestowed upon them. They held honourable and well-paid offices under the Egyptian kings. Above all, the favour of God rested on them. The Lord remembered His covenant with Abraham and the word that He spake, saying that His seed should be for multitude as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea shore. Their increase was marvellous. The Divine Word heaps one expression upon another, to convey to us a fit idea of what then daily gladdened the hearts of God's people. "The children of Israel were fruitful." Their increase was like that of a fruitful orchard, the boughs of whose trees are bent to the ground under the weight of their golden fruit. "They increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them" (Ex. i. 7).

But prosperity sometimes has its penalties; and the story changes. The heaven, till now cloudless, becomes black with storm. The growing strength of God's chosen people made them the dread of a new State-policy. The dynasty that had favoured Israel was swept away, and a new race of kings reigned in its stead. Is there anything in Egyptian history which will enable us in the light of this information to place our finger upon the very spot in Egypt's past, and to say with certainty: "Yes. Those events occurred just here?" If there is such a spot, this will in itself be no small confirmation that we have, in this part at least of the much afflicted Pentateuch, no collection of floating legends, gathered some thousand years afterwards, but his-

tory written with full, clear-eyed, knowledge of the time.

But, in order to search the Egyptian stone records, we must be sure of our dates. On the Egyptian side we have to deal with a very uncertain chronology. Indeed, till the twenty-sixth dynasty (about 600 B.C.), there is no possibility of fixing a single date from purely Egyptian sources. The work of Manetho, the Egyptian priest, who wrote a history of his country about 280 B.C., has long since perished. We have only extracts from it, which have been preserved in the writings of other ancient authors. We might have made a chronology by reckoning the years during which the kings reigned; but, unfortunately, these authors differ so greatly in the various quotations, that all certainty has been lost, and Brugsch, for example, gives up the problem in despair. He places the names of the Pharaohs in the order of succession, and, for dates, falls back on a suggestion made long ago by Herodotus, that three reigns might be reckoned to a century. Brugsch, accordingly, makes two kings reign thirty-three years each, and every third king thirty-four years, dividing the hundred years between all comers with the most undeviating partiality!

The case is certainly hopeless for the present, so far as the Egyptian chronology is concerned. The versions of Manetho not only differ among themselves; but they are also contradicted by the unexceptionable testimony of the monuments. The quotations from Manetho tell us, for example, that

Thotmes III. reigned thirty-eight years, while the monuments show that he reigned almost fifty-four. Again, when we sum up the reigns of the long succession of kings given by the Egyptian historians, we find that they amount to 5,462. But Manetho himself says that the time covered by them all was only 3,555 years—a difference of 1,907, or nearly 2,000! The result of all this is, that the greatest experts are unable to fix a date with any certainty. M. Chabas says it is probable that Seti I. began to reign about 1500 B.C., and that the commencement of the seventeenth dynasty may be placed about 1800 B.C. But, he adds, it need not astonish us should we find ourselves wrong in this calculation to the extent of two hundred years! Prof. Flinders Petrie, in his recently issued *History of Egypt*, says in reference to the dates which he places at the top of the pages: “Where dates are confessedly so uncertain, it may seem presumptuous to keep a running head-date to the pages.” He adds, however, that “it must always be remembered by the reader that the range of uncertainty may be about *a century in the earlier parts of this volume* (Vol. I.), *diminishing to about a generation by the close of the volume*. No greater accuracy than this is in the least professed in the numbers here assigned.”

The italics given above are Mr. Petrie's own; but confidence in the smallness of that margin of error which he thus emphasizes has recently been considerably shaken. A discovery of ancient Egyptian manuscripts was made in the winter of 1898 at

Kahun. They are now in the Berlin Museum. A paper upon the new discovery, written by Dr. Borchardt, of Cairo, and read by Dr. Erman the well-known Egyptologist, made a marked sensation at the Oriental Congress, held at Rome, in October, 1899. The manuscripts seem to have formed part of the records of a temple\* “and to include a sort of day-book in which the priests recorded any events which they considered remarkable. In this it is mentioned that in the seventh year of Usertesens III. the star Sothis (Sirius) was for the first time on the horizon at day-break, on the 16th day of the eighth month.”

This astronomical fact, if the record can be relied upon—and the marked efficiency of the Egyptians as astronomical observers is well known—enables that date at least to be calculated. Dr. Borchardt has worked back to it, and has announced “that the seventh year of Usertesens III. must have fallen between the years 1876-1872 B.C. Prof. Petrie, whose chronology is mostly founded on that of Mahler, puts Usertesens III.’s latest date at 2622 B.C., and, if Dr. Borchardt’s figures hold good, he will, therefore, have brought the XIIth dynasty nearer to us by nearly eight centuries.” †

That is an awkward fact for believers in any of the received systems of Egyptian chronology. Our safety, then, is to cling to the chronology which is certain, and to search the Egyptian records, not so

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\* See *The Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. xxi., p. 263.

† P. 264.

much for years as for events. 1583 or 1584 B.C. is, as we saw in the last chapter, definitely fixed by Scripture as the date of the Exodus. This I take as final. The dates indicated in the Bible for other events, the era of which is known to us from other sources, are found to be exact to a year. The dates, for example, of the capture of Samaria by Sargon, and of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, are confirmed by the Assyrian and Babylonian annals. We shall find many an illustration of this absolute correctness of Scripture chronology as we go on; but let me cite a somewhat instructive instance in passing. The opening words of the book of *Daniel* are: "In the THIRD year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem and besieged it." But Jeremiah xxv. 1, makes it plain that the capture took place in the *fourth* year of Jehoiakim. The critics swooped down on this like vultures on a carcass. Here was one of "the errors" of Scripture, and an indisputable proof of the unhistorical character of the book of Daniel! By no arithmetic, and by no cunningly devised explanation, could a third year be changed into a fourth.

The case seemed plain, the error undeniable, and the triumph of criticism complete. But there was one oversight which, when it was noted, made the accuracy of the Scripture appear more marvellous than ever. The little word *bah*, translated "came," means also "went." The best rendering here is "marched." "In the third year of the reign of

Jehoiakim, king of Judah, marched Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it." Daniel *is writing in Babylon*. Had he been writing in Judea, he would have spoken of Nebuchadnezzar's *arrival*. But, writing in Babylon, he speaks of his *setting out*. A glance at the 25th chapter of Jeremiah is enough to show that this was a most important campaign. From other sources we learn that it was indeed so. The Egyptians under Pharaoh-Necho, were in strength at Carchemish, on the other bank of the Euphrates, after having subdued all on their way. But one step more and they would be on Assyrian soil, and would soon swoop down upon Babylon.

It was a supreme moment for the monarch and the inhabitants of Babylon. Jerusalem was the destination of the Babylonian army, but the capture of the sacred city was by no means the only task of the Chaldean host. They had first of all to clear their own borders. The Egyptians had to be encountered, defeated, and swept back in unrelenting flight to the Nile valley. Strongholds had to be besieged and taken, and one nation after another had to be brought into subjection to the new Babylonian power. These processes took time; and, though the Babylonian army began its march in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, it was well into the fourth year of his reign when the invading host swept round the walls of the holy city. The difference in dates between Daniel and Jeremiah made two things plain, which were among the very last the critics

thought of. It showed, first, that the book of Daniel was no forgery. An impostor would have carefully marked the date in Jeremiah, and have copied it and not have differed from it. And, secondly, it disclosed the Babylonian stamp impressed upon the book. This precious "third" year discloses one who is on Babylonian soil, not on Judean, as the critics (who tell us that *Daniel* was the work of a forger in the Maccabean times, about 160 B.C.) would have us believe. No: he that pens these words is in Babylonia. He sees the host gather on the Babylonian plain. He beholds in imagination the young king set himself at their head. He notes the time when the tents are struck and the army sets out upon its march. It needed the attack of the critics upon the veracity of the Bible to bring all this out; for so God makes the wrath of man to praise Him.

We cling, therefore, with full assurance to the Scripture date of 1584, as the year of Israel's first deliverance. The Scripture has also given us another date. It has virtually told us when it was that Jacob and his sons came down into Egypt. The time of the entire sojourning of Israel is given as 430 years (Exodus xii. 40, 41). "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Round these words there has been a con-

siderable conflict of opinion. Do they mean that 430 years had elapsed since the time when God called Abram? *It was then that the sojourning began.* From that day on which God laid his hand upon Abram in the city of Ur, he and his descendants had been without a country. They had been pilgrims and sojourners in Canaan, and before then in Haran, quite as much as they had been in the land of Egypt. But there are those who confine the 430 years to their residence in Egypt. It seems to them that it is possible to understand the increase among the Israelitish people only when this entire period is assigned to the Egyptian sojourn.

They also point out that we do violence to the Scripture unless we understand in this way the passage which I have just quoted. The Hebrew relative pronoun *asher* is indeclinable; that is, it retains the same form whether it means "who" or "which." These say it should be translated "which" here, and that, rightly rendered, the passage runs: "The sojourning of the children of Israel *which they* sojourned in Egypt." This is done, not because of any grammatical necessity; but merely because they conclude that *asher* must refer to the sojourning and not to the people. But it was surely quite possible for the Scripture to desire the emphasis to be thrown upon the people and not upon the sojourning *in this part* of the statement. If it intended to point out that those who had dwelt in Egypt had been sojourning *even there*, where they had found so good and large a land to begin with that Canaan may have

seemed to be quite unnecessary—if, I repeat, it was intended to point out that they, too, had been sojourners and not settlers, this was just the place where it could be fitly done. Their very coming out showed that Egypt was never intended to be their rest. They had not, it was true, been moving to and fro like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. *They* had enjoyed a settled abode. Abraham had to buy a burial place; but they probably owned fields and houses. They dwelt upon their own property and had handed it down to their children. But they were, nevertheless, in a land that was not theirs, and they had only been completing the sojourning begun by their fathers.

Understood in that way there is no necessity for altering the translation as the Revised Version has done. The Jews may be supposed to have understood Hebrew quite as well as those who study it to-day. Kalisch, though taking the opposite view, admits freely that “almost all Rabbinical interpreters” understand the passage as stating that the whole period of the sojourning—and not merely the Egyptian part of it—extending over 430 years.

Referring to Genesis xv. 13, Mr. Hershon’s translation of the Commentary on Genesis in which Rabbi Jacob, of Frankfort, embodied the traditional sense, says: “The captivity of Egypt began from the birth of Isaac. Although they were not yet in Egypt, yet from the birth of Isaac they had no land and were equal to strangers.”\* The Samaritan and

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\* *A Rabbinical Commentary on Genesis*, p. 86.

Septuagint Versions show that Exodus xii. 40, 41, was understood in this sense. The Septuagint renders: "But the sojourning of the children of Israel, during which they dwelt in Egypt and in the land of Canaan, was 430 years." The Samaritan reads: "And the sojourning of the children of Israel and of their fathers in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt was 430 years." These are explanations rather than readings or translations; but they show clearly in what sense the passage was understood. That the passage does at first present a difficulty must be admitted; but it is one of those passages which are apparently intended to draw attention by a difficulty to a truth which would be otherwise overlooked. The point which is here emphasized is that Egypt was not to be the rest of God's people. They were as much sojourners there as their fathers, who had no certain dwelling-place even in the land of Canaan. The fact so emphasized has its lesson for us also. We may have imagined in the goodness of God to us, as they did in the security and fatness of Goshen, that we had reached our abiding-place. We may have ceased to look, as our troubled fathers looked, for that better country—even an heavenly—and that city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God; but the moment will come when we shall realize that we have been sojourners just as truly as they were.

Reference is made to the fact that on the very day on which the 430 years were completed, the children of Israel were led forth by their armies. What day,

then, was this which was so exactly kept? The reply has to be got, not from one passage, but from several, just as the hopes of God's people have always had to be gathered. One of these is that which records the solemn covenant made with Abraham and the revelation which was given to him concerning the fortunes of his descendants. Abraham had asked (Genesis xv. 8) whereby he should know that he would inherit the land. God, in reply, commanded him to prepare sacrifices. "And he took unto Him all these, and divided them in their midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge," &c. (verses 10-14).

An alteration in the pointing of verse 13 will remove the difficulty which meets us here. "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs; and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them—four hundred years." There are three chapters in the history of Abraham's descendants which are here indicated: (1) They are to be without a fatherland; (2) they are to be enslaved; and (3) they are to be persecuted. *The-*

*whole period* which will elapse between the giving of the promised seed to Abraham and the ending of this last stage in their deepening trials will amount to 400 years. If we were to assign the four centuries to the persecution, there would be no intimation at all of the duration of the slavery or of the preceding sojourning.

But what of the additional thirty years? These must plainly cover the time of Abraham's sojourning *before* the birth of Isaac. When he left Haran he was seventy-five (Genesis xii. 4). He was one hundred years old when Isaac was born (Gen. xxi. 5). Twenty-five years had consequently passed of the sojourning in Palestine at Isaac's birth. The remaining five years, therefore, must cover the period between Abraham's leaving Ur and finally setting out from Haran and parting with his kindred.

This accounts for the whole period of 430 years, and we are now able to determine the exact duration of the sojourn in Egypt. For, if we can say how many years passed between the birth of Isaac and Jacob's going down into Egypt, the difference between that and the 430 years will give us the exact time spent in Egypt. Now Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born (Gen. xxv. 26). And Jacob's age when he went down to Egypt was 130; for he lived altogether 147, and the last seventeen of these were spent with the son he loved, and who was given back to him, as it were, from the dead.

The reader will see that these numbers do not lie upon the surface of Scripture, and will note what

painful gleanings it requires to bring them all together. The perfect agreement, therefore, of such scattered notices is all the more wonderful. But let us see what we have got. Abram, after his call, sojourned in Haran ... .. 5 years. There passed between the entering of Canaan and the birth of Isaac ... 25 years. From the birth of Isaac till the birth of Jacob other ... .. 60 years. Jacob's age when he entered Egypt was 130 years.

The whole interval amounts to 220 years.

Two hundred and twenty years, therefore, out of the 430 of the whole sojourning were gone, before Jacob and his family reached the Egyptian territory. 210 years still remained, which, if added to 1584 B.C., the time when their bondage ceased and they left the country, give us 1794 B.C. as the date of the arrival of the Israelites in Egypt.

These 210 years, then, must be made to cover the entire sojourning of Israel in Egypt. We must hold to this in the face of the protest which has been raised in recent times. The space is too brief, we are told, to account for the mighty increase of the Israelites. How could seventy persons increase to three millions in a couple of centuries! The idea is preposterous, we are assured; and, as usual, frightened defenders of Scripture do the work of their adversaries. Interpretations are forced upon words, and the chronology of Scripture is thrown into confusion, so that a way of escape may be found from what

seems to be an insuperable difficulty. We are told, as we have already seen, that the passage in Exodus xii. 40—"The sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years"—must not be so rendered. The only correct translation is, it is alleged (by men who, one would imagine, would not so instruct an unlearned reader without the most complete assurance that their statements were well founded), "The sojourning *which the children of Israel sojourned in Egypt* was 430 years." But the truth is, as I have already shown, that there is no necessity for an alteration, outside the desire to make out that the 430 years were spent in Egypt. "Who dwelt in Egypt," is grammatically correct; and Egypt is evidently alone mentioned, not only because it also was a place of their sojourning, and the last; but also because it was there that the hatred, and oppression, and sorrow of the sojourning had reached their climax. The havoc which this forced interpretation would occasion may be judged from one fact. If the 430 years were spent in Egypt, then Jochebed, the mother of Moses, was 257 years old when Moses was born! Taking the 210 years as the duration of the Egyptian sojourn, the dates given in the sacred narrative are in perfect harmony.

Thus, Jacob lived in Egypt	...	...	17 years.
Levi outlived Jacob (Exodus vi. 16)	...	...	78 ,,
The age of Moses at the Exodus was	...	...	80 ,,

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Making in all 173 years,

and leaving 37 years (the difference between 210 and

173) as the interval between the death of Levi and the birth of the great Lawgiver.

The longer date for the sojourn in Egypt leads to similar difficulties with regard to other facts which are mentioned in the book of Exodus; and it necessitates the extravagant supposition that quite a number of generations is left unrecorded. It is equally irreconcilable with the promise that the Israelites were to leave Egypt "in the fourth generation" after their entering into that land. Whatever difficulties it may be supposed to create, the Bible statements shut us up to the conclusion that the sojourn embraced only 210 years. But we shall see that the difficulties are imaginary, and that here, as elsewhere, the Bible record is in fullest accord with facts.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE INCREASE OF THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT.

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THE Scripture, in repeated statements, directs attention to the marvellous growth of God's chosen people. We read: "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them" (Exodus i. 7). It was this fact which led to the subsequent oppression and persecution. The statesmen of Egypt saw in the rapid growth of this foreign people upon their

eastern border a danger for which it was necessary to find an immediate remedy.

But that increase was part of the Divine plan for Israel and the world, and not all the wisdom or the might of Egypt could arrest it. "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (verse 12). And, even though the Scripture had said nothing about their rapid increase, it would have forced itself upon our attention. We note their numbers when they enter this land of the Pharaohs. They are—including Jacob and Joseph and his sons—in all 70 persons. And now, 210 years afterwards, they are a nation, apparently numbering more than three millions!

What have we to say, then, as to this startling difficulty which has led modern scholarship to lay violent hands upon the Scripture chronology? Well, let us first clearly understand whether there is a difficulty, and if there is one, what its real dimensions are. Everyone will remember the story of "the Merry Monarch," Charles II. Visiting one of our two great seats of learning, he set himself to find something for the wise men to do, and so he propounded to them the following problem. He desired them to explain how it happened that if a tub were filled to the brim with water and a dead fish were placed in it, the water overflowed; while, if a live fish were introduced instead, no displacement of the water occurred. Long and deeply did the wise men ponder over this strange phenomenon. The result was that theories were

neither few nor wanting in originality. When, indeed, are they? But someone suggested that the experiment should be tried, and then the jest was no longer "the Merry Monarch's" private property. It was found that the live fish made a very decided and uncomfortable displacement of the water, and the poor theories died an instantaneous death, not one surviving to perpetuate the fame of its author.

Now, I have no wish to indulge in theories till we have ascertained our facts. Did the increase of the Israelites then rise to those huge proportions? Let me say at once that I have no intention of questioning the statement that at least three million souls went out with Moses at the Exodus. I think that this is a moderate, and not an exaggerated, estimate. The ordinary calculation is that, since there were 600,000 men (Exodus xii. 37), we must multiply the number by five to find the total of men, women, and children. When thirteen months afterwards (Numbers i.) the number of men from twenty years old and upwards was taken in the wilderness, it amounted to 603,550, exclusive of the tribe of Levi. We note in that circumstance the utter consistency of the Scripture figures. For, apparently in that interval 3,550 had attained the age of manhood who were too young to be numbered when the people left Egypt. And, now, we can go further. There is one remarkable fact that puts it, I think, beyond doubt, that the hosts which passed out of Egypt numbered more than three millions.

The first chapter of the book of Numbers gives

the result of the census taken by Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. Each of the twelve tribes is numbered separately. These results are summed up, and the number of males from twenty years old and upwards is stated. "From twenty years old and upwards, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel . . . were 603,550." Now there is nothing in these summations that occasions the slightest difficulty. We cast up the figures ourselves, and find that everything is exact. But when we come to the numbering of the tribe of Levi in the third chapter, matters no longer run smoothly. There are three great families in the tribe which are numbered separately: and then, as in the case of the remaining tribes, the collective sum is given. But, between the total stated in the Scripture and the real total, there is a remarkable difference. We sum up the figures and find them amount to 22,300. We read, however: "All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the Lord, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were *twenty and two thousand*" (Num. iii. 39). In the counting of the tribes everything was exact, even to the odd 50. Here, in numbering only three families, there is a difference of 300.

In the face of such a palpable discrepancy as that, one is at first ready to despair. And yet the explanation is simple, and lies on the surface. The enumeration now is made with a different purpose. It is made, not for war, but for holy service. The number of the Levites is taken, not from twenty years old

and upwards, but from a month old and upwards. There is also another census taken of all Israel. All the first-born are numbered, and the Levites are to serve instead of the first-born. It is with that object that the whole of the tribe of Levi is now counted. *But there were also first-born in it.* These could not be reckoned in the total. They could not stand as representatives of the first-born in the *other* tribes. These were separated for God's service, as it were, in their own right, and not because they stood for the first-born among their brethren. As they were not available for the purpose in view, the 300 were dropped out of the total.

These 300, then, were the first-born of the tribe of Levi. But the whole of the first-born that were then with Moses at Sinai, numbering from a month old and upward, were (Numbers iii. 43) 22,273. Now this is the fact which, as I have said, settles the question as to the number of those who left Egypt with Moses. A simple proportion sum will give the answer. In one tribe, numbering 22,300, there were 300 first-born. But the whole number of first-born *in all Israel* was 22,273. How many males, then, did all the tribes contain? The answer is, 1,655,626. If we double these figures to find the number of both sexes, we reach the total of 3,311,252. It is quite true that the enumeration was made thirteen months after the departure from Egypt; but with the most liberal allowance for births during that interval, the total remains between three millions and three-and-a-quarter millions.

The figures cannot, therefore, be disputed. Are we to say, then, that seventy persons increased to more than three millions in a couple of centuries? Let me ask the reader to have patience. The figures have something more to tell, if we will only listen. They prove conclusively that all were not of Israel who were reckoned with Israel. Has the reader noticed the number of the tribe of Levi? *Down to the children a month old they are only 22,300.* Double these to find the total of both sexes, and we have 44,600. Let Levi be taken as a fairly average tribe, and we have—multiplying by thirteen, the entire number of the tribes—579,800, as the number of men, women, and children, of a month old and upwards, in all Israel a year after the Exodus! There can be no doubt that here we partly have the solution of the mystery. Each family in Israel had numerous slaves and dependents, who necessarily shared its fortunes and were numbered with it. Abraham, for example, was childless, and yet “he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, 318” (Gen. xiv. 14). What became of these and of their descendants? Let it be remembered that they were not kept outside of the covenant, although they were not descended from Abraham. The rite of circumcision was undergone by every servant “that is born in thy house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed” (Genesis xvii. 12). Again I ask, what became of them and of their children? They passed, beyond a doubt, into the possession of Isaac, and, in all probability, into the possession of

Jacob also on his father's death. Then Jacob himself had become two bands in the land of his early exile. He, too, had menservants and maidservants. When he went down to Egypt with his children, he and they did not go alone. They went as princes, accompanied by a following, made necessary by their large possessions in flocks and herds. What became of the descendants of these, who, according to the command of God, were circumcised equally with the offspring of the Israelites, and who reposed with them under the broad shadow of God's covenant? Then, again, in those early days of abounding prosperity in Egypt, the number of their servants must have increased still more largely, and we have once more to reiterate our question and to ask what became of these when the Israelites passed out from the land of bondage?

There can be no doubt that they formed a very large element indeed of the Israelitish force. Just as Abraham armed his 318 servants, so, when account was taken in the wilderness of those able to bear arms from twenty years old and upward, Moses and Aaron enrolled these as well as the descendants of Jacob. But we are not left to our own inferences. This Providential information regarding the tribe of Levi leads us out of a large part of our difficulty. *For the service of the Tabernacle*, none but Israelites, God's elect people, chosen from the nations for this very thing—*none but these* would be numbered. This is so self-evident that it need not be argued. In Levi, therefore, we have a tribe stripped for this purpose of

all its foreign accretions, separated entirely from its servants and its dependants. These 22,300 males, men and children from a month old and upward, are those who were pure Israelites in the tribe of Levi. Double that number so as to include both sexes, and we reach the conclusion that those who were truly descended from Levi, 210 years after the going down into Egypt, numbered 44,600 souls.

Now, say that Levi was an average tribe—and I know no reason for thinking that it was not—we have only, as has been already said, to multiply its number by thirteen to find the total number of pure Israelites who surrounded Sinai when the census was taken. The result shows that they amounted to 579,800. This was the number of men, women, and children, down to the infants a month old, thirteen months after the Exodus. If we wish to apply a double test, the figures allow us to do so. There were 300 first-born in the tribe of Levi. Multiplying these by thirteen we get 3,900 as the first-born of *pure* Israelites in all the thirteen tribes. But the number in the whole camp was, as we have seen, 22,273—about six times 3,900. Reckoning from this as a basis, the pure Israelites were therefore about one-sixth of the multitude that went forth with Moses and Aaron. But all that went out were 600,000 men. A sixth part of 600,000 gives us 100,000 men ; and multiplying these by 5 to give us the entire number of men, women, and children, we reach a similar conclusion. The pure Israelites at the time of the Exodus, calculated on this basis, were about 500,000.

In the light of these facts a large part of the difficulty vanishes. What remains will largely disappear when we think of the possibilities of 210 years. These possibilities of time, if duly considered, would save us from the theories which deface every science which touches upon the antiquity either of the earth or of the nations. Vast drafts are made upon time without any preliminary investigation of the value of the unit of measurement. The talk everywhere is of centuries, of millenniums, of millions of years. But who has taken pains to ascertain, or even seriously to ask himself, what one million, one thousand, or one hundred, years may cover? For these theorists history seems to have been written in vain. On 4th July, of the year 1776, America proclaimed her independence. She then contained a population of about a million and a-half. Within the 124 years which stand between us and that time, she has multiplied her population by 60, for it is now over ninety millions. Her territory in 1783 was about 820,000 square miles. In 1890 that extent of territory had been multiplied by purchases, accessions, and conquests, four times, and the number of square miles over which her flag waved exceeded three-and-a-quarter millions. And what shall we say of the multiplication of her towns; of the creation of her great cities; and the sweeping out of her population, like the advancing waters of a mighty flood, over immense desolate areas; of the planning and consolidating of her institutions; of the development of her resources, the elaboration of her

laws, and the formation of her national character ?

It may be urged in reply that America has received enormous additions from other countries and particularly from our own. But this will only attract our eyes to fresh marvels. Which of those countries has been impoverished by the growing greatness of America ? The largest drafts of population have been taken from our own ; and, instead of having suffered, we have made advances within the same period which are amongst the most astonishing incidents in our history. The area of Great Britain and Ireland is 121,115 square miles. We had in our other possessions about four million and two hundred thousand square miles more. Since that time, notwithstanding the loss of the United States, we have increased our territory to more than double the area we had then. In 1801, when the first census was taken and the first reliable information regarding the numbers of our population was obtained, the population of Great Britain and Ireland was about 17 millions. At the census of 1891, it stood at more than 38 millions. That is, within 90 years 21 millions had been added, notwithstanding the huge emigration to America and to our colonies. But when we recollect that the interval from 1776 to 1900 forms a period which has seen the introduction of steam ; the immense extension of our commerce ; the making of railways ; the invention of the telegraph and the telephone ; the wonders of modern chemistry and their application to our manufactures ; the growth and multiplication of our towns and

cities; the vast changes in our political and municipal franchises and conditions—do we not obtain a new sense of the possibilities of time? Could we—apart from these experiences—have conceived it possible that 124 years should cover so many marvels and such an astounding progress? No man, who has pondered such lessons from modern experience, can possibly take up these 210 years—that is, a period not far from double that 124—and toss them aside as a thing of nought. If the story of 124 years has so astonished us, the tale to be told by 210 may well astonish us more.

Let it be remembered that we have to account for the growth of 70 persons—not to more than three millions in 210 years—but to about 600,000, and the difficulty will largely disappear. What remains is met by the repeated assurance of the Scripture that the increase *was* wonderful, and was due to direct blessing from God. “The singular increase of the Hebrews,” says Kalisch,\* “must astonish us the less, if we consider that the land of Canaan, which was but very thinly populated at the time of the emigration of Jacob’s family, became, during their sojourn in Egypt, a most populous country, and Jost observes correctly: ‘the increase of the Israelites since they left Canaan stands in proportion with the increase of those who occupied it during that time.’ We refer the reader further,” he adds, “to the authentic and interesting account concerning the Englishman Pine, who was, in the year 1589, by a

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\* *Exodus*, p. 213.

shipwreck thrown with four females upon a deserted island south-east of the Cape of Good Hope, and whose descendants had, after seventy-eight years (in 1667) increased to more than 11,000 souls."

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## CHAPTER V.

### WHEN DID THE OPPRESSION BEGIN ?

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PROBABLY for more than a century after their coming to Egypt the children of Israel lived in quietness, and comfort, and prosperity. They had increased in wealth as well as in numbers. The palatial buildings of the children replaced the more modest edifices which had sheltered the fathers. Where there had been before small groups of servants there were now strong bodies of retainers. "The children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them" (Exodus i. 7).

Had this abounding prosperity continued, Israel's destiny would have been forgotten or despised. Canaan would have presented no attraction, and desire to leave a land where they possessed all that heart could wish for would come to be looked upon as a kind of madness. More than this, they would have ceased to be a separate people. We have already seen that at a certain period in Egyptian history the Semitic sojourners who were among them rose suddenly into high favour among the

Egyptians. At least that belief is natural in view of the fashion of the time to use Semitic names and to bring the language of Egypt into line with that of the Semites. With a prosperous people like the Hebrews, inter-marriage would be courted by the Egyptians, and the Israelites as a separate people would soon have ceased to exist.

But the destiny of Israel—the greatest among the nations—was not to be lost. There came a day when the old comfortable security was exchanged for the alarms of war; and “there arose up a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.” Then follow counsels of systematic oppression and enslavement, of determined tyranny and cruelty, which will bulk largely in the story which we have now to tell.

But there is one question which we shall have first of all to answer. Do we know the name of this king “who knew not Joseph?” In other words, is it possible, in scanning the records of Egypt’s ancient dynasties, to place our finger upon the Pharaoh of the oppression, with the conviction that our identification is final? This question must be answered in the negative. So far as our present knowledge goes, there is nothing which enables us to say with

absolute certainty who it was that laid this heavy hand upon the Israelitish people, though, as we shall immediately see, there is much that points to one individual ruler. In the end of 1892, Sir P. le Page Renouf, in an address as President of the Society of Biblical Archæology, made some remarks upon the numerous theories that were broached as to the Pharaohs of the oppression and of the Exodus. He concluded a somewhat scornful address with the words: "The conviction grows upon one, as it did upon the late M. de Rougé, that no materials have yet been discovered for fixing historical dates in periods of Egyptian history as far back as the Hebrew Exodus.

The tone of the president's remarks may be accounted for by his unconcealed sympathy with the higher criticism. And some things have happened since 1892. He said, among other things: "It should be thoroughly understood that the Egyptian records, on the one hand, know absolutely *nothing* (the italics are the President's) about the Israelites; and, on the other, that the Biblical references to Egyptian matters are never characteristic of any particular reign or epoch, until we have come to a much later date than that of the Exodus." The latter part of that statement required serious modification even then. "A famine lasting many years;" an entire revolution in the land tenure of the country; a monarch of Egypt who becomes, in a land of superabounding idolatries, a worshipper of one God only—these are surely matters which are characteristic

enough. And when they are all embraced within the history of Apepi II., the king identified from ancient times with the Pharaoh of Joseph, the assertion that the early Bible references to Egypt are wanting in definiteness will plainly not hold. And the other statement, that "the Egyptian records know absolutely *nothing* about the Israelites," can no longer be repeated. The recent discovery of the inscription by Menephtah, in which he mentions the Israelites by name, has entirely disposed of that contention.

But how does it happen that, if the two peoples were indeed so closely connected as the Bible says they were, we have so little reference to Israel in Egyptian history? That is a question which the reader will naturally ask himself. The reply is that, while the Bible gives us history, the literature of Egypt, so far as it has been yet recovered, gives us almost none. Let the reader open any vol. of Prof. Flinders Petrie's *History of Egypt*, and he will have a convincing demonstration of the truth of this statement. It embraces a list of names, but almost nothing that can be called history. The inscriptions upon the tombs and the temples contain merely praises of the dead and inflated accounts of warlike expeditions. If the Egyptians ever wrote any orderly account of a single reign, it has failed to come down to us. We are thrown back upon chance references in the monuments of kings and courtiers; and from these, which are often, as we shall see, of special value, Egyptologists have to build up the little history we possess.

It will be quite clear, therefore, that we cannot

expect that we shall be able to say *with certainty* who first oppressed Israel, and in whose day the long-continued persecution ended. But we shall nevertheless find some outstanding facts which shed most welcome, and sometimes startling, light upon the sacred history. We have already had striking confirmations of the Bible statements concerning the administration of Joseph; and if we take our stand with him and look onward, it is possible that, notwithstanding the present absence of information, we may find some distinct guidance.

Taking Apepi's reign, then, as our starting point, do the events harmonise with the after history of Egypt, as it is known to us from the monuments and from Manetho, the Egyptian historian, fragments of whose work have come down to us? It is plain that Israel enjoyed a lengthened period of peace and plenty before the evil days began. That time of prosperity continued during the whole of the life-time of Joseph and of his brethren who came down with Jacob into Egypt. It is also evident that their career was one of unbroken peace for some time after. We read: "And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." After their great protector and all the fathers had passed away, the Lord still blessed and prospered them. The God of the fathers was the God of the children.

Now, if we put these statements into figures, we

shall see that the era of prosperity carries us a long way through the sojourn in Egypt. Joseph was about forty when Jacob arrived, and he lived altogether 110 years. He was able to watch over Israel, then, for about 70 years. On the other hand, the oppression had begun before the birth of Moses, and he was eighty years old at the Exodus. These two periods make 150 years, and leave an interval of 60 out of the 210 for the further continuance of the prosperity and the beginning of the period of trial. The greater part, however, of this interval must be assigned to the time of prosperity. Aaron was only three years older than Moses, and, as we hear nothing of the necessity for concealing *him*, it is probable that the decree to slay the male children was issued only a short time before the birth of Moses. The attempt to diminish the people by hard labour may possibly have been made for twenty years before, but could scarcely have extended over a longer time. This would give us 110 years of prosperity, and 100 years of trial.

Let us now turn from the sacred page and question the history of Egypt? Did the seventeenth dynasty, the race of Apepi, continue to reign for about 110 years after the settlement of the Israelites? This question receives a very satisfactory answer from the records left by Manetho, and from recent explorations. The monuments of the Shepherd kings were carefully sought out and destroyed by the native Egyptian kings, so that all memory of them should perish. But in the cemetery of Memphis,

tombs of their officials have been found, which confirm what Manetho has told us. There were two successors of Apepi before his dynasty perished. His son, Melaneres, whom he had associated with himself in the sovereignty, did not survive him. The successor of Apepi was Jannes. He reigned fifty years and one month, and towards the end of his long reign, raised Asses his son to share the throne with him. The reign of Asses extended to forty-nine years and two months. The great nobles of this king have left monuments in the cemetery of Memphis, which make various references to their sovereign. The monuments are in the best style of art, and show that everything was as yet prospering with the Shepherd dynasty. It is well to remark, that the time of Apepi and his successors was one distinguished for its prosperity. There was only one building spared by the dynasty that came after, "but that," says Osburn, "was, in the time of the Greeks, the wonder of all Lower Egypt."

The following references by the same writer to the character of the era which, when it terminated, brought the end of Israel's peace, will interest the reader. "The whole of the tombs," he writes, "which bear the name of Asses, were of far greater dimensions than those of the more ancient epochs which occur in the same cemetery. They exactly resemble in this particular the tombs of Melawee, Beni-Hassan, and other localities in the vast cemetery of Abydos.

"This and all the other indications in these

magnificent tombs tell unmistakably that the reign of Asses was long, peaceable, and prosperous. His works of engineering, in the neighbourhood of Memphis, must have been of vast extent. Even in the mutilated records that remain to us, we read of the names of more than thirty different plots of land that were first added by him to the soil of Egypt. . .

“A taste for vast constructions of all kinds, gorgeously decorated, evidently pervaded the whole of society in the days of this illustrious race of kings. The palaces of Moeris, of Apophis, and of Asses, must have exceeded all that Egypt had ever seen before for glory and for beauty. The solitary one of them that the fanaticism of the Amonians allowed to remain unraised to the ground was in the time of the Greeks the wonder of Lower Egypt. To what extent the same ruthless spoliators marred and defaced the grand constructions wherewith Apophis had decorated Memphis, we may probably be soon in a condition to state more particularly, if the excavations which have been so auspiciously begun by the French Government should be continued. We can only say at present that there is nothing at Thebes to compare with the gallery, more than 1,500 feet in length, which formed the cemetery of the temple of Apis. The discovery of this wonderful work is one of the first-fruits of the excavation. It was our strong impression, while surveying the ruins of Memphis, that its temples and palaces have been on a scale of magnificence which equalled those of Thebes, at any rate.

“The tombs of the princes of all the kings of this epoch largely surpassed those of the preceding dynasty, the 12th, both in their dimensions and the profuse and elaborate style of their decorations.”\*

Asses spent part of his long reign as co-regent with his father. The ninety-nine years covered by the two kings, would require to be diminished somewhat in view of that fact; but Apepi was in full vigour when Jacob arrived in Egypt. He died at the age of eighty, having reigned sixty-one years. If Jannes and Asses reigned together, say 10 years, this would bring down the period covered by the reigns of the two last reigns of the Shepherd dynasty to 89 years. Say now that Apepi survived the immigration of the Israelites by 21 years, the interval of prosperity for the Hebrews would then be exactly 110 years. Is it not wonderful to find these facts looming up in the dimness of old Egypt's history, and once more assuring us that God's Word is the word of truth? The Scripture implies that Israel dwelt in the midst of unbroken peace and prosperity for more than a century; and here these old tombs in the cemetery of Memphis tell how this peace and prosperity were secured. The buildings of the kings were demolished by their conquerors and successors. Their statues were broken to pieces. Their names were erased, and every memento of them which man's hand could reach was blotted out. But now, in these last days, tombs then closed have been opened, and the memorials which had been buried with the dead, have come

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\* *The Monumental History of Egypt*, vol. ii., pp. 117-119.

forth to confound doubt and to strengthen faith. There *was* just such an interval of happy quiet, in which Israel was strengthened for the coming storm, and it was obtained through the long and peaceful reigns of a line of monarchs, all of whom had known Joseph. The last of them, Asses, must have passed his boyhood and youth in the acquaintance and friendship of the greatest statesman whom his country had ever known.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PHARAOH OF THE OPPRESSION.

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IT has been shown, in the last chapter, both from the Scripture and from the history of Egypt, that Israel's welfare in Egypt lasted about 110 years. We have now to see whether we can identify, in the pages of Egyptian story, the persons and events mirrored in the Scripture narrative of Israel's misfortunes. Here we are hardly less fortunate than in the story of Israel's prosperity. For some time previous to the close of the seventeenth dynasty and the end of the Shepherd dominion, there had been insurrection in the south of Egypt. The kings of Thebes had been viceroys of the Shepherd Pharaohs, by whom strict obedience had been enforced. But toward the end of the Shepherd dynasty, the Theban monarchs had regained their independence, and the authority of

the Shepherd kings appears to have been latterly confined to the Delta. The example of the Theban viceroy had been followed elsewhere, and the last supreme effort to end the foreign supremacy was made by a confederacy, at the head of which was Amosis, as the Greek historians call him, Ahmes, as the monuments name him, the king of Thebes. It is a remarkable confirmation of Scripture, that this breaking up of the Shepherd dominion should have ensued just after the time when, as the sacred record tells us, the strong hand of Joseph was removed by death.

A mistake of Manetho's, to which we shall afterwards refer, led scholars to imagine that the war with the Shepherd kings extended over more than one reign. This we now learn was a blunder. The final struggle was short and sharp. Ahmes, at the head of the confederacy of great nobles, swooped down upon the forces of Asses, or Asseth, the Shepherd king, defeated him, took some of his chief cities, swept the Shepherd race out of the Delta, and pursued them as far as Syria, capturing some of the cities there in which they had taken refuge. It was a complete overthrow. The Shepherds were uprooted and cast out, never more to return to the land which they had ruled so long. Ahmes then set himself to strengthen his position, and to re-organise the government of the country. He built frontier cities, and after a number of years began to repair those which had been desolated. He was an able monarch, and was the founder of a dynasty which gave to

Egypt some of the mightiest kings that ever ruled the land.

If we turn to the first chapter of Exodus, we shall see how completely all that we know of Ahmes, agrees with what we are told there of the Pharaoh of the oppression. The latter, says the Scripture, was "a *new king*" (Exodus i. 8). Expositors have all along felt that these words pointed to the founder of a new dynasty. He was evidently a king, too, *who had come from a distance*. A conspiracy might have placed some one upon the throne whose earlier life had been passed at the court of the Shepherd kings, and of whom it would not have been true to say that he "knew not Joseph." Ahmes came from the far south, some thirty or forty years after the Patriarch's death, when Joseph was becoming only a memory to his own people, and when all recollection of him may have perished in Thebes. It is generally unwise to press the words of other books, and to inquire narrowly into what lies behind certain phrases. We almost always find that nothing lies behind them. Phrases are not always, or even often, chosen with such sharp discrimination and such deep purpose as would warrant us in making any investigation of the kind. But a long experience of the Word of God, has taught us to expect other things here. Its expressions somehow bear everywhere the stamp of an intellect that never sleeps, to which things are bared, and by which they are penetrated to their deepest depths. We *can* press the words of Scripture and wring enlightenment

from them, just as men press grapes and make wine.

Well, then, let us look once more into the mirror of Scripture, and see whether any other features of Ahmes are reflected there. We have seen that he was "a new king," and a stranger to the court of the Shepherd monarchs and to their traditions. There are other significant phrases. "There *arose up* a new king *over Egypt*." The words "there arose up" cannot refer to a peaceful succession to an expected inheritance. They speak rather of a somewhat prolonged and laborious conflict. "Over Egypt," again indicates that the sovereignty of the country had been divided, but that it was once more united in the grasp of a powerful hand. The reader will also observe another peculiar phrase. "And he said unto *his people*, Behold, the children of Israel are more and mightier than we" (Exodus i. 9); "and Pharaoh charged *all his people*" (verse 22). Why not "*the Egyptians?*" Why "*his people?*" Look at the Ahmes of Egyptian history, and you have a full explanation of every feature so faithfully reflected in the mirror of Scripture. Ahmes had come with a southern army, and with a confederacy of the leading nobility of the south and west. They are invaders of this part of the Egyptian territory. After long centuries, the inhabitants of the Delta must have been bound by ties of hearty allegiance to the Shepherd dynasty. Ahmes and his confederates are, consequently, a party by themselves, and, therefore, we read of him taking counsel with "his people," and commanding *them*, when the native officials of

the district failed, to murder the children of the Hebrews. He could depend upon *their* obedience; for his safety and their own depended, they imagined, upon severe repressive measures. It is this isolated position of Ahmes and of the invading army, which also helps us to understand the words: "Behold the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." Greatly as the Israelites had multiplied, they could not possibly have become more numerous than all the other inhabitants of Egypt put together. But they did outnumber the followers of Ahmes, who were now located as semi-foreigners in the midst of the population of the Delta; and the worldly-wise king, taking account of his new acquisition, had to notice and to deal with, this element of possible danger.

Taking all these indications of the Scripture and of Egyptian history into account, it seems probable that the Pharaoh of the oppression was Ahmes, the founder of the 18th dynasty.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### LANDMARKS IN EGYPTIAN AND SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

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THE question which headed the preceding chapter admitted of a comparatively easy answer. When, however, we attempt to discover who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, we have less to guide us,

and our inquiry will require special care. We shall have to "hasten slowly." The Romans made roads as well as inroads; and in that way they formed abiding conquests of the countries which they overran. If we first of all make perfectly sure that we are on the right track, we shall have less difficulty in discovering the place we wish to reach. Every student of Scripture is struck, as we have already remarked, by its suggestiveness. We sometimes meet the same quality in merely human speech. A man mirrors in a phrase, or in a brief, pregnant sentence, some fact or condition of affairs. The clear, vivid reflection surprises and delights us, and the phrase or sentence is seized upon and treasured like some precious work of art. One such gem has been enough to make a man famous. But the Scripture is full of them. There is not a book, or even a chapter, in which they do not shine like stars in the firmament. The sentences of Scripture are photographs that preserve the colour as well as the form of events and circumstances. They leave in its simplest story the impress of a mind that, in its clearness and grasp, is more than man's—is Divine.

My readers will remember that it is to a phrase of this kind, that we owe the thread which has just guided us through the labyrinth of Egyptian history. "There arose up a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph" (Ex. i. 8), fits thoroughly only one monarch within the whole range of those ages in which it is possible to find the Pharaoh who began the oppression of the Israelites. Ahmes, the founder of the



GREAT HALL OF THE TEMPLE AT EDFOU.

*(Reproduced by permission from the photograph published by the Cosmos Co.)*

eighteenth dynasty, was a man of an entirely different race from that of the monarchs under whom Joseph served. *They* were descendants of the Shepherd invaders of Egypt; *he* was a son of the soil. He was a "new" king in another sense. He came from the south of Egypt to impose his dominion on the fertile and populous north. And he "arose up over Egypt," patiently, skilfully, and persistently climbing the steep and dangerous ascent to greatness. He was not a descendant of the ancient Pharaohs; for his pretensions were based upon the rights of his wife, Nefertari, the daughter and heir of the ancient masters of Egypt. He began as viceroy, or, at the best, as petty sovereign of Thebes. He then allied himself to other petty sovereigns in revolt against the last of the Shepherd kings. With their aid he triumphed over the common foe; and, last of all, he treated his confederates as rivals, put them down, and placed his yoke over the entire land. There is no parallel to that career in this section of Egyptian history; and that phrase, which has so vividly pictured the story, makes us lay the finger upon this one spot and say: "Ahmes was the king who began the policy of the oppression."

We cannot pass over this complete agreement between the Scripture and Egyptian history without confessing our gratitude to Him, who enables us in a day of gainsaying to know that, in this story of mercy and deliverance, we are dealing with truth and not with fable. It was simply impossible for anyone compiling, or manufacturing, Israelitish and

Egyptian history one thousand years after the time of Moses, to have thus packed the history of Ahmes into a single sentence, and, without adding another word, to have shown us the very man. No, the words express thought to which Ahmes and all his story were fully known. The stamp of God is on them. If we now ask whether this part of Scripture contains any further reflection of the time, the reply is that the Scripture narrative enables us to construct Egypt's story. With only these first chapters of Exodus before us, we see that the "new king" and his immediate successors were great builders and improvers of the land. Half a million of men were engaged in forced labour. They were compelled to toil with their whole strength. They were made to serve with rigour. Their lives were made "bitter with hard bondage in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." Two cities are specially named, which they built for their oppressors—store cities they are called—Pithom and Raamses.

That, then, is plain on the face of the narrative. The time of this new dynasty was an age of improvement and of construction. Is this a true representation of the time of Ahmes and of his successors? The reply is a most emphatic affirmative. The eighteenth dynasty *covered Egypt with buildings*. From the twenty-second year of Ahmes the new era began, and it continued till his race ceased to sway the Egyptian sceptre. Maspero says: "The first kings of the eighteenth dynasty, Ahmes and Amenhotep I., had had enough to do to drive out the Shepherds and

to re-organize Egypt. They limited themselves to re-opening the neighbouring quarries of Memphis, and to repairing the monuments which had suffered most during the invasion and the war of independence. Thotmes I., on his return from his expedition into Asia, employed as masons the numerous prisoners whom he had gathered on his route, and made a commencement with the great works which his successors continued without interruption. *The whole valley of the Nile, from the fourth cataract to the sea, is covered with monuments.*"\*

The significance of this fact will be felt when I remark that there is reason to believe that Thotmes II., the next monarch after Thotmes I., was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. But Ahmes, the "new king who knew not Joseph," also engaged in extensive works which his position made a necessity. He had chased the Shepherds into Syria; but they might rally again and endeavour to regain their former dominion. A great wall was, accordingly, either made or repaired by Ahmes, and strong forts were erected, which might effectually bar the way of the invaders till the forces of Egypt had been gathered together and prepared for resistance. Much *was* done in this very way by Rameses II. of the nineteenth dynasty, whom the scholarship of the present day inclines strongly to identify with the Pharaoh of the oppression. But he only rebuilt and strengthened what had previously existed. "The line of fortresses," writes Canon Cook, in the *Speaker's Commentary*,

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\* *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 205.

to whose admirable appendices I am at this point greatly indebted—"The line of fortresses was enlarged and strengthened by Rameses II., but that king was not the original founder. Traces are found *both of the canal and of several forts under the ancient empire.* One of these forts, bearing the name *Pa-chtum en Zaru*, is mentioned in the monumental annals of Tothmosis III." In a footnote he says that "Dr. Ebers entirely corroborates the view taken by the writer. He shows that the line, previously existing, must have been strengthened by one of the earliest kings of the eighteenth dynasty." He adds: "It is also well known that, during the latter part of his reign, Ahmes was occupied in building and repairing the cities of Northern Egypt. In an inscription, lately deciphered, dated in his twenty-second year, certain *Fenchu* are said to be employed in the transport of blocks of limestone (see below) from the quarries of Rufu (the Troja of Strabo) to Memphis and other cities. These *Fenchu* are unquestionably aliens, either mercenaries or forced labourers. According to Brugsch, the name means 'bearers of the shepherd's staff;' and he describes their occupation as precisely corresponding to that of the Israelites. No proper name for the Israelites is found on the monuments of the eighteenth dynasty; during which period all Egyptologists admit their presence in Egypt: they could certainly not be designated more exactly, whether we regard the name or the occupation of these *Fenchu*."

This mention of "limestone" is remarkable, as the

ruins of Pithom (of which I shall immediately speak) show that it was largely used in the construction of the edifices. Speaking of the temple, M. Naville says: "The inner walls were made of white limestone of Toora, which in spite of its Egyptian name, 'the good stone of An,' has no durability, is broken with the greatest facility, and does not resist the action of the air. Everywhere in the course of our excavation, pieces of that stone have turned up; sometimes a block from the foundation of a wall; sometimes a fragment with one or two hieroglyphic signs, showing that it was part of some sculpture; sometimes, also, I found several feet deep of white gravel entirely composed of that stone, which had crumbled to pieces. Evidently a considerable number of inscriptions have been thus destroyed, and this explains why I found so few." But the reader will notice, in my quotations from Canon Cook, the references, which I have italicised, to the *canal* and the *forts*. That throws some light upon the words of Scripture: "they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." They were the brickmakers, the hodmen, and the navvies of their proud Egyptian masters. Under the perpendicular rays of an Egyptian sun they dug, and filled and carried baskets, in excavations where not a breath of air blew on them to refresh the panting, fainting frame. It was just such work as that in the excavation of the Mahmoudieh canal, where twenty-three thousand fellahs perished from exhaustion, and were buried in the banks of the canal by the survivors

as they painfully dug their way along the course marked out by *their* taskmasters.

But something more was needed than the canal and the wall with its forts. The clear-sighted conqueror saw that the only safety of Egypt lay in carrying the war into the territory of his foes. Syria must be enfeebled and broken up by repeated raids. Egypt must fill it with the terror of her might, and thus strangle the spirit of invasion in its very cradle. That became the settled policy of the eighteenth dynasty. Whenever Ahmes and his successors were strong enough, the Egyptian hosts were marshalled, and they swept along what soon became a well-known route—along the sea-coast of Palestine, through the Lebanon and the pass of Megiddo, over the plains of Damascus, and on to the Euphrates. Now this policy, as I have said, demanded something more than, and something different from, a line of defence. There was an absolute necessity for frontier towns, where the armies about to set out on the Syrian campaign should find arms and provisions. Ahmes needed store cities: and, accordingly, we read of the Israelites that “they built for Pharaoh treasure (or store) cities, Pithom and Raamses” (Exodus i. 11).

Is it not striking to find there in these words, so simple and concise, such an exact reflection of the time? Were these cities, however, really built at this time? Our readers are aware of the recent explorations of M. Naville; he has found Pithom, the very city, long lost to observation and to history. It bears on its monuments this very name Pa-Tum, the abode

of the god Tum. More than that, M. Naville laid bare the granaries in which the corn was stored for provisioning the Egyptian armies previous to their march across the desert. In his memoir on the subject, "The store-city of Pithom," he says:—  
"Outside of the space which I consider as the temple, and excavating further towards the north-east, we reached some very strange buildings, no indications of which appeared above the sand, but which, however, were of considerable extent. We came upon thick walls built of *crude bricks, joined by thin layers of mortar*. These walls are remarkably well built, and have a thickness of from two or three yards; the surface being perfectly smooth, and as well polished as possible with such a material as mere Nile mud. Everything indicates a very good epoch, when the Pharaohs built with the intention of making a lasting work.

"These are the walls of a great number of rectangular chambers of various sizes, none of which had any communication with each other. . . . What was the object of those chambers? I believe them to have been built for no other purpose than that of storehouses, or granaries, into which the Pharaohs gathered the provisions necessary for armies about to cross the desert, or even for caravans and travellers which were on the road to Syria. . . . I laid bare the upper part of the walls of several of these store-chambers, which I do not doubt extended over the greater part of the space surrounded by the enclosure. . . . The chambers had no communica-

tion with each other; the access to them was only from the top."

The pictures which the Egyptian artists have left behind them in temples and in tombs have made us familiar with those granaries into which the grain was cast through an opening in the top. It seems now to be quite established that Pithom is the same city as that which is so often referred to by the Greek historians as Heroöpolis. That name has also been found among the ruins. But it now turns out that this very name is an additional proof of the accuracy of Scripture. What the name *Hero*, or, as it is written in a Roman inscription found among the ruins, *Ero*, meant, no one could explain. The problem, however, is now solved. M. Naville discovered among the titles of one of the Ptolemaic priests the two words *Mer Ar*. These mean the keeper of the storehouse. *Ar* is the old Egyptian name for storehouse, and was written in Greek *Er*. Hence Eroöpolis, or, with the Greek aspirate, Heroöpolis, THE CITY OF THE STOREHOUSES!

Pithom was, therefore, as the Scripture has said, "a store-city." Another coincidence is discovered in the materials of which the buildings are made. The reader will remember the prominence given to one branch of the hard service which was laid upon the Israelites. Towards the end of the oppression it is the only department that is mentioned—their making of bricks. That was an occupation in which the whole Israelitish population seems to have been engaged. When Pharaoh would increase their burdens

it was this, and this only, that he touched. "Ye shall no more," he said to the taskmasters and their underlings, "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof." (Ex. v. 8).

Let us pause a moment to note the thoroughly Egyptian feature which is here incidentally mentioned. Straw was an essential element in the manufacture of Egyptian bricks. "We have an abundance of testimonials," says Kalisch, "proving the fact that the Egyptians manufactured their bricks from clay taken from the Nile, with which they mixed straw cut into small pieces, in order to give them firmness and compactness; and, after the bricks thus prepared have been dried in the sun, they are of such hardness and durability that they defy the destructive influence of millenniums." \* He mentions the fact that Rosellini brought some specimens from Egypt which bore the stamp of Thothmes IV., of the eighteenth dynasty. In a papyrus of the nineteenth dynasty we have a most remarkable parallel to the cry of the Israelites. The writer complains:—"I have no one to help me in making bricks, no straw."

But the point to which I wish to draw attention now is this: the making of bricks was plainly the main occupation of the enslaved Israelites. A vast accumulation of this building material must have

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\* Historical and Critical Commentary on Exodus, p. 90.

resulted from their combined and long-continued labours. The use of bricks must therefore have been quite a feature in the masonry of that district and time. Now what has the exhumed city to say upon this point? Is a large use of bricks a feature of Pithom? Had we known that M. Naville was going to unearth the long buried site, and had we placed implicit faith in this book of Exodus, we could have ventured a prediction. We could have said to him not only that he was about to uncover a *store* city, but we could also have told him what sort of material was mainly used in its construction. What then has the excavator, who has laid the place bare with pick-axe and spade, to say? We have already heard of the walls of these store chambers. They are from two to three yards thick, and those thick-walled chambers, M. Naville supposes, filled the whole enclosure, and were the great feature of the city. The granaries are *constructed wholly of bricks*, and the quantity required for them alone must have been very great. But this is by no means all that has to be said by way of reply. Bricks were employed everywhere in Pithom. "The square area," M. Naville says, "enclosed by enormous brick walls . . . contained a space of about 55,000 square yards;" so that not only were the thick walls of the store-houses made of bricks, but also the "enormous" walls which surrounded the entire enclosure. But wherever the excavator went he still found bricks. "The temple was enclosed on both sides by walls, or square masses of bricks. It was a rectangular space, divided from the

rest of the building. *Very likely bricks were the materials* of which the greater part of it was built." Speaking of his excavations in the store-chambers, he says: "Wherever shafts were sunk I came across brick walls more or less decayed, and belonging to different ages;" and referring to the eastern part of the enclosure, he adds: "there the excavator finds a compact mass of bricks of all ages, in which it is hopeless to trace any kind of plan." Everywhere indeed, in the brief account of the recovered city, the talk is of "bricks." "During several days my labourers were engaged in excavating a singular structure near the canal. It consisted of *two masses of bricks*, sloping gablewise, and resting on the sand."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### WHO WAS THE PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS?

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WE are now prepared to attempt a reply to this formidable question. If we know what king founded Pithom, we have laid our finger at last upon the Pharaoh of the oppression, and having got that date fixed, we can measure onward to the Pharaoh of the Exodus. M. Naville believed that he had settled the matter; for, on what remained of the buildings and monuments, he found the name of one king only, and that the name of the great Rameses II., the Sesostris mentioned by the Greeks. But, as

I have already pointed out, M. Naville's explorations were not exhaustive. There was much to be done which he could not attempt, and some future excavator may turn up monuments which show that Pithom owes its origin to an earlier king. Rameses, unfortunately, had a way of appropriating honours which by no means belonged to him. It is proved that, towards the end of his reign, he erased the name of his own father Seti I., from monuments which Seti had erected, and substituted his own name. A man who could take such unwarrantable liberties with monuments sacred to a parent's memory, would not be over scrupulous in dealing with such as might belong to a hostile and hated race of kings. Seti I., the father of Rameses II., was a founder of a new dynasty, the nineteenth. The eighteenth dynasty fell in a religious war. Seti and Rameses came in as the avengers of an insulted, and, perhaps, persecuted, faith. What was an evidently irresistible tendency in Rameses would in this case be recommended as a religious duty; and in rebuilding the frontier city of Pithom, every memento of its earlier foundation by the eighteenth dynasty would be carefully removed.

It may be urged, however, that this is merely theory, and that, while we have distinct evidence that Rameses II. was, at least, *one* of the builders of Pithom, we have no proof that any earlier monarch had touched it. Well, there is one fact which may be regarded as a negative proof. If Rameses II. was the founder of Pithom, we might surely expect

that the names of city and founder would be linked together. The monuments would have connected the city in some way with the great monarch to whom it owed its origin. But no such connection is indicated. Pithom is mentioned in the inscriptions, but nowhere in connection with Rameses. When I have mentioned another fact, it will be felt that something like a demonstration has been reached. The city of Raamses was also a store-city, the Scripture tells us. It was built at the same time as Pithom, and with the same intention. The name might have led us to imagine that Rameses II. was certainly the founder of that city, and that, therefore, there was a probability of his also having been the founder of Pithom. This is, indeed, confidently asserted by many. But there is good ground for believing that this name of Rameses was in use long before the nineteenth dynasty to which Rameses II. belonged. What is called the "anonymous list of Syncellus" mentions no fewer than six kings of this name, or names derived from it, in the period immediately preceding the times of the Shepherd dynasty.\* And other facts show that *it is certain that this sister city of Raamses existed before his time.* His reign was considerably advanced before his great works on the frontier began. But we find him, in his fifth year, receiving the ambassadors of the Hittites *in this very city of Pa-Ramesu.* The city was, therefore, completely inhabited and well known in the very beginning of the reign of Rameses II. And,

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\* *The Theological Critic*, vol. i., p. 51.

if any doubt on this point were left, it would be dissipated by the statement of Brugsch that the city is mentioned in the reign of the father of Rameses, Seti I.

And M. Naville's strong contention that Pithom owed its existence to Rameses II. has to encounter the following fact. Mr. Pollard, speaking of the antiquities found on the mounds which covered the ruins of Pithom and now at Ismaila, mentions one which proves that the city must have existed long before the time of Rameses. "A large sphinx," he says, "in black marble is also very interesting, as the name of the king in whose reign it was carved, and whose portrait it most probably bears, has been erased. *It belonged, unquestionably, to the period of the Hyksos, or the Shepherd kings, during the latter portion of which Joseph ruled in Egypt.* The only name found upon it at the present time is that of Rameses the Great, who reigned about 1400 B.C. It was—most unfortunately for the records of Egyptian history—the practice of this monarch to cut his name on almost every object that presented itself. This would have been pardonable enough had he allowed all previous names and titles to remain; but he seems to have desired to obliterate all records but those of his own ancestors."\* It will be said that, on the other hand, this discovery makes the founding of the city too early, as the Pharaoh of the oppression came after the Shepherd dominion had ceased. But it is probable that the city was re-built and specially

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\* *The Land of the Monuments*, p. 18.

adopted for its new place as a store city. Rameses, coming some two centuries afterwards, repaired the buildings and obliterated every line that would ascribe any part of the city's glory to another.

Our way is now prepared to answer the question, "who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?" Of Ahmes we have already had some details. He not only conquered and expelled the Shepherd dynasty, but also re-organised the kingdom, and established his throne. He died after a reign of over twenty years, leaving his wife, Nefertari, in whose right he had secured the throne, as either queen or regent. Her mummy, along with that of her husband and other sovereigns of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties, was discovered in 1881, and now lies in the museum at Boulak. This careful preservation of her remains is in keeping with the excessive veneration with which we know the Egyptians regarded her memory. "Long after her decease," says Brugsch, "this great ancestress of the new empire was venerated as a Divine being, and her image was placed as an equal among the eternal inhabitants of the Egyptian heaven. In the united assembly of the sainted first kings of the new empire, Nofertari-Ahmes, the divine spouse of Ahmes, sits enthroned at the head of all the Pharaonic pairs, and before all the royal children of their race, as the specially venerated ancestress and founder of the eighteenth dynasty."

Strangely enough, the various quotations which ancient writers have made from the lost work of Manetho all agree in the duration of her reign and

that of her successor. All the versions ascribe to Nefertari a reign of thirteen years. Her son, Amenhotep I., who appears to have been a child when his father died, reigned, as all the versions say, twenty-one years. The surpassing ability which long marked the rulers of the eighteenth dynasty was specially manifested in him. He left behind him a great fame and was long worshipped as a god. His successor, Thotmes I., also left a great name. He was the first of his dynasty who carried the terrors of Egypt into the far east. He overran Syria, and pushed his conquests as far as the Euphrates. There are also inscriptions on the rocks near the waterfall of Kerman between the 20th and 19th degrees of latitude, which show that he was equally successful in the far south. "He opened the valleys," says the inscription—"He opened the valleys which had remained unknown to his forefathers, and which had never beheld the wearer of the double crown. His southern boundary mark was at the beginning of this land, the northern boundary at that water where the traveller downward turns for his upward journey. Never was this the case under any other king." The inscription concludes: "The land in its complete extent lay at the feet of the king."\*

Thotmes I. reigned twenty-one years. And so far the persecution of the people of God had brought down no token of God's indignation. The successors of Ahmes were increasing their territory. The spoils seized and the tributes imposed were filling the land

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\* Brugsch, *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, i. 285, 286.

with wealth and splendour. A rich booty was taken from the Nubians on the south, and the people were compelled to labour in the gold mines and to produce the plates of precious metal which were carried down the Nile and stored in the king's treasure chambers. "There floated, coming from the south down stream, richly laden ships, freighted with cattle and rare animals, panther skins, ivory, ebony, other costly woods, balsam, and sweet smelling resin, gold and precious stones, corn, and lastly, negroes in almost countless numbers, to fill the temples and adorn the palaces of Pharaoh. In the mines of the scorching valleys of the country of Wawa there languished prisoners and negro slaves, who out of deep gullies loosened the gold sprinkled stone from the rocks, crushed it in mills, and with unspeakable pains washed out the particles of gold. Egyptian men-at-arms and foreign soldiers kept close watch, and looked after the complete fulfilling of the day's work."\* From the east, spoil and tribute, though different, were still more rich and splendid. Brugsch reminds us that there "trade and art went hand in hand," and speaks of "the chariots of war, which blazed with gold and silver, of armour, from beautiful coats of mail to richly covered lances; of gold, silver, and brazen vases; of household furniture down to tent poles and footstools; and of a thousand small objects, which appear as necessities to civilized men."

With all these splendid fruits of murder and

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\* *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, i. 287.

robbery pouring into the land, and with the edifices and towns springing up under the enforced toil of the poor enslaved Israelites and girding the country with strength and covering it with magnificence, it seemed as if Egypt was treading the path to glory. But these things were from Satan's hand, not from God's. The Egyptians were selling themselves and their children to destruction, and this was the price. We shall look on the other side of the picture by and bye. When Thotmes I. died, he left behind him only one heir to the throne, his daughter Hatasou. The latter would appear to have been still a child at her father's death, and Egypt was ruled once more by a queen-regent, the widow of Thotmes I. and mother of Hatasou. She is called Ahmes on the monuments and Amessis by Josephus, who quotes from Manetho. She is said to have reigned more than twenty years. Towards the end of her reign, she married Hatasou to a son of Thotmes I., who was a child of the harem, and who ascended the throne under the name of Thotmes II. This fact throws light upon the words addressed to the Pharaoh of the Exodus: "And in very deed for this cause *have I raised thee up* for to show in thee my power" (Exodus ix. 16). Thotmes II. had no right to the throne. He was only one of many children whose birth debarred them from any such expectation. But God had lifted him from the midst of these and exalted him to the throne. Of the reign of this new monarch we have, as yet, only a few memorials, but these

show him to have been by no means inferior to his predecessors in warlike deeds. There are records of successful campaigns on the south and on the east. His reign was comparatively short. He was cut off in the fulness of his strength, and this end was involved, as we shall see, in misfortune and mystery. The joint reigns of Amessis and Thotmes II. were given by Manetho as covering a period of thirty-five years.

Till quite recently we were met at this point by a difficulty which appeared to be insurmountable. I have said that the interval between the death of Thotmes I. and that of Thotmes II. was thirty-five years. But Thotmes II. left no legitimate heir to the throne, and was succeeded by his widow. She wears a masculine garb, and is even represented on her monuments as wearing a beard. On this extraordinary phenomenon a little light may be cast by and by. She was succeeded by Thotmes III., who, was long universally believed to be another son of Thotmes I. and brother of Thotmes II. Now here was the difficulty. Thotmes III. passed a long minority under Hatasou. It lasted about seventeen years. It was not till the twenty-second year of his reign, that he began a course of conquest which placed him among the mightiest princes who ever ruled in Egypt. Now, if we remember the thirty-five years during which Amessis and Thotmes II. reigned, it will be seen that this juvenile, who was unfit to govern because he was little more than a child, must have been about forty years old! It

was quite evident that there was an error somewhere, and it was naturally supposed that Manetho's figures were wrong. There could not have been, it was said, an interval of thirty-five years between the death of Thotmes I. and the accession of his second son Thotmes III.

The interval was therefore shortened, and the reign of Amessis was ruled out altogether by Brugsch. An error there certainly was—but it was the archæologist and not the historian who was at fault. M. Maspero has now discovered that Thotmes III. was *not* the brother of Thotmes II. He was his son, but, like the father, a child of the harem. To give him a right to the throne, Hatasou married him to her daughter, and, while she lived, ruled the land herself.

This important discovery has removed the last difficulty which stood in the way of our identifying the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Let us now see what we have ascertained :

Nefertari, the widow of Ahmes, the “ new king,” reigned	...	..	...	...	13 years
Amenhotep I. reigned	...	...	...	...	21 „
Thotmes I. reigned	...	...	...	...	21 „
Amessis and Thotmes II. reigned	...	...	...	...	35 „
					—
			In all	...	90 years.

Now, if these dates are to be relied upon, Thotmes II. must be the Pharaoh who resisted God and brought the Divine judgment upon himself and his

people. To make this perfectly plain, however, there is one point which we must try to settle. Did the death of Thotmes II. coincide with the deliverance of the Israelites? In other words, was Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea? It has been contended that he was not. Most readers of the Bible experience something of a shock when they hear that statement made by defenders of the Bible. It may be safely said that all the generations of Bible readers have believed that Pharaoh perished with his army. How did they arrive at that belief? It is quite true that the account in Exodus does not contain any explicit statement to the effect that Pharaoh perished with his army; but it is equally true that it is plainly implied that he did perish with it. He was with the army. When the tidings came that the Israelites fled, "he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him . . . he pursued after the children of Israel" (Exodus xiv. 5, 8). When God says: "And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen" (verses 17, 18). It seems quite clear that Pharaoh himself shared the same fate as his chariots and his horsemen. But there is one statement to which the Book of God has committed itself, which no one can explain away. In Psalm cxxxvi. 15, we read that God "overthrew

Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea." Those words close the controversy. The Scripture teaching plainly is that the last was the most appalling and crushing blow that Egypt had received. Pharaoh gathered his whole strength to fight against God. The battle was joined, and of God's foes there was nothing left. "And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen . . . . And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them" (Exodus xiv. 23, 28).

That which led to this manipulation of the Bible testimony, was the fact that the body of the then supposed Pharaoh of the Exodus, was found among those of his ancestors. It was imagined that if he had been drowned, his body must have been lost. But this does not, by any means, necessarily follow. Many a man has been drowned, whose body has been recovered and has received all due burial rites. The body of Thotmes II., is to-day in the Boulak Museum; but that does not prevent our believing that he perished in the waters of the Red Sea. We are told that "Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore" (Exodus xiv. 30). Their bereaved kindred might easily find them where Israel looked upon them. The waters, rushing in from either side, seem to have swept their victims to the shores; and, even though the sea had not in this way yielded up

its dead, the Egyptians, whose care of the dead body was one of the highest religious duties, would have searched its deepest depths, and have brought back for embalmment and sepulture, the remains of their king.

We may take it, then, that if Thotmes II. was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, the last year of his reign was the year of Israel's deliverance. But Moses was eighty years old when that event took place. His birth would, therefore, have occurred in the tenth year of Nefertari's reign. Ahmes, who had begun the persecution, would have passed away, but his policy of oppression and of slaughter was continued. A careful reading of the second chapter of Exodus will show that there is nothing inconsistent with this in the account of the birth of Moses, while it is certain that the oppression had lasted for some time before Moses was born. The command to drown the male children of the Hebrews is the last thing recorded of Ahmes, and there is no reference whatever to him in the story of the birth and rescue of the great Lawgiver. Pharaoh's daughter would in this case have been the daughter of Ahmes and Nefertari, and an elder sister of Amenhotep I. Will the reader now glance back at our table of the reigns of the descendants of Ahmes? Amenhotep I. reigned twenty-one years, and at his death, Moses must have been twenty-four years old. He was forty when he renounced his high position, and took his place among the enslaved people of God. This carries us into the sixteenth year of Thotmes I. Thotmes I.

would then be the Pharaoh who sought to slay Moses. The king died five years after; but, as his wife and sister, Amessis, reigned for at least twenty years more, Egypt was barred against the return of Moses for twenty-five years. It will be seen that this fits in with our identification of Thotmes II. as the Pharaoh of whom we are in search. No other identification seems possible. We cannot go back to Thotmes I., for his death takes us down only fifty-five years from that of Ahmes; and, if to that period we add the twenty-five years of his reign, we have, even then, only eighty, so that Moses would have been born before Ahmes had expelled the Shepherd dynasty. To pass over Thotmes II., and to take Thotmes III., would bring us down some fifty years later, and dislocate the entire history.

To this it may be added that Thotmes II. died amid dire misfortune and disgrace; Hatasou, his wife and sister, who survived him and reigned in his stead, is marked by two characteristics which have attracted the attention of every Egyptologist. She suddenly, upon the death of her husband, assumes a masculine garb, and apparently insisted upon being addressed as a man. Her great architect, Semnut, speaks of his sovereign in this fashion—"He made me great in the country: *he* named me as the chief steward of his house, as the governor of the whole country," and so on. Another circumstance to which I may refer is the almost insane hatred she manifested towards the memory of her husband. She erased his name from the monuments which he and she had

jointly erected, and, as Brugsch says, "sought to blot out" his memory "in every conceivable manner." Now the calamities which preceded and accompanied the Exodus would fully explain these peculiarities. Thotmes II. fell as one abandoned and hated by the gods. To repudiate his memory was to conciliate them. The necessities of her position, and the call to show that, though a weak woman overwhelmed with misfortunes, she was nevertheless not to be trifled with, enable us to understand the masculine garb, and the desire to assume every possible manly attribute.

Apart from such circumstances these facts in the queen's history would be hard to explain, unless we think of insanity, a supposition which there is nothing besides in her career to sustain. But we have distinct evidence that our inference is correct. The testimony on this point I shall give in the words of Canon Cook. The death of Thotmes II. "was immediately followed by a general revolt of the confederated nations on the north of Palestine, which had been conquered by his father. No attempt was made to recover the lost ascendancy of Egypt until the twenty-second year of Tothmosis III." He adds: "the reigns of all other early kings in this great dynasty were prosperous and glorious, filled with great events attested by numerous monuments. This king succeeded to a great place; his first years were brilliant, he cleared his frontiers; there is no indication of rebellion or of foreign invasion, and yet the last years are a complete blank;

there is a sudden and complete collapse; he dies, no son succeeding; his throne is long occupied by a woman, and no effort is made to regain the former possessions of Egypt for more than twenty years.”\*

The mention of two other facts will complete all I have to say on this matter. Tradition has indicated this king as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Eusebius says that it was in his days that the Exodus took place. That is one fact that is not without its weight. Here is the other to which I have referred. Manetho has been guilty, just at this point, of a strange departure from the testimony of the monuments. We know that the conflict with the Shepherds was short and sharp. Ahmes began it, and it was concluded in the early years of his reign. But Manetho represents it as going on through all the following reigns and concluding only on the accession of Thotmes III., to whom he assigns the honour of their expulsion. Even then he tells us they were not driven out, but that they left of their own accord under a treaty which gave them permission to go out unhindered and unharmed. Now Manetho had no purpose to serve in falsifying the ancient history of his own people. He did his best to make his book a reflex of the monuments, or of the historical records, existing in his day. He must have been misled in some way. With the history of the Exodus before us, we understand the historian's perplexity and mistake. He found these other shepherds still in the land, *after* the days of Ahmes.

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\* Speaker's Commentary, i. 456.

He found Ahmes in the latter years of his reign, and his successors after him, treating them as foes, and endeavouring to accomplish their suppression. The conflict ceases only on the accession of Thotmes III. (who dated his reign from the death of his father Thotmes II.) He notes, too, that they go out with Pharaoh's permission. Viewed in this light—and no other explanation of the mistake has ever been given—the whole becomes intelligible, and Manetho's blunder takes its place as another testimony that Thotmes II. was the Pharaoh who perished at the Exodus.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE STORY OF THE EGYPTIAN BONDAGE.

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THE reader is no doubt acquainted with the incident in an American trial in which a watermark led to a somewhat unlooked-for development. It was a case in which documents played the chief part, and everything depended upon a paper, which was the confidence of one party and the dismay of the other. It was correctly drawn up and duly signed; and, though one side was not merely suspicious, but morally certain, that the document was a fraud, it seemed impossible to disprove its genuineness. Their counsel was making the best of what seemed a poor case. Gesticulating with the fateful paper in his hand, he happened to glance at

it as he held it between him and the light. He noticed the watermark. It contained the name of well-known American paper-makers. The name was accompanied by certain marks which they used to distinguish the products of various years. The marks were, in fact, part of an elaborate system of dates. A communication was immediately sent off in which they were asked to say in what year the paper bearing the special mark was manufactured. A reply came back naming a date *some years later than that in which the document professed to have been drawn up.* The watermark exposed the fraud and gained the case.

Here what we may call the Egyptian watermark performs an exactly similar service. It does not expose fraud, but it rolls back the aspersions which have been cast upon truth. I need not weary the reader by attempting to give a minute account of opinions of the rationalistic critics regarding the origin of the Pentateuch. But let me request attention to the following statement, penned by Wellhausen himself for the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. His theory is that Ezra—a Babylonian scribe—was the writer of the Pentateuch. This man saw that something was required to give coherence to the Jewish people, and so he drew up a code of laws; and to gain such a reception for them as would ensure obedience, he set them forth as having been given by God to Moses and by Moses to the Israelites. To make the imposture still more complete and telling, he invented the

history, with the aid of some floating traditions, and placed each set of laws where they would be explained and enforced by the imaginary events and circumstances which were alleged to have called them forth. But we shall let Wellhausen speak for himself. "Now there came," he says, "to Palestine a Babylonian scribe, having the law of God in his hand—Ezra did not set about introducing the new law immediately on his arrival in Judæa. The main reason appears to have been that Ezra had not the vigorous support of the local authorities; but this was indispensably necessary to secure recognition for a new law. At last it fell to the lot of Nehemiah to be sent as Persian Governor to Judæa. After he had freed the community from external pressure, the business of introducing the new law-book was next proceeded with. Substantially, at least, *Ezra's law-book must be regarded as practically identical with our Pentateuch, although many minor amendments and very considerable additions have been made at a later date.*"

The Pentateuch is alleged, therefore, to have had a Babylonian and Persian origin, and that some of it belongs to a still later time. It was written, according to the rationalism of to-day, by men who were saturated with Babylonian and Persian ideas, into whose speech many Babylonian and Persian words must have entered, and whose phrases must have unconsciously reflected the customs and the life of their own times. If the rationalists, then, are right, the Pentateuch must bear the Babylonian and Persian watermark. But, as we carefully

examine the book, we find that there is stamped and woven into its very tissue the watermark—not of Babylon nor of Persia—but of ancient Egypt—the Egypt of the 18th dynasty—the Egypt of the time when Moses is said to have lived and to have written. The foreign words that are imbedded in the Hebrew of the Pentateuch, like shells or vegetable and animal remains in strata, are neither Persian nor Babylonian, but ancient Egyptian. The life and customs reflected in phrase and narrative are those, not of the time and the circumstances of Ezra, but of the alleged time and circumstances of Moses. Our readers have heard of the Jehovistic writer and of the Elohist writer, who are supposed to have altered and patched each other's work to such an extent and so cunningly, that it has taken the rationalists well-nigh a century and a half to rip down the patchwork and to give each man his own. One is supposed to have made use of the name *Jehovah* (translated LORD), and the other of the name *Elohim* (translated God). *But this Egyptian watermark is found in both portions.* We read it as clearly in the Jehovistic as in the Elohist passages. Is it possible to imagine a more conclusive proof of the entire unity of the book and of its Mosaic origin? The Pentateuch is not made up of an early and a late portion; for the same watermark is on both the so-called sections. Neither is it the work of Ezra, or any other man belonging to the Babylonian or Persian period. It is the work of one who knew the Egypt of the Exodus, and it was written

when the language of Israel bore the fresh traces of the Egyptian sojourn.

We have already partly traced the testimony which God has so providentially interwoven into the very fabric of these five books. We shall now continue our inspection. In the account of the first effects which the demand of Moses had upon Pharaoh's attitude towards the Israelites, we come upon a cluster of confirmations. Moses and Aaron came with the demand, made in the name of Jehovah, that Pharaoh should suffer the Israelites to go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice unto Jehovah their God. The king's reply was that which is usual with tyrants—increased oppression. "And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. . . . And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters hastened them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both

yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?" (Ex. v. 6-14).

I have already drawn attention to the fact that the chief burden imposed upon the Israelites was the manufacture of bricks. These, as we have seen, were largely used in the construction of Pithom. But the reason for this excessive demand becomes plain only when the details of Egyptian architecture are laid bare. The methods adopted by Egyptian architects and engineers led to bricks being required *in enormous quantities*. Had Egyptian dwellings and cities been built upon the soil, they would have been engulfed in the next overflow of the Nile. The yearly inundation, consequently, made raised foundations an absolute necessity. The problem which Egyptian builders had to solve, was how these raised foundations could best be reared. Their solution of the question shaped the labours of the Hebrews. When the site of a building or of a city was selected, the first thing done was to mark out parallel lines, at certain distances from each other. Along these were raised massive walls built of unbaked bricks. Between these parallel walls others were built at right angles, of the same material, until the whole site had the appearance of a gigantic draught board. The spaces were then filled up with earth and stones and whatever came to hand, and on this raised and solid basement the house or city was erected. To fashion the bricks for even one such foundation must have required the labours of multitudes of men. But when the real building of the city began, the demand for bricks still went on. The city walls were

made of bricks. They entered into the construction of every house, palace, and temple. "The houses," says Wilkinson, "were built of crude brick, stuccoed and painted with all the combinations of bright colour in which the Egyptians delighted. . . . Many roofs were vaulted, and built, like the rest of the house, of crude brick; and not only have arches been found of that material dating in the sixteenth century before our era, but vaulted granaries appear to be represented of much earlier date. Bricks, indeed, led to the invention of the arch; the want of timber in Egypt having pointed out the necessity of some substitute for it."\* "Enclosures of gardens, or granaries, sacred circuits surrounding the courts of temples, walls of fortresses and towns, dwelling-houses and tombs, and even some of the temples themselves were of crude brick, with stone columns and gateways: and so great was the demand, that the government, foreseeing the profit to be obtained from a monopoly of them (that is, of bricks), undertook to supply the public at a moderate price, thus preventing all unauthorised persons from engaging in their manufacture." †

Denon, in his account of the monuments of Egypt, expresses his astonishment that the only existing remains are those of temples and of tombs, and that no remains of palaces or of private buildings are to be found. But the explanation lies there. Temples and tombs were made of massive

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\* Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians* (popular edition), i. 6, 16.

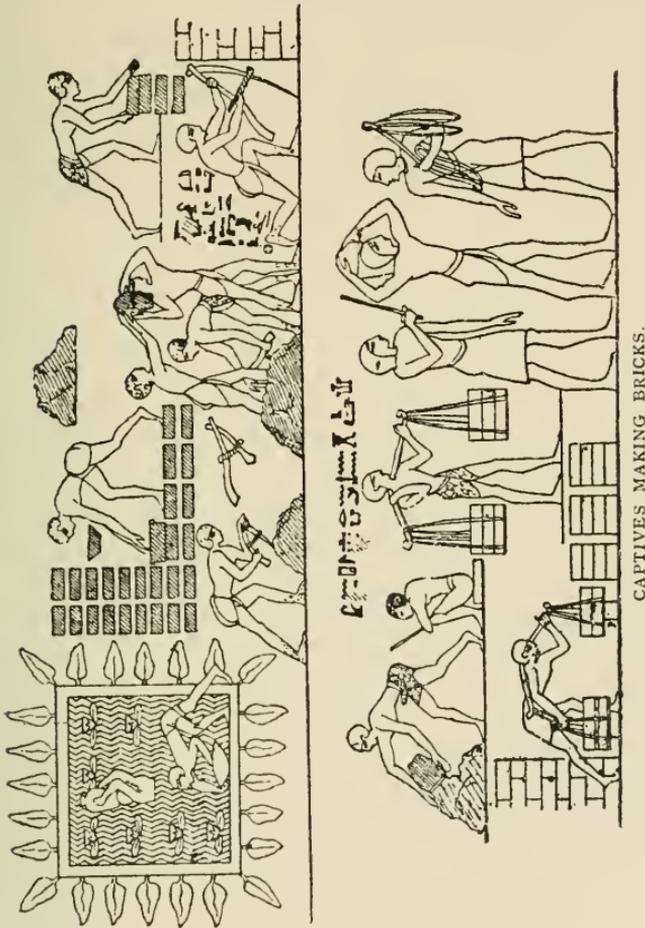
† *Ibid.*, ii. 194, 195.

stones, which have bidden defiance alike to the ravages of time and to the neglect and the rage of man. The rest were made of brick, and these in process of time fell asunder and mingled again with the earth from which they were taken. We are also told that the bricks which the Israelites made required straw for their manufacture. This is plainly implied in the narrative. Their punishment for daring to come with God's demand is the withholding of straw. They are still to make and to deliver the same number of bricks as before, but they are to find straw for themselves. I repeat that this implies that straw was a necessary element in brick manufacture. If it had not been so, the refusal of the Government to supply straw would have involved no hardship for the Israelites. They would simply have made the bricks without straw. What, then, is the fact? Egyptian bricks are of two kinds. They are made both with and without straw. "When made of the Nile mud," says Wilkinson, "or alluvial deposit, they required straw to prevent their cracking; but those formed of clay taken from the torrent beds on the edge of the desert, held together without straw." When we remember where the Israelites were, this confirmation will appear striking indeed. They were in the Delta, and the only material at hand was this very Nile mud. Hence the necessity for the introduction of the chopped straw to bind the material together and to prevent cracking in the process of drying under the heat of an Egyptian sun. Had they attempted

to make their bricks without straw, the imposition would have been evident even to an unpractised eye, and would have brought upon them swift and cruel punishment. It is somewhat striking to find in a papyrus of the nineteenth dynasty, and close therefore to the time of the Exodus, an illustration (which I have already noticed in a former paper) of this very burden now imposed by Pharaoh upon the Israelites. The writer complains: "I have no one to help me in making bricks, no straw."

But the words are also Egyptian. The word rendered straw is *tebn*, and here again there is no light upon the term from any Hebrew roots. Gesenius proposes a far-fetched derivation from *banah* to build, and imagines that it may mean *building material*. But if the word meant building material, however did it come to be translated "straw"? Hebrew scholars are now saved any further trouble, in providing a derivation, by the discovery that *tebn* is not Hebrew at all, but a purely Egyptian word, meaning "chaff;" and we ought to render it, not by "straw," but by "chopped straw." The straw was cut into short pieces and made, as a matter of fact, into something like chaff in order to mingle with the clay. But the ignorance which has prevailed regarding the meaning of *tebn* is a small matter compared with the thick darkness which rested upon the meaning of *qash*, which has been rendered "stubble." Commentators, have unquestioningly accepted that translation and they and their readers have seen in fancy the Israelites spread over all the land rooting

up from the reaped fields the stubble clinging to the clods. Indeed, so unquestioned was this rendering, that Osburn, in his *Monumental History of Egypt*, tries



from this expression to determine the exact time of the year when the mission of Moses began. "The captives," he says, "were no longer to have straw

given them, but they must themselves collect stubble in the fields. . . . The harvest, therefore, of Egypt was just at an end, and the stubble had not yet been collected into heaps and burnt." All this is now proved to be beside the mark. The *qash*, which they were scattered abroad to collect, was not stubble but REEDS! These were to be found everywhere in the Delta by the riverside, in marshes, and on the margins of canals and pools. These reeds were usually gathered to form layers between the beds of bricks, to bind the structure more firmly together: and, as necessity is the mother of invention, it occurred to the distressed Israelites that chopped reeds might take the place of chopped straw.

As if nothing should be wanting to make this Egyptian watermark distinct and clear, we have the most conclusive proof that the account of the oppression of the Israelites is a vivid picture of the time. I have given the facts which lead me to believe that Thotmes II. was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. We have a picture of scenes enacted some twenty or thirty years afterwards in the reign of Thotmes III. After a long period of quiescence, Egyptians had carried their arms once more to the south and to the east, and had returned loaded with booty and with prisoners. These prisoners were put to work *in the very manner in which we are told that the Israelites were compelled to toil*. "Fate," says Brugsch, "has preserved to us on the walls of a chamber in a tomb in the interior of the hill of *Abd-el-Qurnah*, in the region of the melancholy Coffin-hill (*Du-Neb-*

*Ankh*), a very instructive pictorial representation, in which the pencil of the deceased master has portrayed in lively colours to future generations the industry of the prisoners. Far more convincing than the explanations, written by the side in old Egyptian letters and words, these curious drawings themselves allow us to recognise to their full extent the fate and the severe labour of the unfortunate prisoners. Some carry water in jugs from the tank hard by; others knead and cut up the loamy earth; others, again, by the help of a wooden form, make the bricks, or place them carefully in long rows to dry; while the more intelligent among them carry out the work of building the walls. The words which are added as explanations of each occupation give us the authentic information that the labourers are captive people whom Thotmes III. has carried away to build the temple of his father Amon. They explain that the 'baking of the bricks' is a work for the new building of the provision-house of the God Amon of Apet (the east side of Thebes), and they finally declare, in a most copious manner, the strict superintendence of the steward over the foreigners in the following words:— '(Here are seen) the prisoners who have been carried away as living prisoners in very great numbers; they work at the building with active fingers; their overseers show themselves in sight; these insist with vehemence, obeying the orders of the great skilled lord (who prescribes to them) the works, and gives directions to the masters. . . . . The overseer (*Rois*) speaks thus to the

labourers at the building: "The stick is in my hand, be not idle."'

"The picture and the words," continues Brugsch, "which we have laid before our readers exactly as they have been transmitted to us, present an important illustration of the accounts in the Bible concerning the hard bondage of the Jews in Egypt."\* There is no mention made of the Israelites. These had gone, and, therefore, Thotmes III. must have their place supplied if his great architectural works are to be carried on. The Egyptian armies consequently encumber themselves with multitudes of prisoners, to whom are assigned the very labours from which, the Scriptures tell us, the Israelites had just been delivered. Is it possible to conceive a more striking and conclusive proof that the Scripture shows us the Egypt of the time?

In a papyrus belonging to the nineteenth dynasty, and which forms the report of a master of works engaged in constructing an edifice in the city of Rameses, we read: "Number of masons, 12, besides men for moulding bricks in their cities, brought to the work of the house. *They must make their number of bricks daily.* They are not to slacken their labours at the new house. Thus have I obeyed the command given by my master." Brugsch, in giving a translation of this document, has added: "We have here a most beautiful and authentic commentary on the fifth chapter of Exodus." The words which I have italicised show that it was the custom to demand a certain

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\* *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, i. 375, 376.

number of bricks daily. "They must make their number of bricks daily" is an exact parallel to the words of Scripture: "Fulfil your works, your daily tasks," "wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making bricks both yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?" "Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task" (Exodus v. 13, 14, 19).

But these are not the only reflections of the time. Every part of the picture, everything named or indicated, is Egyptian. The mention of the taskmasters and their officers (Exodus v. 10) show us again the clear imprint of the place and time. The word in the original for taskmasters is *sare-massim*. *Sar* is found in Hebrew and other Semitic tongues in the sense of chief or prince. But it is an ancient Egyptian title, and is the *very title given to the chief of the works in the representation of brick-making under Thotmes III. to which we have just referred*. That representation brings us within *the life-time of Moses*. Moses and the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness when those bricks, represented in the picture, were being made. The second part of the name, *massim*, was, like many of the words in the Pentateuch, a trouble to the learned. One had one theory as to its derivation, and another had another. The word is the Egyptian *mas*, to bring tribute. The *sare-massim* were the chiefs of the tribute, who had to levy the imposts and to allot and exact the labours of the captives and of those condemned to enforced service.

The word rendered "officers" is *shoterim*, that is,

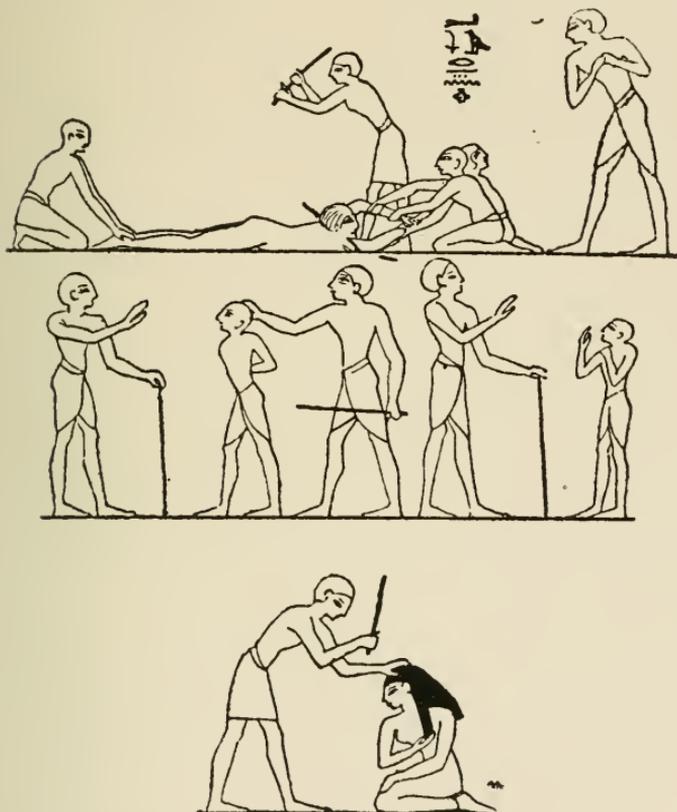
scribes. These were Hebrew officers, "the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's task-master had set over them" (Exodus v. 14). The word in this case is Hebrew, but the custom is Egyptian, and was mercifully imported into Israel as a providential provision for the times near at hand when organization would be essential to the national well-being and, indeed, to the nation's very existence. These scribes were everywhere in Egypt. No establishment was complete without its scribes. The stewards and others had to give in their reports to them. "In these" (reports), says Wilkinson, "nothing was omitted; and every egg was noted in the account and entered with the chicken and goslings. And in order to prevent any connivance, or a question respecting the accuracy of a report, two scribes received it from the superintendents at the same moment. Everything was done in writing. Bureaucracy was as consequential in Egypt as in modern Austria or France; scribes were required, on every occasion, to settle public or private questions; no bargain of consequence was made without the voucher of a written document; and the sale of a small piece of land required sixteen witnesses. Either the Egyptians were great cheats, or a very cautious people—probably both; and they would have been in an agony of mind to see us so careless, and so duped in many of our railway and other speculations."\*

We read that the officers were beaten (Ex. v. 14)

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\* *Ancient Egyptians*, ii. 176.

“and demanded: wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making bricks both yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?” Referring again to the picture of the brickmakers, the reader will note that the over-



APPLICATION OF THE BASTINADO.

seers are represented bearing sticks. They “were armed,” says Canon Cook, “with long heavy scourges made of a tough pliant wood imported from Syria. The discipline of the Egyptian service, both

military and civil, was maintained by punishments of excessive severity, even in the case of native officers. Hence the proverbial saying, 'the child grows up and his bones are broken like the bones of an ass;' and again, 'the back of a lad is made that it may hearken to him that beats it.'"\*

That the Hebrew officers were not imposed upon by vain terrors, and that the decree that the male children should be cast into the Nile was not an empty threat, will be plain from the following account by a writer in the time of Rameses II., whom many have identified with the Pharaoh of the oppression. He shows how the taxes were enforced in the very height of Egyptian civilisation and splendour. "The scribe of the custom-house," he says, "is at the wharf to collect the tithe of the harvest. The gate-keepers with their batons, and the negroes with their palm-sticks cry: 'bring your grain!' If anyone has none, they throw the unfortunate man his whole length upon the ground. *Bound, dragged to the canal, he is thrown in headlong.* Whilst his wife is put in chains and his children are bound with cords in their presence, the neighbours abandon them and escape to see to their own ingatherings." The treatment of prisoners by the Egyptians was sometimes horrible. "In the next picture," says Osburn, "Sethos is on the borders of Egypt. He is riding in his chariot, leading four strings of captives, the fruit of the four battles he has fought in Canaan. The mutilations and tortures

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\* *Speaker's Commentary*, i. 276.

inflicted on those miserables are truly frightful, and give a Satanic character to the whole scene. Both the hands of one prisoner have been chopped off, and the mutilated stumps are bent upwards and tied over his head in a position which would dislocate both the shoulder and the elbow joints. There is not one captive who would not be utterly disabled, from the injuries inflicted upon him by the cord, or that could even survive the long continuance of the constraint. Every effort would probably be made to aggravate their tortures to the highest pitch, on an occasion so solemn as the return of the conqueror to the confines of Egypt. Their immolation before the idols of Egypt would doubtless at length terminate the hideous sufferings of these wretches, whose only crime had been the defence of their own country from a foreign invader."\*

These facts are enough to show that, in their treatment of the Hebrews, the Egyptians would be unrestrained by any sentiment either of righteousness or of humanity. In this matter also the Scripture account bears the stamp of the place and of the time. In the chapters that follow we shall see that, if this is true of the story of Egypt's sin, it is not less true of the story of Egypt's punishment, and that the Egyptian watermark is on every page of the Pentateuch.

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\* *Monumental History of Egypt*, ii. 410, 411.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE MISSION OF MOSES.

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WE are now to become spectators of the mightiest conflict in all history. On one side is arranged all the power, and wealth, and splendour of Egypt, its learning, its pride, and its confident dependence upon its gods. On the other, is a poor, weak, aged, broken, and discredited man. He has but one follower, his elder brother, Aaron. It is no formidable procession which these two make as they pass through the palace gates and ask an audience of the King; and the light-hearted, sharp-witted Egyptians must have enjoyed many a jest at their expense. But there was a heart of astonishment behind all the laughter. What generation had ever witnessed such a thing! Two slaves demanding liberty, not for themselves, but for three millions of people! Demanding it again after repeated refusal, and bearding the Pharaoh, the god-king of the mightiest people in the earth, in his palace hall, and on his very throne! The laughter dies down before the persistency of these men, and astonishment is exchanged for fear. The cheek pales and the heart trembles at the sound of their steps. These two men hold the fate of Egypt in their hands, and leave written upon that land words which shall abide when every trace of its greatness has passed away.

Before we take up the story of this conflict, let me say a few words on some of the circumstances attending the mission of Moses. I begin with two of "the difficulties of Scripture" of which the rationalism of to-day makes so much. The first is the various statements about the father-in-law of Moses. He is called in Exodus ii. 18, Reuel, or more correctly Raguel. But in chapter iii. 1, we read that "Moses kept the flock of *Jethro* his father-in-law." The same name is repeated in iv. 18: "And Moses went and returned to *Jethro* his father-in-law." Now this might have given us trouble enough even if it had stood alone; but it does not stand alone. In Num. x. 29, we read: "And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, we are journeying," &c. Here a third name is introduced. It is quite true that the phrase "Moses' father-in-law" *might* be understood as referring to Raguel the Midianite and not to Hobab. No one could say that we might not read the passage in that way. But that device would not help us much; for in Judges iv. 11, we read that Heber the Kenite was "of the children of *Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses.*"

Here, then, is a glaring difficulty, and it was only to be expected that the most would be made of it. A great German critic (Eichhorn) thought there must have been two writers of Exodus, the one of whom believed that Raguel was Moses' father-in-law and the other who was equally confident that it was *Jethro's* daughter whom Moses had married. A very minor English critic (Wilson) thought that the German had

not gone far enough. He wrote, "Three different writers gave varying accounts, and the compiler of the Pentateuch implicitly followed his original documents," because "not any single writer would throw such uncertainty about his subject." Nor were those who maintained that the Pentateuch was the work of Moses quite clear as to the explanation. It often happens so, and then our varying explanations make the difficulty still greater. The Jews had noticed the difference in the names long ago, but they held that they were only different names of the same person. Jethro, according to them, had *seven* names, so that the case might easily have been worse and yet have had a very simple explanation.

That solution, however, will hardly satisfy an English reader. He would ask for some proof, and would besides remember that, while Jethro takes his leave of Moses and returns to his own people, Hobab remains, and finally settles with the Israelites in Canaan. It is quite clear that we are dealing with persons and not with names merely. Others explained that the name was Raguel, and that "Jethro" was not a name but an official title, meaning "his excellency." This might have swept Jethro away, but Hobab still remained, and it was plain that that explanation helped as little as the other. And yet the solution was very simple. The trouble was caused not by the Bible but by its translators. The word rendered "father-in-law" is *khothen*, which seems to have been applied to *any relation by marriage*. Kalisch makes the astounding statement: "this meaning of

*Khothen* is, with certainty, not found in any passage of the Bible." That from a Rabbi, who, if he knew anything, ought to have known his Hebrew Bible, looks as if it settled the matter. But the reader will see what dependence is to be sometimes placed upon learning. In Genesis xix. 12, we read that the angels said to Lot: "Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law," &c.; and again in verse 14, "and Lot went out and spake unto his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters." The word in each case is the same that is applied to *Jethro* and *Hobab*, and here, undoubtedly, it has the meaning of "son-in-law." But, more astonishing still, it is used in Exodus iv. 25, 26, in the sense of "husband." *Zipporah* exclaims: "a bloody husband art thou to me." It is quite true that the Jews have made two words out of one by supplying them with different vowel-points; but these vowel-points were not in use till several centuries after the beginning of the Christian era, and are only a Jewish comment. The word which Moses penned was in every case the same. He wrote each time the same three characters, in the same order, and like the corresponding word in Arabic and Syriac, it means any relation by marriage. *Raguel* was Moses' *Khothen* or *Khathan*, because Moses had married his daughter. But to *Jethro* and to *Hobab* the same term equally applied because Moses had married their sister. In the same way Moses was the *Khathan* of *Zipporah* because he was her husband.

The other is more a theological than a verbal or

archæological difficulty. It is the statement repeatedly made about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. It scarcely comes within our province to deal with it; but it is hardly possible to tell the story of God's contest with Egypt and to be altogether silent about this. Moses is told by God, when he is being sent on his mission to the court of Egypt, that Pharaoh will not let the children of Israel go. He is told that even the miracles which he is to perform will not compel consent to the Divine command. And God explains the secret of this stubbornness: "*I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go*" (Exodus iv. 21).

An attempt has been made to explain this away as simply an unusual manner of expressing what we all recognise as a natural law. A man refuses to listen to the voice of conscience, and then the sense which discerns right and wrong is dulled. He sets himself against the right, and true, and good, with many a qualm and questioning; but, as he goes on, indifference takes the place of fear. He comes to do things without question or scruple which, at an earlier stage of his career, he would not have dared to do. Conscience would have filled his soul with a sickening sense of horror; but now his heart refuses to be alarmed: it has been hardened. It is the story of all crime, and of every downward way. It is a natural law, and therefore the work of God. It is God's judgment upon a life of persistent transgression.

This is undoubtedly true, but is it the whole truth regarding this matter? Did God mean nothing more

than that when He said of Pharaoh, "I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go?" We are several times told that Pharaoh hardened his heart. He entreats Moses and Aaron to remove the plague of frogs, and promises deliverance to the Israelites; "but when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them." When he was delivered from the plague of flies, it was the same. He had promised freedom to the enslaved people; "but Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go." The royal word was as lightly regarded when the mighty thunderings and the hail were stayed; for "when Pharaoh saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants." There is no scruple shown, therefore, in using ordinary phraseology. The Scripture speaks freely of Pharaoh sinning and hardening his own heart. Why, then, should not this form of speech have been adhered to throughout? Why should God have attributed the hardening in any one instance to His own direct act?

It will be quite clear that the explanation must go further if it is to satisfy. The truth is, that the difficulty is removed only when we cease making one. The Scripture has not been given to us that we might explain it away, but that we should receive it as the word of the all-wise God. There is a light here that goes to the very heart of the tragedies of judgment. Pharaoh did harden his own heart, and

as a fit reward for that God hardened his heart when the man, left to himself, would have quailed before the terrors of coming judgment. There have been men, and there have been nations, who have sinned so deeply that, if they were permitted to turn and flee just as they caught a glimpse of advancing judgment, God would be lacking in justice, and the terrible things by which He has avenged earth's wrongs would never have been done. They went so far in the way of oppression, right in the teeth of conscience and of men's remonstrances. *God* pleaded with them to refrain, to repent, and to flee from that way of death; but they would not hear. They went on. The oppression deepened. The cry of anguish went up with tenfold strength to heaven. God stood in the way again. Again He pleaded. Again He threatened. But the living God, the Judge of all the earth, was thrust aside, just because He came not in judgment but in mercy. They hardened their hearts and went on and dyed their hands still more blackly in crime. They treated men, made in the image of God, as they would not have dared to treat the brutes. And now, when God bares His arm for judgment, and the cowards would flee from their fitting reward, God says: "No: you would not turn when I implored you to flee; you persisted in sowing iniquity; you watered it with the tears and the blood of your victims: and now you shall reap the harvest." And so, to them who have hardened their hearts again and again in defiance of God, there comes a time when *God hardens their hearts*, that they may go

further still and reap the just reward of their deeds. Even in heathen times men discerned so much as that. It was a common saying: "Whom the gods would destroy, they first madden." The heart was hardened to a daring which thrust away from it every vestige of prudence. It was so when God brought judgment upon America for its long-continued and inhuman slavery. Britain has sins enough, God knows. May He be slow to mark iniquity! But in that matter God had pity upon us, and our heart trembled for what we had done in permitting that vile oppression in our Colonies. We declared there should be an end of it. We said: "We shall pay any amount, we shall submit to any sacrifice, but in this terrible wrong against God and man we shall continue not one moment longer." We made an end of it. But America continued it amid growing light for another sixty years. It continued it in the face of the protests of Christendom—in spite of its own loudly-proclaimed doctrines of human liberty and equality. And then God hardened the hearts of the men of the south. Prudence and fear were flung away. In the same spirit of proud defiance of right and of scornful and abusive mastery, they turned upon the men of the north; and then their doom came, and the men of blood had blood to drink. Sin had met its punishment, and another page was written in that awful book which shows how "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold back the truth in unrighteousness."

God had waited long before He led the Egyptians to their doom. The oppression had begun before the birth of Moses. It had gone on through the forty years he had lived in the land. It had gone on through the forty years of his exile. It was going on now more determinedly than ever. And at length God said: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart . . . and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord" (Exodus vii. 3-5). But we have to deal more especially with the circumstances of Moses' Mission. When he fled from Egypt he found an asylum in the land of Midian, or Madian. Is anything known of such a place, and is there any proof in the mention of this place that we have here not a tissue of dreams, but a narrative of facts?

Commentators have suffered sadly through living at a distance from the scenes referred to in the Pentateuch. This mention of "the land of Midian" has been fruitful of difficulty. It was natural to think of the country of the Midianites, who are so well known to us in their subsequent relations to the Israelites. But it was impossible to believe that Moses would have led his brother-in-law's flocks from the east or the south-east of the Dead Sea all the way to the wilderness of Sinai to find summer pasturage. The entire difficulty was due, however, to the ignorance of expositors. There was another land of Midian, equally well known, probably, indeed, better known to the Israelites of the time of Moses. The

Red Sea divides at its northern extremity into two deep gulfs, the gulf of Suez running along the west side of the Peninsula of Sinai, and the gulf of Akaba, or, as it was anciently called, the Ælinitic gulf, running along the east side of the Peninsula. On the east shore of the latter gulf, about half way down, or five days' journey from the head of the gulf, lie the ruins of a city called Madyan (which answers exactly to the Hebrew name). Tradition has all along pointed to this as the place of Moses' long sojourn. The place lies on the route of the Moslem pilgrims on their journey from Egypt to Mecca; and Abulfeda says that this was the capital of the tribe of Midian, and that their descendants were received by Mohammed with this cry: "Welcome to the brothers-in-law of Moses! Welcome to the race of Shoeib (*i.e.* Jethro)!"

Mohammed's salutation must have been founded on an old and well-known belief that Madyan was the place where Moses dwelt. The Egyptians were masters of the Peninsula of Sinai, where they carried on extensive mining operations. Within its area, therefore, Moses would not have been safe from pursuit and capture. He accordingly pressed on till he reached its eastern border. Whither should he flee now? To go right on would have taken him along a well-travelled route and into countries with which Egypt was in constant communication. There would have been no escape for Moses had he gone to the Midian with which we are so much better acquainted. The emissaries of the Egyptian king were

no doubt already there busily making inquiries and stirring up the authorities to use the utmost diligence in discovering and arresting the fugitive. No: Moses must leave the beaten track; and so he turned to the right and plunged into the wilds of Arabia. He had already gone five days' journey southward when he intervened on behalf of the priest's daughters. He was merely resting; he had "sat down by a well," which proved to be the well used for watering the flocks. He no doubt intended to plunge still deeper into this unknown territory; but God had prepared a refuge and a home for His servant. The service rendered by the stranger touched the old man's heart, and he said unto his daughters, "And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him that he may eat bread. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter" (Exodus ii. 20, 21).

There is another topographical question which springs out of this part of the sacred narrative. We are told that Moses had set out on a special errand when God met him. "He led his flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb" (Exodus iii. 1). The "back" of the desert is really the west of the desert. Just as we always make the top of a map the north and the bottom the south, the right hand the west and the left hand the east, the Hebrews always in their reckoning turned, as it were, their face to the east, the place of the dawn, where brightness rose and whence it spread over the whole earth. That direc-

tion was thus fixed by what we may call the mightiest fact in nature, the oft repeated miracle of the day. And that being fixed, all the other directions were named accordingly. The back was the west, the right hand was the north, and the left hand the south.

But the question which arises is this? Was there vegetation in the desert sufficient to induce a shepherd to bring flocks from the eastern shore of the gulf of Akaba? Was the wilderness of Sinai not a place to lead flocks away from (supposing they had happened in some strange way to get there) rather than to lead flocks to? This is really part of a larger question which we shall deal with by and by, but meanwhile I may say that there is evidence that the desolation of Sinai was by no means so utter in ancient times as it is now. There are even now in its desolation valleys, up amid the stony mountains, which are veritable oases, and to these the shepherds from surrounding districts still lead their flocks on the approach of summer. These form, as Dean Stanley has said, "a union of vegetation with the fantastic scenery of the desolate mountains," which "presents a combination as beautiful as it is extraordinary." Ruppell describes one such scene in the following words: "We advanced from that point along an extremely beautiful valley. The luxuriant vegetation, nourished as it was by the water of the brook, covered the ground with a thick carpet; groups of trees of considerable size, alternately with low bushes, cast a pleasant shade on this romantic spot, whose charms are the more distinctly brought out by

the contrast of the naked, steep masses of rock. . . Despite the charm of the spot, increased as it was by solitude, not a trace of human life was to be seen."

Similar grateful references to such spots abound in *The Desert of the Exodus*, by E. H. Palmer, who has recorded the story of the Ordnance Survey of Sinai. "This region," he says of one district, "is the dreariest of all. . . . Even here one sometimes finds a narrow gorge or picturesque valley, a cool stream rippling along its bed, and caper plants festooning gracefully over its white and dazzling walls." And again, "Although the general aspect of the country is one of sheer desolation and barrenness, it must not be supposed that there is no fertility to be found there. There are no rivers, yet many a pleasant little rivulet, fringed with verdure, may be met with here and there, especially in the romantic glens of the granite district. At Wadies Nasb and Gharandel are perennial, though not continuous, streams and large tracts of vegetation. At that part of Wady Feiran where the valley contracts in breadth and concentrates the moisture, we find the most considerable oasis in the Peninsula."

In the course of his book we meet from time to time passages like the following: "The nature of our work took us into many an unfrequented nook, and we often lighted on little pieces of mountain landscape of which the ordinary traveller knows nothing. Perhaps the most picturesque and beautiful of these is the Wady T'lah . . . a fertile and well-watered glen, which one would little expect to

find in the midst of such utter desolation." Speaking of a pass in the neighbourhood of Mount Serbal, he says: "This gorge was declared by the Arabs to be impassable, and we were therefore compelled on the following morning to seek an entrance into the valley by a pass leading over one of the lower mountains, which form, as it were, the outposts of the group. From this we descended into a lovely glen, between precipitous cliffs, and paved with smooth, white granite; along this there flowed a murmuring stream, which ever and anon, as it trickled over some larger rocks, formed itself into a deep pool or tiny waterfall, overshadowed by fantastic rocks and graced with ferns and desert herbage of the richest green. It is these sudden glimpses of scenery, these unexpected transitions from monotonous sterility to grand landscape and exuberant vegetation, which impart so great a charm to desert travel." When I add that this mountain plateau is *on the west of the Peninsula*, and was therefore to Moses at Madyan on the gulf of Akaba, literally *the back of the desert*, I have said enough to show here again that the Scripture has mirrored with astonishing clearness the place and the time.

With a reference to another remarkable confirmation I close the present chapter. Customs live in the east with a pertinacity which is a phenomenon in human history. The reverence with which throughout life a son regards his father when living, and reveres his memory when dead, may possibly account for the manner in which these customs are perpetuated.

But, be that as it may, travellers have been struck by the circumstance that, among the Arabs of Sinai, the care of the flocks is regarded as beneath the dignity of the men of the tribe. It is left to the women or to slaves. That seems to explain why, though Raguel had sons, not one of them was with the priest's daughters when they were vainly attempting to water their flocks. It also explains the easy victory of Moses when he intervened on their behalf. The shepherds whom he drove away were slaves, who trembled at the indignant glance of a freeman's eye. But what, then, the reader may ask, of the after employment of Moses himself? Was the care of the flocks of his brothers-in-law a degradation to him? The question is a natural one. And it may be answered in more than one way. The departure for Sinai was not a case of ordinary shepherding. It was an important expedition which could not be entrusted to slaves, who might have gone into the desert and never have returned. But the incident may also show the brokenness of this man's spirit. God was going to do great things by him, and therefore he first humbled him. We read, in the midst of the story of his after greatness, of his meekness. There was none more meek than he. Where did he learn it? Certainly not in Egypt and not at the court of the Egyptian king. That stroke under which the Egyptian fell lifeless on the sand was not a meek man's act. No: that meekness of spirit was learned in his exile, when all his greatness and his dreams lay buried in what seemed an irre-

vocable past. It seems for a time as if God Himself could not revive in his heart the hope of service which once flamed so high in early days. Moses felt himself a broken reed. Jacob grew rich in the land of his exile; but Moses comes from his with one poor beast of burden to carry his wife and children. The broken heart was content with what was little better than a slave's vocation, and repined not that he had no higher than a slave's reward.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE SCENE OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN MOSES AND PHARAOH.

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THERE is no knowledge or ability acquired in our past experience, that may not at some time or other yield fruit for God's service. The acquaintance which Moses had gained in the first forty years of his life with the ways and the customs of the Egyptian court, must have stood him in good stead when he had to present himself there as God's ambassador. The Pharaoh was the most truly regal of all who have ever reigned; and a rude approach, or an infringement of the intricate, but sacred, court ceremonies, would have been treated as a crime. Had Moses gone about his appointed work in

ignorance, it might have ended in a sudden early martyrdom, and his mission would have closed before it had well begun.

Let us try to get some notion, more or less clear, of the place which was the scene of the wondrous contest. The great cities of Egypt, and even the capital cities, were by no means few. There was Thebes in Upper Egypt, and Memphis, as well as other cities favoured by various kings, in Lower Egypt. It is to the latter district, the region of the Delta, that we have now to look. Have we any clue which will help us to identify the capital of this time?

The answer to this question brings before us some further illustrations of the marvellous accuracy of the Word of God. In the seventy-eighth Psalm we find two references to the place where God wrought His wonders before Pharaoh and the Princes of Egypt. "Marvellous things did He in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan;" and again, "How He had wrought His signs in Egypt, and His wonders in the field of Zoan" (verses 12 and 43). Zoan is the correct form of the name of the ancient city which we now speak of as Tanis, and Egyptologists have been struck by this expression, repeated by the Psalmist, "the field of Zoan." *It is an exact reproduction of the ancient Egyptian name for the district.* "According to the Geographical Inscriptions," says Brugsch, "the Egyptians gave to this plain, of which Tanis was the centre, the name of *Sokhot Zoán*, 'the plain of Zoán,' the origin of which name is traced back as

far as the age of Rameses II. The author of the seventy-eighth Psalm makes use in two verses, of *precisely the same phrase* in reminding the Hebrews of his time of the miracles which God wrought before their ancestors 'the children of Israel in Egypt, in the plain of Zoan.'" He also speaks of it as a "remarkable agreement," and indicates that it is, nevertheless, in thorough keeping with other Scripture references, which show the most exact knowledge "concerning all that related to Tanis." \* There are some who talk glibly to-day about "the mistakes of Scripture;" but, strange to say, these are not the men who dig up the monuments of ancient cities and of past civilizations, and who put the statements of Scripture to the most thorough-going of all possible tests. No: these last can only speak of its marvellous exactitude; and, while the claims of the Bible are being denied in the Theological College, the religious press, and the Christian pulpit, they are being proved in the trench of the excavator and in the study of the archæologist. As of old, so now, God will make the folly of those who withstand Him known unto all men.

There is more, however, in the Scripture references to Zoan than a correct designation of the district. There is the fullest information regarding the remote origin of the city. In Numbers xiii. 22, the sacred writer has to refer to the Canaanitish city of Hebron. But the mention of that city recalls another with which the Israelites had had much to do, and so the

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\* *Egypt under the Pharaohs* (John Murray), vol. ii., 352.

two are linked together in the following notice: "Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt." What was the connecting link between them? It can hardly be the single link of time. There must have been many cities in Egypt and elsewhere, which were built seven or fewer or more years before or after Hebron. It is quite evident that there was some other relationship between the towns *and one which was so well known to Moses and to those for whom he more immediately wrote, that it did not require to be mentioned.*

There seems to me to be no escape from this conclusion. Well, *was* there any such connection? Mr. Reginald Stuart Poole, in his article on Zoan in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, has pointed out that this notice connecting the two cities throws light upon a dark place in Egyptian history. Zoan bore in earlier times another name. It was called *Ha-awar*, and was the celebrated Avaris, the great stronghold of the Shepherd dynasty (the Hyksos), in which they had a garrison of two hundred and forty thousand men, and large stores of provisions. The name is Semitic, and the Shepherds were evidently Semites. They came, as we know from other sources, from the east. Here, then, we have an indication of the progress of these ancient masters of Palestine and of Egypt. They are in possession of the south of Palestine, and build there the city of Hebron. Seven years afterwards they are in Egypt and build the city of Zoan. It is the only light we have as yet upon this story. The conquerors of the Shepherds, Apepi,

and his successors who knew not Joseph, overthrew their monuments and tried to sweep away every trace of their hated domination. The attempt was so successful, that the learned men of Egypt in after times were in ignorance as to who the Shepherds were, whence they came, or what they did. That part of Egyptian history was, and is, almost a perfect blank. Manetho, an Egyptian priest, who wrote a history of his country for Greek readers, did not know, for instance, the fact that Zoan was the great Shepherd city. "We see at a glance," says Mr. Poole, "that Manetho did not know that Avaris was Tanis." How, then, did the writer of *Numbers* know that fact? Manetho lived about 300 B.C.; for his history was written 268 B.C., and we may be sure he wrote in his maturity, if not in his old age. The new rationalism tells us that the book of *Numbers* was written about a century earlier by a Babylonian, or Palestinian, Jew. Could that Jew have been acquainted with a fact which Manetho, after searching the records of the Egyptian Temples, was ignorant of? The truth is that we have here again the unquestionable stamp of the time. *Numbers* was written by a man who possessed knowledge that had perished long centuries before 400 B.C. It was also written for readers who not only knew that Zoan was Avaris, but who were also acquainted with the fact that the builders of that city were the builders of Hebron, and that both cities were monuments of the supremacy, and marks of the progressive conquests, of the Hyksos, the ancient masters of Egypt. Say that

*Numbers* was written by Moses for a people who had just left Egypt, and who were filled with grateful recollections of the kindness which their fathers had received from that very people, and everything is plain. Deny that, and you will not only leave these facts unexplained; you also go right in the face of their plain testimony.

But the Scripture shows that it knew Zoan's future quite as well as it knew its past. In a remarkable series of predictions in Ezekiel xxx. regarding Egypt, one rapid glance is cast at Tanis. The Lord exclaims, "I will set fire in Zoan" (Ezek. xxx. 14). It might be imagined that this was a passing visitation. But the context, in which we read such words as these, "Thus saith the Lord God: I will also destroy the idols, and I will also cause their images to cease out of Noph (Memphis); and there shall be no more a Prince of the land of Egypt," leads us to think of a judgment the effects of which will abide. Nebuchadnezzar is to inflict the death-blow of the once majestic city. Sir Gardiner Wilkinson says: "The plain of San is very extensive, but thinly inhabited; no village exists in the immediate vicinity of the ancient Tanis; and, when looking from the mounds of this once splendid city towards the distant palms of indistinct villages, we perceive the desolation spread around it. The field of Zoan is now a barren waste: a canal passes through it without being able to fertilize the soil; 'fire' has been set in 'Zoan;' and one of the principal capitals, or royal abodes of the Pharaohs, is now the habitation

of fishermen, the resort of wild beasts, and infested with reptiles and malignant fevers."

Zoan is indeed a desolation. "A sandy plain," says Brugsch, "as vast as it is dreary, called at this day San, in remembrance of the ancient name of Zoan, and covered with gigantic ruins of columns, pillars, sphinxes, stelae, and stones of buildings—all those fragments being cut in the hardest material from the granite of Syene—shows you the position of that city of Tanis, to which the Egyptian texts and the classic authors are agreed in giving the epithet of 'a great and splendid city of Egypt.'"\*

If it was "a great and splendid city" in the time when Egypt had passed the zenith of its glory, what must it have been in the day of Egypt's splendour? We have a most interesting letter from an Egyptian writer named Panbesa, who visited Zoan about a century after Moses passed through its magnificent Temples and avenues of sphinxes and of statuary, to the palace of the king. He says that "nothing can compare with it on the Theban land and soil. Here is the seat of the court. It is pleasant to live in. Its fields are full of good things, and life passes in constant plenty and abundance. Its canals are rich in fish, its lakes swarm with birds, its meadows are green with vegetables, there is no end of the lentils; melons with a taste like honey grow in the irrigated fields. Its barns are full of wheat and durra, and reach as high as heaven. Onions and sesame are in the enclosures, and the apple-tree blooms. The

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\* *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, ii., 352.

vine, the almond tree, and the fig tree grow in the gardens. Sweet is their wine for the inhabitants of Kemi. They mix it with honey. The red fish is in the lotus-canal, the Borian-fish in the ponds, many kinds of Bori-fish, besides carp and pike, in the canal of Pu-horotha; fat fish and Khitpi-pennu fish are in the pools of the inundation, the Hauaz-fish in the full mouth of the Nile, near the 'city of the Conqueror' (Tanis). The city-canal Pshenhor produces salt, the lake region of Pahir Natron. Their sea-ships enter the harbour, plenty and abundance is perpetual in it. He rejoices who has settled there. My information is no jest. The common people as well as the higher classes say, 'Come hither! let us celebrate to him his heavenly and his earthly feasts.' The inhabitants of the reedy lake arrive with lilies, those of Pshensor with papyrus flowers. Fruits from the nurseries, flowers from the gardens, birds from the ponds, are dedicated to him."

He describes the city as keeping perpetual holiday in honour of the victories of Rameses II. "The youths of the 'Conqueror's City' were perpetually clad in festive attire. Fine oil was on their heads of fresh curled hair. They stood at their doors, their hands laden with branches and flowers from Pahathor, and with garlands from Pahir, on the day of the entry of king Ramessu-Miamun (Rameses II.), the god of war Monthu upon earth." He also dwells lovingly upon the wine of the "Conqueror's City," upon their cider and the sherbets that "were like almonds mixed with honey." "There was beer," he

tells us, "from Galilee in the harbour, wine in the gardens, fine oil at the lake Sagabi, garlands in the apple-orchards. The sweet song of women resounded to the tunes of Memphis. So they sat there with joyful heart, or walked about without ceasing. King Ramessu-Miamun was the god they celebrated."

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE EGYPTIAN KING AND COURT.

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A PICTURE, which has been found at Tel el Amarna, shows us one of the sights which awoke from time to time the enthusiasm of Tanis. It is a procession of the court, and it is interesting to us now as showing the state kept by the Egyptian monarchs of the time. "The procession," says Erman, "moves out of the courts of the royal palace surrounded by the greatest pomp and splendour. Two runners with staves hasten first to clear the way through the inquisitive crowd for the king's chariot. Following close behind them comes His Majesty drawn by fiery richly caparisoned horses, with which the servants can scarcely keep pace. On either side is the body-guard on foot, running; Egyptian soldiers and Asiatic mercenaries armed with all kinds of weapons; their badges are borne before them, and behind them the officers follow driving. After the king's chariot come those of his

consort and of his daughters, two of the young princesses drive together; the elder holds the reins, while the younger leans tenderly on her sister. Behind them come six carriages with the court ladies, and, on either side, six more with the lords of the bed-chamber. Runners and servants hasten along on both sides swinging their staves."

"A more splendid spectacle," he continues, "can scarcely be imagined than this procession as it passed quickly by the spectators; the gilded chariot, the many-coloured plumes of the horses, the splendid harness, the coloured fans, the white flowing garments, all lighted up by the glowing sun of Egypt."\*

Such was the city through which Moses passed, and the court to which he made his way. I have already spoken of the king, Thotmes II., into whose presence he was to carry his message. It will be remembered that we were guided, quite independently of all external testimony, and solely by the Scripture chronology, to fix upon him as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. It is assuring to find that this result is confirmed by two distinct, and apparently independent, testimonies. Eusebius, a Christian historian of the fourth century, A.D., says that Thotmes II., or Achencheres, was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The other witness is Manetho, the Egyptian priest to whom I have just referred, who wrote some three hundred years before the beginning of our era. I have already shown that he confounded the driving

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\* *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 64.

out of the Shepherd kings with the going out of the Israelites. The monuments have corrected his mistake, but *the Bible alone explains it*. He found indications in the history of his country of a long-continued antagonism between his people and foreigners. These foreigners also were Shepherds like the race which had protected them. What so natural, then, as that Manetho should conclude that



NAME OF THOTMES II.      NAME OF HIS QUEEN NITOCRIS.

these were one and the same people? To this conclusion there is no doubt whatever that he did come. He says that the struggle was ended by Thotmes III., who, in the beginning of his reign, drove the last of them from the country. This means that the last reign in which the conflict existed *was that of his predecessor, Thotmes II.*

We know a great deal of Thotmes III., but very little of his father, Thotmes II. There is one

glimpse, however, strangely in keeping with the part which he plays in the history of God's people. On the granite rocks of Syene an inscription is extant, which records a small success which he had in the first year of his reign. It was gained in a contest with, says Osburn, "the Shepherds or Lower Egyptians in the Delta. The prisoners captured in this affair were brought by the young king to Syene, where they joined the gangs of black prisoners in quarrying blocks of granite for the decoration of the temples of Amun at Thebes."\*

One cannot help asking who were these "Shepherds or Lower Egyptians in the Delta?" Were they dwellers in the land of Goshen? Had any of the oppressed Israelites dared to resent the deepening injustice of their oppressors, and had they to be subdued by the prince whom God would yet judge for his own sins in that matter, as well as for the sins of his fathers? To these questions there is at present no answer, and we dare not build up the wood, hay and stubble of mere conjecture where only solid and enduring fact should find a place. There is one inference, however, which has a perfectly good foundation. Thotmes II. began his reign by the oppression of a people who, if they were not Israelites, were closely allied to them. Their proud hearts are brought low with labour hard and incessant. They are put to work in the convict gangs under the lash of the taskmaster. It was a fearful pathway to enter upon in the bounding joy of

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\* *Monumental History of Egypt*, vol. ii., 186.

his young strength and of his newly-gotten mastery, to break the hope of the afflicted, and to grind the faces of the poor. The God of all flesh marked the bitter tears and heard the sighing and the groaning of his children.

Remains are still met with which prove his activity as a builder. Several of the halls of the temple of Medinet Abou were erected by Thotmes II. in conjunction with his father. Their names can still be read upon the cornices and the walls. Other buildings at El Asasif and at Karnak show a ceaseless activity in the service of the gods of Egypt. "The remains of constructions in red granite, bearing the name of Achencheres Thothmosis (Thotmes II.), and of the same exquisite style of execution, have been found at Esneh, to the south of Thebes in Upper Egypt, and at Semneh in Nubia. They are the remains of temples dedicated to the gods of these localities."\*

Thotmes was made king in his father's lifetime, and shared the throne with him for some time. His reign as sole monarch was not long, as he seems to have died while still comparatively young. But it is not enough to get a glimpse of the man. If we are to understand the nature of the task committed to Moses, something more than that is required. His prospects of success will largely depend upon the notions with which the prince is imbued. What, then, was the state affected by the Egyptian monarch? Was it such as to invite approach, or to make it likely that the sovereign would attend with

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\* *Ibid.*, 191.

eagerness to any request urged in favour of a people whom his fathers and himself had reduced to slavery? There was much in the *theory* of the Egyptian monarchy and in the evident intentions of the regulations to which it was subjected, that showed the wisdom of that ancient people and that might have encouraged hope. "On ascending the throne," says Wilkinson, "the sovereign learnt all that related to the gods, the service of the temple, the laws of the country, and the duties of a king: and in order to prevent any intercourse with improper persons, who might instil into his mind ideas unworthy of a prince, it was carefully provided that no slave or hired servant should hold any office about his person, and that the children of the first families, who had arrived at man's estate, and were remarkable for their ability and piety, should alone be permitted to attend him; from the persuasion that no monarch gives way to idle passions, unless he finds those about him ready to serve as instruments to his caprices, and to encourage his excesses. His conduct and mode of life were regulated by prescribed rules, and care was taken to protect the community from the caprices of an absolute monarch: laws being laid down in the sacred books, for the order and nature of his occupations. He was forbidden to commit excesses; even the kind and the quality of his food were settled with precision; and he was constantly reminded of his duties, both in public and in private. At break of day public business commenced; all the epistolary correspondence was

examined and despatched; the ablutions for prayer were then performed, and the monarch, having put on his robe of ceremony, and attended by proper officers with the insignia of royalty, repaired to the temple to superintend the customary sacrifices to the gods of the sanctuary.”\*

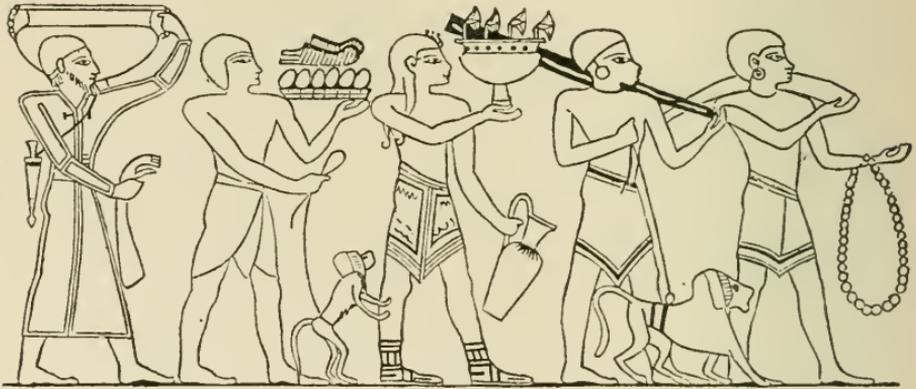
The care thus manifested in securing a proper discharge of the royal functions will help us to understand the narrative of Exodus, and compel us once more to mark in it the stamp of the place and the time. For one thing we have to note his accessibility. Moses and Aaron and the elders of Israel have apparently no difficulty in seeing the king himself, and in stating their case fully before him. There is no exception made in their favour. It is, on the face of it, merely what was customary: it was part of the routine of royal procedure to give audiences of the kind and to listen to complaints and requests such as theirs. Now, such an idea as that could hardly have originated in Baby-



QUEEN NITOCRIS, THE WIDOW OF THOTMES II., PRESENTING OFFERINGS TO THE GODS IN MAN'S GARB AND WITH FALSE BEARD.

\* Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians* (popular edition), i. 312, 313.

lon. "The Jew of the exile," upon whom the critics would thrust the honour of the authorship of the Pentateuch, was brought up amid quite a different kind of civilization, and had instilled into him a totally distinct conception of kingship. The Babylonian monarch did not concern himself so directly with the affairs of his kingdom. There were great officers of state among whom the various departments of



Arab.

Ethiopian.

Copt.

Negro.

Nubian.

REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS NATIONALITIES BRINGING TRIBUTE TO THOTMES III.

the government were allotted. Under them was a highly organized band of officials by whom the entire business of the government was transacted. The great officers, says Lenormant, "formed a sort of cabinet, to direct the affairs of the empire under the supreme authority of the king, who was frequently immersed in the pleasures of his harem and indifferent to business." Appeal is indeed made to the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs, but it is *by petition*; and the petition takes the form of a request that the king

may give his orders in the matter to his minister. One petition runs thus: "May my lord, the king, give orders to the minister of state and to the controller of the palace to give the gold," &c. Petitions are also made in the most humble and fawning style to the ministers, and not to the king at all. One opens as follows: "To my lord, the controller of the palace, his humble slave, Sarah. May Bilit of Telit and Belit of Babylon, Nebo, Tashmit, Ishtar of Nineveh, and Ishtar of Arbela, look favourably on him for many days; may happiness and worldly prosperity be the portion of my lord."

It will be felt that here there is an entirely different civilization. The two monarchies are diverse in their very idea. In Babylon the administration is carried on by officials, and the king is hidden behind them. In Egypt the king has the aid of ministers, but he is the head and the centre of the administration. The ministers were only the advisers of the king. It is noted as an extraordinary circumstance that complete control was given to Joseph. Ordinarily, the king's personality was felt everywhere. "Besides their right," says Wilkinson, "of enacting laws and of superintending all affairs of religion and the state, the kings administered justice to their subjects on those questions which came under their immediate cognisance, *and they were assisted* in the management of state affairs by the advice of the most able and distinguished members of the priestly order."\*

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\* *Ibid.*, ii., 202.

of these facts to affirm that the critical theories so much in favour to-day are in accord with them? Can we explain how the representation given in Exodus of the Egyptian court could reflect so accurately the state of things in ancient Egypt, and should show no tinge whatever of Babylonian customs? It is a critical canon that no man can escape from his "environment." That canon is their sheet-anchor. All their reasoning is based on that law of human nature. They find here and there a supposed reflection of an incident, or of a state of things, which enables them to fix the age of a book, or of a section of a book. I do not deny the validity of the assumption. I believe that it is, what I have called it, a law of human nature. But I ask them to apply their canon here. There is no trace here of a Babylonian environment. Consequently, the writer of Exodus *was not a Babylonian Jew*. There is, on the other hand, the clearest indication of an ancient Egyptian environment. Should not the critical deduction from that be that the writer was one who had been brought up in the midst of that civilization, and that he belonged to the age of Moses?

The impress of the time of Moses is also visible in another part of the story. It will be noted that an extraordinary deference is paid to Pharaoh by all around him. He is accessible; and yet there is a divinity that doth edge about the king. His ministers and he occupy two different platforms. He sits apart and alone. When he has spoken the matter is judged. It is only in the utmost extremity

that his ministers dare to remonstrate and say, "knowest thou not that Egypt is destroyed already!" Then, too, this man is God's sole antagonist. It is to him alone God's demand is addressed, and on him only the responsibility of refusal and of long continued injustice is laid. Is there anything in Egyptian ideas of monarchy to explain this? When we return from the reflection of the Egyptian king caught upon the page of Scripture, and look upon the monarch himself as he is now disclosed by scientific research, do reality and reflection agree?

The reply is that, in the estimation of the Egyptians, there was an infinite distance between the king and even the noblest and ablest of his subjects. Diodorus Siculus says: "The Egyptians respect and adore their kings as the equals of the gods," and adds the explanation that sovereign authority and power seemed to them "a manifestation of the deity." Whatever may be said of the explanation, the fact itself is unquestionable. "From the time of the very oldest dynasties," says Lenormant, "we find that such an unbounded respect for royalty existed, that it was transformed into religious worship, and Pharaoh became the visible god of his subjects. The Egyptian monarchs were more than sovereign pontiffs; they were real deities. The sacerdotal class depended absolutely upon them. The epithet 'Son of the Sun-God' is, as a matter of course, attached to the name of each Pharaoh. They also styled themselves, 'the great God, the good God;' they identified themselves with the great deity Horus;

for, as one inscription says, 'the king is the image of Ra (the Sun-God) among the living.' A prince in mounting the throne was, so to speak, transfigured in the eyes of his subjects. During his lifetime he attained a complete apotheosis. And this is why he assumed a symbolical and mysterious name at the time of his coronation. . . . Pharaoh was equally man and god; he, in the opinions of the Egyptians, so completely united the two natures, that he himself addressed worship to himself. Several monuments represents the prince making, in his own name, offerings to his own image."

"We may imagine," continues Lenormant, "what prestige such an exaltation of royalty gave in Egypt to the sovereign power. That power, so great even among the neighbouring Asiatic nations, became in this country a real idolatry. The Egyptians, in the eyes of the king, were but trembling slaves, compelled even from religious motives, to execute his orders blindly; the highest and most powerful functionaries were only the humble servants of Pharaoh. His most trifling favours are mentioned in their epitaphs as their most brilliant titles of glory." \*

Here is an address by a courtier to Menephtah, whom many believe to have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus: "Listen to me, O Sun, who risest to illumine the earth with thy goodness, the solar orb of mankind, chasing darkness from Egypt. Thou art, as it were, the image of thy father the Sun who

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\* *Ancient History of the East*, i. 294, 295.

riseth in the heavens. Thy rays penetrate to (the depths of the) caverns. There is no spot where thy goodness (is not felt). Thy words are the law of the whole earth. When thou restest in thy palace thou hearest the voice of the whole earth. Thou hast millions of ears. Thine eye is brighter than the stars of the firmament ; it is able to gaze upon the disc of the sun. If the mouth speaks a word in the cavern, it mounts up to thine ears. Everything that is done in secret thine eyes see, O Baenra Meriamen, Lord, Merciful One, who givest breath ! ”

The ascription of divinity to the monarch was, therefore, no harmless political fiction or make-believe. It was a conviction and a faith. It was shared in, no doubt, by the monarch himself. Thotmes II., like the rest, claimed to be divine. An inscription of his, deciphered in our own day, reads thus : “ The good God, the lord of the two Egypts, Aa-chru-n-ra, the beloved of Amun, everliving, hath dedicated this work to his father, Thothmosis Mesphres (Thotmes I.), whose words are justified.” Here again we have an explanation of a striking feature in the Scripture history. We now understand how Pharaoh stands forth as the one man in all Egypt with whom their Deliverer has a controversy. Such words as these take new significance when they are set in the light of these facts : “ That thou (Pharaoh) mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God ; ” “ And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there ; to the end thou

mayest know that I (emphatic *I*, not thou, I and not thy gods) am the Lord in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and thy people" (Exodus viii. 10, 22, 23). God and His people are on one side, Pharaoh and his people are on the other side. It is a contest of the true and living God, with a pretender. God has to break the idol to pieces and to lay the idolatry low, as well as to deliver His people. I repeat that these facts about the Egyptian king help us to understand the Bible. But how could they help us so to understand it unless the book was written by one who knew the facts? There is here one more incontrovertible proof that Exodus was never written by a Babylonian Jew about 400 B.C. It bears the stamp of the ancient Egypt which God judged.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE MAGICIANS OF EGYPT.

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**I** PURPOSE speaking now of those whom Pharaoh summoned to assist him in his conflict with the ambassador of the God of Israel. But there is one thing that may well detain us for a moment or two. Confirmations of Scripture history frequently present themselves in small matters, where it is impossible even for the most sceptical to suspect design. We have an instance of this in the

frequent mention that is made of the staff of Moses. He has it in his hand when he says: "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." He carries it with him, as a matter of course, apparently, when he passes with Aaron into the royal palace. He takes it with him into the very presence-chamber. It serves him at the Red Sea; it is his companion in all the desert wandering. There was a special reason, it is true, for Moses bearing the staff into the presence of Pharaoh, and retaining it afterwards. But this would not explain his having it in the wilderness of Sinai when God appeared to him. It could not have been a shepherd's staff, for we can hardly conceive of him carrying *that* with him always and everywhere, when the occupation which might have made it necessary was altogether abandoned. Judging from the narrative, it seems to have been a customary thing to carry a staff, and its presence was taken as a matter of course even in the king's audience chamber.

When we ask whether there *was* such a custom, the answer comes back with startling distinctness. The use of a walking stick was a marked characteristic of the ancient Egyptians. Priests and noblemen are frequently represented on the monuments holding in their hands a long staff. "When walking from home," says Wilkinson, "Egyptian gentlemen frequently carried sticks, varying from three or four to about six feet in length, occasionally surmounted with a knob imitating a flower, or with the more usual peg projecting from one side, some of which

have been found at Thebes. Many were of cherry-wood, only three feet three inches long: and these I have seen with the lotus head were generally about the same length. Others appear to have been much longer; the sculptures represent them at least six feet; and one brought to England by Mr. Madox was about five feet in length. Some were ornamented with colour and gilding.

“On entering a house they left their stick in the hall, or at the door, and poor men were sometimes employed to hold the sticks of the guests who had come to a party on foot, being rewarded by the master of the house for their trouble, with a trifling compensation in money, with their dinner, or a piece of meat to carry to their family. The name of each person was frequently written on his stick, in hieroglyphics, for which reason a hard wood was preferred, as the acacia, which seems to have been more generally used than any other; and on one found at Athribis, the owner had written—‘O my stick! The support of my legs!’ &c.”\*

Moses did not enter the palace gate as a guest, and therefore was not relieved of his as he passed in to speak with Pharaoh. The reader will also notice the part that is played by “the Magicians of Egypt.” When the rod of Moses is suddenly cast before the king and transformed into a serpent, he calls at once for “the wise men and the sorcerers.” They stand by him as long as they can throughout the contest. They are Pharaoh’s support, and when they fail he

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\* *Ancient Egyptians*, ii. 347, 348.

has no other. Now here again the mirror "is held up to nature." This is the very Egypt of the time, and every name and incident reveals the truth and sharpness of the reflection. The mirror is perfect, and it is placed before the very things with which the writer of Exodus is said to deal. We have here, for example, the most faithful representation of the ancient Egyptian religion. The Egyptian priesthood was in reality a corporation endowed with magical powers which were exercised on behalf both of the living and of the dead. No definition of the priests of ancient Egypt could be truer than that. The knowledge into which they were initiated gave them power with the gods. The mere utterance of the god's name—the knowledge of which is confined to the priesthood, and probably to an inner circle of the priesthood—the mere utterance of the name of the god *compelled* him to obey the will of the priest who uttered it. The great source of our knowledge regarding the religious beliefs of the Egyptians is *The Funeral Ritual*, many copies of which have been found entombed with the mummies. "The whole series of pilgrimages which the soul, separated from the body," says Lenormant, in his *Ancient History of the East*, "was believed to accomplish in the various divisions of the lower regions, are related in this book; it also contains the hymns, prayers, and formulæ for all ceremonies relative to funerals and to the worship of the dead."

The book contains many chapters detailing the perils and the conflicts of the soul on its way to the

final justification or punishment to be rewarded at the judgment-seat. But the end and aim of the book is to provide assistance for the departed by means of spells and conjurations. "Some of the most important chapters of the *Ritual of the Dead* (the Funeral Ritual), when written upon certain objects placed on the mummy, converted them into talismans which protected the deceased with a sovereign efficacy during the perils which awaited him in the other world. . . . Others were destined to the consecration of certain symbols made of certain substances prescribed in the liturgies, and suspended round the neck of the mummy. . . . Lastly, many chapters of the *Ritual* are in themselves regular magical exorcisms for repulsing the monstrous beings . . . who strove to ruin and devour the soul of the deceased."\*

The vital warmth, the preservation of which was thought to be essential for the resurrection of the body, was protected by magic. Magic was also employed to protect the mummy from being bitten by serpents, devoured by wild beasts, or inhabited by a wicked spirit. But the uses of magic were not confined to the protection of the bodies and of the spirits of the dead. The same enemies assaulted the living, and these had to be repelled by the same means. Magical incantations and charms were the daily support of the Egyptian. From the cradle to the grave, as well as beyond it in the realms of the dead, the Egyptian was carried, so to say, in the

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\* Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, 91.

magician's arms and shielded by the words which he alone could speak or teach. Incantations have come down to us which were relied upon as a protection against the attacks of crocodiles, the bites of serpents, "all the perils which could possibly menace an Egyptian in a desolate country house," &c. Magic was used even to make the watch dogs better guardians of their master's person and property. Here is an incantation which was supposed to have that effect.

Stand up! Wicked dog!  
Come! that I may direct thee what to do to-day;  
Thou wast fastened up, art thou not untied?  
It is Horus who has ordered thee to do this:  
May thy face be open to heaven!  
May thy jaw be pitiless!  
May thy strength slay like the god Har-sheft?  
Massacre them like the goddess Anata!  
May thy mane be like bars of iron!  
Be like Horus for this, and like Set for that!  
Go to the south, to the north, to the west, to the east;  
The whole country is given into thy hands;  
Nothing shall stop thee.  
Do not turn thy face against me;  
Turn it against the savage beasts.  
Do not bring thy face in my way;  
Turn it upon that of the stranger.  
I invest thee with a fascinating virtue; raise up thy hearing.  
Be thou a courageous formidable guardian.  
Safety! Word of safety!

It was quite natural, therefore, that the magicians should be summoned by Pharaoh to counteract and to excel the supposed magical powers of Moses and Aaron. But there is another feature in the story, the

peculiarity of which strikes every reader. Jehovah's contest with Egypt is a contest with its gods. When the last plague was about to be inflicted and the first-born of man and beast were to die throughout the entire land of Egypt, the Lord said: "Against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment" (Exodus xii. 12). It has been supposed that these words refer to the slaughter of the animals which were tended and worshipped in the Egyptian Temples. This is no doubt part of the truth; but the information which we now have regarding Egyptian beliefs enables us to see more in the words than that. It is difficult to limit the reference of the threatening to the slaughter of the first-born of beasts. It seems to embrace the whole judgment, so that in some way the slaughter of man and of beast throughout the land as well as in the Temples was an executing of judgment upon the gods of Egypt.

That is the sense which one would naturally put upon the words of Scripture, and our knowledge of Egypt now shows how mighty was their significance. The magic of the Egyptian priests stood quite alone. In Babylonia, for example, the priests in their magical incantations relied upon, and made their appeal to *spirits*: in Egypt the appeal was made to *the gods*. It was upon *their* help that the Egyptians relied for present prosperity and for future deliverance. To know and to pronounce the name of the god, was not only to secure his aid, but even to *compel him* (as I have said) to do the will of the magician, or of him to whom the magician imparted

the formula. The name of the god was resistless. And the idolatry of Egypt went further still. "There was indeed a formed belief in ancient Egypt," says Lenormant, "which is attested by numerous passages from the religious texts, that the knowledge of Divine things elevated man to the height of the gods, identified him with them, and ended by *blending his substance with that of the Divine*. Certain mysterious words and formulæ, which were hidden from the comprehension of the vulgar, and revealed only to the initiated, brought about this identification or fusion of substance."\* The Egyptian was armed against all ills by this identification with the gods. Here is a magical protection against crocodiles :

Do not be against me ! I am Amen,  
I am Anhur, the good guardian.  
Do not erect thyself ! I am Month.  
Do not try to surprise me ! I am Set.  
Do not raise thy two arms against me ! I am Sothis.  
Do not seize me ! I am Sethu,

and so on. The Egyptians and their children were imagined to be protected from all ills by their identification with the gods. The hand, therefore, that struck the first-born, struck the gods; and the judgment that fell on man and beast crushed the deepest beliefs of the Egyptian people, made vain their incantations, and proved that the gods in whom they trusted were powerless to save them.

We are in possession of information also which shows that the very terms by which the magicians

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\* Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, 94.

are named in Exodus, bear the stamp of the time. Three names are applied to them. They are called "wise men." This designates them as the possessors of hidden knowledge, and as the men acquainted with the secrets which armed the magician with power. It corresponds to the ancient Egyptian *Rechin Chetu*, that is, "people who know things." They are also called "sorcerers." The verb here used is *khashaph*. The meaning in Hebrew is not clear, and the probability is that we have here the Egyptian word *cheseḥ*, "a very common word used specially in the sense of repelling, driving away, conjuring all noxious creatures by magic formulæ. Thus, in the *Funeral Ritual*, there are no less than eleven chapters containing forms for 'stopping' or driving away crocodiles, snakes, asps, &c. It was natural that Pharaoh should have sent specially for persons armed with such formulæ on this occasion," (when the rod of Moses was turned into a serpent).\*

There remains one more name—*Chartom*, "magician." The word has been a trouble to Orientalists. Gesenius devotes a long paragraph to it, but leaves the matter not a whit clearer at the end than it was at the beginning. The burden of his statement really is that he cannot accept the opinions of other scholars, and that he himself can come to no definite conclusion upon the matter. He has looked in vain for any Hebrew word to which *chartom* can with any plausibility be traced. If it is a Hebrew word its relatives have all died out. It is orphaned and

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*Speaker's Commentary*, i. 278.

solitary, having no recognizable father or mother, sister, brother, or child. The conclusion, then, to which we are forced is that the term is an intruder. It has come from without. And when we enquire whence it has come, the Egyptologist is not without a reply. Brugsch has found a name, *charto*, applied to the chief priests of this city of Tanis, in which these very men lived, who, the Scripture tells us, were summoned into Pharaoh's presence. But the word finds an easy explanation in what we now know of the language of ancient Egypt. The Hebrew *char* is plainly the Egyptian *cher*, "one of the commonest Egyptian words," says Canon Cook,\* "used in compound terms, as 'bearing,' 'having,' 'possessing;' the second part corresponds to *temu* or *tum*, 'to speak, utter.'" This last word was specially applied to uttering a sacred name, and, as we have already seen, the sacred name was the secret of the magician's power. "Thus, on certain days it was unlawful to utter (*temu*) the name of Set, or Sutech, the Typhon-or spirit of force and destruction. . . . In the trilingual inscription, lately discovered at San, *tum* means to recite a sacred hymn. *Cher-tum* would thus mean 'bearer of sacred words.'" †

Here, then, we have another galaxy of confirmations. Those whom Pharaoh immediately calls for are the magicians: and we now know why. They were the leading men of the day, and those to whom all looked, from the lowest to the highest, in the hour of perplexity or of need. Then the magic of

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\* *Ibid.*, 279. † *Ibid.*

Egypt was of such a kind, and made such pretensions, that it explains fully the Scripture statement that, when judgment fell on man and beast throughout the land, judgment was executed on the gods of Egypt. And last of all, this book of *Exodus* names these men by names which describe their work and their pretensions *in the language of ancient Egypt*. The words are not Hebrew words: they are Egyptian. How did they enter the Hebrew language? The full knowledge of Egyptian life, the clear reflection of these men and of their art, supply the answer. The writer and the people for whom he wrote, both knew that land, and were acquainted with its speech. No man who will grapple with these facts can run away from that conclusion. When we say that *Exodus* was written by Moses, and written for the people whom he delivered, we have given a full explanation; and there is no other theory of the book with which the facts can possibly agree.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE FIRST MIRACLE: THE ROD CHANGED INTO A SERPENT.

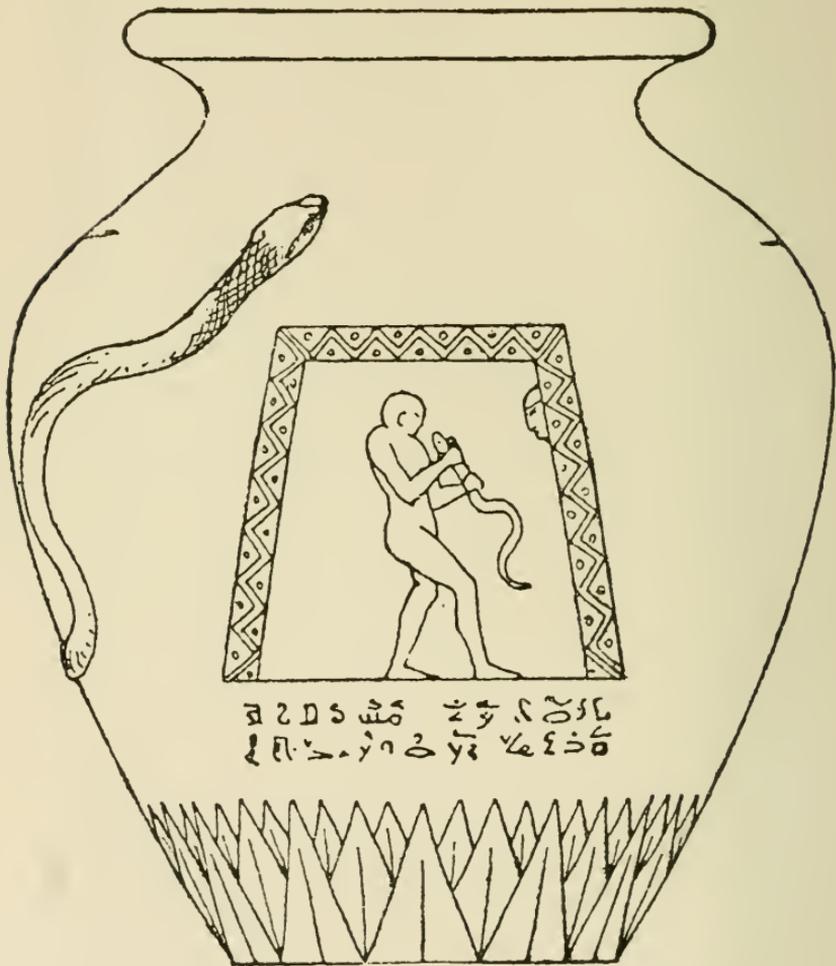
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THE magicians of Egypt long retained their celebrity. Lucian, the celebrated Greek writer who lived in the first century of our era, refers to one of them in the following terms: "There was with us on

the ship, a man from Memphis, one of the sacred scribes, of a marvellous wisdom, and versed in all the knowledge of Egypt. It was said that he had lived 23 years in one of the subterranean sanctuaries, and that it was there that the goddess Isis had taught him magic." Let us now turn to the first encounter of these men with Moses. The first sign which was given was the casting down of the rod which was instantly changed into a serpent. "Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods."

This narrative has called forth various explanations. It is natural for us to suspect a trick on the part of the magicians. From the most ancient times the charming of serpents has been practised in Egypt. Travellers tell of the wonderful feats performed by those who know the art. Serpents are drawn by the incantations, or the sounds emitted by the snake-charmers, from their most secret recesses. They come out of the walls of a building and fall from the roof. The strange power which they exercise over these animals does not end there. "The mystery," says Kalisch, "which hangs round this subject, has not yet been quite dispelled. The art of conjuring serpents is hereditary in certain families. The charmers travel, in great numbers, through towns

and villages, allure, by different contrivances, the serpents which are hidden in the secret recesses of



ANCIENT BRONZE EGYPTIAN VASE IN THE LOUVRE.

the houses, and seize them by various artifices. They are safe against their bite to such a degree that

they not only allow them to creep around their bodies, but provoke them even to anger." He also quotes the following from the *Description de l'Égypte*. "The serpent Haje is that sort of reptile which the jugglers of Cairo know best how to turn to account; they tame it, and teach it a great number of tricks, more or less extraordinary; they can, as they say, *change the Haje into a stick*, and make it appear like dead. After some preparation it seems, indeed, to assume these forms."

I give a representation found upon an ancient vase, now in the museum of the Louvre, which shows that this power was undoubtedly known and exercised of old. The charmer has succeeded in attracting and seizing a serpent, while another appears to be coming in answer to his call. The artist has cleverly indicated the danger of such close contact with those venomous reptiles to the uninitiated, by giving us a glimpse of the face of a cautious onlooker. There is no doubt a measure of imposture in the present displays of the Egyptian snake-charmers. In a paper by Professor Owen in *The Edinburgh Review* for February, 1872, he states his belief that there is nothing more than sleight of hand in these displays. This was a conclusion arrived at after a close personal inspection of exhibitions by the snake-charmers. Does not the whole affair, then, find its explanation there? Is it not plain, it has been asked, that the magicians carried with them what *seemed* to be rods, but what were in reality charmed serpents, thrown by some means into a

catalepsy, from which they awoke as soon as they were cast on the ground? Let me say that I, for one, am unable to accept that explanation. It is surrounded by great difficulties. Are we to imagine that they kept a stock of these serpent-walking-sticks, or that, visited by a common inspiration, they understood at once what the king wanted them for, so that each man seized and prepared a serpent for the occasion?

Similar difficulties will be found in the language of Scripture. The very same words which are used to describe the miracle performed by Aaron, are applied to what was done by the magicians: "Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh . . . and it became a serpent . . . they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents" (Exodus vii. 10, 12). We are also told that what the magicians did they performed by means of "their enchantments." It was something that emulated the Divine work, and which was accomplished by the exercise of power the secret of which was confined to these Egyptian priests. This I well know will find small favour with those who are swayed by that cheap scepticism which scornfully refuses to believe that there is anything in heaven or in earth not dreamed of in its philosophy. But the revival in our own day of spiritualism, all the phenomena of which it seems utterly impossible to explain away as trickery, is quite enough to make us suspect our scepticism. The spirits whom these Egyptians identified with their gods, and to whom they made their appeal, did not

leave them without an answer. The conflict between the Maker of heaven and earth and the gods of Egypt began at the outset. In the words translated "enchantments," we have another mark of the place and time. Hebraists experience the same difficulty in tracing the derivation of these as of the other terms to which I have referred. Egyptology comes again to the rescue. They "correspond to Egyptian words for magic and medical formulæ." The "enchantments" were simply the incantations, "the all-powerful words" by which the magicians claimed to work their wonders. In this light the miracle in Pharaoh's presence had a startling significance. As the rod of Aaron swallowed up the rods of the magicians, so would the religion which God was about to establish swallow up the delusive trusts by which the "wise men" of the world sought a knowledge and a greatness that still left them and their fellows slaves of Satan and heirs of eternal wrath. The promise has been fulfilled. As the light of the kingdom of God has been shed abroad, the gods have been forgotten, and the powers of their votaries have vanished. And if, in these last days, there is a revival of hidden arts, it is only that they may come forth to meet the judgment of God, and be swept away for ever.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT: THE FIRST PLAGUE.  

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THE knowledge of Egypt, which has been so largely increased by modern travel and investigation, has had a peculiar effect upon the attitude assumed by many towards this portion of the sacred narrative. Formerly, the whole account of the plagues was scouted by sceptics as baseless legend. But there is such a wonderful correspondence between them and the ordinary phenomena of the country, that a new explanation has been suggested. The plagues inflicted find a most striking parallel in troubles from which Egypt has always suffered, and from which it suffers now. These troubles also follow in much the same order as that in which the plagues fell. The similarity is undoubted, and is such as must arrest attention: but to the man who wishes to escape from the presence and pressure of the supernatural, it inspires a sudden sense of relief, and of positive elation. He has discovered the solution of the mystery! The so-called miracles are, it is said, only "exaggerations of ordinary phenomena."

That was the conclusion arrived at by one of the *savants* who accompanied Napoleon to Egypt. But he did not make a discovery, as he imagined. I have said that the facts referred to are undoubted. But it is equally true that they establish the Book

which the French philosopher imagined that they overthrew. This can be shown in a word or two. Was it not to be expected that, when God announced by the lips of His servant that certain judgments would be sent, such should be named as were well known, or at least easily understood by things that were well known? The very purpose which the Lord had in view necessitated such a course. Had plagues been threatened, of the virulence of which the Egyptians had had no experience whatever, their ignorance might have been a delusion and a snare to them. The people would have perished for lack of knowledge. But God takes the things which were an ever-recurring dread to them, and warns them that, in case of disobedience, where they have been chastised with whips, they shall be scourged with scorpions.

That is an explanation which at once satisfies us. But when we have viewed the matter from this side, we see not only the mercy of God in His chastisements upon that land of debasing idolatry and of cruel oppression; we also find ourselves confronted by one of the strongest possible proofs of the reality of the events, and of the Mosaic authorship of the book of *Exodus*. These are no fictions imagined by a Babylonian Jew. Each of the events bears the indubitable Egyptian watermark. They are thoroughly and distinctly Egyptian. They, so to speak, taste of the soil. There is not the slightest tinge of a Palestinian, or Assyrian, or Babylonian colouring. It is as genuine and as clear a reflection

of the land of Egypt as if it had been penned by an Egyptian hand. I say nothing meanwhile of *the truth* of the story, as to whether the miracles were real, or as to whether the events ever took place. If we deal with the account of these plagues merely as a piece of literature, they, in themselves, settle the question of their origin. The narrative is of such a kind that it must have been written by one who had trod the soil, breathed the air, and lived the life of Egypt. The lowest possible estimate of the narrative cannot dispense with authorship: even if it is regarded as a pious fraud, someone must have concocted it, and in the concoction must have left some trace of the civilization to which he belonged. Who, then, penned the account, and told the story of events reflecting in their every lineament the Egypt of the Pharaonic times? The only possible answer is, that the author must have been one who was familiar with the land of which he writes.

And to this conclusion we must add another. There are no explanations or comments in the narrative to make it more intelligible to readers who, like ourselves, were unacquainted with the place and the time. We have such comments elsewhere, both in the Old Testament and in the New; but here we meet with none. The probability is, therefore, that no explanations were given, for the simple reason that none were needed, and that the people for whom the narrative was first written, were, equally with the writer, acquainted with the country and with its customs. Now, there is but one period which will

meet these conditions. The book must have been written by Moses, and written for the people who, like himself, had lived in the land. When we have reached that conclusion, we shall need no further proof that the miracles were real, and that God did in very truth show "His signs among them and wonders in the land of Ham." If the book was written during the life-time of Moses, there was no sufficient period to permit of the growth of myth and legend. Moses wrote for those who had been eye-witnesses of the marvels which he described; and to have misrepresented or exaggerated would have destroyed the influence which it was essential for him to retain as a leader, and a leader acting in the name of the God of truth.

Let us now listen to the story of the plagues which smote Egypt's strength, and broke its stubborn heart. A sign had been given when the rod was changed into a serpent. The sign was challenged by the magicians, with the result that the power of Jehovah was only the more fully manifested. But that was after all only a sign, and so it could be easily despised and forgotten. God must, therefore, have recourse to judgment. The first plague was that by which the waters of Egypt were changed into blood. The Divine command came to Moses: "Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come" (Exodus vii. 15).

The reader will observe the command to meet Pharaoh at the brink of the river. There is nothing

said as to why that meeting-place was chosen. Some have explained that Moses was told to meet Pharaoh at the river because he was unable to find entrance to the palace. But of that there is no proof whatever. We find Moses presenting himself in the palace of Pharaoh whenever he desires to do so. But if there was any connection between the water which was to be turned into blood and Egyptian idolatry, and if Pharaoh had come out to worship the Nile-god then and there, we can see at once a glorious fitness in the time and place. Was there, then, any connection of the kind?

A word or two will give the answer. "The god of the Nile," says Osburn, "was an impersonation of Nu, or Noah . . . Nu, or water, was one of the chief father-gods of Egypt, and an object of profound veneration in all Egypt. Over him, therefore, Jehovah, by this plague, asserted his supremacy."\* "The Nile," writes Canon Cooke, "was worshipped under various names and symbols, at Memphis especially, as Hapi, *i.e.*, Apis, the sacred bull, or living representation of Osiris, of whom the river was regarded as the embodiment, or manifestation. It is therefore probable that the king went in the morning to offer his devotions. This gives a peculiar force and suitableness to the miracle."† The reader will find a representation of the Nile god and his worship, taken from the monuments, on page 382 of the preceding volume, and on the following page a hymn recounting his praises.

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\* *Monumental History of Egypt*, ii., 579. † *Speaker's Commentary*, i., 277.

To the king, then, while standing before the very altar of his god, the message of Jehovah was delivered. It was a startling one. The god and his worshippers were alike to be judged: "And the Lord spake unto Moses: Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone" (Exod.vii.19). I have spoken of the Egyptian colouring of the narrative. There was something in every threatening which struck the Egyptians with fear, and every plague had some correspondence with phenomena with which they were familiar. These statements are easily verified in regard to this first infliction. The Egyptians well knew what it meant to be deprived of the use of their revered river. Every year, for a brief interval, its waters are unfit for use. The first symptoms of the rise of the Nile, which is so eagerly expected every year, is a change which is known as "the Green Nile." With the first rise of an inch or two, "the waters themselves," says Osburn, "have lost the little of clearness and freshness which just before had still recommended them as a delicious draught. They have acquired the green, slimy, lustreless hue of brackish water between the tropics, and no filter that has yet been discovered can separate them from the nauseous unwholesome admixture which occasions this change." After

remarking that the Green Nile is supposed to be occasioned by vast lakes of stagnant water in the south of Nubia, he continues : “ These, after having stagnated in the tropical sun for more than six months, are carried forward by the new inundation, and once more thrown into the bed of the river. Happily, the continuance of this state of the water seldom exceeds three or four days. The sufferings of those who are compelled to drink it in this state, from vesicary disease, even in this short interval, are very severe. The inhabitants of the city generally provide against it by Nile-water stored in reservoirs and tanks.” \*

The Egyptians well knew, therefore, what it meant to be deprived of the use of the Nile water, and could understand the significance of the threat that none of the usual contrivances would serve them in this new calamity. But they were also acquainted with a phenomenon which bears a striking resemblance to the aspect which the waters assumed under the rod of Moses. They have a red, as well as a green, Nile. I again quote from Osburn, who has made this subject peculiarly his own. “ Ten or twelve days elapse before the development of the last and most extraordinary of all the appearances of the Nile. We will endeavour to give our own first impressions of it. It was at the end of, to my own sensations, a long and very sultry night, that I raised myself from the sofa upon which I had in vain been endeavouring to sleep, on the deck of a Nile boat

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\* *Monumental History of Egypt*, i., p. 11.

that lay becalmed off Benisoueff, a town of Middle Egypt. The sun was just showing the upper limb of his disc over the eastern mountains. I was surprised to see that when his rays fell upon the waters, a deep ruddy reflection was given back. The depth of the tint increased continually as a larger portion of his light fell upon the water, and before he had entirely cleared the top of the hill it presented the perfect appearance of a river of blood. Suspecting some delusion, I rose up hastily, and looking over the side of the boat, saw there the confirmation of my first impression. The entire body of water was opaque, and of a deep red colour, bearing a closer resemblance to blood than to any other natural production to which it could be compared. . . . it is not, however, like the green admixture, at all deleterious; the Nile water is never more wholesome and deliciously refreshing than during the overflow.”\*

The reason which lay behind the Divine choice in selecting this infliction, appears to have been that the Egyptians were accustomed to one change at least in their river, whose coming they dreaded. And now they are told that there will be a Red Nile, that shall be a scourge and a terror, such as no Green Nile has ever been. The river will be turned into blood. From sight and smell of it they will flee with sickening horror. There was no doubt, as has been often remarked, a just retribution in this beginning of plagues. The male children of the Israelites had been thrown into the waters, and now God would

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\* *l.*, pp. 11, 12.

bring the sin of the Egyptians to their remembrance. The river of blood shall tell the story of their deed to earth and heaven, and the horror of it shall arise and cling to them.

But our present purpose is less exposition of God's word than demonstration that we have here a word of God to expound. It will be noticed that the description of the plague is very full. The places where it is to fall are minutely specified (Exod. vii. 19). The prophet looks, as it were, over the entire country. He sees a certain distribution of this sacred stream. In one way and another it spreads itself over the land. Now in this minute description we have a marvellously perfect account of that system by which the blessings of the Nile were spread over the whole of ancient Egypt. Egyptologists have been astonished at its fulness and its absolute correctness. A few words will convince the reader that they have reason for wonder. Take the second phrase in the description: "Upon their rivers." The words are literally: "Upon their Niles (*Yeōrim*)." The word *Yeōr*, as I have had occasion to remark previously, is a purely Egyptian term. It is one of the proofs of the Israelitish sojourn in Egypt. It "is never used in Egypt," says Osburn, "but of the Nile and its natural branches." The reader will now notice the expression, "the Niles." The great river pursues its course for about two thousand miles without receiving a single affluent. It receives none through all its course from Upper Egypt to the Mediterranean. In some parts of Egypt, therefore, say at Thebes in

Upper Egypt, or in some of the great cities of Middle Egypt, it would have been meaningless to have spoken of "the Niles." But the phrase reflects the special feature of the Delta, that part of Egypt in which Moses and the Israelites were. The great sea-like river branched off above Memphis into great streams, which spread out to the north-east and north-west, carrying fertility with them over the level plains of Lower Egypt. These streams are now reduced to two, but were anciently seven. Over all these Moses casts his eye as he speaks, and carries with him the thought of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. These rivers, by which the Nile rolls its fulness to the sea, shall run blood.

The phrase with which the description opens is "their streams (*Naharotham*)."<sup>1</sup> These are the canals, the *artificial* branches of the great river, by which its waters were carried to the right and to the left. They are mentioned first, because among others the great canal of Menes, the most important of them, came first in order. The river pursues a straight course from south to north, giving off not a single stream till it reaches the Delta. This defect was remedied by gigantic canals, one of them large enough, it is said, to receive one twenty-sixth part of the entire waters of the Nile.

In addition to these, "ponds" and "pools" of water are mentioned. Translate "lakes" and "reservoirs," and we have the water-system of Egypt fully described. The "lakes" were kept supplied for the growth of reeds, of which manifold

and extensive use was made, and for the rearing of waterfowl, which were in great request as articles of food. The "reservoirs" were huge receptacles, which were filled at the time of the overflow, and from which the canals and smaller streams for irrigating the fields were replenished, as the waters failed. To this is added a further description which displays equal familiarity with the household customs of Egypt. The Scripture speaks of vessels of wood and stone (literally "woods and stones"). "This also marks," writes Canon Cooke, "the familiarity of the writer with Egyptian customs. The Nile water is kept in vessels and is purified for use by filtering, and by certain ingredients, such as the paste of almonds."

This is surely abundant testimony to be embraced in the narrow compass of a single verse (Ex. vii. 19). But there is something more. Special mention is made of one result of the plague: "and the fish that is in the river shall die" (vii. 18). The death of the fish would not have seemed a terrible infliction to an inhabitant of Palestine, or even of Babylonia. Was there anything that made it of special significance in Egypt? "Great," says Wilkinson, "was the consumption of fish in Egypt, as we know from the sculptures and other good authority. . . Besides the fish cured, or sent to market for the table, a very great quantity was set apart expressly for feeding the sacred animals and birds. . . . The quantity of fish in Egypt was a very great boon to the poor classes. The revenue derived from the taxes on fish was

upwards of £94,000 a year." Here, again, the threatening was one which filled the Egyptians with the liveliest alarm. It "would be a most impressive warning. The Egyptians subsisted to a great extent on the fish of the Nile, though salt-water fish was regarded as impure. A mortality among the fish was a calamity much dreaded."\*

Can any man conceive how all these purely Egyptian traits should be found imbedded in two verses of this book, if the theories of the Higher Criticism are correct? If the book was fabricated by someone whose ideas were moulded by the life of Palestine or of Babylonia, how could he reflect, with such accuracy and with such simple naturalness, the very appearance of ancient Egypt and the fears of its people? And if by some means he could have done that, can we imagine him placing the narrative in the hands of a people who could not possibly understand its full significance, and yet add not a word of comment to make the meaning plain?

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE PLAGUE OF FROGS.

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MENTION has been already made of the thoroughly Egyptian character of the plagues. This is so indisputable that the rationalists laid hold of it, and used it as a weapon against the Scriptures.

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\* *The Speaker's Commentary*, i., p. 278.

The plagues, they argued, were not in any sense specially Divine visitations. There was nothing miraculous about them. They were ordinary phenomena. They may have come at that time in a severer form, and so have laid the foundation for the exaggerations of Exodus; but, it was contended, any man who knew Egypt was brought back by the country itself to a saner interpretation of the statements of the Bible.

The rationalists did not know that, in thus endeavouring to rob the Scripture of its authority, they were really establishing its claims. The thoroughly Egyptian character of the plagues places an Egyptian stamp on the Book which Egyptologists have fully admitted. When I say Egyptologists, I do not speak of men who use their knowledge for the defence of the Bible. Very few of these men have had any inclination of the kind. Assyriologists and Egyptologists largely belong to those who pay little heed to the supernatural claims of Scripture, and who have engaged in these enquiries merely as a scientific pursuit. Had they found their discoveries contradicting and discrediting the Bible, matters would have turned out pretty much as they had expected, and, without the slightest scruple, they would have pointed out how the historical character of the Bible had been disproved by their researches. That it has all turned out so contrary to expectation has astonished no men more than themselves. Ebers, and Brugsch, and Schrader, all of them adherents of the Rationalistic school, have had to bear a kind

of cross in this way. They have had to announce and to expound discoveries which have been a chastisement to their friends and a rejoicing to their enemies.

There is now no doubt whatever among Egyptologists of the thoroughly Mosaic character of the Pentateuch. The Egypt of the times lives in every page of the book. But this has led some scientists and commentators back to the old rationalistic error regarding the plagues. We now know that many of these inflictions closely resemble the ordinary phenomena of Egypt, and even follow in the usual order. The appearing of the frogs, for example, follows upon the phenomenon of the red Nile. That of the *kinnim* (translated "lice" in our version, but which is supposed to mean mosquitoes) follows in October, soon after the appearing of the frogs. The suggestion is that Moses waited till the natural season came for the visitation, and that the hand of God was then seen in the intensifying of a merely natural and customary phenomenon. It is true that in this way Jehovah would have been shown to be the God of nature, whose will all things obey. But if the plagues were kept back to what we may call their ordinary season, they would have been spread over an enormous interval. These three plagues would themselves have occupied over three months, as the red Nile occurs in the end of June, and the mosquitoes begin to be a burden in October.

Even the cursory reader of Exodus feels that that explanation is not in accord with the impression

which he received in perusing the story of Egypt's judgments. These are rapid successive blows from the Divine hand, and Egypt is not, from first to last, permitted to forget for a moment that God is dealing with it. When we look more narrowly at the narrative, this impression is deepened. The last judgment of all fell on the 14th Nisan, about the beginning of April. There is also another date fixed—that of the seventh plague. The hail fell when "the barley was in the ear and the flax was balled," and when the wheat and the rye were still under the sod (Exodus ix. 31, 32). "This," says Canon Cooke, "is a point of great importance. It marks the time. In the north of Egypt the barley ripens and the flax blossoms about the middle of February, or at the latest early in March, and both are gathered in before April, when the wheat harvest begins." \*

The interval covered, therefore, from the seventh plague to the last, the death of the firstborn, extended at furthest from the middle of February to the beginning of April. That is, the whole were embraced within six weeks, and probably, within four. This suggests a somewhat startling question. Did these blows fall at regulated intervals, that showed at once God's urgency and God's patience, intervals that proved that while He would wait to be gracious, He nevertheless had His time and kept it? Did Moses pay a weekly visit to the royal palace, and on each Sabbath-day (a day which these people had long

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\* *Speaker's Commentary*, i., 286.

forgotten) did God make an awful pause in their busy, God-forgetting life? \* The four weeks for the last four plagues evidently suggest this; and if we turn back to the account of the second plague, with which we are now concerned, this suggestion seems to be confirmed. After the river had been smitten, we read: "And seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river. And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let My people go, that they may serve Me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs" (Exodus vii. 25—viii. 2). Here, apparently, on the very threshold of the story, the measure of the interval is given us. The seven days was God's completed waiting. The whole period would, in this way, have occupied nine weeks, and have extended from the beginning of February to the first week in April. In any case, the supposition that the plagues kept pace with the natural phenomena of the country must be abandoned. The second plague begins seven days after the first. But the discolouration of the Nile endures for a much longer period, a period of at least three weeks' duration. Then the frogs appear, in ordinary course, several months after the Red Nile. There is this, and this only, in the striking correspondence between the plagues and the ordinary phenomena of Egypt, that instruments of chastisement were chosen

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\* It is now proved that Egyptian civilisation came from Babylon, and that the ancient Babylonians had known and hallowed the Sabbath-day. We owe to them one of the most beautiful and suggestive names which the Sabbath has ever had:—"The day of rest for the heart."

*with the character of which the Egyptians were well acquainted.* The warning, which was given in two out of every three plagues, manifested God's mercy. The choice of the infliction in each case showed still more fully that the Lord doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men; for the afflictions that were threatened were in every case things thoroughly known and dreaded. It may have been intended also to teach the Egyptians that the God of Israel was the one living and true God, the Lord of heaven and earth. The marshalling of these foes to their prosperity and their comfort, at the command of Jehovah, revealed to the wise men of Egypt Him by whom these things were fashioned, and whom they always served.

But let us now see whether the Egyptian character of the second plague is really as strongly marked as that of the first. There is one important testimony to the Egyptian character of this part of Exodus which must not be overlooked. It is found in the word in the original Hebrew which we translate, and translate rightly, "frogs." It occurs only in this eighth chapter of Exodus, and in two passages in the Psalms which refer to this plague. It is quite true that frogs are not spoken of elsewhere in the Old Testament, so that we can hardly say whether it was a customary word among the Hebrews. But there is difficulty in finding a satisfactory Hebrew derivation for the word. Scholars are at a loss to determine from what word it has been derived, and even the most likely guesses leave a great deal to be



THE PLAGUE OF FROGS.

explained. This is enough to lead one to suspect a foreign origin—that the word has been imported into Hebrew from another tongue. When we ask whether Egypt can lend us any help in solving this difficulty, we have an immediate and satisfactory reply. There are two kinds of frogs known in Egypt. These are called by the learned the *rana Nilotica* and the *rana Mosaica*. The native name of the latter, "Dofda," corresponds closely with the word in the Hebrew. Here the mystery is explained. The difficulty of finding a Hebrew root for the word arose from the fact that it was not a Hebrew word at all. It was the name of a distinct species, long known to the Israelites during their sojourn, and naturally named in this record (written by an Egyptian Israelite for Egyptian Israelites), by that name by which it was known to the Egyptians and to themselves. This is another of the many facts that nothing will explain save that the Pentateuch was written by Moses for the people whom God delivered by his hand.

But was this rod, which was now lifted over the Egyptians, one which they were likely to fear? In other words, does the visitation as well as the name bear the stamp of the place and time? Here is the reply: "Frogs were always a great nuisance in Egypt." "As the Nile rises, they float in loathsome masses with the turbid scum of the flood. They croak incessantly, until the ear aches with the reiterated harshness through the sultry night. They are revolting enough in ordinary years when they

keep principally to the river. What the torment must have been when, at the beck of Aaron, they came up from the water and went into the houses, sitting upon the tables and upon the beds, hopping into the ovens and into the kneading troughs, croaking incessantly when at rest and yelling like demons when pursued and in danger, we must confess our inability to imagine."\*

Another writer says: "They are small, do not leap much, are much like toads, and fill the whole country with their croakings." Other writers speak of them as one of the plagues which have not ceased to afflict the country, and that they are a burden both to natives and to strangers. It was an affliction, therefore, well known and thoroughly dreaded. Its intensity was described in words every one of which must have gone home and have filled the breast of every Egyptian, who heard the words of God by Aaron, with loathing and dread: "Behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs; and the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly" (as we have seen, they come from the Nile, and that is another Egyptian trait), "which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs: and the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants" (Exod. viii. 2-4). Place behind these words the infliction which we know these animals to be in Egypt, and the plague

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\* *Osburn* ii., 579, 580.

immediately acquires a significance which is terrible. We then understand why no detail is spared. We lose sight of the insignificance of the instrument in the magnitude of the chastisement. In a word, with the Egypt of reality in the background, we see the glory of God both in the threatening and in its accomplishment. The only possible conclusion is that that background was there fully in view both of the writer and the first readers of the book, and that the book was written by an Egyptian Israelite for Egyptian Israelites; that is to say, it was written by Moses and for the Israelites of the Exodus.

But we now discover that there lay still more in the background. The plague of frogs was not only a terrible chastisement of the people, but also a judgment upon their gods. "Frogs," says Osburn, "were always a great nuisance in Egypt, and from the beginning the driving of them away was entrusted to a goddess called Heki. She sometimes appears with the head of a frog. So important was the function they supposed her to fulfil, that she was one of the supreme goddesses in all Egypt. She was the great patroness of the crocodiles, on account of the number of frogs they devour. On a mummy at Paris she is represented as suckling two crocodiles. She was worshipped in a shrine of wonderful magnificence, dedicated to her in a city built on the mouth of the Sebennyitic branch." \* Here, again, therefore, we see that the more we know of the Egypt of the time of Moses, the more significant do these words

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\* II., 580.

become. Is this chance? Is it a mere accident that, as we see the place and the time more clearly, these words take fire and shine out with new and undreamt-of splendours? Is it not rather that the Egypt of that time and these words so make answer to each other, because they have always belonged to each other?

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE THIRD AND FOURTH PLAGUES.

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THE third plague is involved in an obscurity which is another testimony to the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. Our translators, in common with many others, translate the Hebrew *kinnim* by "lice." But the Septuagint, an early translation of the Old Testament, made by Jews resident in Egypt, translates it by a word which means mosquitoes, or rather "mosquito gnats." This is also confirmed by Philo and Origen, both of them natives of Egypt. The difference in translation is solely due to one fact. *Kinnim* is not a Hebrew word. There is nothing in the Hebrew or in the Semitic tongues that can throw any light upon it. It has been imported into the language for the special purpose of describing this third infliction upon Egypt. The word occurs only in this chapter and in a psalm referring to these wonders in the land of Ham. Where has it come from? If we find that it has come from ancient

Egypt, that will certainly have to be reckoned as another of the many proofs of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. Well, then, what is the fact? I have said that the word in the original is *kinnim*. Now *ken* is an Egyptian root, meaning force and abundance. It is used in the sense of plague. Brugsch quotes the following passage from an ancient Egyptian document: "The year did not bring the plague (*ken*) at the usual time." He also identifies the word in Exodus with the Egyptian *chenemms*, the mosquito.

It is quite impossible to say, in the present state of our knowledge, whether "mosquito gnats," or "lice," is the correct rendering. But, strange to say, either translation brings up an Egyptian background which makes the word glow. It will be remembered that the Lord said: "Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt;" and we read that it became "lice in man and beast." Travellers speak of the troubles they have suffered in Egypt from these insects. They "are a sort of tick, not larger than a grain of sand, which, when filled with blood, expands to the size of a hazel nut." Sir Samuel Baker describes the infliction in words which vividly recall those of Scripture. He says: "it is as though *the very dust* were turned into lice." Compare with that these words: "all the dust of the land became," &c.

On the other hand, the translation "mosquitoes," or "mosquito-gnats," the only other rendering suggested,

brings before us an even more grievous annoyance, and one equally characteristic of the country. "It is an insect," says Philo, "although of very small size, yet of a most troublesome nature; for it hurts not only the surface, causing intolerable and protracted itching, but penetrates also into the interior through the ears and noses. It flies even into the eyes of those who do not guard themselves, and produces serious pain." A still earlier authority, who also speaks from personal observation, the father and prince of travellers, Herodotus, says: "Against the gnats, which are very numerous, the Egyptians use the following means: the inhabitants of Upper Egypt protect themselves by turrets, in which they sleep; for the gnats are unable to rise to any considerable elevation. Those who live near the marshes take a net with which they fish by day, spread it over their beds by night, and sleep beneath it." The stings of these gnats are a terror to animals as well as an annoyance to men.

It is outside of my present purpose to tell over again, or even to give a continuous comment upon, the history of the Exodus. My task now is a lowlier one. There are parts, here and there in the narrative, which bear the impress of the place and the time; and, pointing out and explaining these, I hope to show the important bearing which they have upon the present controversy regarding the origin and the authority of the Word of God. The reader will not, therefore, expect from me a glowing historical picture, or even a commentary on that picture in the

book of Exodus which has charmed and instructed every age.

If those of us who are engaged in this service were to give heed to all that we are told, the pen would speedily be thrown aside. These historical corroborations are beginning to trouble the critics. They have to pause in their complacent assurances that the Pentateuch is full of myths, of vague traditions, and of folk-lore; and they have to admit, as Mr. Horton was compelled to do more than once in a book published some time ago, that certain incidents are quite historical. This is, of course, very disquieting to them, and exceedingly gratifying to us, who may be reckoned as their foes. The "critics" have to make a retreat under the smiles and the hallelujahs of their enemies; and they are naturally provoked. Mr. Horton takes occasion, while he is retreating, to assure us that we have achieved nothing. You do not prove the inspiration of Scripture, he says, when you show that a certain narrative in Scripture is historically correct.

In one way, that is quite true, and, what is more, we have never imagined that, in proving the correctness of Scripture history, we were proving its inspiration. But in another way the contest over the historical character of these narratives is most vital. The critics, like other opponents of the Bible, set aside its full and perfect inspiration on this very ground, that it contains error and mistake. How can a statement be inspired, they ask, if it is false or incorrect? Here, then, lies the vast importance of

our work. We meet the critics *just where they are undermining the Bible*. We show that the supposed errors are absolutely, and not infrequently gloriously, true statements. We prove that never has there been history so concise, so marvellously suggestive, of such wondrous insight, and of such correctness in detail, as the history of the Bible. And, in this way, not only are the guns of the enemy silenced and spiked; but the truth which they attacked is also shown to be in every way worthy of Him by whom it has been given.

Turning now to the fourth plague, we are met by the same difficulty which we experienced in regard to the third. We have, at present, no means of knowing with certainty what the infliction really was. Moses was told to rise up in the early morning, and to meet Pharaoh as he went down to the Nile. No hint is given as to why the king sought the river-side at that early hour, or why the servant of God was once more to meet him there. It may have been that Pharaoh had come forth in some great state procession to worship, with all the pomp of Egypt, before a false god, and that he was there to listen to the demand of the true and living God. Or, it may have been that, since the same spot had witnessed the miracle which changed the Nile into blood, and which, therefore, lent an emphasis to the new message which no other spot could give, it was now chosen as the meeting-place. But, whatever the reason of the selection may have been, Pharaoh has to listen there, in the coolness and quiet of the early morning, to

God's renewed demand, "Let my people go." "Else," the message this time ran, "if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms (of flies) upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms (of flies), and also the ground whereon they are. And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms (of flies) shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth" (Exodus viii. 21, 22).

The plague is plainly one of exceeding severity. The refuges which the Egyptians will flee to will not serve them. Their houses will afford no protection, for the plague will be also there. Neither without nor within will there be any shelter: "The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms (of flies), and also the ground whereon they are." It will be noticed that the words "of flies," in the English version are printed in italics, and that they have been supplied by the translators. They are their explanation of what they understood the swarms to consist of. The word in the original, *arob*, occurs only in the description of this plague and in the references to it. As a Hebrew word, it has no meaning that suits the context. This is another trace of the Egyptian "watermark." The word was an Egyptian one, perfectly familiar to Moses and the Israelites of that time, but one about which Hebrew scholars of a later time can tell us nothing. They can only guess; and we ourselves can do as

much as that. But their perplexity is to us a valuable testimony; it proves the high antiquity of a book which some men of learning want to make us believe belongs to the very latest age of Hebrew literature.

But what are we to say about it? In what did the plague consist? The truth is that up to the present we have no reply. There is a word in ancient Egyptian which would lead us to think that the *arob* was a beetle and not a fly. The Septuagint translation identifies the *arob* with the dog-fly, "the bite of which is exceedingly sharp and painful, causing severe inflammation, especially in the eyelids." But the result of the plague indicated in the Scripture,— "the land was corrupted by reason of the *arob*"—gears no trace of such an experience as that. It is in keeping, however, with the ravages of the beetle, or cockroach. This is still further emphasized in Psalm lxxviii. 45, where we read: "He sent the *arob* which devoured them." So sure, indeed, is Kalisch that the word means "beetle," that, in his translation of Exodus, he uses this word throughout the account of the fourth plague. He makes a quotation from Pratte's travels through Abyssinia which proves how wonderfully the ravages of that insect correspond with the expression of Scripture. "The Kakerlaks" (beetles), says Pratte, "appear in a moment in the houses, and break forth, as if by a spell, suddenly from every aperture and fissure. Shortly before my departure from Adua, they filled, in a few minutes, the whole house of the resident missionary there.

Only after the most laborious exertions, and after covering the floor of the apartment with hot coals, they succeeded in mastering them. If they make such attacks during the night, the inmates are compelled to give up the houses; and even little children, or sick persons, who are unable to rise alone, are then exposed to the greatest danger of life." "Haselquist and Forskal," adds Kalisch, "further report that they inflict very painful bites with their jaws; that they gnaw and destroy clothes, household furniture, leather, and articles of every kind; and either consume or render unavailable all eatables."

If the *arob* were the beetle, every word in this description would have a terrible fitness: "I will send the *arob* upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of the *arob*, and also the ground whereon they are:" "and the land was corrupted by reason of the *arob*" (Exodus viii. 21, 24). The plague would, in that case, have also struck a blow at Egyptian idolatry, and have given point to the words: "To the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth" (verse 22). The beetle was revered as the symbol of creative power. The sun-god was represented with a beetle's head. Strong objection has been taken, however, to this identification. Mr. Robert Thomson points out that the cockroach is a *night* insect, and flies as soon as light, either natural or artificial, appears.\* This, and other considerations, compel us to suspend our

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\* *The Plagues of Egypt*, pp. 78, 79.

judgment as to the precise nature of the means summoned to inflict this chastisement.

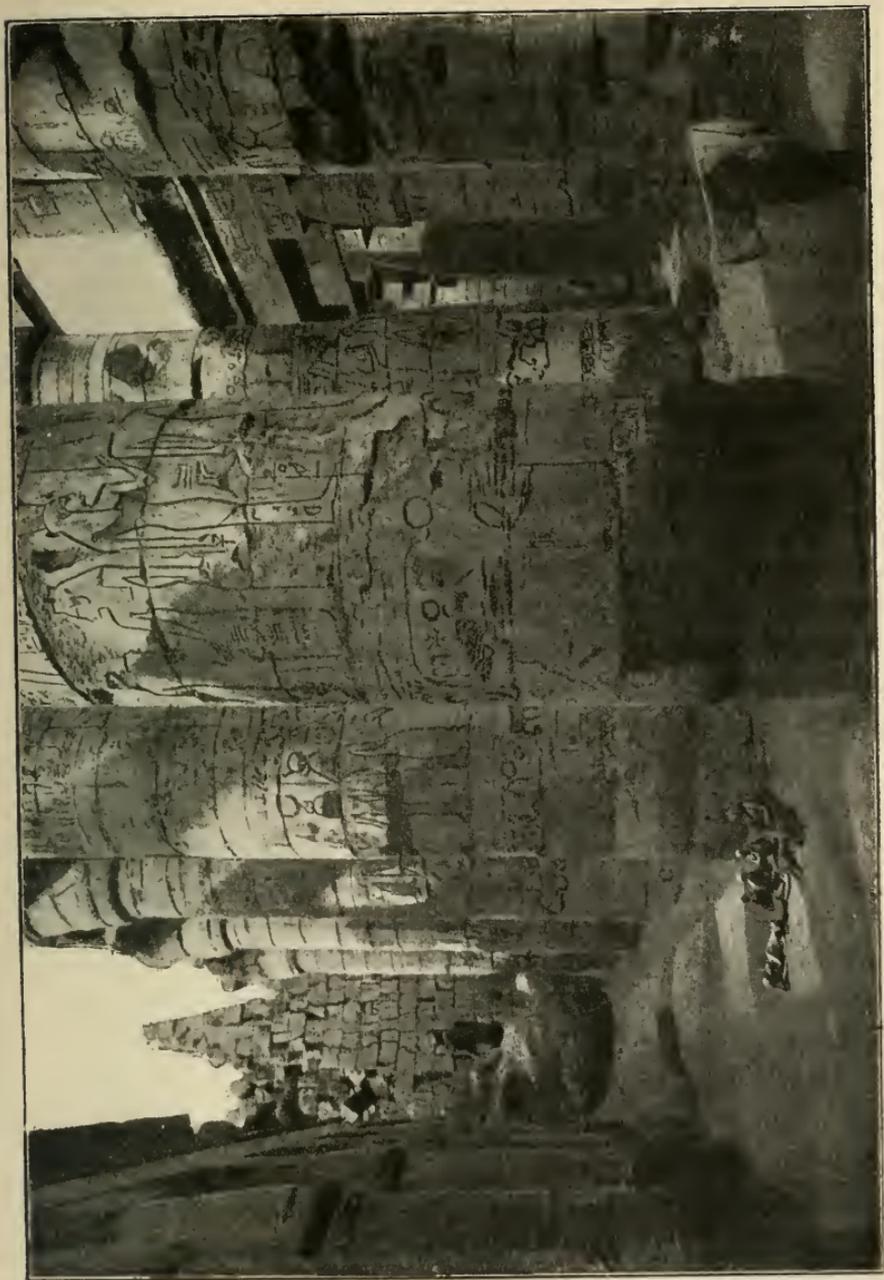
The blow was too heavy for Pharaoh's fortitude. He summoned Moses and Aaron into his presence, and gave them immediate permission to go and worship Jehovah—only it must be within the borders of Egypt, and not, as they desired, in the desert. And here we trace another line in "the water mark" of the book of Exodus. The reply of Moses indicates the existence of customs which we know to have been characteristic of ancient Egypt. "And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?" (v. 26).

Now, we are here upon ground about which there is no uncertainty. It is alleged, as a sufficient answer to the king's proposal, that, if the Israelites follow out the rites of their worship, they will bring upon themselves the indignation and murderous hatred of the Egyptian people. The part of their worship which is so peculiarly obnoxious is distinctly specified. It is the sacrifices: "Lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?" In whatever way we apply this epithet "abomination"—whether we understand it to mean that which, as a sacrifice, is abomination in their eyes, or that which is the object of Egyptian worship, and therefore, an abomination in the eyes of God—the result is practically the same. There was that, in the Israelitish worship, so peculiarly ob-

noxious to the Egyptians that the attempt to perform it would have awakened their deadly hostility.

Moses' reply is so conclusive that the king does not repeat the request, but promises to allow the Israelites to take their own way. Can we, then, throw light upon this matter, and let anyone see for himself what the eyes of Moses and of the king were resting upon? The truth is, that the finger is here laid upon one of the most extraordinary fanaticisms that ever found a habitation in the human breast. Among the numerous animals which were objects of idolatrous veneration among the Egyptians were those very animals which the Israelites had to offer upon the altar of Jehovah; and to have slain these "in the land" would have exposed the Israelites to almost certain destruction. For to destroy these was, in the eyes of the Egyptians, the most fearful impiety. Herodotus was struck by this fact. He says: "If a person kills one of them (the sacred animals) designedly, the punishment is death: if it is done unintentionally, he pays the fine which the priests impose upon him. But he who kills an ibis or a hawk, be it designedly or not, must mercilessly die."

What we know of ancient Egypt fully bears out these words of "the Father of History." A Roman ambassador, who unintentionally killed a cat, narrowly escaped the very fate which Moses predicted would befall himself and his people if they attempted to do as Pharaoh counselled. This happened, too, under the reign of the Ptolemies, the Greek masters



HALL OF THE GREAT TEMPLE AT KARNAK.  
*(Reproduced by permission from the Photograph issued by the "Cosmos" Co.)*

of the land. When on an expedition to a foreign country, the soldiers of ancient Egypt brought reverently home with them any dead cats or dogs they met with, and had them embalmed and buried in Egypt with "great pomp and lamentation." When a fire broke out in a house, the first thing thought about was to save the cats and the dogs. I have said that the bull was invested with a high sanctity, being sacred to the sun-god, and also occasionally regarded as a god, and the type of Osiris. The latter, the sacred bull Apis, was worshipped at Memphis, in the immediate neighbourhood of the land of Goshen. The goat, sheep, and ram were also sacred. Such was the Egypt of the time of Moses. When we look on it, how eloquent become the expostulation of Moses and the answering silence of the king!

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE FIFTH AND SIXTH PLAGUES.

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THE last plague had touched the property of the Egyptians. First of all, a mere sign was given when the rod was changed into a serpent. Then personal discomforts told of God's power and displeasure. The water was changed into blood; the frogs invaded their dwellings; the mosquito-gnats tormented themselves and their cattle. But now, along with the torment and the peril brought by the

*arob*, their garments, furniture, and trappings were destroyed: "the land was corrupted by reason of the *arob*." In the fifth plague, God goes still further. He lays His hand upon one of their most valued possessions—their cattle. The matter was not to end when Pharaoh said "no" to God's demand, or when he promised obedience and then neglected to fulfil his promise. God is not to be denied or to be put aside by delay. Again Moses is sent with the message: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me," and Pharaoh is warned: "If thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain." The separation between Israel and Egypt was to continue. "The Lord shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel. And the Lord appointed a set time, saying, To-morrow the Lord shall do this thing in the land" (Exodus ix. 1-5).

It is here implied that the cattle formed a most important part of Egypt's wealth. In the preceding volume, in the history of Joseph, this is proved to have been the case. The breeding of cattle was carried to a perfection in Egypt that has, perhaps, never been equalled, and certainly never surpassed, in any other country. The monuments raised to departed nobles enumerate among their chief possessions their oxen, their sheep, &c. "Flocks and

herds," says Osburn, "were possessions highly valued in these remote ages, and for which Egypt was always celebrated. The representation of these (on the tombs), immediately follows that of the landed property: in some cases it precedes it." The cattle consist of oxen, "asses, sheep, goats," &c.

This enumeration has been challenged by the so-called learned, who frequently, though they know a great deal, do not by any means know nearly enough. It was boldly said that sheep were not reared in ancient Egypt. Here is the reply of modern investigation: "They abounded in Egypt, and even at Thebes," says Wilkinson, "and large flocks were kept for their wool, particularly in the neighbourhood of Memphis," that is, in the very district in which the Israelites dwelt, and in which Moses spoke to Pharaoh. Still greater difficulty has been made about the horse, and especially the camel. The horse, as we shall by-and-bye see, figures largely upon the monuments. The objection regarding the camel has also been swept away, as we have already seen, by fuller investigation. This useful beast of burden seems to have been confined to the provinces bordering on the desert, and to have been unknown in Upper Egypt.

Before I turn from this point, let me ask the reader to note what animals head the list, and on the loss of which most stress is apparently laid. They are the horses and the asses. Let this be compared with the following extract from Wilkinson: "Horses and asses were abundant, and the latter were employed

as beasts of burden, for treading out corn, (particularly in Lower Egypt), and for many other purposes. Like those of the present day they were small, active, and capable of bearing great fatigue: and, as these hardy animals were maintained at a very trifling expense, their numbers in the agricultural districts were very great, and one individual had as many as seven hundred and sixty employed on different parts of his estate.”\*

The list given in the Scripture is also remarkable for an omission. “The enumeration of the animals in the fields,” says Mr. Thomson, “which would be affected by the murrain contains one of those undesigned coincidences for the truth of the sacred narrative of the plague which would have been the delight of Paley to trace. Among the animals which suffered, *sheep* are mentioned, a circumstance that could only occur within or close to the Mendesian Nome, which lay opposite to Goshen. Sheep were there used for food, and the goat, being adored as a god by the inhabitants of this district, was not eaten: hence the latter was not in the fields.

“Besides,” he adds, “the presence of these animals in the meadows marks the time of the year when the calamity occurred, for it is only in the spring and early summer that the fields are available for pasture. This period is also within the interval occupied by the plagues, that is, between the middle of February and middle of April.” †

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\* *The Ancient Egyptians* (Popular Edition), vol. i., 231.

† *The Plagues of Egypt*, pp. 81, 82.

The enumeration, and the very order of it, bear the stamp, therefore, of place and time. No one can fail to see that the words were moulded in view of the very things which we now know to have characterised the Egypt of the time. How is this, if the words were not spoken then, and have not been brought down to us in such unbroken integrity that not one thing in the enumeration is missing, and not even the order of it is disturbed? Is there not a proof there that He, who caused these things to be written for our learning, has taken care that they should reach us in their integrity?

There is still one inquiry which we have to make. We have already seen indications of a compassionate law in these afflictions. The scourge, lifted in the hand of God, has hitherto been one the weight of which the Egyptians were well acquainted with. This gave emphasis to the threatening; and, if anything could have bowed the stubborn will of Pharaoh, the mention of a much dreaded infliction must have availed to do it. Was it so, then, in this instance? Was a murrain of cattle an occasional occurrence, and one that was regarded with alarm? We have, so far as I know, no ancient testimony upon this point: but modern experience fully supplies the lack. In 1786, the cattle plague slew so great a number of oxen that the Egyptian cultivators were compelled to employ buffaloes in their place. In still later times, it has repeatedly fallen upon that country with great severity. In 1842, 1863, and 1866, there were visitations in which "nearly the whole of the herds have

been destroyed.”\* It is natural to suppose that the cattle plague swept over the land, from time to time, in ancient, as well as in modern, days. This would lend a terrible emphasis to the announcement that there should be “a very grievous murrain.”

It is one of the marvellous properties of the Bible, that its glory is the more fully revealed, the more closely and minutely it is studied. It is not so with other books. There are tricks of authorship of which one tires. There are limitations of insight, and of ability, and of information: there are defects of memory, of temper, and of style that lead to the painful discovery of how poor and mean man is, even at his best. The glories of human authorship, as of all human workmanship, fade under the microscope. But the workmanship of God is never rightly seen till then. The minutest study of God's works has always the most wondrous tale to tell. And it is so with the Bible. As we take it phrase by phrase, and word by word, it is as if gateways opened, and we saw right up along the golden streets of the city of God. The doors of the palace are rolled back, and we see the glory of the King.

The story of these plagues, for example, seems a very simple matter. At first we may imagine that a glance is enough to reap everything which they contain in the shape of information or of wisdom. But read them carefully through again and again, and you will discover a strange law pervading them. *Every third plague falls without warning.* Another strange

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\* *Speaker's Commentary*, i., 238.

thing is, that this should be the case and yet no attention be called to it. The fact lies waiting, like so much besides in God's Word and in God's works, to be discovered and pondered. Twice is the warning given, and a place left for repentance. But when the second chastisement has fallen, and there is defiance still, then the hand of God smites in unannounced and sudden judgment. There is here a note of warning. God will not always plead with men to turn from wrong; He will not always deal in chastisement. A moment comes when mercy gives place to judgment.

We have already pointed to another lesson which those who look closely into this record see written upon these plagues. They steadily increase in severity. It was God's *first* message to Pharaoh, that if he refused to let Israel, God's first-born, go, God would slay Pharaoh's first-born (Exodus iv. 23). Pharaoh disobeyed, and yet that threatening was not fulfilled. That was the last stroke; and signs, and wonders, and chastisements went first to save Pharaoh from the blow for which there could be no healing. The signs, like the deepening intensity of the Divine pleading, grow, as I have said, in severity. First, a mere sign—the staff changed into a serpent—is shown. Then the water is changed into blood, when the fish die, and the land is polluted. Then the horror and pollution is increased in the plague of frogs. Next, their life is made a burden in the plague of mosquito-gnats.

These are the three first plagues. So far the Egyp-

tians are inconvenienced, but no man's possessions are as yet touched. The second three plagues go further. The beetles, or *arob*, invade their dwellings, consume their clothing, turn their splendidly-furnished apartments into ruin, and put in peril the lives of the sick and the feeble. Then the plague descends upon their cattle, and that much prized possession is swept away. And now, in the sixth plague, their own bodies are touched. They are smitten with a painful and loathsome disease, which the magicians, their champions in this conflict with Jehovah, confess to be from the hand of God, and at once retire from the contest. Men, in their reasonings over the predicted end of the wicked, put God's love over against His righteousness. Some build their arguments upon the one foundation, some build theirs upon the other. Are they wise? Here we see *both* love and righteousness. Love keeps back the stroke of threatened judgment. Love sends milder chastisements to turn aside from the way of disobedience, and to save from the final and awful calamity. When lighter chastisements fail to save, love lets heavier strokes fall, to see whether these may turn the sinner from his way. *Chastisement implies judgment.* Its very warning tells that some fearful fate lies waiting to end the path of sin.

But we must keep to our special task, and ask whether this sixth plague bears the Egyptian watermark. We do not know what the plague was. Some suppose that it was Elephantiasis, a disease that is sometimes confounded with leprosy. But we

have as yet nothing definite in the way of evidence. Then, some of the words employed are plainly not native Hebrew. They resemble Egyptian words. But here, too, we have up to the present time nothing more than indications which are too faint to be called proofs. But there is, nevertheless, one part of the narrative in which the Egyptian watermark is unmistakable. Why could not the magicians stand any longer before Moses? The Scripture replies that they "could not stand before Moses because of the boils" (Exodus ix. 11). But the question is not yet answered. The boils must have been quite as painful to Pharaoh, and to his other courtiers, as to the magicians. It might have been said that Pharaoh, or his nobles, could no longer stand before Moses; and we have, therefore, still to ask why the magicians are singled out, and why we are told that *they* could no longer "stand before Moses because of the boils?"

That is an incident which a knowledge of the customs of ancient Egypt will alone allow us to explain. In the first place, these magicians were not only priests, but were high in the ranks of the priesthood. The knowledge which they were using in the contest was the prerogative of the priesthood, and it was only to the most trusted members of the order that the great secrets of the art were committed. Now here we meet an immediate and full explanation of *their* retreat at this time. These ulcers were a defilement, and the priests were no longer able to discharge the duties of their sacred office.

Their scrupulous attention to the laws of health and to cleanliness, are among the best known facts relating to the Egyptian priesthood. "The priests," says Lenormant, "were obliged to be scrupulously clean in their persons and clothes. 'They shave the whole body every other day,' says Herodotus, and his account quite agrees with the monuments. 'Their dress is entirely of linen, and their shoes of the papyrus plant; and it is not lawful for them to wear either dress or shoes of any other material. They bathe twice every day in cold water, and twice every night, besides which they observe, so to speak, thousands of ceremonies.'"<sup>\*</sup>

The reader will bear in mind that the Scripture does not say that the magicians were priests, and does not explain that the priests were rendered unfit for their office by the slightest defilement. The Scripture was silent *because there was no necessity for explanation*. The people of the Exodus were fully acquainted with the facts. *They* knew that the magicians were the leading members of the priesthood, and that defilement made it impossible for them, so long as it lasted, to discharge the duties of their office. A later generation would not have known these things, and an explanation would then have been necessary. That no explanation is given here is a silent but powerful testimony that the book was written by Moses, and for the people whom he led out of Egypt.

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<sup>\*</sup> *Ancient History of the East*, i. 291.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE SEVENTH, EIGHTH, AND NINTH PLAGUES.

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IN the seventh plague a distinct advance is made in the severity of the chastisement. There is now to be loss of life, as well as of cattle and of crops. "Behold, to-morrow," so ran the Divine message, "about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die" (Exodus ix. 18, 19). With regard to the cattle, the question naturally occurs—whence have they been procured? In the fifth plague we are told that "all the cattle of Egypt died." Yet we read here that "he that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: and he that regarded not the word of the Lord left his servants and his cattle in the field" (ver. 20). Both parties have cattle, and yet, if *all* the cattle had died in a previous plague, where can these have come from? With a difficulty of that kind, the first thought of some people is to alter the Scripture. The word "all," they say, cannot really mean *all*: it means only that the bulk of the

cattle died. We believe, on the contrary, that when the Bible says "all," it uses that word with deliberation, and with perfect accuracy. There *is* a limitation, however, expressed in the Scripture. The cattle which perished were those pasturing "in the field" (Exodus ix. 3). The animals which were not so exposed did not perish then. Besides this, the Israelites had abundance of cattle, and their Egyptian masters could soon make good their losses in the markets of Goshen, as well as in those which were being continually supplied from the neighbouring countries. The Egyptians had acted with their usual clear-sightedness, decision, and energy. Their losses were repaired in the speediest possible way. Their farms were once more stocked, and their stables were once more filled.

This would make the seventh plague still more severe. The loss of these cattle would be felt more than the first. But does this plague also bear the mark of the place and time? The Egyptians are threatened with a very grievous hail: "I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now." This implies that the Egyptians knew what hail-storms were, and the damage which they inflicted. If it can be proved that such visitations were known and were dreaded, the choice of this plague would be fully explained.

The following quotation will be enough to show that hail is not unknown in Egypt. "During their sojourn in Alexandria, Wansleben and Monconys

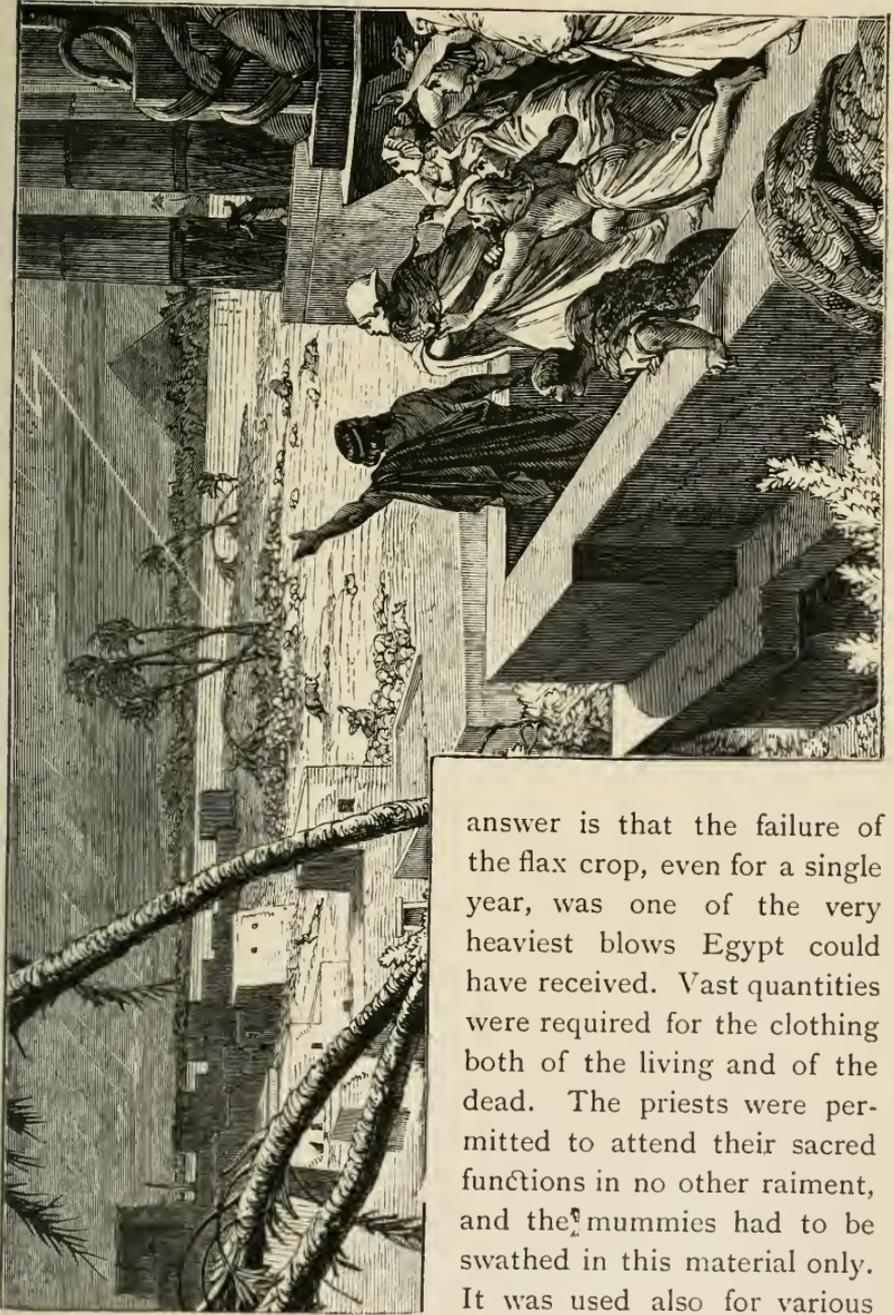
witnessed thunderstorms in the month of January, the former on the first, the latter on the seventeenth and the eighteenth of the month: the tempest was accompanied with hail. Perry also observes that it hails in January and February in Cairo, although but seldom. Pococke and Korte witnessed at Fium, in February, rain-showers mixed with hail-stones. . . . In March, tempest-storms are of no rare occurrence at Cairo.”\*

It is quite evident, then, that the Egyptians knew enough to understand the Divine threatening. There are other three points in the narrative which show the minutest acquaintance with Egypt. The reader will notice what is said in summing up the loss. In verse 31 we read: “And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled.” The flax was not so far advanced as the barley, for it was only bolled, that is, it was merely in blossom; while, on the other hand, the barley was in the ear. And yet, though the latter crop had almost reached its maturity, *the flax is named first*. It was, therefore, plainly the more important crop. In any estimate of the damage done, that, it appears, must take the first place.

This may seem a small point, but it is one of those small things in which a narrative insensibly takes shape and colour from the surroundings of the writer, and which a forger can never imitate. When we look back to the Egypt of that time, can we mark anything that gave this form to the sentence? The

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\* Kalisch on Exodus, p. 152.



PLAGUE OF HAIL AND RAIN.

answer is that the failure of the flax crop, even for a single year, was one of the very heaviest blows Egypt could have received. Vast quantities were required for the clothing both of the living and of the dead. The priests were permitted to attend their sacred functions in no other raiment, and the mummies had to be swathed in this material only. It was used also for various

purposes besides. It formed defensive armour for their soldiers. Herodotus mentions an Egyptian corslet which he thus describes: "It was of linen, ornamented with figures of animals, worked in gold and cotton. Each thread of the corslet was worthy of admiration. For, though very fine, every one was composed of three hundred and sixty other threads, all distinct." Linen was also used for nets. "The threads used for nets," says Wilkinson, "were remarkable for their fineness;" and Pliny says, "some of them (that is, the nets) were so delicate, that they would pass through a man's ring, and a single person could carry a sufficient number of them to surround a whole wood."\* The fame of these fabrics had filled the whole ancient world, and the fine linen of Egypt, said to have been sold for its weight in gold, was in request everywhere. Large quantities were exported. When I add that this very district of Tanis, in which Moses and the Israelites lived, was the great flax-field of Egypt, we can understand how well these words of Scripture have caught and retained the reflection of the facts.

The second point which we have to notice is *the order* of the crops. The Scripture gives us very definite information on these points: "The flax and the barley was smitten, for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they were not grown up (or were later)" (Exodus ix. 31, 32). Here the order is definitely laid down. The barley ripens first, the

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\* *The Ancient Egyptians*, ii., 80.

flax next—seeing it was only in blossom while the barley was in the ear. The wheat and the rye harvests are later. They are all sown about the same time—in the month of November. Wilkinson gives a table\* which will help us to understand the statements of Scripture. Of the flax he says: “Sown middle of November; plucked in 110 days.” Let us now do a little calculation. To the end of Nov.

would give us	...	...	...	15	days
To end of December	...	...	...	31	„
„ „ January	...	...	...	31	„
„ „ February	...	...	...	28	„
„ fifth of March	...	...	...	5	„
				110	„
In all	...	...	...	110	„

The flax harvest would then be ready for plucking about the first or second week in March. Let us now see what is known about the barley. Of this Wilkinson says: “Sown at the same time, *i.e.*, as the wheat—November; reaped, some in 90 days, some in the fourth month.” Now if the flax ripened in 110 days, and the earlier barley in 90, then the barley harvest was 20 days earlier than the flax harvest, which would exactly suit the statement in the text that the barley was in the ear while the flax was in blossom.

Let us now turn to the crops which escaped. The wheat, we read in Wilkinson’s table, was “sown in November; reaped in the beginning of April, a month later than barley.” If the barley was only in

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\* *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. ii., p. 398.

the ear, then the wheat was not advanced enough to be fatally injured by the storm. The rye, or spelt, keeps pace with the wheat, being also one month later than the barley. "Wheat and spelt," says Kalisch, \* "were still tender and flexible, and, therefore, yielded to the violence of the hail and rain, and remained uninjured; whilst the hard, stiff, and dry stalks of flax and barley were, by their resistance, easily broken and destroyed."

I may add that *all* were important Egyptian crops. The rye, called doora by the natives, was the common food of the ancient Egyptians, and is the only grain pictured on the monuments. This is a point of very great importance. It was impossible for anyone writing in a later age, and in the midst of an entirely different agriculture, to have given such an account of the crops of ancient Egypt. Either in their nature or in the order of their appearance, some blunder would have been made that would have betrayed the foreign education of the writer. But we find also another of these invaluable indications that we are dealing with a production of the time. What is stated about the condition of the crops gives us an indication of the time of year when the plague of hail fell upon Egypt. Later on a date is given in connection with the Exodus. Do these dates agree? Here again a forger's hand would have betrayed itself. It is proverbial that one cannot think of everything, and it is fortunate, for the protection of honest people, that rogues *cannot*

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\* Kalisch on *Exodus* 158.

remember everything. In the investigations of any supposed imposture, the one hope is that the impostor's story will be found not to hang together, and that, under the fire of questioning and cross-questioning, the fraud will at length be revealed. Well, do these two dates hang together? The flax harvest might have happened to have been later than the date fixed for the Exodus; or it might have been too early; and so a gap might have been left which the intervening events could not have bridged over. Or yet again, it might have come so close upon the other event, that no room was left for other occurrences to intervene. How stands the matter, then? In a passage which we have already quoted, the editor of *The Speaker's Commentary*—no mean authority on any question respecting Egypt—says, "*The flax was bolled, i.e., in blossom.* This is a point of great importance. It marks the time. In the north of Egypt, the barley ripens, and the flax blossoms, about the middle of February, or at the latest, early in March."

So much for the one date; now for the other. The Israelites went out from Egypt on the 15th day of the month Abib, afterwards called Nisan by the Jews. By its etymology, Abib was the month of "ears of corn," and would fall, therefore, about the beginning of the eastern harvest. At the present time, the Jews make Nisan to coincide with our March. But, owing to the ancient months being lunar, they were subject, within limits, to perplexing variations. We have one valuable astronomical

indication, however, which we owe to Josephus. The Jewish historian says that the Passover took place when the sun was in the constellation Aries. It enters the constellation near the end of March. The fifteenth day of Abib, the day of the Passover, would therefore be about the end of March, or the very beginning of April. We have, therefore, about one month between the plague of hail and the Exodus. The three plagues which intervened would fill up the intervening time. The interval is neither too long nor too short, and the two dates follow in the right order.

There is no doubt as to the nature of the eighth plague. We have experienced difficulty on more than one occasion by the very circumstances which reveal the Egyptian stamp impressed upon the sacred narrative, and which, therefore, prove it to belong to the time of Moses. Egyptian terms are used, upon which research has shed a ray or two of light, but only a ray or two. Here, however, there is no obscurity. The locust was too common a scourge, and Israel herself was too often visited by this token of the Divine anger to leave the name unemployed in the relation of her history. It is of frequent recurrence in the Old Testament Scriptures.

It is plain, too, from the narrative, that this infliction was greatly dreaded. It is quite true that it was to be of exceptional severity. The Divine message to Pharaoh spoke of it as a visitation such as "neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day"

(Ex. x. 6). But it is plain that, apart from this, the very word "locusts" had a terrible sound in the ear of the Egyptian. For the first time we hear a remonstrance in the court. The princes and great men who surround the king, and who revere him as a god, are driven to forget the awful distance that stands between them and the throne. They throw aside, in very evident terror, their habitual reverence, and expostulate with the lord of the two Egypts. This expostulation, too, is couched in no gentle language:—"And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" (Exodus x. 7).

The word "locust" is represented, therefore, as awaking terrible alarm in Egypt. Just as a second blow had fallen upon their cattle, so a second blow was now to fall upon the land and to complete the destruction of the produce on which they depended for their daily bread. The second blow was to come from a quarter which they apparently knew would spare nothing. Was there any cause for this apprehension? The following testimonies will afford a sufficient reply.

Volney (*Trav. i.* p. 235) writes: "With Egypt, Persia, and almost the whole of Southern Asia, Syria has a fearful plague in common, namely, those clouds of locusts of which almost all travellers report. Everybody, except an eye-witness, must deem the enormous quantity of these insects quite

incredible; the ground is covered with them for several leagues. The noise which they cause when devouring leaves and grass is heard at a considerable distance, and seems like the noise of an army foraging in secret. It is certainly much better to fall in with the Tartars, than with these little all-devouring creatures; it might almost be said that fire accompanies them. Where their swarms appear, everything green vanishes momentarily from the fields, as if a curtain is rolled up; the trees and plants stand leafless, and nothing is seen but naked boughs and stalks, and thus the dreary image of Winter follows rapidly on the variegated exuberance of Spring. If these locust clouds move on, in order to fly over an obstacle which stands in the way of their voraciousness, or still more rapidly over a waste soil, it can literally be said that the sky is obscured by them. It is a consolation that this plague does not occur often, for there is nothing which produces so invariably famine and disease."

"They often cover the ground," says Kalisch, "for the space of several leagues to the depth of four, sometimes six or seven, inches. A swarm which was observed in India in 1825 occupied the space of forty English square miles, contained at least forty millions of locusts in one line, and cast a long shadow on the earth. And Major Moore thus describes an immense army of these animals which ravaged the Mahratta country: 'The column they composed extended five hundred miles, and so compact was it when on the wing, that, like an eclipse, it completely

hid the sun so that no shadow was cast by any object. Brown, in his *Travels in Africa*, states that an area of nearly two thousand square miles was literally covered by them; and Kirby and Spence mention that a column of them was so immense, that they took four hours to fly over the spot where the observer stood. The approach of their swarms is announced by a yellow reflex in the skies, which arises from their yellow wings. If the rays of the sun shine upon them, the earth itself assumes a yellow colour. After they have converted the land into a desert they proceed in their flight, but leave behind them their eggs and their excrements, which cause a detestable smell. Remarkable is the extraordinary order and regularity of their swarms.' 'They fly,' says Jerome, 'after the will of the all-governing Deity with such order, that they keep their place like the figures made by the hand of the artist on a pavement, and never in the least deviate to the right or to the left. They fly always in a straight onward direction, mostly northwards, but not always. Sometimes they penetrate even into the houses; they fly into the mouths of the inmates; they throw themselves on the food: they gnaw leather and even wood. It has been unsuccessfully tried to keep them off or to repel them by pits and ditches, crying, drums, smoke, and even soldiers.' '\*

There can be no doubt that the locust is the terror of the eastern husbandman. But, it may still be asked, have we any proof that they were a terror

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\* Kalisch. *Exodus*, 161-163.

to Egypt, and especially to the Egypt of the times of Moses? Here is the answer: "The locust is less common in Egypt than in many eastern countries; yet it is well known and dreaded as one of the most terrible of scourges. In the papyrus *Aanast.* v. p. 10, it is mentioned as the common enemy of the husbandman. Niebuhr and Forskal witnessed two visitations; Tischendorf describes one of unusual extent in March, which covered the whole country: they come generally from the western deserts, but sometimes from the east and south-east." \*

In the instructions of King Usertesen I., the ravages inflicted by the locusts are mentioned, and are placed upon the same level as civil war and an insufficient rise in the Nile, two of the greatest calamities from which Egypt could suffer.

The observation of modern times has fully confirmed the ancient records.

Lepsius, writing from Saqqarah on March 18th, 1843, says: "I had descended with Abeken into a mummy-pit, to open some sarcophagi which we had discovered. I was not a little surprised on coming up to find myself in the midst of a tempest of locusts, which, like a snowstorm, almost darkened the sky. They passed over our heads by hundreds of thousands, coming from the desert on the southwest, and proceeding toward the valley. Believing that there was only one battalion of them, I hastened to cry to my companions to come up from the tomb, to enjoy the sight of this marvel before it had passed

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\* *Speaker's Commentary*, i. 287.

away. But the locusts continued to pass without intermission, and the workmen told me that the flight had already continued for a quarter of an hour. We now remarked that the entire country, in every sense of the word, was covered with locusts. I sent a servant into the desert to get some idea as to the breadth of the cloud. He ran along for a quarter of an hour, and came back saying that he had not been able to discover the end of it. It is fourteen years since the locusts invaded Egypt in such large numbers."

An account which bears still more closely on the sacred narrative, is given by Denon, the French artist, who accompanied Napoleon to Egypt: "Two days after this disaster, we were told that the plain was covered with birds, which were passing on from east to west, like the close files of an army; and, indeed, we saw at a distance the fields appear to move like a broad torrent flowing through the country. Thinking that they might be some foreign birds, we hastened out to meet them; but instead of birds we saw a cloud of locusts, who just skimmed the soil, stopping at each blade of grass to devour it, then flying off to new food. If it had not been the season in which the corn was young and tender, this would have been a serious plague, for these children of the desert are as lean, as active, and as vigorous as the Bedouin Arabs; it would be interesting to know how they live and produce such multitudes in so arid a desert; perhaps it was the rain that had suddenly hatched them, and had produced this

emigration, just as certain winds bring swarms of gnats. The wind changing again in a contrary direction to their march, they were once more driven back into the desert. These locusts are of a rose colour, speckled with black, very strong, shy and difficult to catch.”\*

This last testimony is specially valuable. The accuracy of the Scripture has been challenged, because it states that the locusts were brought by an *east* wind. A little knowledge is proverbially a dangerous thing. It is quite true that an east wind is somewhat rare in Egypt, but that is hardly a sufficient foundation for the contention that the wind *never* blows from the east there, and that the Scripture which says it did, must be wrong. It will be noted that Denon states distinctly that the invasion of which he was a witness, passed from east to west, and that the locusts were removed by the wind “changing again in a contrary direction.” There could not possibly be a closer parallel to the account to Scripture. Before I pass from this part of the narrative, I may mention an incident which is in striking accord with it. We have been already told that the hail “brake every tree of the field.” The destruction of the trees must have been a heavy blow, as “the Egyptians were passionately fond of trees.” But this destruction is now completed. The shattered branches, and the very stems are destroyed by these ravenous and insatiable insects. “They shall eat,” said the Divine pre-

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\* *Denon's Travels*, vol. ii., 330, 331.



PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS.

diction, "every tree which groweth for you out of the field" (Exodus x. 5). Egypt was stripped of this adornment; and now comes the wondrous part of my story. We have seen reason, on entirely different grounds, to fix upon Thotmes II. as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Four years after the death of Thotmes II., *his widow* "imported a large number of trees from Arabia Felix." The story of the expedition is told on the walls of a vast temple which the queen reared at Deir el Bahri. She is represented in the sculptures bringing the produce of the expedition to Punt and presenting it to the god Amen.\*

That trees belonging to certain rare species might be imported at any time, we know; but this was one of the special objects of a great expedition which has been recorded by Egyptian scribes and sculptors; and it was not the gathering and importing of rare specimens, but the bringing into the country of a large supply, as if for its re-planting. What made the re-planting necessary? Read that record of *The Fleet of an Egyptian Queen* in the light of the Book of Exodus, and all is plain. As soon as the country begins to recover from these heavy chastisements, and the shattered government gathers strength, an expedition is undertaken to clothe the land with the ancient fruitfulness and beauty.

On the ninth plague I can say little. Many have thought that the thick darkness which could be felt was caused by the chamsin, the strong hot south-

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\* Petrie's *History of Egypt*, vol. ii., pp. 82, 83.

west wind, which "fills the atmosphere with dense masses of fine sand, bringing on a darkness far deeper than that of our worst fogs in winter." They have been the more inclined to this opinion, by the fact that the chamsin frequently lasts three days, the time during which this plague continued. But, however deep that obscuration is, it could hardly be said that the people "saw not one another." It seems to me that we must regard this infliction, which fell, like each of the other third plagues, suddenly and without warning, as entirely unprecedented. It was God's last appeal before the long deferred judgment fell. Each man was shut in, so to say, with God, during those awful three days and three nights. All business was suspended: everything was laid aside: each dwelt alone, king, counsellor, noble, priest, merchant, artisan, peasant: each was held in God's hand, and confronted with the question, spoken in the memory of one plague after another, and re-uttered in the consciousness of this—"Canst thou contend with the Lord God of Israel? Wilt thou dash thyself against the buckler of the Almighty?" Those three days of awe-struck isolation, permit us to look into the depths of that infinite compassion which would have saved Egypt from that last stroke which was to break all its stubbornness and pride.

We are not, however, without some indication of the blow inflicted by the tenth plague—the death of the first-born. The story of the life and reign of Thotmes II. has yet to be written; but we know

that he died without leaving any legitimate successor to his throne. His widow succeeded him, apparently as regent, during the minority of Thotmes III., a child of the harem.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### THE EXODUS.

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THE last plague broke the heart of Egypt. Death, terrible everywhere, made an awful pause in the life of this pleasure-loving people. We have already noted this feature in dealing with the death of Jacob. "When anyone died," says Wilkinson, "all the females of his family, covering their heads and faces with mud, and leaving the body in the house, ran through the streets, with their bosoms exposed, striking themselves, and uttering loud lamentations. Their friends and relations joined them, uniting in the same demonstrations of grief; and when the deceased was a person of consideration, many strangers accompanied them out of respect to his memory. Hired mourners were also employed to add, by their feigned demonstrations of grief, to the real lamentations of the family, and to heighten the show of respect paid to the deceased. The men, in like manner, girding their dress below their waist, went through the town smiting their breasts, and throwing dust upon their heads."

It may be imagined, then, what effect this last infliction had upon the entire people. "There was not a house in which there was not one dead." Those who might have mourned with others, had to bow under their own grief. "And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead" (Exodus xii. 30). But, when we have noted the grief of Pharaoh and of his people because of their dead, we have not summed up all that was accomplished by this judgment. The impious pretensions of the king, and the idolatrous veneration of the Egyptians for their sovereign were judged. It has always been felt that the words in Exodus xii. 12, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and *against all the gods of Egypt* I will execute judgment," implied the existence of such idolatry. The animal-worship of Egypt has always been well known, and everyone could see why, over against that prediction of the death of the first-born of beasts, the words should be written: "And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment." But the words are placed against these: "both MAN and beast." Did the Egyptians add to their other follies the deification of man? Was the one man of the nation—the king—esteemed and worshipped as a god?

To this question no perfectly clear answer could be given till recently; and it need not surprise us that

the fact was denied. All doubt has now, however, been swept away by the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets and of other inscriptions. The deification of the king seemed to be proved even by Egyptian inscriptions previously known. Thotmes III., the successor (after an interval) of Thotmes II., whom we believe to have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus, was at this very time an infant in the royal harem, and "received divine adoration in his earliest youth, and sacrifice was offered to him by the scribe, User-Amen, in his fifth year." \* Amenophis III., belonging to the same dynasty, speaks of himself as the god of Nubia, and in a papyrus he is referred to as one of the gods of Memphis. But the Tel-el-Amarna tablets show how real the idolatry was. The Pharaoh was worshipped by his high officials. Rip-Adda, a governor of a Canaanitish city, addresses him as "the king of the universe," and adds: "at the feet of my lord, my sun-god, I prostrate myself seven times and seven times." Ammunira, governor of Beyrout, adds the expression "my gods," as if all the divinities he adored were summed up in the personality of his poor fellow-mortal, who sat upon the Egyptian throne. He says: "To the king, my lord, my sun-god, my gods, thus says Ammunira, a man of the cities, thy servant, and the dust of thy feet; At the feet of the king, my lord, my sun-god, my gods, seven times and seven times I fall." Another adds to the other idolatrous ascriptions, this: "The sun who is from heaven," and says: "At the feet of the king,

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\* *New Light on the Bible* (Cassell & Co.), 174.

my lord, my sun-god from heaven, I bow seven times and seven times, with my heart and with my back." The governor of Tyre goes further still. "My lord is the sun-god who rises day by day upon the lands, according to the decree of the sun-god his gracious father, and gives life by his glorious voice, and speaks within his sanctuary, and makes all lands to dwell in strength, peace, and abundance, and gives forth thunder in heaven like the god Rimmon, and all lands are consumed with terror because of his thunder."

The impious pride of Pharaoh was at last humbled. He was smitten and chastised in his own land, and in the presence of all his people. His heir, who no doubt had already been hailed with divine honours, lay in the stillness of death. It was impossible to doubt that this blow was from the hand of Israel's God. The simultaneous death of the first-born everywhere was plainly no accident. And Israel's God had threatened this from the first. A great fear, too, pressed upon king and people. The hand that had already smitten, might smite again. Freedom was, therefore, immediately given to the oppressed Israelites. They were thrust out. Pharaoh will make no longer delay. He will not even wait for the dawning of the day. "He called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send

them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men" (Exodus xii. 31-33).

We now come to a part of the sacred narrative which wakens the deepest interest in the breast of the Archæologist. The masses of Israel are in motion. They assemble at a certain centre. They march forward in a certain direction. They pass, or rest at, places which are named. As we read the story, we are taken back into the long vanished life of the time. The vast interval of 3,500 years is bridged over; and, as we peruse the story of this journey, we are walking through the Egypt of the fifteenth century before the Christian era. Each day's journey measures the distance between one ancient city and another, and we are able to fill in the places in our map, and to correct the mistakes of past ages. But the interest felt by the Archæologist is a small thing compared with that experienced by the student of God's Word. He knows what things are being said against this part of Scripture, and how multitudes are losing that faith which is salvation, because of what they hear. It is said that this book of Exodus was not written by Moses, nor by Joshua, nor by any of the men who are said to have come out of Egypt. It is true (it is admitted) that a good deal is said in it about Moses writing one thing and another in "the book;" but that, we are told, is only a trick to suggest, or to help the suggestion, that Moses is the writer of the book. It was really written, we are further informed, in the time of the exile, when some "patriotic Jews" thought that their

countrymen would be all the better for some elaborate ritual.

The book is thus alleged to have been written eleven hundred years after the events, if these ever *were* events. Wellhausen speaks of "the decisive arguments that support the view that the Priestly Code originated in and after the exile;" and he adds: "it is a pure *petitio principii*, and nothing more, to say that the post-exilic age was not equal to the task of producing a work like the Priestly Code."\*

But research and discovery have shattered into irreparable ruin the infidel theories of the New Theology. We shall find abundant proof, as we accompany the Israelites through Egypt and Sinai, that the theories which assign the authorship of the Pentateuch to any other than the Mosaic period are utterly incredible. Let me give one illustration of this. Josephus has written an account of the Exodus, in which he sets forth the story in a form which he judged would be intelligible to the men of his own time. Let it be borne in mind that Josephus had facilities for knowing Egypt that were altogether wanting to any Jew at the time of the exile. For more than three hundred years a large, wealthy, and influential Jewish colony had been settled in Alexandria, the Egyptian capital. There was constant intercourse between Alexandria and Jerusalem, and there were many natives of the former city with whom Josephus was intimately acquainted, and many others from whom he could have obtained

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\* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xviii., p. 513.

information. What, then, was the result of all this enlightenment, or at least of this opportunity for enlightenment? Merely this—a brief passage in which almost every line contains a blunder.

The Critics give the supposed forgers of the Pentateuch credit for abilities which neither they themselves nor any other sons of men have ever possessed. Josephus says: "Now they took their journey by Letopolis, a place at that time deserted, but where Babylon was built afterwards, when Cambyses laid Egypt waste. But as they went away hastily, on the third day they came to Baalzephon on the Red Sea." On this Scholz (in his work on *Egyptology and the books of Moses*) says: "The statement of Flavius Josephus, that the Israelites went through Letopolis—the later Babylon—and came to Baalzephon with women and children and cattle in three days of hurried marching, is not the outcome of investigation, but of his customary superficial conjectures. Besides, he has given wrongly the position of Letopolis, which lay *west* of the Nile, slightly under Cairo, while Babylon stood on the *eastern* side of the Nile, *above* Cairo. He evidently believes that the Israelites, coming from the capital of Egypt, *had to set out from Memphis*. His statements are nothing more than a superficial paraphrase, and false explanation of the Scripture account."

Josephus is not the only one who has helped to prove that, if it is impossible to write history out of one's inner consciousness, it is a still harder task to construct the geography of a country out of the same

slender materials. Many others have failed, who have had fuller information than he possessed, and who had the advantage also of having visited the very places through which the Israelites marched. The first who entered into the question in modern times, with any likelihood of settling it, was Claude Sicard, a Jesuit missionary, who died in Egypt in 1726, after having spent twenty years in the country. He set himself to study the question of the Exodus. He made himself acquainted with the local traditions, and then undertook a journey in 1720, "the principal motive of which," he says, "was to examine leisurely, and on the spot, the route which the Israelites took at God's command, when they went forth from Egypt." He was misled at the outset, by the Arab tradition, that the Pharaoh of the Exodus resided at Memphis. This error as to the starting-point vitiated everything, and the only good which Sicard's investigations effected, was to place the problem of the Exodus before the learned of Europe.

Another theory as to the route of the Exodus startled the learned world a number of years ago. It was by Brugsch Bey, an Egyptologist of deservedly high reputation, and one indeed to whom Biblical scholars are deeply indebted. The theory to which I refer, was first given to the public at a conference held at Alexandria in 1874, and was at the close of the same year explained by the author to the Oriental congress which then met in London. The confidence with which it was propounded may be judged from his statement that, for two thousand years, every Biblical

commentator and translator had been in error in regard to the geography of the Israelitish sojourn in Egypt and of the Exodus. The lecture was published in French, more than a year afterwards. He had meanwhile been absent on an expedition into the Libyan desert, and he writes in his preface: "On returning from this journey, he was able to take advantage of his stay in the eastern part of Lower Egypt, to examine the sites, and to verify the topographical and geographical views, which form the subject of this Memoir. The author is happy to be able to state that his new researches have contributed to prove, even to the smallest details, the conclusions which the papyri and the monuments compelled him to form with regard to the topographical direction of the Exodus, and to the stations where the Hebrews halted, as related in Holy Scripture."

When we consider that the new theory led the Israelites to the Mediterranean, instead of to the Red Sea, we need hardly wonder that he should credit Biblical scholars with an ignorance of more than two thousand years' standing, and that he should have to complain of the "attacks which these new views have had to sustain on the part of several orthodox scholars." But the whole is now an old story. In view of further research, Brugsch Bey willingly and manfully withdrew his theory, and it will only be referred to in future as one of the "curiosities of literature." The discovery of Pithom overthrew his whole fabric of ingenious speculation,

and showed that the narrative of Exodus had a hold on reality which neither tradition nor learning has ever been able to boast. We can understand how this should be so, if Exodus owes its origin to the Mosaic period. But we shall be glad to have Dr. Driver's explanation of the mystery, if Exodus is itself the result of tradition and of conjecture formed in an age still less enlightened than that of Claude Sicard, or even of Brugsch Bey.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE LOCALITIES OF THE EXODUS.

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IN the last chapter, we had painful evidence of how impossible it is for ignorance—even very learned ignorance—to map out an accurate or even consistent route of the momentous journey made by the united families of Israel. Let us now see whether the Scripture has succeeded any better. If it has, the conclusion will be immediate and lasting: each of us will feel that the Bible has succeeded because, where others knew much, it has known everything.

We have first of all to note from what point the Scripture account makes the journey begin. Any mistake as to that will make everything else not merely worthless, but positively misleading. There

is also another matter, closely connected with this, which must first be settled with equal certainty. We must get to know where those marvellous and eventful meetings between Moses and Pharaoh took place. In other words, we must have some clear notion as to what was the capital of Egypt in the time of Moses. In chapter XI., which deals with "the scene of the conflict between Moses and Pharaoh," we have seen that this was Tanis. The capital of Egypt, during the Shepherd dynasty, was Memphis. It was there, in all probability, that Joseph was imprisoned, and afterwards lived while he ruled the land. But the eighteenth dynasty, which succeeded the rulers who knew Joseph, fixed upon a more northern city, which kept the centre of their power where it was more needed for the security of the new conquest. The story of this new capital takes us back to the time of the Shepherd invasion. That invasion of Egypt took place about the year 2080 B.C., and was made by a people and not by a king. It seems that they passed out from the Euphrates valley and settled first in Syria and Palestine, and then passed into Egypt. Manetho says that they conquered the country in a most peculiar fashion. No battle was fought. There was, so to say, no warlike invasion. They poured into the country with their flocks and herds, and resistance became impossible through the immensity of their numbers. It was a deluge rather than an invasion. Some time after they had thus taken possession of the country, the confederated chiefs chose a king named

Salatis, "who reigned," says Mr. Reginald Stuart Poole,\* "at Memphis, exacting tribute of Upper and Lower Egypt, and garrisoned the fittest places with especial regard to the safety of the eastern provinces, which he foresaw the Assyrians would desire to invade. With this view, finding in the Saïte nome, . . . on the east of the Bubastite branch, a very fit city called Avaris, he rebuilt and very strongly walled it, garrisoning it with 240,000 men. He came hither in harvest-time . . . to give corn and pay to the troops, and exercise them so as to terrify foreigners."

This, as Mr. Poole remarks, is the account given by Manetho, the Egyptian priest, who wrote the only history of his country that we know of, sometime during the reign of the Ptolemies. By that time much knowledge regarding the Egypt of the time of Moses had perished, and, as Mr. Poole points out, Manetho did not know the locality of the ancient Avaris or *Ha-Awar*, which he found mentioned upon the monuments. He did not know, what we know now, that *Ha-Awar* was Tanis, or rather, as the Scripture correctly gives the name, *Zoan*. Both names indicate the use to which the city had always been put. *Ha-Awar* means the house of "going out," or "departure." The Semitic name *Zoan* has the same signification, and under the Shepherd dynasty, which raised the city to an opulence and strength and fame it never had before, the latter name supplanted the earlier. It was the point from which the caravans departed for Syria and the East, and at

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\* *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, vol. iii., p. 1855.

which those from Syria and the East unloaded their treasures.

The residence of Pharaoh was, therefore, at Tanis, in the north-east of Egypt. Let us cast another look at this city before we pass on. Miss Edwards has given a description of it, from which we cull the following.\*

“Let us suppose a stranger to have hired a skiff a mile or two below Tanis, and to approach by way of the river. The banks are bordered by gardens and villas, and the stream is alive with traffic. He is put ashore at the foot of a magnificent flight of steps, from the top of which he sees the Great Temple—a huge pile of buildings showing high above a line of massive wall. It stands on the east bank of the Nile, facing westward. A paved roadway leads from the landing-place to the gateway. This pile of buildings—more like a huge fortress than a temple—looks quite near; but it is full half-a-mile from the water-side. Around it, beyond it, lies a flat, verdant, limitless panorama, divided by the broad river. This plain is dotted with villages, each embowered in clumps of sycamores and palms. Here and there a gliding sail betrays the course of an unseen canal, while far away to the northward, whence a mass of storm-cloud is driving up from the coast, a pallid, far-distanced gleam tells the story of the sea. . . .

“Even at this distance the stranger’s quick sight detects the tops of a forest of tapering obelisks, and the twin towers of a series of massive pylons. One

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\* *Harper's Magazine*, 1886.

object, shining, solitary, towering high above the temple and its surroundings, fixes his attention. It is ruddy, as if touched by sunlight; it glitters, as though the surface were of glass. It is not an obelisk; neither is it a tower. It cannot be a statue, that is impossible. Yet as he draws nearer, his shadow lengthening before him, the paved dromos blinding white beneath his feet, that glowing, glittering, perplexing thing grows more distinct, more shapely, more like that into which it presently resolves itself—a godlike, gigantic figure, crowned, erect, majestic, watching over the temple and the city. . . . After this, no miracle of art, no pomp of decoration, can greatly move the wonder of the pilgrim stranger. He goes on through a courtyard surrounded by a colonnade, and bisected by an avenue of single stone columns thirty-six feet high; thence under another gateway, across an open space, and along a magnificent avenue bordered on both sides by monuments of many kinds and many ages. This avenue is the *Via Sacra* of Tanis. It is about 375 feet in length, and within that comparatively short distance, arranged so as to produce the subtlest play of colour and the greatest diversity of effect, are arranged a multitude of red granite obelisks, and doubtless many smaller works in the more rare materials, such as diorite, alabaster, green serpentine, and the like.”

Let the reader add to that picture the life and movement of a great city, and he will have some notion of that wondrous capital, where the pride of

Egypt was humbled by the poor, timid, travel-stained, and aged men who, one morning, passed through its gates and sought an interview with the king. The place, as we shall see by-and-bye, is now a desolation ; but it is enough for us to have determined its position. The city of Pharaoh was Tanis in the far north-east of Egypt, almost on the frontier of the country. The extent of the blunder, committed in making Memphis the then capital of the land, will now be apparent. The latter city was quite seventy miles to the south-west, and would, therefore, have vastly increased the distance which Moses and Aaron, if not the Israelites, had to cover before they reached the sea. Another question, however, awaits us, and we hasten on. Where was Goshen ? Was Tanis in Goshen, and did the Israelites begin their journey from that north-eastern capital ? If we recall some of the incidents in connection with the plagues, it will be plain that the Scripture indicates that the two districts were separate and distinct—"The field of Zoan" was not in Goshen. We are told that God made a difference between His people and the Egyptians, which seems to show that they resided in different districts. There was darkness upon the land of Egypt, and yet light in the dwellings of Israel. There was hail throughout all the land of Egypt, but none in the land of Goshen. All this seems to prove clearly that the districts were distinct ; but, if any doubt remained, it would be swept away by the statement that Pharaoh "sent" to see whether the word of the Lord had been kept in

regard to the safety of the cattle of the Israelites (Exodus ix. 7). Goshen must, therefore, have been situated at some distance from Tanis.

Recent discoveries have revealed the fact that the very form of these statements has been moulded by a perfect knowledge of the localities. The number of days' marches to the desert is given. The place is named from which they start; we are told where they pitched their tents on the evening of the first day, of the second, and of the third. It is one of the most minute itineraries which have ever been put on record. Let the reader compare the account in Exodus with that contained in the 33rd chapter of Numbers, and he will want no further evidence to convince him of the extraordinary care which has been taken to preserve for us the minutest information regarding this eventful journey. In the latter chapter we read:—"These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. *And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord:* and these are their journeys according to their goings out. And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. . . And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth. And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness. And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pi-hahiroth, which is before Baal-zephon: and they pitched before Migdol. And

they departed from before Pi-hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah. And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there" (Num. xxxiii. 3-8).

We shall find light cast upon this record by other parts of the sacred narrative, and shall see what recent explorations have to say concerning the whole of it. Meanwhile, let me say that every ray of light which is being shed upon that distant past is confirming the Scripture story. My readers will remember that we were compelled to differ from the opinion of the great body of Egyptologists regarding the Pharaohs of the Oppression and of the Exodus. In point of date alone it is impossible, I believe, to identify Rameses II. with the oppressor, and Menepthah with the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The latter was, apparently, Thotmes II., the circumstances of whose reign fall in so remarkably with this identification. It is plain, from the Scripture narrative, that Egypt was then at the very height of its power, and that in the hour of its unbroken strength God judged it. But before the time of Rameses II., Egypt had received some terrible blow from the effects of which it was striving hard to recover. "Since the history," says Edouard Naville, "of the reign of Rameses has become better known, his prestige and glory have declined considerably. It has been recognized that he was bent

chiefly on dazzling his subjects and the future generations by his outward show and his magnificence, which concealed but imperfectly the rapid progress of decay in his weakened and exhausted kingdom."

That, I repeat, is not the Egypt of the time of Moses; it is a kingdom which is striving to throw off the stupefying effects of some crushing blow, and to stand once more upon its feet. There is another bit of evidence which might long ere this have convinced everyone that the Exodus took place long before the time of Menepthah. An inscription of the time of Menepthah says of the district around Belbeis, the very land which was once inhabited by the Israelites, "that the country around was not cultivated, but left as pasture for cattle, *because of the strangers. It was abandoned since the time of the ancestors.*" It is possible to explain these words as if they meant that the district was left a kind of debateable ground on account of the incursions of Eastern tribes, and that it had been abandoned because of its insecurity. But that interpretation cannot be maintained. It was not debateable ground. The frontiers of Egypt, well watched and strongly fortified, lay far beyond it. Besides, too, the inscriptions tell of an Eastern tribe that had to obtain Menepthah's permission to pasture its flocks there. How then did it come to be abandoned at a time already ancient in the days of Menepthah? We only need to bear in mind that Menepthah's was the tenth or eleventh reign from the time of Thotmes II., and all is explained. *The*

*district was abandoned* at the Exodus. A population of about three millions could not be speedily replaced, and the exhausted condition of the country had prevented the increase of population which might, in other circumstances, have re-peopled the vacant plains. There was also another reason which, no doubt, co-operated to make it a continued solitude. The remembrance of past judgments would render the former abode of the Israelites no inviting spot for a people who were the slaves of superstitious fears. The district had, therefore, as the inscription says, "been abandoned since the time of the ancestors."

To this has now to be added Menephtah's own testimony. An inscription of his, discovered by Dr. Flinders Petrie, contains the first mention of Israel in the Egyptian texts. I give the translation of the inscription published by Prof. W. Max Müller of America. It is a long hymn celebrating the power of the king. It ends thus:—

"The chiefs lie prostrate uttering '*Shâlôm*' [written *sha-l-ma*; this Canaanitish word may signify here 'peace, salute,' as well as 'mercy'].

Not one is raising his head among the nine [a mythical number] barbarian nations.

Plundered is Libya (*ʿehenu*),

The Hittites keep peace;

Captured is the Canaan [widest sense, *i.e.*, Syrian coast] for all [its] wickedness.

Led away is Ashkelon (*As-ga-ru-ni*, Spiegelberg *re-ni*),

Caught is Gazer (*Qa-za-ra*),

*Yenuam* [near the northern frontier of Palestine] has been annihilated,

*Israel has been torn out without [any more] offshoot.*

Palestine has become a widow [*i.e.*, helpless, feeble; a paronomasia between *Kha-ru*, 'Palestine,' and *kheret*, 'widow'] for Egypt,

All lands together, they are in peace,

Any stranger who appears [lit. whosoever tramps abroad],

He is subjected by the king *Binrê-hetep-her-mêit*, the son of the Sun, Merenptah," etc.\*

Here Israel is spoken of as *already in Palestine*; and, notwithstanding the attempts which have been made to evade the plain meaning of the words, Prof. Müller admits that "it would seem that we ought to place the Exodus at an earlier period."

We have already seen that the capital of Egypt in the time of Moses was Tanis, but a glance at our map will show that Goshen lay at a very considerable distance from the capital. It will be noticed that a well-watered valley runs for many miles north-east from Cairo (which is situated in the neighbourhood of the ancient Memphis), and then turns and runs eastward. This eastern portion, as we shall see by-and-bye, was the land of Goshen. The desert has encroached upon the valley since ancient times, and the district inhabited by Israel no doubt extended both north and south of its present breadth. But even then the distance from Tanis could hardly have been less than from ten to twenty miles.

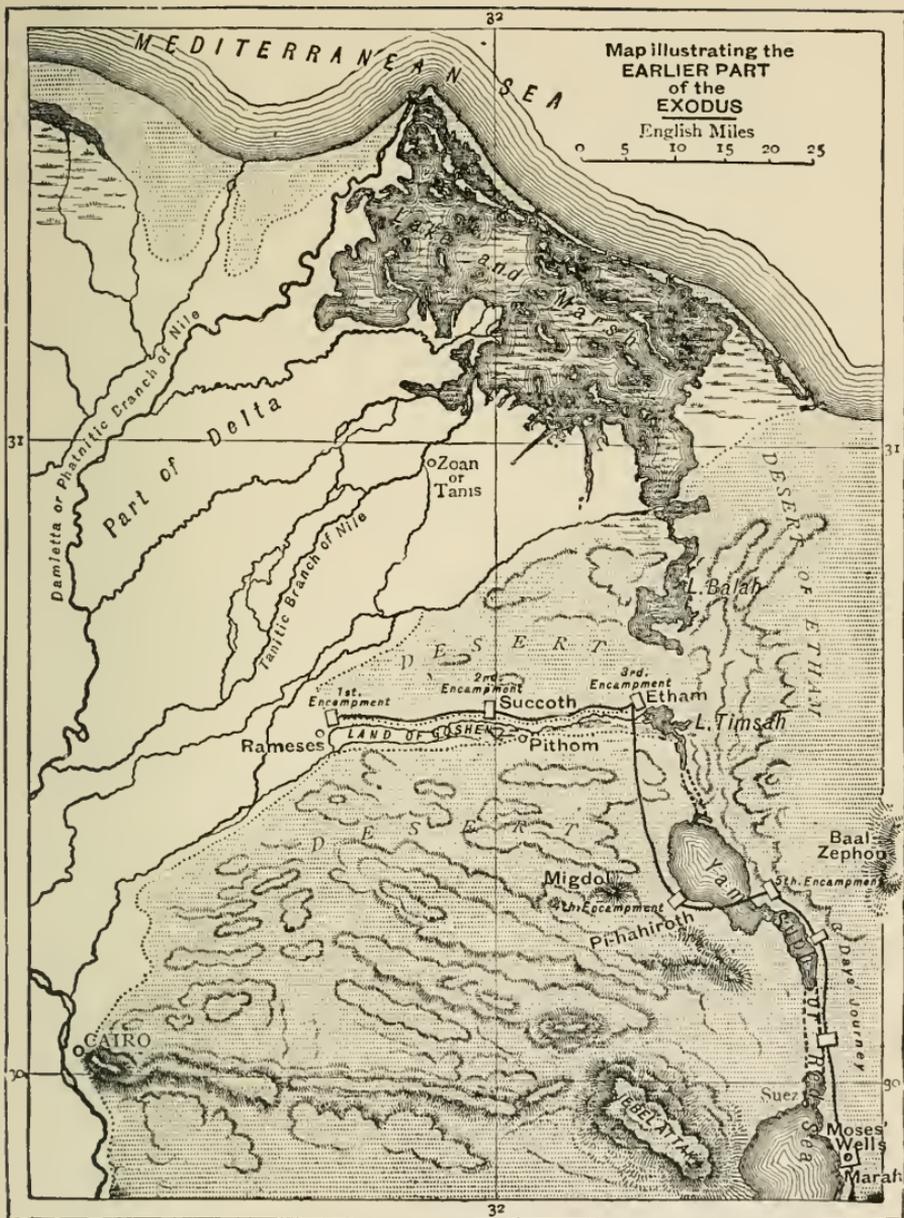
Of this district, Sir W. J. Dawson says: "On the east side of the delta of the Nile, about fifty miles north-east of Cairo, a narrow valley of cultivated soil extends eastward, with desert on both sides for about eighty miles, or nearly as far as the town of Ismailia,

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\* *The Independent*, July 9, 1896.

on the line of the Suez Canal, where it crosses Lake Timsah. This valley, known as Wady Tumilat, and anciently as the land of Goshen, or Gesen, or Rameses, is wide at its western end, and gradually narrows towards the east. As the desert sand is, however, encroaching on it from the south, and has indeed in places overwhelmed an ancient canal which at one time probably ran near the middle of the valley, it must formerly have been more extensive than at present. Recent surveys also render it certain that this valley once carried a branch of the Nile, which discharged its waters into the Red Sea. This branch, or a canal representing it, must have existed in the time of Moses. At present the valley is watered by the Sweetwater Canal, running from the Nile to Suez; and though probably inferior to the land of Goshen in its best days, it is still one of the most beautiful districts in Egypt, at least in its western part, presenting large stretches of fertile land, covered with luxuriant crops, numerous cattle and sheep, large groves of date-palms, whose fruit is said to be the best in Egypt, and numerous populous villages; while it must always have been, what it now eminently is, a leading line of communication between Egypt and the countries to the east."\*

The king declared that it was "the best of the land," but the reader may ask how we know that this is, in very truth, the land of Goshen? There were traditions which might have answered the question; but we know too much about traditions to



From Sir W. J. Dawson's *Modern Science in Bible Lands*. A book which we strongly advise our readers to procure (6/6, Hodder and Stoughton).

accept them as authoritative. There was a town in this region which anciently bore the name of *Phacusa*. In the last century a Dutch scholar, Van der Hardt, saw in that name the long lost title of the territory once possessed by Israel. Pa or Pha was known to be the Egyptian article, and the word Cusa that remained, he suggested was the same as the Goshen of the Scripture, given as *Gesen* in the Greek of the Septuagint. The monuments have now fully confirmed this lucky guess. "About six miles east of Bubastis" (the Pi-Beset of the monuments and of Scripture), "was the region called *Kesem* or *Kes*, which seems to have been also styled *the water of Ra.*"\* This places the western boundary where it is shown in the map. The territory extended, no doubt, towards the north, and approached nearer to Tanis.

The original habitation of the Israelites was, therefore, at the beginning, or the western end, of the fertile valley now called the Wady Tumilat.

The next discovery, of which I have to speak, takes us almost to the other end of the valley, more than twenty miles distant. About twelve miles west of the well-known town of Ismailia on the Suez Canal, and on the south side of the Sweetwater Canal which runs through the Wady Tumilat, stand the ruins of a few deserted European houses. While the Canal was being made, the houses were erected for the engineers and workmen. The Arab name of

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\* Naville on *The Route of the Exodus*, in the transactions of the Victoria Institute, No. 101.

the place is *Tel el Maskutah*, or "the mound of the statue." This name was given to the place because of a statue made of a single block of red granite, and which represents Rameses II. sitting between two gods. Other monuments were discovered bearing the name of the same king. On this account Lepsius called the place Rameses, believing it to be the site of the ancient city which bore that name.

This guess, however, was not so fortunate as that to which I have just referred. But it was not far from the truth. If it was not Rameses, it was at least its sister city. M. Naville, some years ago, made excavations in the mound, and brought once more to the light of day the very store-houses which the Israelites had built for their oppressors. The ruins were those of the ancient Pithom or Pi-Tum, the abode or sanctuary of *Tum*, the setting sun. I have already spoken of this discovery when dealing with the persecution of the Israelites, and we need not say more about it now. It is of importance to us here in fixing the locality in which the Israelites lived, and its discovery has completely revolutionized our conceptions of the route followed by the Israelites; but it does not much help us in the matter with which we are now dealing. If it had proved to be Rameses, as Lepsius supposed it was, the discovery would have helped us more just now. We should then have identified the starting point of the most momentous journey which Israel ever made. But Rameses has not been discovered yet, and we must wait till the excavator has shed further light upon the

words, "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth" (Exodus xii. 37).

Sir William Dawson places it in the west of the land of Goshen. My own opinion is that it was probably further north, and nearer to Tanis. But although Pithom is not named as a station in this eventful journey, its identification has nevertheless helped us greatly. The district around Pithom is now known to have borne the name of *Thuket*, or Succoth. This place was closely connected with the newly-discovered Pithom. Pithom was the religious name of the city, and *Thuku*, or *Thuket*, its civil name. This name was also borne by the surrounding district. "Thuket, Succoth," says Edouard Naville, "was a district before being a city; its name is often mentioned in papyri of the nineteenth dynasty. Its governor was an *aden*, evidently the same word as the Hebrew *adon* (lord). There is a statue of one of these officials in the British Museum, which was found at Pithom. From the papyri we get very important information concerning the district of Succoth. Its name is generally written with the determinative of foreign lands, although it was part of Egypt, thus showing that it was a border land."

We have information, also, which shows why the Israelites made Succoth their first halting place. It contained what is called in the inscriptions a *segair*, that is, a wall or an enclosure. Reference is made to this in an inscription translated by Brugsch. An Egyptian official reports to King Menephthah: "We have allowed the tribes of the Shasu, of the land of

Atuma (probably Edom), to *pass the stronghold* of King Menepthah, of the land of Succoth, towards the lakes of Pithom of King Menepthah, of the land of Succoth, in order to feed themselves, and to feed their cattle in the great estate of Pharaoh."

This fortress in Succoth, near Pithom, barred the way. At this the Israelites rested on the first night of their eventful journey, and when the morning of the second day dawned, defiled through the well-guarded gates which protected the frontier. We are thus indebted to M. Naville's discovery, made only in 1883, for the first sure footing we have had in tracing the route taken by the Israelites, and for one of the most wonderful confirmations of Bible history. The Israelites make Succoth their first resting place, and we now know why they did so. "The stronghold of Pharaoh of the land of Succoth" barred the way. There were distinct regulations for going out and coming in. The nomadic tribes from Edom could pass only by permission. "We have allowed the tribe of Shasu, of the land of Atuma, to pass the stronghold," wrote the governor, at a time when Egypt was weaker and its state service less highly organized than it was in the days of the Exodus. Permission had to be formally obtained, and to be given in orderly fashion, before these three millions of people could pass through the gates of the strong frontier fortress.

Succoth, as I have just said, is the one point about which we are at present absolutely certain. But recent investigations have done much to indicate

the route which the host probably took on leaving Succoth. We read: "And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, in the edge of the wilderness" (Exodus xiii. 20). Now, where was Etham? To that question no man can at this moment give a definite reply. But we are not without information, which enables us to say with certainty in what direction it must have lain. The Israelites, on that second day's journey, followed the usual route to Palestine. This must have led them, after passing the fortified gates of Succoth, to have gone eastward or north-east, and crossing the head of the Red Sea, to have come to the "edge of the wilderness," with the glare of whose monotonous yellow sands every one has been wearied who has passed through the Suez Canal. Across those sands, and up along the Mediterranean coast lay the nearest way to Palestine. A few marches onward, and they would have passed into the territory of the warlike Philistines.

But here the route was suddenly changed. We are told that God "led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: but God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea" (Exod. xiii. 17, 18). Why, then, we may ask, were they suffered to make a beginning, which looked as if they *were* to take the more expeditious road to the land promised to their fathers? Why was the change made in the route so that they had on

the third day to retrace their steps and march southward on the Egyptian side of the sea? We may at first be perplexed by the question. It *does* look as if God's plan had been suddenly altered; but a little reflection will speedily unveil the Divine wisdom. The whole is explained by these words: "they encamped . . . in the edge of the wilderness." God had a two-fold purpose. Israel had to be bent to the Divine will. Naturally they, at the outset, desired the shortest route. God suffered them to take it, and went with them so far, as He often does with ourselves in our wilfulness. They are brought "to the edge of the wilderness," and then comes reflection. There is nothing inviting in the aspect of that dreary expanse. They begin to think of the days of weary plodding, thirsty and hungry, through the treeless, waterless, habitationless desert. And then they think of the embattled wall of fierce determined foemen through which a way must be forced after the desert has been traversed. There was no murmuring on the morrow when God said: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn!" The command brought relief.

That was no doubt one purpose, but there was also another. The movements of the Israelites were watched and carefully reported to the king. God was not going to suffer His people to pass with dishonour from the land of Egypt: they were not to be allowed to *run* away. When the Lord delivers, it is not through human wiles and subterfuges. His deliverance is glorious in its fulness and in its beauty

of holiness. Egypt will herself *thrust* Israel out, and compel them to abandon the country. And so the route is changed, and the Egyptians are left in their selfish greed and cruelty to misread the change to their own destruction. "For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in" (Exod. xiv. 3). It seemed as if the mere aspect of the wilderness had terrified the host of fugitives, that their plans had melted away, and that they were now utterly bereft of guidance and of counsel. It seemed to be a revelation of unexpected weakness. There was no longer any God among them, and Egypt could now enjoy to the full the wild revenge for which it panted! "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them" (Exodus xv. 9).

Returning now to our localities, we feel the immense importance of the discovery of Pithom and of Succoth. This is a fixed point which no discovery can shift. The consequence is that many a theory is shattered, and some venerable traditional beliefs must also be parted with. Among these is the crossing of the Red Sea at Suez. This will be made plain in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS.

ONE danger to which apologist, critic, and commentator are alike liable, is the refusing to halt when the light fails. There is sometimes a charm about a theory, and more especially when that theory is the child of our own imagination, which may lead the wisest into foolishness. We must stubbornly refuse to yield to the temptation, and shall try in all humility to acknowledge that in regard to the route of the Exodus, as in regard to many another matter, we do not yet know everything.

Pithom is, so far, the only point identified. This has fortunately settled the limit of the first day's journey, and the starting point of the second. The enclosure of Succoth was in the immediate neighbourhood of Pithom, and through its gates the Israelites must have passed on the morning of the 16th Nisan, 1584 B.C. We have already seen that they then took the direct route for Palestine, which must have turned to the north-east. They had encamped in the edge of the wilderness when the command came to "turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea" (Exod. xiv. 2).

The description here is minute, and will prove most valuable in the future. But meanwhile it

only serves to emphasize our ignorance. This district is comparatively unknown, and no excavations have yet been made in the sites of its ancient towns. We are consequently unable to identify any of the places named, and it is our safety to confess our ignorance. Among recent explorers, Sir J. W. Dawson has one theory, placing the crossing of the Red Sea on the southern part of the Bitter Lakes; and M. Edouard Naville has another, which places the crossing much farther north. The same reasons which make them differ so greatly, cause us to hesitate. As to where Migdol, Pi-hahiroth and Baalzephon were we cannot say, though the first and last are mentioned in Egyptian documents. There was a Migdol, that is a watch-tower, or a fortress, to the south of Pithom. In a papyrus now in the British Museum, a writer says: "I started from the great hall of the royal palace on the ninth day of the month of Epiphi, at the time of night, going after two slaves. When I arrived at the enclosure of Succoth, on the tenth of Epiphi, it was said to me, they spoke of the south, saying, let us cross over (to the desert) on . . . Epiphi. When I arrived at the stronghold it was said to me, the two grooms going towards the mountain have crossed the wall north of the tower (Migdol) of Seti Merenphthah."

Let the bearing of this upon the Scripture be noticed in passing. The scribe proceeds at once to "the enclosure of Succoth." Why does he at once determine to go there? Evidently because it is in this part of the country, "the land of Goshen," *the*

only way of egress from the land. He knows that he will obtain information from the officials as to whether the slaves have passed through, and what



Red Sea - from The Desert.

direction they have taken. My readers will note how naturally the Scripture falls into the same style of narrative, and they will be able to form their own

opinion as to whether this book was written by one who knew the place, or by "a Babylonian Jew," who knew less of it than they themselves know now. But it is also plain that a Migdol lay to the south of Succoth. To this point the Israelites were now commanded to proceed. They were to give up the route across the desert, and to put the sea between themselves and it.

Both the theories, however, to which I have referred, go upon the supposition that the Red Sea extended much farther north than it does at present, and that the tradition which fixes the crossing at Suez must now be abandoned. The discovery of Pithom seems to have settled this. It would have taken three journeys of about 20 miles each to have reached Suez from Succoth, even if the Israelites had taken the straightest line possible. This of itself shows that the crossing at what is now the head of the gulf cannot be entertained. But when we remember that they followed, to begin with, a contrary direction, and on the third day's journey retraced to some extent the path which they had followed on the second, it will be seen that their reaching Suez on the third day was simply impossible.

Did the sea, then, really extend farther north in ancient times? The answer to this question is clear and decisive. "A very important fact concerning Succoth," says Naville, "for the knowledge of which we are indebted to the excavations made at Pithom, is the vicinity of the Red Sea, which extended much farther north than it does now. Besides Pharaonic

and Ptolemaic texts, there were found two stones with Latin inscriptions, giving us the Latin name of the city, *Ero*, or *Ero Castra*, in Greek, *Heroöpolis*. This city is often quoted by Greek and Latin authors, who are unanimous in stating that the city was built at the head of the Arabian Gulf, also called Heroöpolitan. Strabo and Pliny say it in the most distinct way. Artemidoros, quoted by Strabo, states that the ships which went to the land of the Troglodytes sailed from Heroöpolis. Ptolemy fixes the latitude of the head of the Heroöpolitan gulf at one sixth of a degree south of the city."

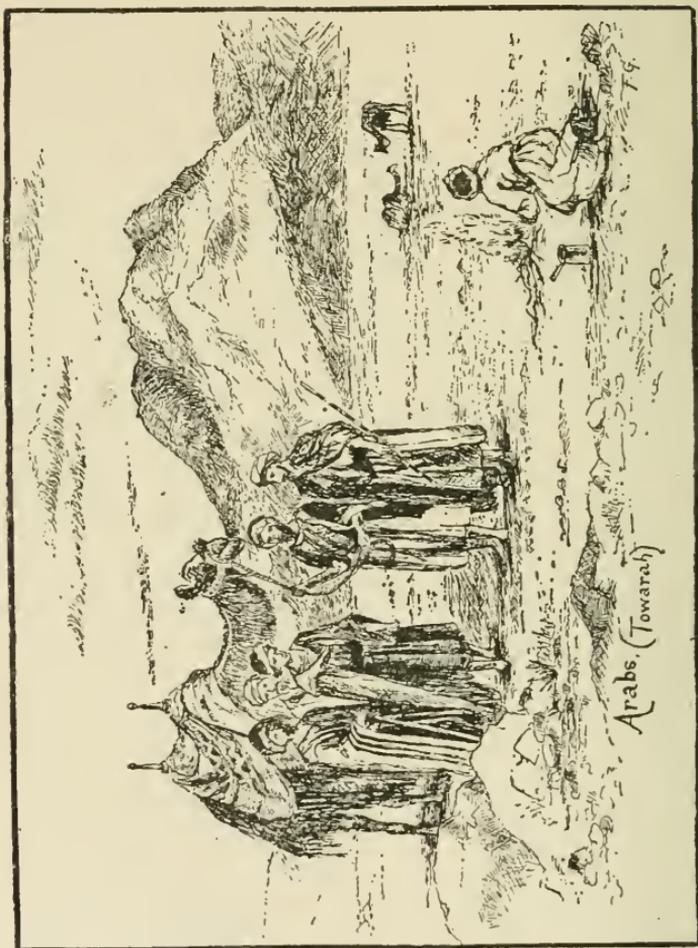
There are other evidences that in ancient times the sea extended much further than it does now, and the probability is that in the time of Moses it went further north than Succoth. Sir John Coode found in 1884, near the Bitter Lakes, about 12 or 15 feet above the present sea level, layers of salt, which at first sight looked like gypsum. He learned on inquiry that the whole district was covered by it. There can be no doubt that this indicates the presence in former times of sea water at and above that level. There are other testimonies which place the fact beyond dispute. "With reference to the former extension westward of the gulf of Suez," says Sir J. W. Dawson,\* "we have indisputable evidence in the marine beds with Red Sea shells extending towards the Bitter Lakes; and at a very slight elevation above the present level of the sea, not, I believe, anywhere exceeding twenty-seven feet along

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\* *Modern Science in Bible Lands*, p. 281.

the line of the canal. *These shells are of recent Red Sea species."*

How, then, has this come about? The land has



evidently been raised above the sea level. The observations of Sir John Coode, to which I have just referred, prove that the land has risen above the

present Red Sea level at least from 12 to 15 feet. Sir J. W. Dawson indicates that the land has risen in some parts about 12 feet higher. Is there any explanation obtainable as to how this change of level has been brought about? The reply will be found both interesting and satisfactory. There is a height to the north of Ismaïlia, named El Guisr. On the southern side of that height shells are found which show that the Red Sea extended so far in comparatively recent times. There is also evidence that while the land south of this point has been raised, the land north of it, lying towards the Mediterranean, has sunk. Districts that were once cultivated now lie under the waters of Lake Menzaleth.

Sir J. W. Dawson says: "Nothing is more illustrative of this than the present state of the once beautiful district around Zoan," and reproduces the following quotation made by Miss A. B. Edwards, from Mas'oudy, an Arab historian and traveller who wrote in the 10th century. "The place occupied by the lake was formerly a district which had not its equal in Egypt for fine air, fertility, and wealth. Gardens, plantations of palms and other trees, vines, and cultivated fields met the eye in every direction. In short, there was not a province in Egypt, except the Fayoum, to be compared with it for beauty. This district was distant about one day's journey from the sea. . . . But in the year 251 of the era of Diocletian (A.D. 535), the waters of the sea flowed in and submerged the plain, which is now called the Lake of Tennis; and every year the inundation increased, so

that at last it covered the whole province. All the towns which were in the lowest levels were destroyed, and only those which were built on rising grounds remained unharmed. The total submersion of this part took place one hundred years before the conquest of Egypt," that is, before its conquest by the Arabs in the seventh century of our era.

"Thus," says Miss Edwards, "the whole face of the country was changed, and the rich flats across which the great Colossus had been visible from afar in the palmy days of Tanis, were again devoured by that same hungry sea from which nature had reclaimed them inch by inch in ages long past." Dawson points out that here lies the explanation of the rise on the south, and the fall on the north. The mud carried down annually by the Nile has been deposited on the Delta, thus gradually beating back the sea, and recovering the north of Egypt from the waters of the Mediterranean. But as the weight of these deposits increased, a new danger was developed. The mass of matter became too great for the supports beneath to bear. These were crushed in, and the surface of the land fell below the sea level. "All such areas of great deposition tend," says Sir J. W. Dawson, "to be areas of subsidence; so that, while they gain by addition on their surface, they lose by settlement, sometimes gradual, sometimes suddenly started by earthquakes. In this way the high land of El Guisr has in modern times been the axis on which the isthmus has revolved, the south side rising, the north side sinking."

So much, then, is perfectly clear. The Bitter Lakes and Lake Timsah are remnants of Red Sea water preserved in deeper beds. In the times of the Exodus, the Red Sea rolled its tides over both, and pierced into the land to the north of Pithom and the gates of Succoth. The Israelites consequently marched from Succoth in a north-easterly direction, and paused somewhere at the head of the gulf, and on the borders of the wilderness of Etham. Along that wilderness lay the road to Palestine. It stretched before them dreary, barren, and shelterless. The elation, inspired by their deliverance, and the terror which God's hand had laid upon their oppressors, died down. They went to rest that night with sobered thought. The fulness of Egypt lay behind them. They had exchanged its grassy meads for desert sand, and they knew that, before they could pass into the fruitful valleys of Palestine, the fierce Philistines had to be met and to be conquered. As we have already seen, the command to retrace their steps must have come as a relief. There is, at least, no record of their murmuring, and they were a people that knew no restraint when their will was crossed. They submitted humbly, re-crossed the northern shore of the Red Sea, and turned south, keeping between the barrier of Succoth and the sea-coast.

As, Sir J. W. Dawson has pointed out, the information that after crossing the sea they "went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah" (Numbers xxxiii. 8), and that "they went

three days in the wilderness, and FOUND NO WATER'' (Exodus xv. 22), is in complete accord with all that we now know of the district. The first day's journey,



'Ayun Músa

THE WELLS OF MOSES.

when they were commanded to go back, would be partly occupied in re-crossing the head of the gulf, which must have extended for some miles. The rest

of the march would probably land them about ten miles southward on the Egyptian side of the sea. When they crossed over through the sea into the wilderness of Etham, they would thus have between 40 and 50 miles between them and "the wells of Moses," opposite Suez. This would be exactly a three days' journey. The way would pass along a waterless region, and at the close of the third day they would come to "Ayun Mousa," to those wells whose waters are described to-day in the very language of Scripture. The Israelites had been accustomed to drink the sweet Nile water, so famed in the east, and now their disappointment and vexation burst forth in childish petulance and unrestrained complaint. "They could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah (that is, "bitterness"). And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" (Exodus xv. 23, 24).

This identification of Ayun Mousa (the Arabic name which we translate, The Wells of Moses) will be startling to many. But the discovery of Pithom, and a close study of the Scripture narrative leave us no choice. The three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham must have stretched between the point at which the Israelites crossed and Ayun Mousa. There can thus hardly be a doubt that Ayun Mousa is Marah. The journey from Marah lay along "the wilderness of Shur," that is, "the wilderness of the wall." We shall see by-and-bye that there could be no better description than this

name gives of the wilderness into which Israel passed at Ayun Mousa. The name, too, "the wells of Moses," seem to point to some well-known transaction. Why call *these* the wells of Moses? What has associated his name specially with *them*? When we remember the miracle wrought there, we seem to find an answer. Tradition points in its dumb fashion to that of which we are fully informed in the Scripture alone. "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet" (Exodus xv. 24, 25).

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### INCIDENTS OF THE EXODUS.

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WE have, so far, occupied ourselves exclusively with the route which the Israelites followed in leaving Egypt. But there are other matters of interest which it is well to look at before we pass with the Israelites from the land of their sojourn.

There is, in particular, one difficulty which it is well that we should notice. Before the conflict with Pharaoh began, God had said to Moses: "I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: but every woman shall borrow of her

neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians” (Exodus iii. 21, 22).

This is a matter over which we may be tempted to pass with a light and hurried step. We may have a suspicion that there are difficulties slumbering there, and we have no desire to awake them. For difficulties, once they *are* fully roused, have an uncomfortable fashion of pursuing and clinging to us. I need hardly say that this is not the way to honour Scripture, or even to secure peace of mind for ourselves. Suspicion of that kind is as bad as doubt: indeed it is worse. It gives up the Scripture at the outset, and says in effect: “We had better not look into this matter; for, if we do look into it, our faith will certainly be overthrown.” How can anyone, who has such a fear for the Scripture, rest in it with child-like and rejoicing trust?

And there is another reason why we should not hurry past this supposed “dangerous” spot. The Scripture dwells upon it. God asks us to mark it, and to ponder its teaching.

More than 400 years before, He had predicted this triumph. He said to Abraham regarding his posterity: “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and *afterward shall they come out with*

*great substance*" (Genesis xv. 13, 14). Here God looks forward to this very spoiling of the Egyptians as the end of the sore travail of His people, and as a compensation for their bondage and suffering. In the light of that promise and purpose we can understand how, at the very beginning of the conflict with Egypt, and just as Moses is being sent to deliver his people, God should speak of the spoiling of the Egyptians; and how at the end of it we should be asked to mark well its accomplishment, and to read the words: "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them.\* And they spoiled the Egyptians" (Ex. xii. 35, 36).

Now—to put the matter in plain English—was this a case of theft? Did the Israelites deceive the Egyptians? Did they ask for a *loan* knowing well that they were not to return, and that the goods entrusted to them would never be restored? And—to carry the matter to its utmost limits—did they engage in this deception by Divine commandment? That really is the difficulty which objectors have urged persistently, and which has troubled not a few readers of the Bible. But it is a difficulty of our own creating. It is due to a mistaken translation of the two words rendered "borrow" and "lend." *Sha-al*, the first of these words, means "ask," and

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\* The words, "such things as they required," are printed in italics, indicating to the English reader that they are supplied by our translators, and are not found in the original.

is one of the commonest words in the Old Testament. It is, indeed, the only word which is translated by our word "ask," and it constantly recurs in such phrases as, "Why *askest* thou thus after my name?" (Judges xiii. 18); "Hide not the thing that I *shall ask* of thee" (II. Samuel xiv. 18); "King Solomon gave . . . whatsoever she *asked*" (II. Chron. ix. 12); "*Ask* thee a sign of the Lord thy God" (Isa. vii. 11). The word occurs about ninety times, and in this sense alone. It means "to ask," and only "to ask." The word, which means "to borrow," is *lavah*. There are only, in fact, three passages, besides those which relate to this incident, where our translators have rendered *sha-al* by "borrow." We might examine these, and we should find, I believe, no difficulty in keeping to the sense of "ask," even there. But even if any doubt were to linger about the meaning of the word in those passages, the common-sense reader would at once conclude that, seeing it has undeniably the meaning "ask," in ninety passages, and "borrow" in only three, the word *may* surely be translated "ask" in the passages before us. The Israelites were *not* commanded to deceive. They were told to "ask," and not to "borrow."

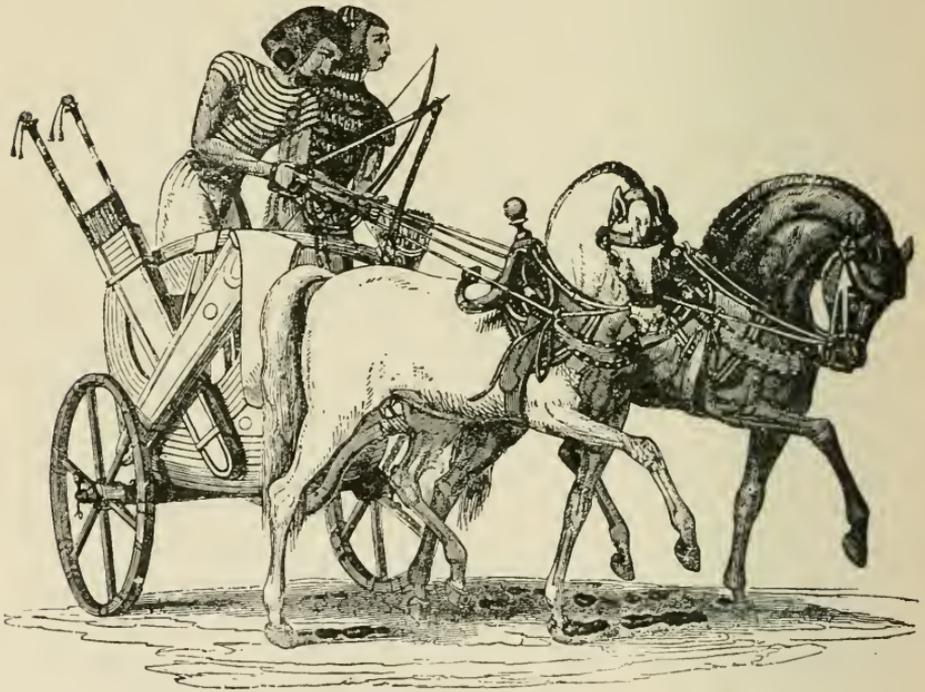
But what are we to say of the word "lent?" When we read that the Egyptians "lent unto them," does not that prove that, although the usual sense is "ask," *sha-al*, here means "to borrow?" The argument, however, lies just the other way. The word "lent," has even less in its favour than its neighbour "borrow," and appears to have been put

in by our translators merely to preserve the consistency of their rendering. Having spoken of "borrowing," it was necessary to describe the Egyptians as "lending." It is a form of the same word *sha-al*, and means "to let ask," that is, to entertain a request, and graciously to give. It occurs just twice in the whole of the Old Testament, here and in 1. Samuel i. 28, "Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord." In the latter passage it is translated "lent," but, evidently, can only mean "given." Samuel's mother is made to say that she has "lent" her child to the Lord. But she never resumed the loan, and she never meant to resume it. Samuel was given over without the slightest reservation. It was one of the completest gifts that mortal ever made to God, and was intended from the first to be an entire and final surrender. She *gave* him to the Lord fully and completely. The child was no longer hers: he was the Lord's. Translate the word in the case of the Egyptians in the light cast upon it by its use in Hannah's case, and we need no other commentary. They did not "lend;" they *gave*; they gave willingly and unreservedly, neither hoping nor wishing for any return of that which they bestowed.

This is evident, also, from the statement of Scripture. Let us look at it once more. We retain, for the moment, the old rendering: "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment: *And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians*, so that they

lent unto them. And they spoiled the Egyptians" (Exodus xii. 35, 36). Now, what is the force of these words: "And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians?" *They plainly imply an extraordinary result.* The Egyptians were led by special Divine intervention to do what in ordinary circumstances they would not have thought of doing. Now, substitute the word "asked," and all is clear. The whole story is told in three sentences. The Israelites "asked" these things. It was a question whether the request should be granted, or should meet a contemptuous and even angry refusal. But the Lord intervened. He gave His people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians. They were looked upon by their old enemies and masters in a new light; and "the Egyptians gave unto them." These were the spoils of a more glorious victory than Egypt or any conquering nation had ever, till that moment, boasted. The conquered had been spoiled, but never willingly. But here the Egyptians find a joy in giving to those who have mastered them. The Israelites, who had simply stood by and waited for God's salvation, pass out adorned with the gorgeous raiment, and the jewels of silver and of gold, which have been the willing tribute of those who had so long spoiled *them*. And that conquest of the weak, the despised, and the oppressed, has still a word for Israel. The days are drawing near when this old story will be Israel's hope. They will return to their own land, and there the last fierce blasts of the long tempest of persecution will blow upon them. For that coming hour

God has given these words of promise: "And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, GOLD, AND SILVER, AND APPAREL, in great abundance" (Zechariah xiv. 14).



AN EGYPTIAN CHARIOT PREPARED FOR BATTLE.

Some other points I must reserve for the following chapter. Meanwhile, let us notice what is said and implied as to the character of the Egyptian force which pursues the Israelites. "Pharaoh took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them" (or

over all of them). . . . “And the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army” (Exodus xiv. 7, 9). The chariots and the horsemen are referred to again repeatedly. We read of Pharaoh’s host, his chariots, and his horsemen (verses 18, 19, 23, 26). All these references bear deeply the stamp of the time. Any reference to the chariot as a military arm before the 18th dynasty—the very dynasty which oppressed and drove out the Israelites, would have been a blunder. The monuments before that time have no representations of them in battle scenes. They seem to have come in with the 18th dynasty, and to have been from that time the chief reliance of the Egyptian warrior. “The chariot corps,” says Wilkinson, “constituted a very large and effective portion of the Egyptian army. Each car contained two persons like the *diphros* of the Greeks. On some occasions it carried three, the charioteer or driver, and two chiefs. . . . In the field, each had his own car, with a charioteer; and, the insignia of his office being attached behind him by a broad belt, his hands were free for the use of the bow, and other arms. . . .

“In the battle scenes of the Egyptian temples, the king is represented alone in his car, unattended by any charioteer, with the reins fastened round his body, while engaged in bending his bow against the enemy; though it is possible that the driver was omitted, in order not to interfere with the principal figure. The king had always a “second chariot,” in order to provide against accidents; as Josiah is

stated to have had when defeated by Necho. . . .

“The Egyptian chariots had no seat, but the bottom part consisted of a frame interlaced with thongs or rope, forming a species of network, in order, by its elasticity, to render the motion of a carriage without springs more easy: and this was also provided for by placing the wheels as far back



THE FIRST AND SECOND ROYAL CHARIOTS.

as possible, and resting much of the weight on the horses, which supported the pole. . . . The fact of there having more than three thousand years ago, already invented, and commonly used a form of pole only introduced into our own country between forty and fifty years, is an instance of the truth of Solomon's assertion that 'there is no new thing under the sun.'"\* The chariots were richly ornamented, and some were inlaid with silver and gold.

The number of the chariots was large. Diodorus

\* *The Ancient Egyptians* (popular edition), i. 368-374.

Siculus says that Rameses II. had twenty-seven thousand of them. The six hundred "chosen chariots" were no doubt the very *élite* of the force, and were in attendance upon the king. As the case was urgent, and a rapid and overwhelming attack was necessary, all these were taken, and orders were probably sent by swift messengers to all the strongholds of lower Egypt, to summon the chariots and the cavalry. These last—"the horsemen"—are referred to in every description of this crowning triumph in the book of Exodus. "The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea," sang Moses and the Israelites in the joyous enthusiasm of their great deliverance. But cavalry, it has been said, are not pictured upon the monuments, and their very existence as a branch of the Egyptian service has been denied. So far has this affected commentator on the Bible, that they have tried to twist the Scripture, and to make it seem as if the horsemen referred to were the charioteers. But more minute investigation has completely vindicated the Scripture. There are numerous references to the cavalry of Egypt in ancient authors. "Herodotus," says Wilkinson, "represents Amasis 'on horseback,' in his interview with the messenger of Apries; and Diodorus speaks of twenty-four thousand horse in the army of Sesostris (Rameses II.), besides twenty-seven thousand war chariots." But that is not the only evidence. "Mention is made," he continues, "of the Egyptian cavalry in other parts of sacred and profane history, as well as in the hieroglyphics, which show that

'the command of the cavalry' was a very honourable and important post, and generally held by the most distinguished of the king's sons."\*

In addition to all this, it may be stated that an ancient battle-axe has a mounted soldier engraven on its side,† and that the term for "mounting on horseback" is found among the hieroglyphics. There is another striking proof of thorough acquaint-



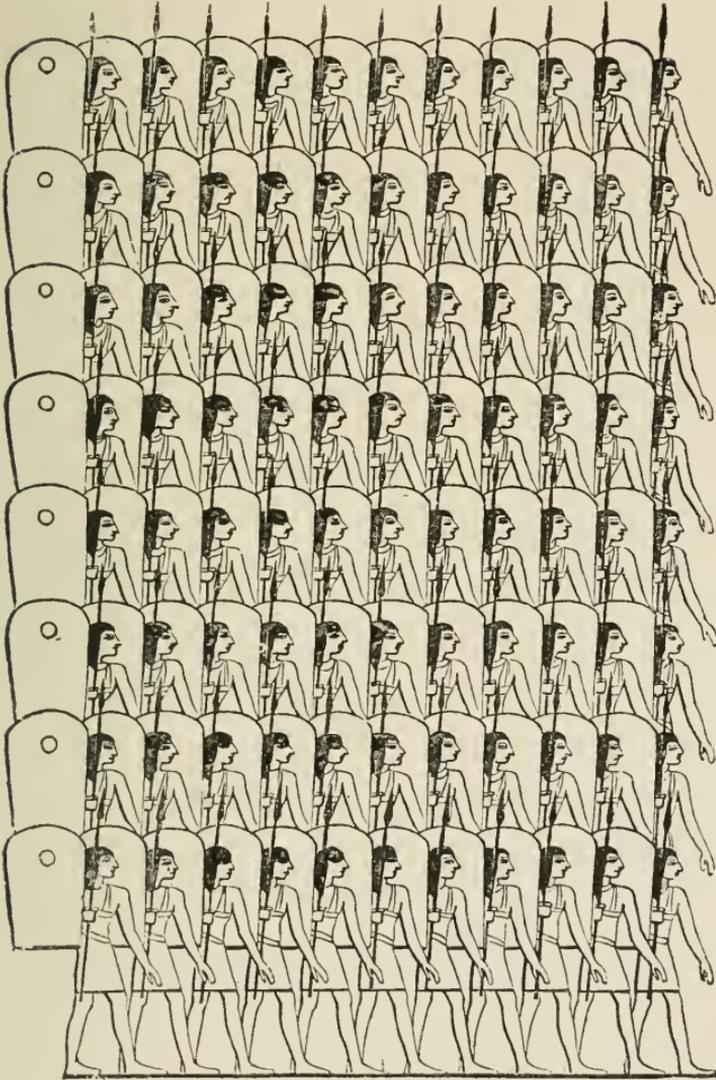
EGYPTIAN STABBING AN ENEMY.

ance with the usages of the Egyptian court in the word which is rendered "captains," "and captains over them all" (Exodus xiv. 7): "His chosen captains" also are drowned in the Red Sea (xv. 4). The word used here is *Shalishim*, which means "third," or "thirtieth." The king of Egypt had a council of thirty, each of whom bore the title of

\* *Ibid.* (Birch's edition), i., 193.

† See Erman's *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 493.

*Mapu*, that is a "thirty man." *Shalishim* is evi-



EGYPTIAN PHALANX.

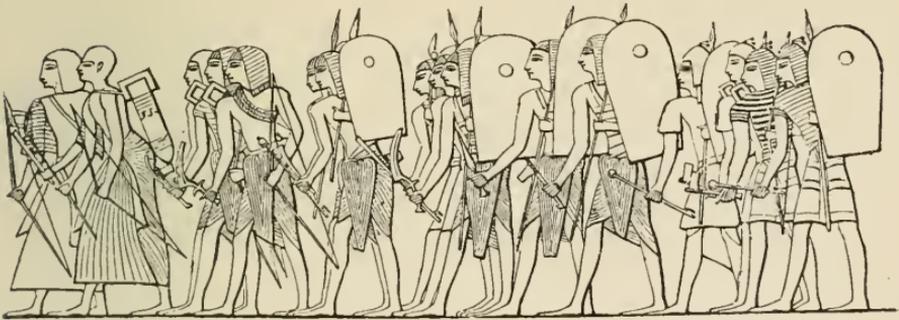
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dently a Hebrew translation of the Egyptian term

*Mapu*, and the term indicates that, not only did the king rush off to the pursuit of the Israelites, but *his entire Council* were drawn away with him in his eagerness. The thought which sprang up in Pharaoh's bosom seems to have flamed up like an answering fire, in the bosoms of his people. "The heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" (Exodus xiv. 5). "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them" (xv. 9).

It would seem, too, that all the troops which could be massed together, took part in the pursuit. In addition to the mention of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and horsemen, we have that of "his army" (xiv. 9), and "all the host of Pharaoh" (verse 28). The universal impulse may account for this massing of every available force, as well as the necessity of guarding or exterminating three millions of people. The Egyptian infantry was highly organized and "was divided," says Wilkinson, "into regiments," which "were formed and distinguished according to the arms they bore. They consisted of bowmen, spearmen, swordsmen, club-men, slingers, and other corps, disciplined according to rules and regular tactics. . . . When in battle array, the heavy infantry, armed with spears and shields, and a falchion or other weapon, was drawn up in the form of an impregnable phalanx; and the bowmen, as well as

the light infantry, were taught either to act in line or to adopt more open movements, according to the nature of the ground, or the state of the enemy's battle. But the phalanx once formed was fixed and unchangeable, and the ten thousand Egyptians in the army of Croesus could not be induced to oppose a larger front to the enemy, being accustomed always to form a compact body, having one hundred men in each face. Such was the strength of this mass, that no efforts of the Persians could avail against it; and



EGYPTIAN INFANTRY OF VARIOUS CORPS.

Cyrus, being unable to break it, after he had defeated the rest of Croesus's army, gave the Egyptians honourable terms, assigning them the cities of Larissa and Cyllene, near Cumae and the sea, for an abode, where their descendants still lived in the time of Xenophon."

The elaborately disciplined standing army of Egypt was one of the marvels of the ancient world, and I would ask the reader to mark the terror with which the Israelites are inspired the moment they

realise that this fearful engine is directed against them. The question has been asked why the Israelites did not fight. The answer is to be found in their knowledge of what the Egyptian army was. The thought of fighting with *it* never entered the mind of any man in all the Israelitish host. A writer of later times, not indisposed to glorify his people, and drawing upon his imagination for his facts, would have treated us at least to a preliminary skirmish in which the vanguard of the Egyptians would have been faced and beaten. But there is here only the paralysis of terror, the frenzy, and the reckless accusations of deadly fear. In those impassioned cries, and in that mad affright as of men trapped and defenceless, you catch as in a mirror the matchless strength and fame of the Egyptian armies. How could that reflection be there, unless in this book we were face to face with facts, and with the very thought and feeling of the hour?

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### INCIDENTS OF THE EXODUS.

*(Continued).*

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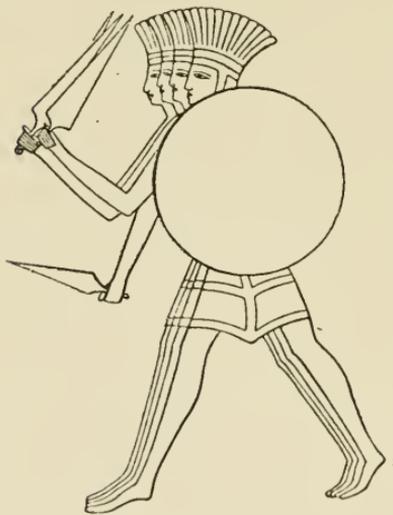
OBJECTIONS have been made, and difficulties have been felt, at almost every point in the narrative of the Exodus. The stupendous character of the undertaking may form the explanation of the difficulties and the excuse for the objections. But

wider knowledge and a stronger faith would have prevented both. It has been said, for example, that the difficulties attending the moving of such a mass of people, together with women, children, and cattle, must have made it impossible for the Israelites to have left Egypt in the time stated. But there is a modern instance of an evacuation of territory which sheds a welcome light upon this of the Exodus. It is mentioned by Dean Stanley in his *Lectures on the Jewish Church*. In 1761, during the reign of the Empress Elizabeth Petrowna, *an entire Tartar tribe, numbering 400,000, left Russian territory in one night.* They took women, children, and cattle, with them. They then made their way over several thousands of miles of steppe, stretching from the banks of the Volga to the confines of the Chinese Empire, where they were hospitably received by the Emperor of China. The Russian Empress pursued them with her artillery, as Pharaoh pursued the Israelites with his chariots; but so swift were the movements of the fugitives, that the pursuit was vain. This comparatively recent experience will modify the difficulty; and when we recollect that God was Israel's Helper and Guide, the difficulty disappears.

The Israelites set out, apparently, with the intention of following the ordinary road, and passing into Canaan by the road from Etham to Gaza. But when they came to the edge of the wilderness of Etham, as we have more than once remarked, the route was altered, and they turned back and passed down by the Egyptian side of the Red Sea. The

Scripture comments on this change as follows: "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt" (Ex. xiii. 17).

Here it is assumed that the South of Palestine was at the time of the Exodus what it continued to



PHILISTINE INFANTRY.

be in the days of Saul and David: that the Philistines occupied it, and that they were in a position to offer strong opposition to an invading force. Now it is at a point like this that the hand of a later writer is likely to betray itself. To anyone who knew what foes the Philistines were to the infant kingdom

of Israel, there was nothing more natural, *if he were inventing an earlier history*, than that he should fall into this trap, and picture the Philistines as standing there on the southern border of Palestine in the days of Moses, five centuries earlier, and forbidding the approach of the Israelites. Have we here, then, a proof of the late origin of the Pentateuch, or another demonstration that the book belongs to the time,

and pictures things as they were in the days of Moses?

The reply is simply another vindication of the truth of the Pentateuch. The Philistines were already in the south of Palestine; and they were there in strength. Their cities were built, had become great, were fortified with strong walls, and defended by dauntless warriors. Thotmes III., whose reign dates from the death of his father, Thotmes II., and, therefore, from the year of the Exodus, invaded Palestine in the



A PHILISTINE SHIP IN BATTLE. (From the Egyptian Monuments).

twenty-second year of his reign. Gaza, the great frontier city of Philistia, was important enough to detain an Egyptian king and his army an entire year. The Tel-el-Amarna tablets, which show the state of Palestine shortly afterwards, mention the cities of Philistia. There are letters from Ascalon, whose king is called *Dagantacala*, a name which contains that of the Philistine god, Dagon, and "appears to mean," says Major Conder, "Thou, Dagon, art a shield."\*

\* *The Tell Amarna Tablets*, p. 117.

The Philistines were, therefore, in Palestine in the time of the Exodus, and barred with strong cities the entrance by the south just as the Scripture says they did. The monuments present us with pictorial representations of these ancient enemies of Israel, which help us to understand why Israel was not at once confronted with them. It will be observed that our illustrations show them engaged in warfare with Egypt by sea as well as by land. "The personal appearance," says Osburn, "of the Philistines differed very little from that of the Egyptians, to whom they were allied by blood. Like them they are represented to have been a tall, well-proportioned race, with regular features, and complexions somewhat lighter than in Egypt. Like the southern Canaanites, they shaved the beard and whiskers. Their arms and accoutrements very conspicuously distinguish them from all the other nations to the east of Egypt. They wore a head-dress, or helmet, of a peculiar and far from inelegant form. It has the appearance of a row of feathers set in a jewelled tiara or metal band, to which were attached scales of the same material, for the defence of the back of the head and sides of the face.

"The corselet was quilted with leather or plates of metal; and, like that of the Moabites, reached only to the chest, and was supported by shoulder straps, leaving the shoulders and arms at full liberty. At the waist it was confined by a girdle, from which depended a skirt, which was quilted like the corselet, and hung down nearly to the knee. The shield was

large and circular, exactly resembling that afterwards used by the Greeks. The weapons of the Philistines were the javelin or spear for the distant fight, and the poniard and long sword for close combat. They used war chariots of a form exactly resembling those of the Egyptians. They also used carts or wagons of various forms, drawn by two or four oxen. The use of such carts among them is mentioned in the Scripture narrative of the return of the ark to Bethshemesh by the lords of the Philistines.”\*

It will thus be evident that the Philistines were masters in the art of warfare, and were among the most formidable foes whom the Israelites could assail. In immediate connection with the mention of the Philistines there is another statement which has exercised commentators not a little.

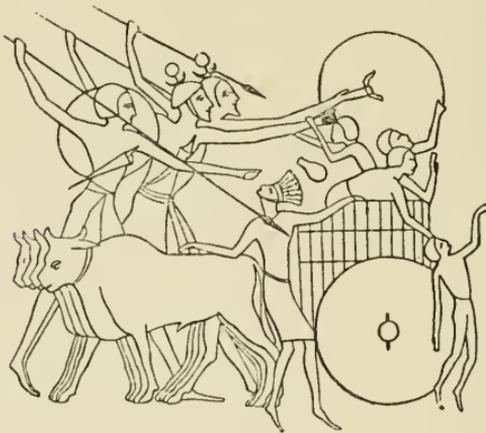
It is said that “the children of Israel went up *harnessed* out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus xiii. 18). The evident meaning is that they went up girded with armour, and prepared for war. This gives a picture of the Israelites so opposed to our notions of their condition, that attempts have been made to throw doubt upon the correctness of the translation. It



PHILISTINE WARRIORS.

\* *Ancient Egypt, her Testimony to the Truth of the Bible*, pp. 137-139.

has been said that the words mean rather that they marched "five abreast;" but that rendering cannot be maintained. The word occurs in other passages, which leave no doubt as to the correctness of the translation here. It occurs in Joshua i. 14: "Ye shall pass before your brethren *armed*, all the mighty men of valour, and help them;" and in Judges vii. 11, where we read of Gideon that he went down "with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the



A CAPTURED PHILISTINE CHARIOT.

*armed* men that were in the host."

We have dwelt upon their slavery till we have imagined them cowering under the shadow of the taskmaster's stick, strip-

ped of everything which spoke of manly independence, and running out of the country like beaten dogs. But they had been under the oppression only for a century, and there is nothing said about their having been disarmed. While the favour of the Egyptian kings lasted, they must have formed a powerful part of the community, and there is an indication that they sometimes took part in warlike expeditions. We are informed that two sons of

Ephraim were slain in a raid upon the men of Gath (1. Chronicles vii. 21). Probably a levy was made on the eastern border of Egypt to execute reprisals upon the Philistines of Gath, and that the sons of Ephraim were of the number chosen. The Israelites went out in orderly array unchallenged. God had won the battle, and they shared the triumph.

We have here an answer also to the difficulty which has been raised about the Israelites fighting with the Amalekites in the wilderness. Where could slaves have procured weapons to fight with? Some have replied that they



A CAPTIVE PHILISTINE.

spoiled the Egyptians at the Red Sea. But there is no necessity for resting upon that. The Israelites possessed weapons, and no doubt knew how to use them.

But how, then, it may be asked, are we to understand the fear which utterly unmanned the hosts of Israel? Remembering the past oppression, they

might have burned with desire for just such a chance of meeting their tyrants face to face, and avenging the wrongs of a hundred years. But instead of courageous ardour, they are paralysed with terror. They cannot think of either defence or flight: there is but one thing before them, their wives and their children—death. Are we to see in this only the panic of the slave whose spirit has been broken under the lash? It seems to me, as I indicated in the last chapter, that we have in this incident simply a reflection of the enormous disciplined strength of that army which was marching to its destruction. Not very long after, we find the Israelites marshalling themselves, without the faintest remonstrance, against the Amalekites. Nor is there any panic when they look their enemies in the face. They are not dismayed as the shrieks and outcries of the foe crash like a storm about their ears. They do not quail before that terrific rush. They quit them like men. No; the beaten slave theory comes handy, and is extremely simple, but it will not suit. There were manly men among them, whose spirit had flamed up at the sight of many an outrage, and who would have felt a savage joy in wiping out the wrongs of themselves and their people in Egyptian blood. But they knew that any attempt of the kind was purest madness. That host, on the perfecting of whose discipline the famed wisdom of Egypt had been lavished, was in their eyes invincible. In such a struggle, they knew that they and theirs must have gone down like grass before the mower's scythe.

Let us now mark how God accomplished what no human power could have performed. Moses cried unto Him, and the reply was: "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." And then he was bidden to prepare a strange pathway for them. He was to lift that rod, which had hitherto brought judgment upon Egypt, and it would summon the winds to work salvation for Israel. "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (Exodus xiv, 21, 22). Here the agent employed for the deliverance of Israel and the punishment of Egypt, is told us. It was the stormy wind that fulfils His word. It was a natural agent, waiting there among a thousand other forces, till God should call. It was miraculous only in its intensity, its working on steadily during the night to the one end, and its ready response to Moses' call. It taught Israel, as it teaches us, that the God of grace is the God of nature: that all things serve Him, and will therefore serve us.

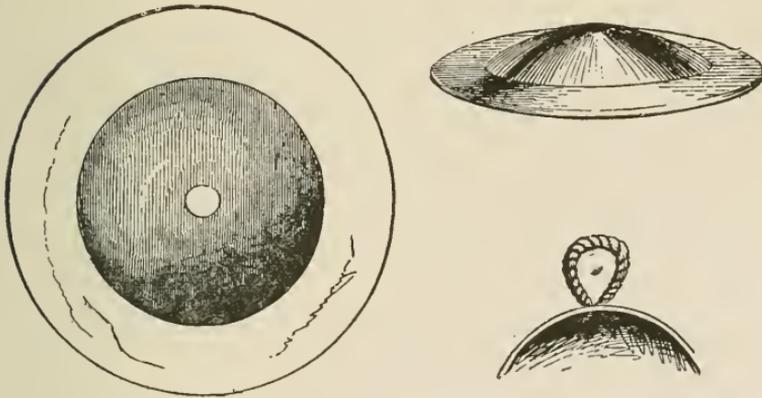
Instances of like results from the constant pressure of tempestuous wind across a river or an arm of the sea are not unknown. In 1645, for example, a furious wind laid bare the bed of the Rhone; and impetuous as its waters are, they were arrested in their career and walled up, while the channel lay bare

beneath. We now come to an incident which is more within the range of confirmation<sup>o</sup> from the monuments. We are told that, when Israel, led by the servant of God, lifted up the sacrifice of praise for the wondrous deliverance which Jehovah had wrought, "Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea" (Exodus xv. 20, 21).

Here we encounter a spectacle which has something to tell us about the Israelitish people. This action of Miriam's, and the immediate response of the women, reveal what must have been a common practice. It is reasonable to expect that it will show traces of the customs of the land from which they have just come. They and their people, for generations, have grown up among Egyptian customs, and they have witnessed many a spectacle in which national joy has been manifested. Whenever the Pharaoh returned from a campaign, he was received by the people with great demonstrations of gladness. If this book is not a forgery of later ages, but a record of the time and of things that really happened, we may fully expect the picture here presented to show that. If it is a mere imagination of a later date, the picture will probably show the traces of its origin. Then there is one musical instrument mentioned—the timbrel or tambourine. Was that

an Egyptian instrument? Above all, was it an instrument *used by women*?

The reply is, that we see ancient Egypt in every detail of that picture. The picture, which we have here in words, explorers have found drawn and painted in the ancient Egyptian tombs. I give a representation from the monuments of the timbrel or tambourine, and another of its use by women. Wilkinson says that “the tambourine and *darabooka*



EGYPTIAN CYMBALS.

drum were generally appropriated to the other sex,” that is, to the women. The second illustration shows the women *dancing*, as well as playing on the instruments named. He says again, in describing this scene from a monument found at Thebes: “Women beat the tambourine and *darabooka* drum, without the addition of any other instrument; dancing or singing to the sound.” Rosellini completes the proof of the thoroughly Egyptian character of the scene at the

Red Sea, when he tells us that the monuments show that music had a large part in the religious ceremonies of the Egyptians; that the tambourine was used in them; and that "the players on the timbrels and cymbals always danced to the sound of their own music, and that these dances formed part of the ceremonials used in religious worship, as well as in religious processions." Osburn says, referring to the same picture: "A group of damsels is here repre-



EGYPTIAN WOMEN SINGING AND BEATING CYMBALS.

sented dancing to the sound of timbrels. The votive boughs, which they carry, indicate that the dance in which they are engaged is a religious ceremony. . . . The Chorus, or leader of the dance, beats a hand drum, resembling the instrument which is called in France the 'tambour de Basque.' It consists of the skin of some animal, stretched over an earthen vessel of a conical form. The other damsels are beating tambourines, one of which is circular like the modern instrument; the others are of a nearly

oblong shape with the sides curving inwards, which is a much more common form in the tombs. They are all beaten with the hands only. They were made, as at present, of the skin of an animal tightly stretched over a frame. . . . The design before us is of great value as an illustration of the dance of Miriam and the Hebrew women after the destruction of the host of the Egyptians (Exodus xv. 20). The Theban tomb, whence it has been copied, is of an era closely bordering upon that of the Exodus."\* I may add that the hieroglyphic symbol for joy is *a woman beating a timbrel*.

To say that, in this notice of the action of Miriam and the women of Israel, we have distinct traces of the Egyptian sojourn, would be far short of the truth. The scene is Egyptian. It is as much a bit of the Egypt of the time as the picture painted on the Theban tomb. This coincidence is explained, when the Mosaic story is accepted as a narrative of fact. How should Israel express its joy and thanksgiving, but in the way to which its sojourn in Egypt had accustomed it? But how can this vivid reproduction of ancient Egypt be explained, if the narrative is supposed to be a fiction invented by some Babylonian Jew who had grown up amid an entirely different civilization?

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\* *Ancient Egypt, &c.*, pp. 233-235.



THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE  
WILDERNESS.



ISRAEL'S WANDERING IN THE DESERT  
OF SINAI.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE CONDITION OF THE PENINSULA OF SINAI AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS.

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WE now come to the beginning of the most eventful period of Israel's history—the march through the desert. And here, too, recent research has shown that this Word is truth. The Peninsula has been surveyed, the wanderings of the Israelites have been traced, the story of the Pentateuch has been compared with the localities and with the character of the region in which the events are said to have taken place. The result is, that the impression, made upon the minds of all travellers that the Pentateuch breathes the very air of the desert, has been deepened. Every man connected with the Government survey, ended his work with the conviction that the Pentateuch was written by one who had taken part in the events he describes.

It is marvellous how, in these days of battle for God's Word, one overwhelming proof of its veracity succeeds another. We knew little, for instance, of the condition of Palestine at the time of the Exodus. One or two explorations had been made which showed distinct traces of an early civilization; but of that civilization, and of the races which occupied Canaan when the Israelites entered it, we knew nothing save from the Bible. A short time ago, however, a

peasant woman was passing near some mounds in the south of Egypt. She chanced to turn up a tile with her foot. The brick had writing on it. Enough was known of the tastes of Europeans to understand that a thing of that kind was valuable. More were found, and still more. They were concealed from the knowledge of rapacious officials, and were secretly sold. But all, or nearly all, have come into the hands of the learned, and are now among the chief treasures of the museums of London, Berlin, and Boulak. They are letters sent by Palestine kings and princes and governors to the king of Egypt *about the very time of the Exodus*. Some of them refer, it is believed, to the Israelites as then invading the country. This discovery proves, beyond the possibility of denial, the accuracy of the Pentateuch, both as to facts and dates: and it has done more to refute the new Infidelity than could have been effected by a hundred treatises.

In entering upon this section of the history of Israel, there is one matter about which a word or two is necessary. It is the condition of Sinai at the time of the Exodus. This Peninsula is to be the home of Israel for forty years, and the scene of some of the grandest and most momentous events in the world's history. What do we know of it?

It is to-day—what it seems to have always been—a kind of no-man's land. Other regions have been coveted and been fought for; but no powers, either of ancient or of modern times, have ever wrestled in that awful death-struggle for the possession of Sinai.

It would even appear that the contempt of the warrior has been imitated by his peaceful brother the geographer. It is now reckoned as part of Arabia; but the ancient Arabian writers declined to embrace it within the limits of their country. "The earliest Arabian geographers," says Ritter, "expressly excluded it from their own domain. Isstachri, in his account of the boundaries of Arabia, is perfectly explicit in rejecting this region, and in assigning the reason why his countrymen put no value upon it:—namely, because its want of water and of pasturage made it absolutely worthless. In fact, the most ancient Arabian geographers gave the district no name whatever."

And yet to this district, so desolate and so despised, three millions of people are to be taken, and there God will reveal Himself in His glory, and speak words which will cause the place to be remembered and honoured in every succeeding age. But it is strange that, notwithstanding what God had done to bind up the history of Israel with this desert region, it was so little resorted to by the Jews in after times. There were no pilgrimages to Sinai. So far as we know, those awful solitudes were visited in after times by only one Israelite. It may have been that the Israelites were not given to pilgrimages. Those who were indifferent would find no attraction in the sacred places, and the pious, to whom these places appealed, would be mindful of the warnings against idolatry. But, whatever the cause may have been, the Peninsula of Sinai was untravelled by the Jew.

I have said that there is one exception and one only. It is that of Elijah. Has the reader ever asked himself why *he* went to Horeb? I think a glance at the circumstances will supply an answer, and shed new light on Elijah's purpose. For three years and a half Israel had been judged according to the prophet's desire. In the prolonged drought and dearth, the false gods had been put to the test. Israel had proved that there was no help in them, and had seen that the Word of Jehovah was steadily and surely fulfilled. Elijah seems to have been confident, therefore, that the assembly at Carmel, when God should be proved to the utmost and Baal should be judged, would issue in a return of the ten tribes to Jehovah their God. When all was shown to be vain and Jezebel was still triumphant, Elijah despaired. He went back first to the desert from which Israel had come, and then to Horeb, where God had set Israel apart for Himself. Did not Elijah's appearance there mean that, through Israel's sin, God's purpose had been defeated and that all had come to nothing? Of all the prophets of the Lord he alone was left, and they sought his life. Elijah, it seems to me, was led to Horeb, where the law had been given, and whence Israel, fully equipped for God's service, had started for the promised land—in order, first, that his despair might shape itself into distinct thought and utterance; and next, that he might have God's reply. All, so far as these tribes were concerned, had come to nothing! They had cast away the law which they had received there

from God's own hand. But now God assures him, in this very place, that His purpose is *not* defeated. The work has not been in vain—neither Moses' testimony nor Elijah's had failed. There were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. They were the promise of a harvest of mercy.

But, I repeat, whatever the reason may have been, we have no Jewish pilgrimage to Sinai, and no light whatever upon the character of the district from Jewish sources. It was only when heathen darkness began to mingle itself with the light of Christianity that Sinai was peopled by Christian devotees. The barren wastes were dotted here and there with the huts, and the hills were pierced with the caves, of the hermits who sought in this seclusion the quiet, and in these sacred scenes the inspiration, for which they thirsted. Dionysius, of Alexandria, writing about A.D. 250, speaks of Mount Sinai as a place of refuge to which the hermits fled when the wilderness was invaded, as it was from time to time, by the "Saracens," who inhabited the district between Petra and the Dead Sea. These seem to have been the slave traders of the time; and, just as their successors to-day make expeditions into the heart of Africa, so these swooped down upon the poor hermits and the other residents in Sinai, and carried them into bondage. There is also a record of an Abbot Silvanus, who withdrew into Sinai about A.D. 365, established monasteries, and laid out gardens.

But a new era dawned for this great and terrible wilderness when Christianity became fashionable in

the Roman Empire. The age of Christian pilgrimages began with Constantine, and every "holy" place was visited, no matter how difficult of access it might be, or what doubts might exist as to its identification. In the results of this new-born zeal Sinai shared. Robinson, in his *Researches*, has pointed out many a reference in the literature of the fourth and of succeeding centuries to the Christian settlements in Sinai. The Emperor Marcian, in the middle of the fifth century, writes to Bishop Macerius and the monks in Mount Sinai, "where are situated monasteries beloved of God and worthy of all honour." The Convent of St. Catherine was erected in A.D. 527, and its lofty and massive walls bear evidence of the perils which beset the early Christian settlements. An Egyptian, who combined in himself the two characters of monk and merchant, has left behind him an account of a pilgrimage which he made to Sinai about the year 540. He is the first, of whom we have any knowledge, who tried to trace the wanderings of the Israelites. There is not much in the observations he makes that is of value, but he was greatly impressed by the large numbers of inscriptions which he found upon the rocks. To these, which arrested the attention of after generations, and the mystery of which has only been recently cleared away, we shall return immediately. Meanwhile I may note the explanation given by Cosmas, the Egyptian monk to whom I refer. He had no doubt whatever that these were the work of the Israelites. He believed that the art of writing had

been picked up by them from the tables of the law; and, enamoured of their new power, they had covered the rocks with inscriptions. He was confirmed in this delusion by the assurance of some Jews, who travelled with him, that these inscriptions were undoubtedly the work of their ancestors, and that they had recorded the names of the tribes and the dates of their journeys.

The Mahommedan conquest in the seventh century put a stop to the Christian colonisation of the Peninsula, and led to the introduction of the Arab tribes, who are now its occupants, if not its masters. Going back to the times before the Exodus, we find that the Egyptians had again and again planted colonies to work the turquoise and copper mines of the Peninsula. References to these attempts are found not only on the monuments of Egypt, but also in the quarries, and in the inscriptions which are now met with in Sinai itself. "The memory of Amenemhat III.," says Brugsch, "is further preserved in several inscriptions engraved on the rocks of the Peninsula of Sinai, the mines and quarries of which were worked in the earliest times of Egyptian history. They are dated in different years, from 2 to 42 of his reign, and furnished us with a proof that the Egyptians kept up establishments in these desolate regions which were very melancholy to inhabit for a prolonged stay.

"The principal envoys of the king," he continues, "the treasurers, artists, officials of the quarrymen, and other similar persons, who had any share what-

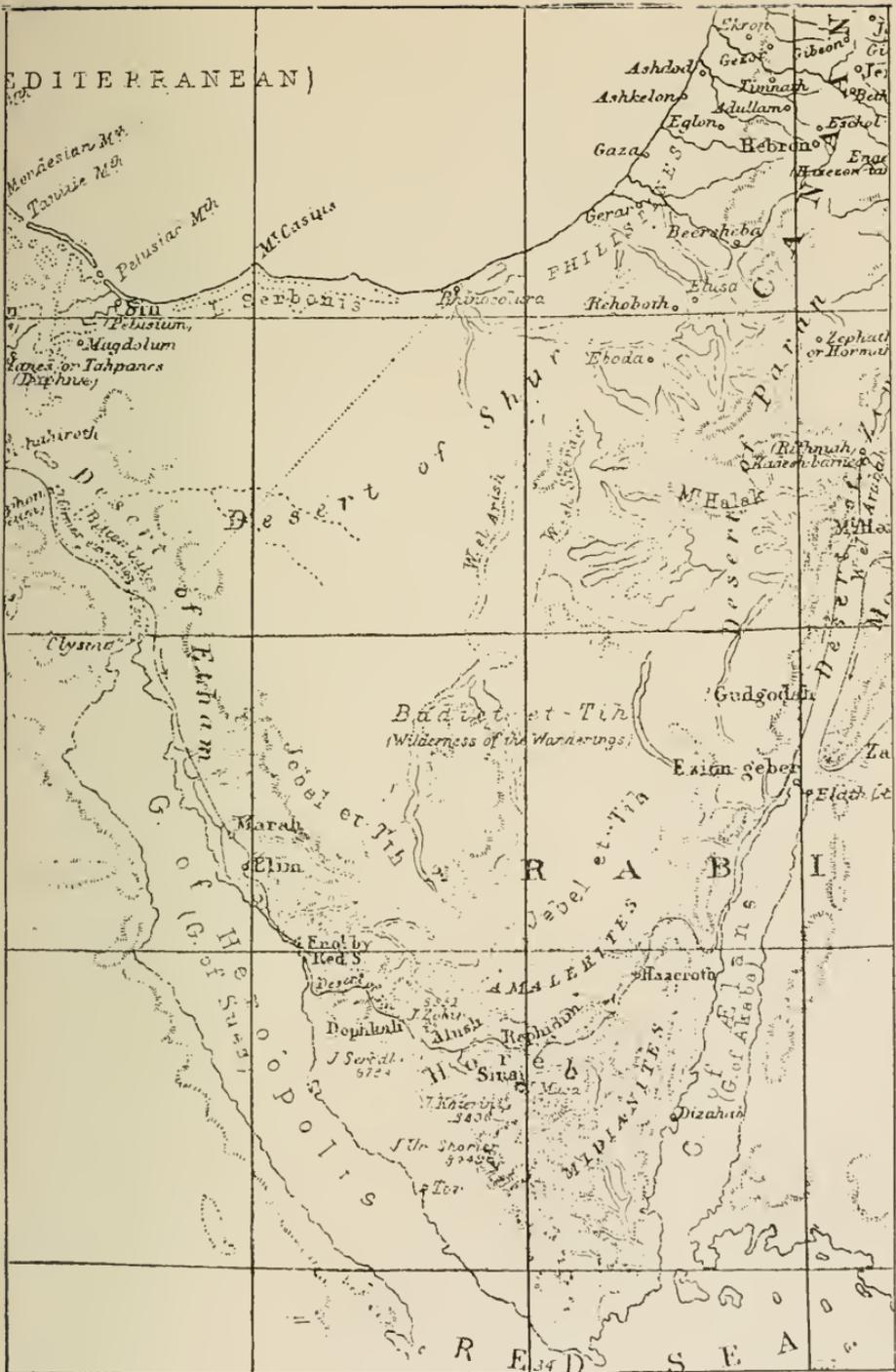
ever in carrying out the commands of the Pharaoh, never left their places without perpetuating on the rock the remembrance of their stay. Each writer records his title, his name, and all his family, and invokes the gods of the place."

These Pharaohs belonged to the twelfth dynasty. After their time, mining in the Peninsula appears to have been discontinued. "After the twelfth dynasty the site," says Dr. Birch, "was abandoned for a long period. The successive monarchs of the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth dynasties did not continue to search either for copper or turquoise."\* This will explain why no notice is found in Exodus of the Israelites meeting with any Egyptian garrison on their way. There were none at that time in the Peninsula. The mining was not resumed till the time of Thotmes III., after the Israelites had passed safely to the east. The remains of the ancient roads would, however, facilitate the movements of the wanderers, and in some degree determine their route. The Egyptian inscriptions speak of native tribes, and mention victories obtained over them. But these victories were achieved easily. I shall conclude this chapter by attempting to answer the question with which I began. What do we know of this singular territory?

A glance at the map (which will require some slight correction as we proceed) will show that the Peninsula thrusts itself like a huge, thick wedge into the Red Sea. It sweeps the waters, so to say, to the

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\* *Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai*, p. 181.

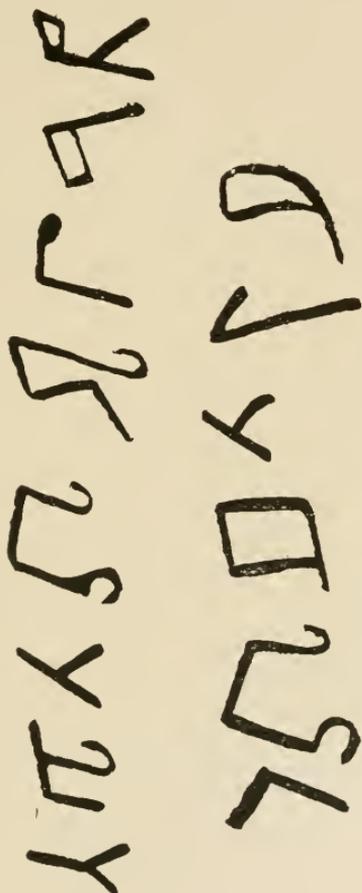


right and left, to west and east. On the west we have the Gulf of Suez, on the east the Gulf of Akaba. The whole of this southern part of the Peninsula is an almost endless series of mountains, whose rugged sides and pinnacles rise up heavenward in utter nakedness. They are destitute of tree and herbage, and even of soil. The southern point dips down abruptly into the sea to a depth of a thousand feet, and rises up, within a few miles from the coast, to a height of 9,000 feet above the level of the sea.

The Haj route—that is, the track followed by the Mahommedan pilgrims from Egypt to Mecca—forms, roughly speaking, a straight line from the head of the Gulf of Suez to the head of the Gulf of Akaba. That route forms the northern boundary. The giving of the law, and most of the recorded incidents of the wandering, have their scene in this southern wedge or triangle. It is within this district that Sinai, or Horeb, must be sought for. But on the north of the Haj route there is a large and comparatively unknown territory, which tradition has linked closely with the story of Israel. It is called the *Badiet et Tih*, that is, the Wilderness of the Wanderings. The name points to this district as the region in which the Israelites spent the thirty-eight years during which they were condemned to wander till the men who came out of Egypt had perished. What truth there may be in the tradition we can hardly hope to determine. The region consists of a lofty tableland, divided from the wilderness of Sinai by a rocky wall, pierced here and there by valleys which

permit the entrance of the traveller. The surface of the plateau is "an arid, featureless waste," broken by one or two groups of mountains. It is drained on the west by the Wady el Arish, which is joined by another river before it reaches the Mediterranean, and forms the stream which is often alluded to in Scripture as "the River of Egypt," forming, as it did, the one definite boundary in this no-man's land between Palestine and Egypt.

It remains to say a word or two about the Sinaitic Inscriptions. These have excited the interest of the learned for ages, and special attention was drawn to them in this country by Mr. Forster, who believed that they were of Israelitish origin. They do not seem to be quite so numerous as the accounts of some travellers would lead us to suppose; but they are found on rocks in several of the valleys, and



SPECIMEN OF THE SINAITIC INSCRIPTIONS.

notably in the Wady Mokatteb. I give a specimen copied from Dr. Stewart's *The Tent and the Khan*. There are many Greek and Latin inscriptions; but this belongs to a class which was confidently ascribed to the time of Moses. That belief, however, was not founded on a knowledge of their contents, for the writing until recently defied every attempt at decipherment. But the rapidly extending acquaintance with ancient languages and inscriptions, which marks our own time, has dispelled the mystery. The late Professor Palmer describes them as "mere scratches on the rock, the work of idle loungers, consisting, for the most part, of mere names, interspersed with rude figures of men and animals. In a philological point of view they do possess a certain interest, but otherwise 'the Sinaitic Inscriptions' are as worthless and unimportant as the Arab, Greek, and European *graffiti* (pencilings) with which they are interspersed. The language employed is Aramæan, the Semitic dialect, which, in the earlier centuries of our era, held throughout the east the place now occupied by the modern Arabic; and the character differs little from the Nabathæan Alphabet used in the inscriptions of Idumea and Central Syria."\*

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\* *The Desert of the Exodus*, pp. 190, 191.

## CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST MARCHES IN THE DESERT.  

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WE have cast a hurried glance over “the great and terrible wilderness” into which the children of Israel are now to be led. But there are special reasons for a more leisurely and minute scrutiny of the history and of the experiences which it enshrines. For we have more than a historic or critical interest in this matter. We are here gazing upon a mirror in which we see ourselves. These are “our exemplars;” and, in tracing their pilgrimage, we are beholding our own. There is a land of promise also before us; and we, too, have to go by the way of the wilderness.

These books are consequently a guide which no age can afford to neglect, and the depreciation of which the Church of Christ must not permit. This places an obligation upon us which, though distasteful and distressing to many, is one which we dare not decline. Nothing can be more painful to an honourable man than to be compelled to take up the statements of a trusted friend, and to test and try them to see whether they are true. He feels as if every step taken in such an inquiry is a desecration. He is trampling under foot his friend’s honour. But if that friend’s influence is being daily injured by suspicion and by open accusation of untruthfulness;

if those who were formerly ranked among his friends have professed themselves to be convinced by the things that are said against him; if they have forsaken him and are now leading the outcry against him—what is the duty of a true friend in such a crisis? Is it merely to stand by him and doggedly to say—“ You may reason and explain as you please, but I still believe in him and shall believe in him? ” Will that re-establish the wavering and put to silence the adversary? No, he must do something better than that. He must take up his friend’s case, subject his statements to a full and fair examination, meet fearlessly the things that are being said against him, and show that they are utterly without foundation. In that way he will clothe his friend’s enemies with shame, and cause this very challenge which has centred the attention of so many upon that matter, to make his friend more widely known and more deeply honoured than ever he was before.

I hardly need to interpret my parable. We have never had a friend whom we have trusted and loved as we have trusted and loved the Bible. We have never had one to whom we owe so much. And if the Bible is taken away, we have absolutely no friend, counsellor, or guide that can take its place. We are left in mid-ocean with a shattered compass, and with charts which no man can trust. And yet this very loss is being daily inflicted upon tens of thousands.

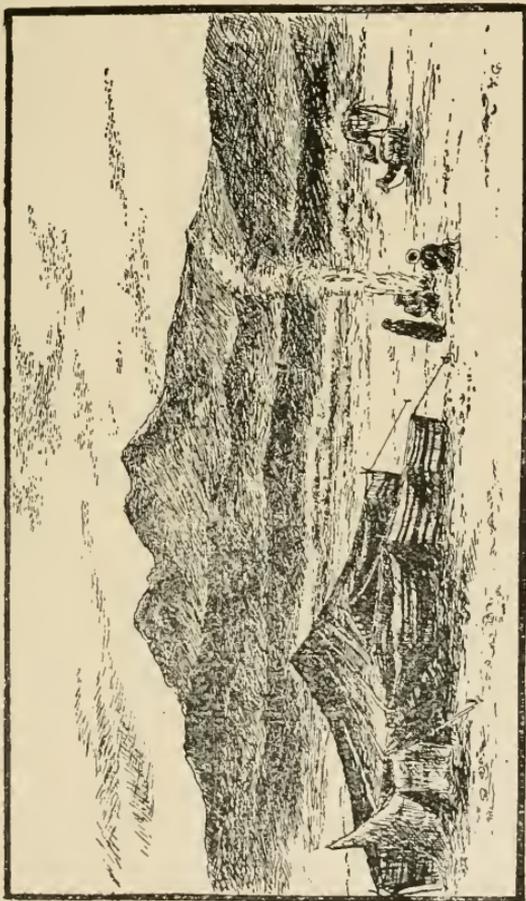
The Higher Criticism boasts that it has destroyed the old belief in the Pentateuch. These five books

of Moses and the book of Joshua, are the creation, we are told, of a later day. No man, it is said, can quote them any more *as history*. A few traditions may possi-

bly be found in them, like the straws in the bricks which the Israelites used to make for their Egyptian masters.

But the great body of the books, it is said, is pure fiction, meant to establish a priesthood and a re-

ligion among the Jews on their return from Babylon, which had been quite unknown to their fathers. What kind of a Bible such an imposture as that must be, I do not care to say or to imagine.



CAMPING IN THE DESERT.

There is, fortunately, something better for us to do. We are told that this is fable, with a bit of tradition stuck in it here and there to keep it in shape. These marches through the desert are also, of course, represented as mere imaginations. They are the imaginations, it is alleged, of some dreamer, who was born, and lived, and died, in the valley of the Tigris and of the Euphrates. He had never been in Sinai, and Sinai had been an unknown land to his fathers for long ages. Now any reader can test this thing right away? Let him think of some country with which he has not the slightest acquaintance, and, seated in his comfortable arm-chair, let him "personally conduct" an imaginary company through that unknown land. He brings them to a halt at a place which, as he pictures it, has certain natural characteristics. It is a desert spot, but there is abundance of bad water. They go on further and come to a comparatively fruitful valley. They encamp before a certain mountain and find a place large enough to assemble over 600,000 men, and probably quite three millions of people—and so on. Now could he have the slightest expectation that research in that country would trace clearly the very path his imaginary pilgrims had taken, lay its finger upon the very places where they had halted, and find that all his descriptions had painted them exactly as they are? He knows that the only thing which discovery would lay bare would be his inevitable blunders; and that if any history, supposed to have been an invention, were so conclusively confirmed

as this, only one conclusion would be possible. It would be triumphantly shown to be history.

We have now to start with Israel on this momentous journey—a journey which will never pass from the world's memory, and which will send streams of blessed influence from these desert solitudes to refresh and inspire every age and people. They have stepped up upon the eastern shore of the Red Sea; and now, instead of striking away in a north-easterly direction towards the south of Palestine, they march southward, setting their faces to the desert instead of toward the land of promise. The information *about the direction which they took* is conveyed to us in Exodus xv. 22 :—"So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water."

These words throw some light on a question which has long haunted expositors—where is Marah? That question has been answered by travellers, but not in a way to carry conviction quite home either to themselves or to their readers. About 33 miles south of Ayun Mousa, where the Israelites were supposed to have crossed the Red Sea, there is one small well, off the main route, whose water is sometimes bitter. In a kind of despair at finding any better representative of Marah, this fountain of Howara has been fixed upon. But as we have said, travellers have expressed themselves with a degree of doubt and hesitation. The fountain is small, and could hardly have afforded a sufficient supply for

three millions of people accompanied by flocks and herds. The truth seems to be that the provision would be ludicrously inadequate, and that we should have expected complaints about the scarcity as well as about the bitterness of the water.

But this, though a great difficulty, is not the only one. We are told that "they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water." Now between Ayun Mousa and Howara there is not a three days' journey. It is urged, of course, that women and children could not make a very long journey in one day; but it is forgotten that this very lack of water would have driven them forward. There is also another difficulty. *There is too short a distance between Howara and Wady Gharandel*, which, as we shall see, it is impossible not to identify with Elin. Indeed to halt at all at Howara, with Wady Gharandel in the almost immediate neighbourhood, would argue an ignorance of the desert impossible to Moses, who had already journeyed through it on his way to Egypt.

Such are the difficulties which perplexed travellers and expositors previous to the discovery of Pithom and the fixing of the route of the Israelites. Let us now come back to the Scriptures and note carefully what we are told there. If we turn to the original of Exodus xv. 22, we find that the rendering "they went out *into* the wilderness of Shur," ought to be "they went out *toward* the wilderness of Shur." This is just what the reader would expect in the narrative. We want to know *the direction which the*

*Israelites took* after they crossed the Red Sea. Did they turn to the north, to the east, or to the south? This Scripture reply defines the matter with brevity and precision. They went "toward the wilderness of Shur." "Shur" means "a wall," and the natural



WILDERNESS OF SHUR.

features of the desert, at the beginning of which stands Ayun Mousa, enable us to fix upon this district without the slightest hesitation. The table land, which forms the northern centre of the desert, stops abruptly, forming a wall-like bank to the east

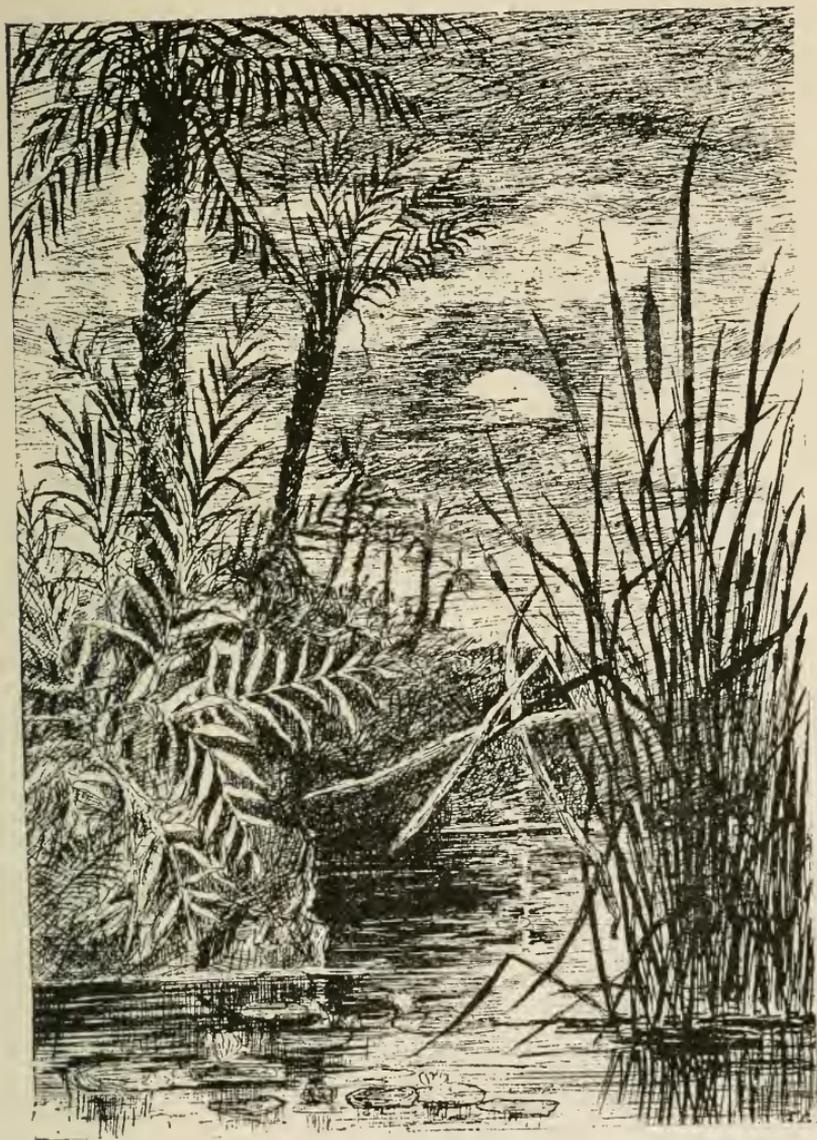
of the Red Sea. Between this bank and the sea stretches the plain of sand and gravel over which the Israelites toiled. "The word 'Shur,'" says Professor Palmer, "means 'a wall;' and as we stand at Ayun Mousa and glance over the desert at the Jebels er Rahah and et Tih, which border the gleaming plain, we at once appreciate the fact that these long wall-like escarpments are the chief if not the only prominent characteristics of this portion of the wilderness, and we need not wonder that the Israelites should have named this memorable spot, the wilderness of 'Shur,' or 'the wall.'" "Its unvarying wall-like front," writes Captain Palmer, R.E., "here the most conspicuous object in the landscape, might well have given the name 'wilderness of *Shur*' (wall) to the desert region in which it is situated." \*

This, then, was the distinct purpose of Exodus xv. 22. The sacred writer wishes to inform us of *the direction taken*, and therefore says—"they went toward the wilderness of Shur." But a complete itinerary of the journeys of Israel is given in the Book of Numbers. There we read that the Israelites "passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey *in the wilderness of Etham*, and pitched in Marah" (Numbers xxxiii. 8). Here, not the direction, but the place through which they passed is named. We have been already told that Etham was situated at the then head of the Red Sea, about sixty miles north of Suez. It was

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\* *Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai*, p. 72.

on the road from Succoth to Palestine. This town



AYUN MOUSA, THE WELLS OF MOSES.

gave its name to the wilderness on the east of the Bitter Lakes, and through *that* wilderness—not of Shur, but of Etham—Israel plodded on day after day, finding no water.

Between the point at which the Israelites crossed the sea and Suez would be about a three days' journey. This is enough in itself to determine the location of, Marah. Just at the end of the three days' journey some miles below Suez, but on this eastern side of the sea on which the Israelites were marching, lies Ayun Mousa. The very name is significant. Traditions live on in names long after the circumstances are forgotten. Ayun Mousa means "the wells of Moses." Why call them *the wells* of Moses? Something, as we have already remarked, must have happened (if we are to lay any stress whatever upon the name) that left the memory of the great law-giver linked in some way with *the waters* of the place. The healing of them, so that their bitterness was made sweet, would give just such a connection as would account fully for the form of the name.

Besides, too, the place is one which the weary Israelites could not have passed without halting at it. The water supply there is more abundant than at Suez itself. "It is a strange spot," says Dean Stanley, "this plot of tamarisks, with its seventeen wells—literally an island in the desert, and now used as the Richmond of Suez—a comparison which chiefly serves to show what a place Suez itself must be." In Dr. Stewart's *The Tent and the Khan* we have a slightly different account. "At present," he

says, "there are about a dozen wells open, one, and sometimes two in each garden; the rest beyond the garden enclosures, beside an old stunted palm. It is singular that the water in some of these wells is much more brackish and disagreeable than in others. . . . The supply of water never fails during Summer, but at that season it always suffers a considerable diminution in quantity. . . . Cabbages, radishes, and other kitchen herbs were cultivated in all the gardens; but in the French Vice-Consul's particularly I observed, besides the tamarisk and palm-trees, pomegranates, fig, olive, and almond trees in a most flourishing state." He also mentions that in the course of excavation in one of the gardens an old well, regularly built, was discovered. This proves that anciently the wells were known and cared for.

There can thus be no doubt that Marah is Ayun Mousa. It is just at the end of a good three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and its water, with the exception of one well, is still brackish.

Further on there is another marked spot in the wilderness of Shur—the Wady Gharandel. "A little farther on," says Professor Palmer, after referring to some objects in the immediate neighbourhood, "the eye is again refreshed by the sight of green tamarisks and feathery palms, and just off the customary track is a pleasant stream of running water. This is Wady Gharandel, generally regarded as Elim, and whether or no the grove and stream are the lineal descendants of the twelve springs, and seventy palm-trees which

the children of Israel found there, it is clear that the site of Elim must lie somewhere in the immediate neighbourhood. It is, in fact, the only notable spot in that part of the wilderness with the exception of Ayun Mousa. Neither spot can a traveller pass to-day without notice. He rests naturally at both of them. The Israelites must have had a similar experience." *The Speaker's Commentary* says: "The only objection to the identification of this valley with Elim is the shortness of the distance" between it and Howara, the supposed Marah. But when we place Marah at Ayun Mousa, every difficulty disappears, and we can then read the story of the halts of the children of Israel as plainly upon the face of the desert as upon the page of Scripture.

Till within recent years these doubts rested upon Marah and Elim. It was felt all along that the narrative held up the mirror to nature, for the reflection of the desert lay clearly on the sacred page. When we read the story, we felt as if we walked along the arid plains and breathed the desert air. But still the difficulty of identifying these spots remained. It was a difficulty which seemed strange. Such places could hardly have disappeared from the Peninsula, and there must have been that about them which would have challenged the attention of travellers as boldly as it challenged the attention of the Israelites. But now the difficulty is wholly cleared away. We, in our ignorance, had made a wrong start, and so had dislocated everything. We imagined that the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea at Suez, whereas

they crossed it some fifty miles higher up. The discovery of Pithom and Succoth has proved that. And now, with the identification of the point of departure, everything has suddenly become plain and even luminous. There is no longer any difficulty with regard to the three days' journey, and none with regard to Elim or Marah. How is this? So long as the mistake was persisted in, in regard to the starting point, there was confusion. The moment we are put right in regard to the starting point, all suddenly arranges itself. We find Marah in the exact place at Ayun Mousa, and Elim at Wady Gharandel. The one inference to be drawn from the whole is that this book of Exodus was written by one who had passed through this very desert, and that we have actual places and scenes—not traditions, myths, or legends—photographed upon the sacred page. The theory of the new critical school that the book was written long centuries afterwards by some Palestinian or Babylonian Jew has consequently this to reckon with. It will have to explain the stubborn refusal of the narrative to accommodate itself to our ignorance, and how, on the other hand, everything has now become plain and harmonious in the light cast by recent discovery.

## CHAPTER III.

FROM MARAH TO ELIM.  

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AMONG the many books on Sinai, there is one worthy of special mention. In *The Desert of Sinai*, the late Dr. Horatius Bonar has given us one of the most acutely observant and fascinating books ever written on this subject. I shall quote frequently from his pages. He takes us over the very path the Israelites must have trod in leaving Marah, that is, Ayun Mousa. It is a "fine large plain," without stream or verdure, "at first soft sand, then hard gravel, then stones, and all these generally of a white colour." There is no track, for the camel marks are soon covered by the shifting sand, but the way is shown by small heaps of stones set up on each side.

For about six miles "the Red Sea still continued in sight, sometimes before us, sometimes at our right hand, bright with the gleam of noon, while the piles of Egyptian mountains threw up a background to the view." The way becomes still more stony, and the plain widens out, till on either side of the travellers there are some five miles of hard sand and stone. On the second day's travel the scene changes, and indications are met with of the stern and fearful grandeur that awaits the traveller. "Now begins the great and terrible wilderness in reality. It is indeed horrible to look upon. There came first

towering mounds of rough sand ; then stupendous precipices of unformed half-baked rocks in awful confusion and dismay, like the lava of some internal volcano ; while in the distance shot up wild brown spectral mountains, which neither pen nor picture can rightly represent."

Just before the Wady Gharandel is reached the way becomes harder for those who are on foot, and the scenery is altogether of a sterner character. "We came," says Dr. Bonar, "to an immense plain of hard rocks. The mountains which bounded it were truly magnificent. Their numerous summits seemed not so much peaks, as spikes or tall spires of rock, which neither Arab nor *Gazellah* could climb, and which even the eagle might fear to alight upon. Their vast sides, which sloped down at a considerable angle to the plain through which we were passing, were all furrowed and cut up, not by ravines, but by enormous quarries, which seem to have been dug, side by side, in succession for miles. Horrid splits appeared in all directions, as if something more explosive than gunpowder had been employed to blast the rocks. It was well named 'a terrible wilderness' (Deut. viii. 15), 'a land of deserts and of pits' (Jeremiah ii. 6). I thought that, often as I had looked upon the wild mountains of Scotland, I had never before seen 'ragged rocks' (Isaiah ii. 21). The raggedness of Almarah is far beyond anything in Glencoe, though the heights of the mountains may be much the same. The whole scene is one of the most magnificent desolation and unmingled terror."

To this I may add the more technical description of the survey. "The plain itself . . . is a wild and dismal solitude; scarcely a scrap of verdure, scarcely a single noteworthy object, varies its black monotony. A 'raised beach' skirts the present shore-line; to this succeeds a broad gravelly tract, dotted with ridges and hillocks of drifted sand; further inland, as far as the base of the mountains, which run parallel with the route at a distance from of about eleven miles, the surface is broken into long, low terraces and little conical knolls capped with a hard gravel conglomerate. The colour of the soil is alternately brown, grey, and yellow, its surface sometimes sandy, more often shingly or gravelly, and sometimes stony; rocky and boulder-strewn tracts are met with here and there. A few wretched herbs and shrubs dot the dreary expanse, growing more thickly towards the sea than elsewhere, and, scanty though they are, nevertheless afford, especially in Spring time, a little welcome pasturage for the camels of the Bedouin. .

. . . On leaving Ayun Mousa you turn your back on all things civilized, and there is nothing but the wide wilderness before you. For the first few miles the plain is a little broken and undulating, but at Wady Dehesh the route enters upon a flat featureless expanse, parched and desolate in the highest degree. Hence to Wady Amarah is a toilsome march through a dreary waste. So monotonous and sterile is the scene that each bush, as passed at rare intervals on the wayside, is welcomed as a relief, and remembered, and afterwards referred to, as a definite landmark.

Other landmarks are met with here and there, as, perchance, the grave of some luckless Bedawy who has perished by the way, the bleaching skeleton of a camel, or a heap of sand or stones indicating the site of some incident or deed commemorated in the native legends.”\*

The ground rises continually from this point onward till the slope is reached, which leads down into the Wady Gharandel. Through these scenes the weary thousands toiled, and then passed down the Gharandel slope, with brightening looks and thankful hearts. Bonar calls it “a sweet oasis in the desert, covered with trees of all kinds, and fertilized by a stream, which retains the falling showers longer than most similar ones, and raises enough of verdure to feed some Arab flocks.” He speaks of a morning walk through the valley, and says “the palm trees were without number. I began to count them, but having reached the eightieth, I desisted. They extended for more than a mile and a half down the Wady, and must amount to several hundreds at the lowest estimate, so that the place is quite a palm-jungle. Most of them have four or five stems shooting up from one root. They have been goodly trees, as the prostrate trunks showed, but have been cut down clean by the ground, and the present forest is made up of shoots which gives a stunted and shaggy appearance to the whole.”

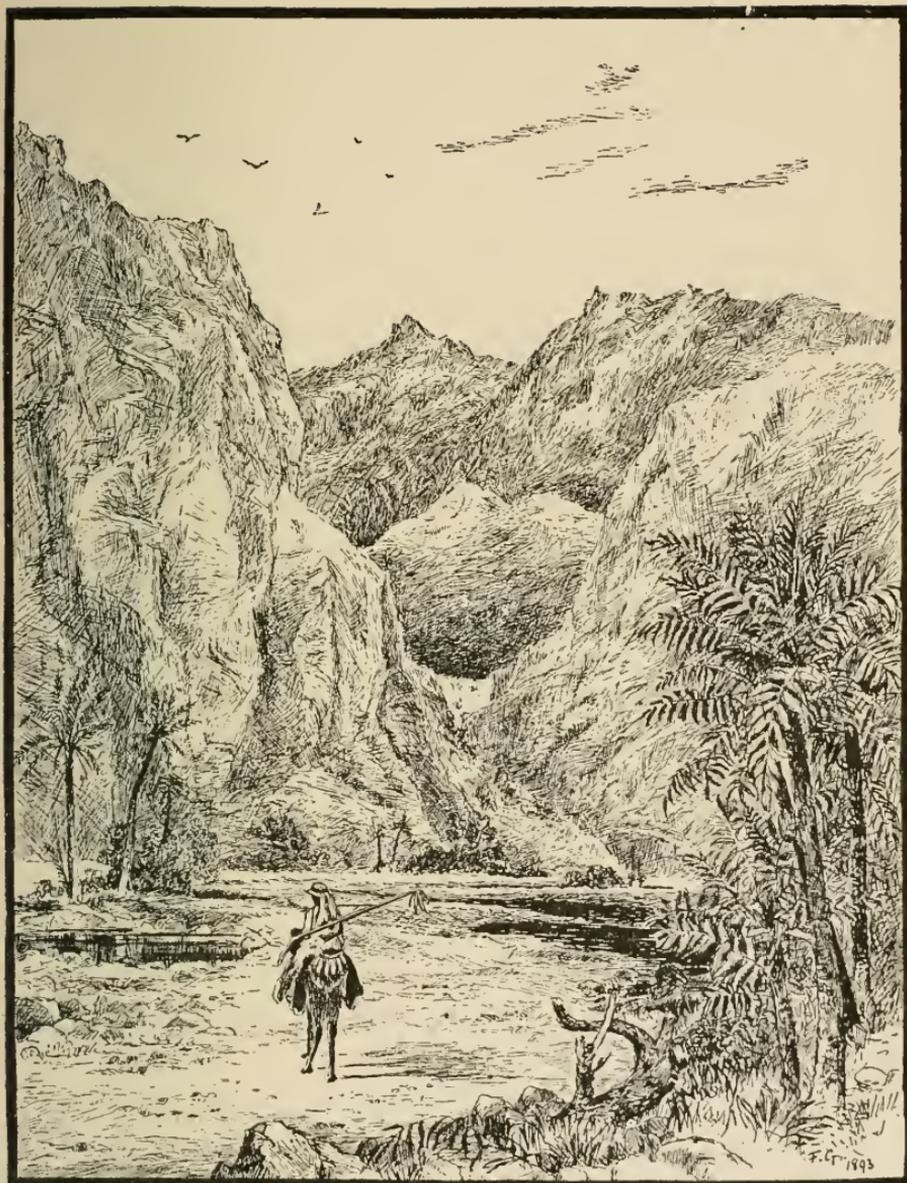
Captain Palmer says Wady Gharandel is “the first really well-defined valley on the journey. At

the point where the route enters it, this Wady is about 600 yards broad, and flows in a south-westerly direction between irregular chalky cliffs, from sixty to eighty feet high; desert herbage is abundant, *tarḥah* and *ghárkad* bushes are plentifully scattered about, and small clusters of stunted palms are met with here and there, increasing in number as the valley is descended. The first springs are situated rather more than two miles down the Wady: these form the usual watering-place for caravans and travellers passing to-and-fro on the central route; in Spring-time the supply is abundant, and bursts forth in several places; sometimes forming quite a little stream, but later in the year it diminishes to two or three dirty, brackish puddles.”\*

The reader will therefore see that this place must always have been a fixed point in any attempt to trace the route of Israel's journey. Such a place could not have been passed by a weary host, and the only difficulty which travellers have experienced in identifying it with Elim has been its nearness to Howara, the supposed Marah. But this difficulty has vanished, as we have seen, with the new discovery of Pithom, and the consequent identification of Ayun Mousa as the Marah of Scripture. Canon Cook says: “At a distance of two hours' journey south of Howara is *the large and beautiful valley* of Gharandel. In the rainy season a considerable torrent flows through it, discharging its waters into the Red Sea. Even in the dry season water is still

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\* p. 75.



WADY FEIRAN.

found, which, though somewhat brackish after long drought (Robinson), is generally good, and according to all travellers, the best on the whole journey from Cairo to Sinai. The grass there grows thick and high, there is abundance of brushwood, with tamarisks and acacias; a few palm trees still remain, relics of the fair grove which once covered this oasis of the western side of the peninsula. The only objection to the identification of this valley with Elim, is the shortness of the distance, but the inducement for the encampment is obvious, *and no other site corresponds with the main conditions of the narrative.*"\*

It is simply marvellous that, notwithstanding the mistake which gave an utterly wrong idea as to the starting-point and the first resting-place of the journey, the Scripture and the desert should have so united in quietly, yet imperiously, placing Elim in Wady Gharandel. There we have the impress of reality. The reflection of this place in the narrative is so vivid and so minutely accurate that only the most perfect acquaintance with the locality can account for it. No ignorant romancer or dreamer ever wrote the words: "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and three score and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters" (Exodus xv. 27). The words are steeped in a sense of relief and rest. Their very brevity is eloquent.

This oasis has also another recognition in the sacred narrative. It was quite natural that Israel should rest here for some time. The flocks and the

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\* *Speaker's Commentary*, i. 316.

children needed repose. There was much also that families had to attend to which had to be put aside in a desert march. Now in Exodus xvi. 1, we read : "And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt." This evidently means that *four weeks were spent* between Rameses and Sin. The first week was passed between Rameses and Marah. Other two days were taken up with the journey from Ayun Mousa to Wady Gharandel, and three more from Wady Gharandel to the wilderness of Sin. This leaves us rather more than a fortnight to allot between Marah and Elim, the bulk of which was no doubt spent in the latter place. Everything, it will be seen, fits in with the necessities of real life. But these are just the things that a romancer would forget, and that a writer of old world traditions would make no account of. That "fifteenth day of the second month," with its margin for needed rest and its haste nevertheless which presses on toward the mount of God, wasting no time needlessly, yet having compassion on the weary and the anxious, is simply alive with reality. No one can think of it and believe that we have before us either legend or tradition. The man that penned that sentence bore fresh upon his thought the memory of the scenes through which the people of God had passed.

## CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE PALMS OF ELIM TO THE WILDERNESS  
OF SIN.

WE shall now find the survey of the Sinaitic Peninsula, which was made several years ago, of special service; and a word or two as to its origin may not be out of place. It had been felt for a long time that more accurate information was needed than could be procured by a few weeks' stay in the desert. It is not an inviting region, and the sacred spots being once visited, there is no inducement to prolong one's sojourn; there is, on the contrary, every reason for returning to the more habitable portions of the earth. The accounts of the Peninsula, valuable as they were in many respects, were consequently painfully defective. We had here and there flashes of light, and then long spaces of darkness. But this defect has now been fully remedied. In the autumn of 1868, a scientific expedition left England for Sinai. Its aim was to make a survey of the Peninsula. The instructions were issued by Sir Henry James, Director General of the Ordnance Survey, and at the head of the expedition were Captains C. W. Wilson and H. S. Palmer, Royal Engineers. They were accompanied by Professor Palmer, whose perfect acquaintance with Arabic was of the greatest service, and by the Rev. F. W. Holland, who had, as a geologist,

visited the country several times, and whose personal acquaintance with the region was as valuable as Professor Palmer's knowledge of the language. The expedition also embraced Mr. C. W. Wyatt, a Zoologist, Sergeant Macdonald, who acted as photographer, Corporal Goodwin, who drew the plans, and Sergeant Brigley and Corporal Mallins, who drew up the map of the mountains.

The expedition spent five and a half months in the work. They made a special study of the whole region, as well as of its inhabitants and their customs, and minutely inspected the places more immediately connected with the journeys of the Israelites, and with the incidents in their history. Besides the maps and plans, three hundred photographic views were taken, and about three thousand copies of inscriptions. The results were published in 1872 in five volumes. The first contains the account of the expedition, three contain photographs, and the fifth the maps and the plans.

This survey has settled not a few disputes, and cleared away many an obscurity. We shall now take as full advantage as we may of the guidance so providentially vouchsafed to us in these last days. We are told in Numbers xxxiii. 10, 11, that the Israelites "removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea. And they removed from the Red Sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin." We have already seen that Elim is clearly Wady Gharandel. It is now, and apparently has always been, a place which weary desert travellers cannot pass without

pausing to taste the sweetness of its refreshment and rest. The narrative of Scripture has conveyed so faithful a picture that the name has become proverbial, and the place is still an "Elim," a place of waters and of palm trees. The first notice in the verses I have quoted enables us to fix the route which the Israelites followed in the next journey. We read that they "encamped by the Red Sea." Now the Wady Gharandel leads down to the Red Sea. But, had they gone down that valley, the rocks would have prevented their further progress along the coast. They would have had to retrace their steps, and we can hardly imagine that they would have marched in that direction merely to have had a look at the waters. They went down to the sea for the simple reason that their pathway was to lie by the shore. By following Wady Gharandel to its western end, however, I repeat, no such pathway was possible. The way by the shore is blocked by rocks which run down into the sea.

There is also another very evident objection to this route. From Elim to the sea, at the foot of Wady Gharandel, would not have been more than an hour or a two hours' journey. The Israelites encamped by the sea, and] this they were little likely to do just after they had broken up] the previous encampment, and loaded their carts and their beasts of burden. They set out for an honest day's travel, and we cannot doubt that before night fell they had completed the task, and had put another fifteen or twenty miles between them and the land of their captivity. We



must, therefore, enquire whether, in setting out for Elim, another way to the sea was open to them.

Four or five miles from the coast a road crosses Wady Gharandel (as will be seen on our map, copied from that of the Ordnance Survey), and leads into Wady Useit. Did they then proceed along this road and then turn down Wady Useit to the sea? This they might have done; for this Wady runs parallel to Wady Gharandel. But they would have again encountered a similar rocky barrier prohibiting further progress along the shore. We must accordingly conclude that they did not turn down Wady Useit, but went straight on crossing Wady Useit, as they had crossed the valley of Elim. The road continues and enters into the Wady Taiyebah, which also leads down to the Red Sea, but now to a part of the coast which afforded an easy and unobstructed passage to the host. Everything falls in with what we read in the narrative. The distance from Wady Gharandel to the mouth of Wady Taiyebah is about fifteen miles; and, therefore, about the very distance which they seem to have passed over in one day's travel. Professor Palmer says: "To reach the sea two roads were open to them, either to follow Wady Gharandel itself to its mouth, or to turn down the next practicable valley, Wady Taiyebah. The first is extremely unlikely, as the cliffs and rough rocks which come down to the water's edge past this point would have impeded their further progress, and compelled them to retrace their steps; whereas from Wady Taiyebah the coast is open and passable, and

moreover the mouth of the valley affords a fine clear space for their encampment by the sea. There are two roads to Sinai, the upper one by Sarabat el Khadim, and the lower one by the coast, and the modern traveller who chooses the latter still turns off by Wady Taiyebah, and reaches the sea-shore in a fair day's journey from Gharandel." \*

Here again it will be seen that the narrative and the desert fit like hand and glove. That slight mention of their encamping by the sea enables us, when we go to the spot, to follow the movements of the host with absolute certainty. Can this be explained by any possibility, except on the one ground that the record of that world-changing journey is not a dim, blurred, and blundering tradition, but a record of fact, marked by what we may call photographic accuracy? It is a painful necessity when, in a Christian land, and with Christian men, we are compelled to argue that the Word of God is not a "vain tradition." But seeing that we are brought down to such humiliation, it rejoices us to note how the Bible itself affords the answer, and discloses the seals of truth and divinity which no opposition or mistake can destroy. Even this brief notice—that "they removed from Elim, and encamped by the sea"—strikes a crushing blow at the theories of criticism which would pass to their pitiable triumph through the ruins of the Bible. Take it as the word of Moses, and we understand it. It is the statement of an eye-witness. Tell us that it was written a

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\* *The Desert of the Exodus*, i., 274.

thousand years afterwards by someone who wrote, not from observation, but from imagination, and explanation is impossible.



THE WADY TAIYEBEH.

We can still see the scenes through which Moses and Aaron led the host of God so many centuries ago. Speaking of this Wady Taiyebah, Prof. Palmer

says: "A short way up, the mountains began to assume a more pleasing and variegated appearance—the sandstone here meeting the chalk hills with a very decided line of demarcation, so that the sides were often half red and half white; and this, relieved by the bright green of many a clustering caper plant, produced an effect extremely agreeable to the eye. Some distance up the valley there is also a scanty *tarfah* grove and a brackish stream." From that stream the beasts no doubt refreshed themselves on that day in the far distant past, while their masters drank from the sweeter Elim waters, which were slung in skins across the beasts' backs. The eyes of the Israelites rested on those red and white rocks, and on the green caper plants, with as much delight as was felt by our own countrymen. It is such experiences that prove how little power even seemingly omnipotent time has to divide the great family of man whom God is guiding into the eternal home.

There are two possible routes from the mouth of Wady Taiyebḥ to Mount Sinai. These the reader may trace upon the map. The first turns back eastward into the land by the Wady Hamr, and passes through Debbet er Ramleh, which some have identified with the desert of Sin, which is the next station mentioned: "And they removed from the Red Sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin" (Numbers xxxiii. 11). The distance in this case fits in well, as we should then have another journey of about fifteen miles. But there are strong objections to this route. We should be met again with the question, why the Israelites

went down to the sea and encamped by it. If they were to go by the upper road, there was no reason, apparently, for their going down the Wady Taiyebah at all. They would have crossed it higher up, in a straight line from Wady Gharandel, and would thus have saved themselves a needless detour. There are also other objections which are still more weighty. I shall give them in the words of Professor Palmer: "The rugged passes and narrow valleys on the upper road would have presented insuperable difficulties to a large caravan, encumbered by heavy baggage, and they would have passed through a district actually held by a large military force of the very enemies from whom they were fleeing. The Bible, however, speaks of no collision between the Egyptians and Israelites, during the whole of their wanderings, after the passage of the Red Sea."\*

There is reason to believe that no weight need be attached to the latter difficulty. We indeed know that along that upper route there were mines which had been worked by the Egyptians, and that the stations had once been occupied by Egyptian troops. But we are now aware that the mines had been disused for long ages, and that they were not opened till after the time of Thotmes II., at the close of whose reign, we have seen reason to believe, the Israelites left Egypt. The first objection, however, is quite enough. The upper route was full of difficulty for the Israelites, and would not have been chosen when a better route could be had.

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\* *Ibid.*, 274, 275.

Professor Palmer gives a lively account of a visit to one of these early Egyptian settlements at Sarabit el Khadim, which the Israelites must have passed had they taken the upper, or what we may call the inland, route. The road, it will be observed, presented considerable difficulty, and was well nigh impassible for a large host encumbered with baggage. "Although only seven hundred feet in height," he says, "the ascent of Sarabit el Khadim is by no means easy. A scramble over a rough slide of loose sandstone at the upper end of the valley, a treacherous sloping ledge of rock overhanging an awkward precipice, and a steep ravine which brings into play all one's gymnastic capabilities, leads to an extensive plateau, broken up by many deep ravines and rising knolls. On one of the highest of these last is a heap of ruins, hewn sandstone walls, with broken columns, and numerous *stelæ* in shape like ordinary English gravestones, standing or scattered at irregular intervals about the place, the whole being surmounted by the *débris* of an outer wall. The buildings consist of two temples, apparently of different dates, one constructed entirely of hewn stones, the other formed by two chambers excavated in the rock at the easter-most end, and having a walled continuation in front. In the largest of these chambers the walls show signs of having been once completely covered with hieroglyphics, though a great portion have now scaled off; at the upper end is a small niche, probably the altar, beside which is a carved figure in bas-relief. Another niche is seen at the right-hand corner, and in the

centre of the chamber is a pillar cut in the solid rock, and covered with hieroglyphics. Some of the hieroglyphics in this cave still bear traces of the paint with which they were formerly ornamented, emerald green inside the characters, with a red and black band above and below. The cornice of the wall which forms the continuation of the temple, is ornamented with a pretty pattern, and fragments of Egyptian coping lie around the entrance.

“The *Stelæ* above mentioned, as well as such of the walls of the building as are still left standing, are also covered with hieroglyphics, and amongst them may be remarked the *cartouches* of many of the earliest Egyptian kings. The purpose of these monuments was for a long time enveloped in mystery, but the researches of Professor Lepsius and other learned Egyptologists have shown that they were connected with the working of copper mines in the neighbourhood, and that the temple was probably that in which the miners and their guards worshipped the national gods of Egypt. The mines themselves were first re-discovered by Mr. Holland, during a previous visit to the Peninsula, and were carefully examined by the expedition on this occasion; they exist in great numbers in the neighbourhood of the temples, and several of them contain beautifully executed hieroglyphic tablets.”\*

We are consequently shut up to the coast route, the choice of which alone explains why the Israelites came down from Elim and encamped by the sea.

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\* *Ibid*, vol. i., p. 31.

That this was the way which they followed, was the unanimous judgment of the members of the Ordnance Survey, who closely investigated the district. Another glance at the map will disclose the fact that there is an open coast route leading down to El Markha, a large plain twelve miles long and three or four miles broad. Another fifteen miles journey from the mouth of Wady Taiyebah would land them in the northern part of El Markha, which we must, therefore, identify with the Wilderness of Sin. Of that journey and its sequel we shall speak in the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE WILDERNESS OF SIN.

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THE astonishing feature in this attempt to follow the track of the Israelites is that the consideration of almost every step in the journey gives us the certainty and the satisfaction of a discovery. Thirty-five centuries have failed to blot out, or to remove, the land-marks. It only required the light of the painstaking and accurate Ordnance Survey to make every word in Numbers xxxiii., and in other parts of the Pentateuch, speak so as to fill us with admiration alike of their precision and of their brevity. The combined fulness and self-restraint of those apparently dry catalogues of names give us a new idea of His wisdom from whom this Word has come.

It will be clear from what has been already said, that the children of Israel must have come down from Elim to the coast by the Wady Taiyebah. This was seen to be the only practicable route by Dr. Bonar long before the Ordnance Survey was undertaken. The route from Elim to the mouth of the Wady was one of the most memorable in Dr. Bonar's journey, and seems to have stirred his poet heart. "We were traversing," he says, "a scene of grandeur as varied as it was matchless. First we passed through what can be called nothing else than a long succession of stupendous quarries. Then the valley takes a noble sweep, and presents a similar succession of huge terraces, overhung with scowling precipices. Then we come right upon a vast towering semi-circle of rocks, that seem to bar our exit, till a sudden turn brings us into a more open way. . . . At one place the harder parts of the vast white slope, now abraded by the rain, come out in full relief, like a row of Egyptian gods, sitting in state with their hands upon their monstrous knees. At another, scores of Gothic buttresses seem planted against the walls of some enormous cathedral. . . . Then comes a vast semi-circle of sheer precipice, some hundreds of feet in height, and which might contain a city in its noble sweep. Then beyond this . . . rises a most singular peak, first tawny sandstone, then red, then white, then red again, then black—till the summit pierces the blue sky with a dark yellow spire. It must be at least 600 feet high. This is *Wady Taiyebah* or "the good"—so called from its

tarfas, palms, and water—which last, however, we did not taste or see. This valley winds for about a mile.”\*

At the mouth of this Wady, and near the sea, there is a plain suited in every way for a large encampment. There Israel “encamped by the Red Sea,” as Dr. Bonar and his friends pitched their tents, “hard by the sea, and within sound of its soft ripple.” “Our dragoman,” he continues, “tells us that the water here is good. The night comes down on us:—and such a night! Full moon, cloudless sky, calm sea, and shadowy cliffs. We enjoy the scene around—but still more the remembrance of the wondrous magnificence through which we have all day been passing.”† Here the Israelites once more rested in peace, with a supply of that essential requisite for a desert journey—good water.

From the mouth of Wady Taiyebah, the way of the Israelites lay along the shore. The members of the Survey satisfied themselves that no other way was practicable for them, and the wisdom of that journey to the sea was evident so soon as all the available routes to “the mount of God” were subjected to close inspection. The way lay by the coast to Wady Feirán, below the desert plain of El Markha. Travellers, who take the coast route, do not go so far south as the mouth of Wady Feirán, but pass into the interior by the Wady Shellal, at the northern end of El Markha. They travel by the Nagb Buderah; “but,” says Professor Palmer, “the

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\* *Desert of Sinai* (Nisbet & Co.), pp. 133, 134.

† *Ibid.*, p. 136.

road over that pass was unquestionably constructed at a date posterior to the Exodus; and, had it even existed at that time, would have been less practicable than Wady Feirán, and would not only have led the Israelites into collision with the Egyptians at Magharah, but have presented a further difficulty in the pass of Jebel Mukatteb.”\*

They could not then have found a way such as they were seeking—a way of easy access for children and baggage, for flocks and herds—by any earlier entrance than that of Wady Feirán, whose broad plains and palm groves make it the paradise of the desert. But, the reader may ask, why fix upon Wady Feirán? It is true there was no *earlier* entrance into the interior, but may there not have been one further south? Strange to say, there is, here again, no possibility of mistaking the route. As there was no other entrance higher up, so there was no other lower down. An immense plain—El Gaah—skirts the sea to the south of Wady Feirán. But the Israelites would have sought in vain for an entrance into the interior there. “Beyond Wady Feirán,” says Professor Palmer, “there is no practicable valley; Wady Hebrán, the most open of them all, being far too difficult and rugged to have admitted of their passing through it.”†

The Israelites must, therefore, have gone towards Wady Feirán, from this encampment by the sea after the first day’s journey from Elim. Let us now follow them. We read (Numbers xxxiii.) that “they

\* *The Desert of the Exodus* (Deighton, Bell and Co.), vol. i., pp. 275, 276.

† *Ibid.*, p. 276.

removed from the Red Sea, and encamped in the Wilderness of Sin." From the mouth of Wady Taiyebah southwards, the way lies, for 10 miles, along a narrow strip of coast. Captain Palmer calls it "a hot and weary march south-eastward over the coast plain which forms a long narrow approach to the larger plain of El Markha." It is "nowhere more than about a mile broad; low sandhills and bleached terraces of limestone bound it on the left; on the right a sparkling blue sea breaks in tiny ripples upon a long stretch of shell-strewn beach."\*

The Israelites had thus the sea on their right hand, and on their left, wild and precipitous cliffs, weather-wasted, and rising up in spikes and cones. The way lies close to the cliffs, and over a natural pavement of flat rocks. The sea comes in, with shallow tide here and there, almost up to the cliffs, and occasionally the feet of the travellers must have been dipped in these very waters, which still lave the coast, and over which our Red Sea steamers plough their way. Before the day's march is done, they have passed from this hard and (for such a host) narrow pathway, and have come to the broad plain, where their feet sink in soft sand. Travellers, as I have said, on entering this plain, no longer follow the coast route. They turn their backs upon the sea, cross over the upper part of El Markha, and pass up the Wady Shellal. But we have seen that the route practicable for travellers to-day was not available then, and even if it had been, it was not suitable for

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\* *Survey*, p. 82.

such a host as was now seeking "the mount of God."

Instead, then, of passing along Wady Shellal, the Israelites kept the coast route, and held on their way into the plain of El Markha, which is about fourteen miles long, and three or four broad. If the reader



WADY MOKATTEB, WITH SOME OF THE INSCRIPTIONS.

will glance at the map on page 399, it will make matters clearer. Their day's journey will take them some miles into what appears then to have been known as the Wilderness of Sin. Professor Palmer calls it "a dreary, desolate, sandy place. The place

has only one spring, and that so brackish as to be quite undrinkable. As there is neither water nor pasturage, the Arabs never come near the spot unless to cross it on their way to and from Suez, and excepting a few lizards and stray sea-birds, we did not meet a single living creature on our way.”\*

Professor Palmer’s remark about the one bitter spring refers to *the south* of the plain. But about 4 miles from its northern extremity there are *springs of sweet water* called Ain Dhafary. This fact enables us to fix the encampment of the Israelites. They would naturally set up their tents in the neighbourhood of the water supply, and their day’s journey would thus have brought them about fourteen miles—about the very distance we have found them travelling on previous occasions. We are thus able to compare the record and the place, and once more to find them fit each other like lock and key. The Itinerary in Numbers xxxiii., as well as the corresponding passage in Exodus xvi. 1-3, is confidently ascribed by the “critics” to what they call “the Priest’s Code.” This, which embraces a large part of the Pentateuch, they say was fabricated after the exile. It is probable, says Driver, “that the *completed* Priest’s Code”—for they find mighty difficulties in so splitting up this one book to make different books of it, and have, therefore to suppose that there has been much tinkering as well as many writers—“that the *completed* Priest’s Code is the work of the age subsequent to Ezekiel.” †

The writer, or writers of this Priestly Code set

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\* *Ibid* i., p. 237. † *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* p. 135.

themselves, these self-styled critics suppose, to fabricate history in order to give position and power to the priesthood! And among their other imaginations was the story of this journey!

Now the reader can very easily put this matter to the test, and see exactly where the fabrication comes in. Let him sit down and imagine that a commando of Boers abandons the Transvaal to seek a home in some part of untravelled Africa. Let him accompany them in fancy, and minutely describe their after experiences. They cross a broad river, let us say. After reaching the other side in safety, he makes them turn to the right and take a three days' journey into a wilderness, which he names. He describes it as a dry land, in which there is no water. At the close of this trying march they come upon springs, abundant enough but bitter. Their next station is a restful valley of palm trees. Their succeeding march takes them down to the river again, by the side of which they encamp. They then, at the end of another day's march, encamp in a broad dreary plain, beside a good supply of palatable water, which is not mentioned indeed, but the existence of which is plainly implied, seeing that, though there is harsh complaint of want of bread, *there is no complaint of lack of water.* When he has painted these pictures in fancy, does he expect, for a moment, that anyone travelling through that very country will ever mistake his novelette for history, or that one after another will come to him and say:—  
“That description of yours is marvellously accurate!

I was able to follow your fleeing Boers every step of the way. I saw where they must have crossed the river. I saw the very place where the three days' desert journey came in, and I myself encamped at the bitter wells which ended the long weary tramp. And every day's journey afterwards was a repeated surprise and delight. I found the palm trees just where you placed them. I searched diligently and discovered that, although there were several ways down to the river, the only one which permitted your Boers to continue their journey, and to continue it by the very best route they could possibly have taken, was the very way you had chosen." Is that within the bounds of possibility? And if it is not, the reader will agree with me that the fabrication must come in somewhere else. It is not in the narrative of the journey: *that* is history, not fiction. It bears on every sentence the stamp of reality, and not of imagination; of truth, not of falsehood. The fabrication must, therefore, be with this wonderful theory. It is the "critics" that are dreaming, and not the Scripture.

Some events happened in this Wilderness of Sin with the story of which we have been long familiar. So far, it would seem, the Israelites had suffered nothing from want of food. They had murmured at Marah, because of the badness of the water; but nothing was said of lack of bread. They had evidently been bountifully supplied on leaving Egypt. They must have anticipated a wilderness journey, even had they gone by "the way of the Philistines,"

and provision had to be seen to for that. Then they could not have counted with safety upon *an immediate* entrance into Canaan. There were sure to be days of waiting, and possibly of battle. Provision had accordingly to be made for that also. The milk supplied by the cattle would also aid in lengthening out the duration of the corn supply. This supply had now, however, quite come to an end. The discovery of the condition of the host was soon made. One neighbour going to borrow from another would be met by the assurance that the other was as poor in this matter as himself. In this way the terribleness of their condition would be borne in upon the host with stupefying effect. The desolation of El Markha would lend additional bitterness to the discovery. Death seemed inevitable. To go forward was to make that fate certain. To retreat was equally impossible. They would perish before they could possibly retrace their steps, and gain the borders of Egypt! "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Exodus xvi. 2, 3).

Now here was a case in which this people could very well have sought counsel from God. They might have said: "The Lord who has done such marvellous things in our behalf, will not forsake us

now. The failure of our bread supply is truly alarming, but He who clave a way for us through the sea, can open up another way of escape from death." We can imagine them coming to Moses, and saying, with blended anxiety and faith, "Pray thou to our God for us, that He may give us bread." Had they only so come, what a different story this would have been, and how God would have delighted in His people! But, instead of this, they flung away from God. As if they had a slumbering quarrel with the Almighty, and only waited for an opportunity of showing their enmity, they broke out into rebellious murmuring. They had been shamefully deceived! They had been led away from a beautiful land of peace and plenty, and were now entrapped in this terrible wilderness, that young and old might die! But perhaps we can all throw some light on that awful scene; for who has not murmured and rebelled against God's guiding? The rebellion of Israel looks dreadful enough, but it is only too true a picture of our own.

This trial was permitted that it might press them into God's presence, so that they might not only find bread, but also rejoice in the assurance of His love. Even their rebellion, however, cannot make God deny Himself. I need not repeat the well-known narrative of the manna and the quails; but there are one or two matters in connection with these miracles which fall within our special province, and to these I shall now ask the reader's attention.

## CHAPTER VI.

## FROM THE WILDERNESS OF SIN TO REPHIDIM.

THE stay in the wilderness of Sin was thus marked, and the story of Israel was marred, by fickleness and ingratitude. It is well to notice, however, that the name "manna," so familiar to us, tells a tale that is more to Israel's honour. It is a name which has enshrined the surprise and the joy of deliverance from death. When they went out at their tent doors in the morning, they saw this little round thing, hard and dry, and in size, colour, and shape resembling coriander seed, lying thick upon the ground everywhere. When it was picked up, examined, and tasted, the words of Moses flashed upon them, and the hearts of Israel were swayed as the heart of one man. They saw in this the hand of God, and they knew that they were saved. The Lord had rained down bread from heaven! "When the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, *man-hu*: for they did not know *mah-hu*" (Exodus xvi. 15). The similarity between the Hebrew words *man* and *mah* has misled many. *Mah* is the relative pronoun "what," "*hu*" the personal pronoun "he" or "it." *Mah-hu* translated into English is simply "What it;" that is, "they did not know what it was." The mistake made is to regard *man-hu* and *mah-hu* as meaning the same thing. *Man*, on the

contrary, signifies "a gift;" and the meaning of the Scripture evidently is, that, unable to identify it with anything which they had hitherto known, they gave it this name—"It is a gift." It was a happy title, and the Scripture thankfully records it. They did not know its nature, but they knew whence it had come, and this word "manna" is an eternal



A VIEW IN WADY FEIRAN.

memento of their gratitude. It is pleasing to note another suggestion. Our Lord has taught us to see in that manna, rained from heaven about the tents of Israel, the emblem of Himself, the true "bread of life," given as freely and lying as plentifully for every man's gathering to-day. Israel's grateful cry has been re-echoed down through the ages by the myriads who have blessed God for His "unspeakable Gift."

The reader will notice the Scripture statement that "when," or after, the dew was dried up, the manna was seen lying upon "the face of the wilderness." The God of nature neglects nothing. A multitude of small but necessary arrangements lend their help in accomplishing His beneficent purposes. And He is the God of providence and of revelation. The dew that fell moistened the sand, and pressed the sandy particles together. In this way, the face of the wilderness was made firm *and clean*, and Israel's food was saved from hurtful admixture and defilement.

An attempt to explain the miracle of the manna has been made by the monks of Sinai. Many have imagined that it takes away a huge difficulty. It is that the bread rained down from heaven was the gum shed by a plant that has always had its home in the wilderness of Sinai. The Tamarisk, or Tarfa, is very frequently met with in the peninsula of Sinai. An insect pierces the leaves, and from the puncture a sweet, honey-like gum pours out during two months of the year. This the monks of St. Catherine gather, put into jars, and sell as the manna on which Israel subsisted for forty years!

It is almost as grotesque an imposition as that of the bits of the true cross scattered over Europe at the present day, or of the garments worn by our Lord, or of the napkin which wiped the sweat from His brow, and which carried away with it the picture of the Redeemer's face. But it has seemed so to simplify this matter to many that they have not looked at the improbabilities of the case. The entire

supply of the Tamarisk gum *would not feed one man for a year*, while the manna supplied the wants of the millions of Israel for forty years! The gum is supplied, too, by the Tamarisk only during two months in the year, and the manna was gathered daily in every month of the year. Further, the gum is a *medicine*, and not a food; for it is entirely wanting in the vital element of nitrogenous matter. No man could possibly sustain life on it; and, even if it had been miraculously multiplied, it would have required another miracle to change its character and to give to it the nutritive properties which it naturally lacks. To all this it has still to be added that the manna was a substance which could be pounded, and ground, and baked, and boiled. If those who are inclined to think that they have found out all about this miracle, will experiment in that way with the Tamarisk gum, or rather treacle, they will speedily conclude that the "manna" of the monks is a delusion.

There are other differences which might be noted; but there is no need to break *every* limb of this poor fly. A second miracle, however, was wrought for Israel on this occasion. God gave them flesh, as well as bread, to eat. "And it came to pass that at even the quails came up and covered the camp" (Exodus xvi. 13). This, I have said, was also a miracle; but the miracle, in this instance, linked itself on to what was natural. The birds were directed in their flight and made to rest in the very camp of the Israelites. In their zeal to make belief

easy to people who have not faith enough to accept miracles, writers have snatched at almost every possible opinion. By some the quails have been set down as flying fish. These abound in the Red Sea, and what so natural as that a shoal or two of them should fly over the plain of El Markha, and cover the camp of the Israelites! Others have turned the quails into locusts, and have imagined that Israel was now fed by what had been recently one of the plagues of Egypt. The Scripture brushes all these explanations aside. The Hebrew word is *selav*. It occurs only in the Pentateuch and in Psalm cv.; but it is the word still applied to the quail in the Arabic and in its sister languages. There can be no doubt that the quail is meant.

Now here is a case in which anyone, base enough in the year 400 B.C. to palm off as history a narrative of things that had never happened, would have certainly blundered. In telling of birds miraculously brought into the camp of Israel, he would hardly have named *the only bird which migrates and which could have been eaten with such satisfaction* by a people given to murmuring, that they would not only feast upon them while they were fresh, but would dry them in the sun and preserve them for future use, as we are told they did (Numbers xi. 32). Even men of learning, writing in modern times—the special feature of which is extensive knowledge founded upon accurate observation—have erred greatly in this matter. Some have supposed these birds to have been white storks; but “the flesh is so nauseous

that no Israelite could ever have done more than have tasted it." Others have suggested sand grouse ; but these could not have been captured even when wearied, as the quails were captured, and their flesh is, besides, "hard and tasteless." The quail, to which, on the other hand, the word undoubtedly applies, is a plump, fat bird, and must have afforded a delicious feast even to the epicures fresh from the flesh-pots of Egypt. How could a writer of fiction, in the fourth century before the Christian era, hit upon this bird, and how could he have walked safely where so many learned men in times of fuller knowledge have woefully stumbled?

But this is only one part, and a small part, of the difficulty which besets the modern "re-construction of the Bible." The quail is a bird whose habits specially fitted it for this service. "The quail migrates," writes the Rev. William Houghton, "in immense numbers—see Pliny and Tournefort, who says, that all the islands of the Archipelago at certain seasons of the year are covered with these birds. Col. Sykes states that such quantities were once caught in Capri, near Naples, as to have afforded the bishop no small share of his revenue, and that in consequence he has been called the Bishop of Quails. The same writer mentions also that 160,000 quails have been netted in one season on this little island ; according to Temminck, 100,000 have been taken near Nettuno, in one day. The Israelites would have had little difficulty in capturing large quantities of these birds, as they are known to

arrive at places sometimes so completely exhausted by their flight as to be readily taken, not in nets only, but by the hand. Sykes says:—‘They arrive in spring on the shores of Provence, so fatigued that for the first few days they allow themselves to be taken by the hand.’ ‘On two successive years,’ says Canon Tristram, ‘I observed enormous flights of quails on the north coast of Algeria, which arrived from the south in the night, and were at daybreak in such numbers through the plains, that scores of sportsmen had only to shoot as fast as they could re-load.’”

There are other features in the miracle which render the fiction theory increasingly impossible. The quails return northward from Africa in the spring. This is *the very time of year* when they are miraculously diverted from their course to feed the hosts of Israel. They wait too for a favourable wind; and we also learn in Scripture that *the wind brought them* (Num. xi. 31). In the second visitation, about a year afterwards, we are told that the Israelites dried the quails and so preserved them for future use. Herodotus tells us that quails were treated by the Egyptians *in this very manner* (ii. 77). The preparing of fish and birds in this way is shown on the monuments. The quails were also well known and much prized by the Egyptians. “Large flights of quails,” says Wilkinson, “afforded excellent sport at certain seasons;” \* and an old writer says:—“The quails of Egypt are esteemed a great

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\* *The Ancient Egyptians*, i., p. 234.

delicacy." The Israelites pined after the flesh-pots of the land which they had left. Could any Babylonian romancer have picked out so naturally one of Egypt's most delicate viands, to show how God could have still furnished a table for His people in the wilderness, had it been best for them? And would, as naturally and with as little remark, have this romancer represented them as drying the birds in *the Egyptian fashion*?

But we must pause here in our study of the confirmations which meet us in the narrative of this momentous journey. The rest I shall hope to deal with in our next volume. There are other modes, indeed, of meeting the attack to which Christianity is now being subjected throughout the whole of the English-speaking world; but there is no other answer so deadly in its effect upon the critical batteries. It annihilates them. Theories, which would have us believe that those narratives are fictions which we see, to be steeped in the customs and in the thought, and which are even composed in the very language, of the times with which they deal, are thereby branded as fallacies and enormities, no matter what ingenuity and scholarship may be behind them. A well-known literateur, in an otherwise favourable notice of Prof. G. A. Smith's book on *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, writes: "We will venture to suggest, however, that the evidence of archæology is somewhat too lightly disposed of. The triumph may be more apparent than real. The significant fact is that the great first-hand archæolo-

gists, as a rule, *do not trust the Higher Criticism*. This means a great deal more than can be put on paper to account for their doubt. It means that they are living in an atmosphere where arguments that flourish outside do not thrive." And that, I may add, is the atmosphere of *fact*, the atmosphere of incontrovertible truth; and into its life-restoring breath we must, without delay, bring the English-speaking public, which has been so long exposed to the deadly exhalations from the swamps of Hegelian scholarship, and of a science that dreams of annihilating God.

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