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A SHORT HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT.

EGYPT AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES.

A SHORT HISTORY
OF
ANCIENT EGYPT.

BY

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ERRATA.

Page 9. Line 28. Omit comma after *doubtless*.

Page 24. Line 21. For *and* read *for*.

Page 39. Line 7. For *these* read *there*.
Line 13. For *all* read *the*.

Page 57. Line 11. Supply a hyphen between *Se* and *Ankh*.

Page 58. Line 10. For *Usertesen* read *Senusret*.
Also pages 61, 62, and 65.

Page 64. Line 23. For *Asiastic* read *Asiatic*.

Page 69. Line 14. Omit comma after *age*.

Page 89. Line 16. For *this* read *their*.

Page 93. Headline of page. For *XXnd* read *XXII*.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE purpose of these pages is to present a short history of Ancient Egypt from the founding of the monarchy until the disintegration of the empire 3,000 years afterwards. The material for such a work has for many years been accumulating, and we therefore venture to lay before those interested in Egypt and the students of allied subjects this attempt at an interpretation of the existing material upon historical principles.

The progress which research has made, both in Egypt upon the ancient sites and in the study of the original language and literature, has seemed to us sufficient authority for setting aside the traditions of later historians, and accepting instead the evidence of the monuments as the ground for the opinions we have expressed. It has been our aim to make no statement which does not rest upon the substantial basis of a fact. Many of our opinions are new, and they express our mutual explanation of the real meaning of the monuments, arrived at often only after prolonged consideration. Opinions of others may naturally differ from these interpretations, and in this respect criticism which aims in scientific spirit at unravelling the real history will be welcomed.

Believing the general course of Egyptian history to be continuous, we have avoided in the following pages, so far as possible, any use of those terms and arbitrary divisions of periods which tend to suggest repeated breaks in the sequence of events. Chronology is certain only as far back as 1600 B.C.; for dates before that time the latest possible year has been appended.

P. E. N.
J. G.

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL.

NEFRET, WIFE OF USERTESEN II. (*See* p. 65.)

A SHORT HISTORY

OF

ANCIENT EGYPT.

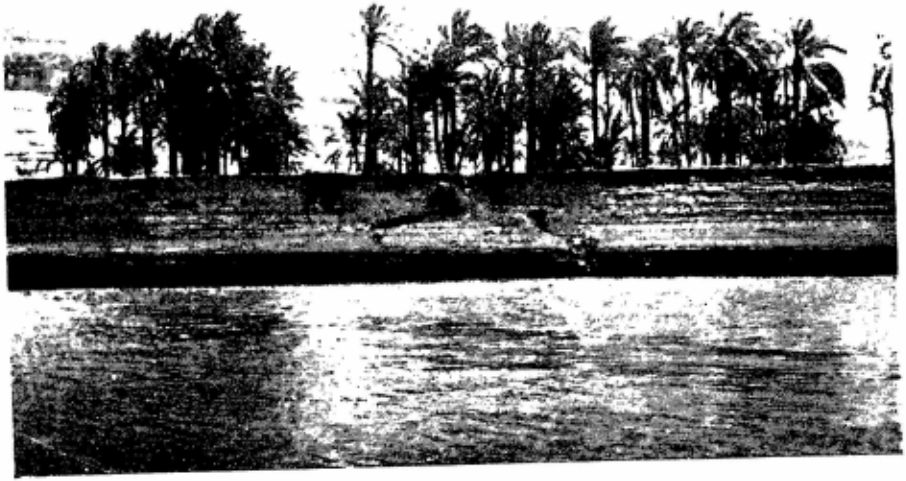
I.—DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY.

Egypt lies in the valley of a single river. The Nile, to which the country owes its life, receives its waters from the great lakes in the heart of Africa and from the Abyssinian mountains; it empties itself into the Mediterranean at the north-eastern corner of the continent. Though flowing for 2,000 miles through desolate regions its banks are mostly fertile, owing to accretions of vegetable mould brought down annually by the river when in flood. Below Khartûm, where the main streams unite, it receives only one tributary, the Atbara, and thence it pursues a solitary course, until at Cairo, about a hundred miles from the sea, it divides into numerous branches which find their several ways into the Mediterranean. For the greater part of this distance it winds through the Sudân and Nubia over beds of sandstone; but from near Aswân, where it enters Egypt over an arm of granite stretched out from the east, it keeps a more northerly direction, winding only within the limits of a continuous valley worn down in former ages from the limestone deserts on either hand. The course of the river is broken in several places by shallows and

rapid fallings, which render navigation difficult in its upper reaches; but from Aswân, where the last of these obstacles is passed, the river flows on placidly between its level banks.

These banks are indeed the land of Egypt. Having themselves been deposited in past time by the Nile, which now works a sinuous and changing course between them, they extend a flat surface of varying width on either hand. These strips of cultivable soil give way in turn to sands gently rising above the influence of the water, which are themselves bounded by the steep uniform edges of the great deserts lying to the east and west. These unvarying ridges of limestone form the natural boundaries of Egypt and the valley of the Nile. They are generally not more than 20 miles apart, and the long fertile plain between them averages only half that width, the remainder being barren and unwatered sands.

Sometimes, however, the appearance becomes varied. The river for a considerable length through Upper Egypt hugs the eastern cliffs, and the strip of land is therefore narrow on that side; sometimes it gives way entirely where the rocks creep westward to the water's edge. In these places the river flows strangely between the bare desert on the right and the fertile country on the left. At one place in the south of Egypt the hills on both sides approach so closely that the river here flows between pillars of rock rising up on either hand. Doubtless in former ages the water has forced this passage through a continuous ridge of yielding sandstone, wearing down a great fall in long sequence of years to a rapid, until eventually the river reached its present level. This mountain chain, called Gebel Silsileh, through which the river flows as it were through a doorway of stone, divides



THE BANKS OF THE NILE.

the strip of cultivable soil completely, and formed in earliest days the natural boundary to Egypt on the south. Above, the banks are narrow, and the granite spur which crosses above Aswân has still, to some extent, resisted the erosive action of the water. Below, the banks are wider, and the white limestone soon appears in a uniform ridge on either side, in one place drawing near and then again receding, but forming an unending boundary to the horizons of the east and west. Though seemingly continuous, these cliffs are broken here and there by deep gorges and ravines leading down from the higher desert beyond. These are for the most part dry, but during occasional rainstorms, which usually recur at intervals of several years, they collect and fill rapidly with water, which pours down precipitously towards the plain. After these deluges a scanty herbage sometimes makes its appearance, struggling on for existence against the heat and dryness for some length of time. On the eastern side, where the ground lying towards the Red Sea becomes bold and mountainous, a few of these gorges assume a greater importance, leading away continuously like natural causeways to the coast. In them water sometimes collects, and here and there is some cultivable soil which supports a few nomadic or desert-living people. On the western side, however, the great Libyan plateau stretches out vast and monotonous, interrupted only at a distance of 100 miles by a continuous series of depressions, naturally watered, in which the oases nestle in seclusion, threatened on every side with obliteration by sands blown from the surrounding desert. Save for these unseen additions, Upper Egypt is thus a narrow strip of land, about 10 miles across, quite level, which the Nile fertilises, and through which it winds continuously for nearly 600 miles from Aswân to Cairo. Though uniform in

general aspect it is not altogether monotonous or displeasing in appearance. The enduring impression is that of a continuous strip of green, varied here and there by tall palm trees and occasionally a village, lying between rose-pink and yellow walls, while over all the blue sky is dazzling with intensity of light. The northern portion, however, is quite different. Between the river's spread-out arms the rich alluvial plain is well watered by many channels. Rain is not infrequent, and towards the coast the climate is not unlike that of Southern Europe. Here small copses of trees and undergrowth are more abundant; while the sycamore fig-tree and the date palm add variety to the fields of rice and cotton. The south country is equally fertile, but is watered with some difficulty by means of long canals and irrigation works, in which the flood-water of high Nile is retained for use during the drier season. Here the crops are different in general character, cereals being chiefly cultivated, and towards the harvest the land wears the aspect of an unending plain golden with ripening corn, interspersed here and there by fields of sugar-cane or vegetables. The upper and lower parts of Egypt are thus far distinct in character and climate, and in relation to their surroundings; both, however, are fed by the same river, and not being separated by any definite landmark, they form naturally a united Egypt.

But this fertile valley will not yield its abundant harvests without unremitting care and labour on the part of those who cultivate its soil. Through all time past the Nile, fed by tropical rains, has yearly spread its waters over the level plains through which it flows, depositing over the soil a layer of fertilising mould brought down from the Abyssinian hills. The height of this inundation is inconstant and an ever-present anxiety. If the water rise too high it flows

swiftly on, and would not, left to itself, deposit this necessary sediment; if too low, then the land remains unwatered, baked and sterile. The regulation of this overflow is thus vital to the country. The water is now drawn into canals and channels, and by help of embankments, nicely engineered, it is divided in due measure throughout the country. To utilise this phenomenon to the full, the farmer must be ever watchful and always toiling.

II.—THE ARCHAIC PERIOD.

(i) *Primitive Conditions of the Country.*

BEFORE the water was thus controlled, the land in its primitive condition was full of swamps, and the drier ground thick with undergrowth and trees. The Nile itself, choked in its sluggish course by thickly growing weeds, water lilies, and tall papyrus rushes, shifted constantly, leaving behind stagnant pools. In these marshes lived the crocodile and hippopotamus. In the low jungle and in the tamarisk and mimosa scrub were found the elephant, the giraffe, the wild ox, and the hog. In the deserts and on the outskirts of the unclaimed land were the lion and leopard, and the hunting leopard or cheetah. Their prey were the bubale, the oryx, the ibex, and the addax, as well as smaller kinds of the antelope family. The ostrich also was present, but, like most of the ancient fauna, has since retreated before the advance of civilisation. It is on the upper reaches only of the Nile that any resemblance to this primitive condition may still be found, and there is reason to believe that the fauna and flora of the whole valley were much more uniform in ancient times than now. The fox and the jackal, the hyena, and occasionally a wolf, still make their lairs in the desolate cliffs that fringe the country. The wild cat, too, is common. The Egyptian cobra and the deadly asp also are found; while among the birds are the eagle, the vulture, and the hawk. While bright-plumed birds are not uncommon, songsters are rare.

The ox, the goat, the ass, and the dog were already domesticated by the earliest historic settlers.

(ii) *Early Man.*

From this wild state the land has been reclaimed for settlement and cultivation by human agency. The marshes have been drained, the jungle cleared, the wild animals slain or driven southward, and all the forces adverse to civilisation restrained by the hand of man working unremittingly from the beginning. It is not possible to say whence or when the people came who began this work. The earliest civilisations of the world have been found sequestered on the banks of great rivers, like the Yangtse, the Ganges, the Euphrates, or the Nile. Of the two latter, modern research has shown that the Euphrates had long nurtured a civilisation which had already advanced far, before that of Egypt awoke. But in a country naturally so productive, situated, too, at the junction of two great continents, it is reasonable to expect traces of human inhabitants at a very early date. Stone weapons of palæolithic character, indeed, are found, mostly in desert places. Some of these doubtless are the rougher implements of a later age; but others, particularly those found in caves or on the high plateau, seem to indicate the presence of man in the earliest recognised stage of culture.

This age was followed by one more advanced, if indeed it be right to read back from the evidences of later times, and to draw inference from the sequence of events in other lands. First Man had learned, either spontaneously or profiting by the experience of others, to fashion better implements, and to improve in general the necessaries of existence. For his increasing needs he slowly elaborated

his finely-worked flint knife, using still his rougher weapon, as in former times, for rougher purposes. He persevered, still learning and still making, and so progressing. Upon him next dawned the possibility of using metal, brought, maybe, from the hills of Sinai. His copper needles were much more serviceable, though not so pleasing, as the older ones of bone. The copper knife which he then made proved much more durable than that of flint. So he adopted this newer art, and was stimulated thereby to further progress. Relieved to some extent of the incessant struggle for existence, he turned to improve the conditions of his life. His dwelling was better built, his pottery less rude, with some show of decoration, and he adorned his person and those of his household with small ornaments fashioned in his leisure moments. His mind, too, began to dwell upon those impressions of his surroundings which generations of his forefathers had observed and handed down. Each day the sun went down, only to rise again with renewed brilliance when the time of darkness was over. From sleep, in which for a time he seemed to leave his mortal body, he awoke to life refreshed. The year withered and died, but each spring came back unfailingly, buoyant and green. Changes he observed in order, but cessation was nohow suggested. Therefore death—so like to sleep—seemed nothing but a phase; and obedient to this instinct, he placed the best of all his trinkets and vases in the graves of his dead for use and adornment in the coming state. It is at this stage that the light of research reveals him.

(iii) *Early Burial Customs.*

The permanence of the burial customs shows how real this religious instinct was, and how deeply it had already

GRAVE OF PREDYNASTIC PERIOD. (*See* p. 9.)

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FAUNA CARVED ON A PRIMITIVE VOTIVE ALTAR. (*See* p. 6.)

permeated the heart of the people. It is, indeed, chiefly from the furniture of the tombs that archæology has been able to trace the history of the national life and art through more than five thousand years. However many the varying phases in religion and ritual, politics and state, through this long cycle of years the main belief of the people in a future life never altered. The vast solitudes and dangers that encircled the Egyptian, the industry that nature demanded of him, the dry cold of the winter winds and the relentless heat of the long summer months, gave a tinge of solemnity and sadness to his character. No singing bird gladdened his ear, no changes of scenery rejoiced his eye, no prospect of sudden plenty cheered his heart. He grew to regard present life as a time allowed for preparations necessary to the future that would bring relief. Other peoples under different skies have framed a different aspect to their thoughts. The Greek, whose isles were among dancing seas, whose green uplands were made bright by the sparkle of streams, saw first the happiness of youth and living. But the Egyptian clung to his sombre deities for protection from a world full of evils. The heroes of his fancy were possessed of superhuman or unnatural powers, and the battles they fought were a doubtful struggle between darkness and light.

Remote though the period is in point of time, yet the civilisation which these earliest graves reveal was already advanced and possessed some degree of luxury. In them have been found, doubtless, the best products of their art, articles of personal adornment, beads of gold, coloured stones and shells, glazed objects, and ornaments carved in ivory. The fine working of stone, characteristic of the age, is seen alike in numerous vases of diorite and Egyptian alabaster, with some of the rarer varieties, as in the flint

knives and bracelets, more skilfully finished than anything which the neolithic age of Europe produced. The pottery of this time, mostly made by hand, is more highly polished and more elaborately decorated than any of the later historic period. At first the art of working copper is found to be incipient, but it progressed and persevered simultaneously with other features of this culture into historic times. It is impossible, therefore, to separate this period from that which followed by any term such as prehistoric. The elements of the culture remained the same long after the use of writing became common. The life of the people, too, was possessed already of some social system. The houses were grouped together as settlements, being made of wicker, plastered with mud, and strengthened sometimes by wooden posts. Food was cooked in large pots of coarse texture placed over the fire of twigs. A few store vessels, large and not well made, held the grain and products of the soil. Vast numbers of flint chippings and cores strewn about, mingled with the bones of fish and cattle, and even of the crocodile, reveal the daily occupations of the people. Great hoes of flint, smoothly polished on the working side, show that the ground was cultivated with toil and care. The conditions thus disclosed are primitive, but this rainless climate demands no special attention to the dwelling-house or to the conditions of living. Though simple in construction, the grouping of these dwellings shows also the elements of a village system. The numerous standards, the emblems of different families, clans, or districts, which they painted upon the vases of pottery, suggest a distinction and separation of communities, each tribe owing allegiance to its chief.

(iv) *Foreign Influences.*

These divisions are the natural outcome of the mingled elements of the people, fostered as they were by the peculiar length and narrowness of the valley. United only as the population of a common country, they were none the less derived indigenously from various stocks, fed from as many sources. The boundaries of the country lay open to influences from every side: from the west by the coast, from Central Africa across the deserts, from the south down the upper reaches of the Nile, and from the south-east by the natural roadways leading from the Red Sea to Upper Egypt. On the east again the continuous strip of land that joins the continents, and on the north the waters of the eastern Mediterranean, made easier direct contact between Lower Egypt and the early civilisations of Western Asia. The subsequent history of the country shows that through all time these influences were active, varying only in intensity from their several sources, and the evidence of the language finally adopted by the composite nation shows the prominent elements of the Semitic character with slighter but still definite traces from Africa on the south and west. The writing also in its earliest form betrays the direct influence of the Asiatic pictorial system.

Yet these same channels, while they tempted the sporadic incomings of individuals or parties, almost forbade by their intrinsic difficulties the incursions of numerously constituted hordes. The desert journeys were long and full of peril; the Nile was barred by dangerous cataracts, and the sea-coast was bound by treacherous winds and currents, making the approaches dangerous. While, therefore, the valley was exposed to influence, it was equally free from chance of violent interruption. Thus the people were radically

indigenous, though derived from mingled elements. The culture also, and later the written language, grew like the nation that fostered them upon the soil of Egypt, remaining through all time permanent in characteristics, changing only in response to the impulse of the different streams of influence that continued to pour in from every side by the natural arteries of the country.

How general these influences were, and how widely separated, may be seen at a glance. The marks upon the early pottery vessels of Egypt illustrate the existence of a system of pictorial expression, the traces of which have been found in nearly all countries bordering on the Mediterranean. It prevails among the Berber tribes of North-West Africa, is found in Spain, Italy, Greece, and the Eastern Islands; it is traced in Asia Minor, and later formed a basis for the Phœnician alphabet. In Egypt it remained as it had commenced, a mere system of signs persevering through the historic period and preserving its character unaltered, concurrently with the written language of the country. From the Libyan Desert, also, and from the coast of the Red Sea, some relations may be traced in archæological details. But from what may be gleaned of the simpler culture prevailing in these directions, it would seem natural to look for a more marked effect upon the civilisation of Egypt coming from Western Asia and the opposite coasts and islands of the Mediterranean. The distant valley of the Euphrates was already possessed of a civilisation more advanced, and the way was open for mutual intercourse across the plains of Southern Syria. In the earliest examples of formal expression by signs, impressed by means of cylindrical stone seals upon which the pictures were cut, there is seen a definite influence in general motive and in detail of form, at the very beginning

of the historic period. On one of the earliest engraved monuments of the country, also, which depicts a conflict between the south and north of Egypt in which the former were victorious, there is found incorporated a strange mythological animal which finds its closest analogies on Mesopotamian carvings. It is here distinctly associated with the conquered, and included in the victor's spoils. Archæology has detected also in Crete and in Egypt, not only the evidences of direct contact and reciprocal influences, but also the existence of another civilisation which lends character to both. In all these instances relation between Egypt and the early centres of culture was nearest through the northern provinces of the Delta. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the civilisation of the north was in earliest times advanced far beyond that of the south. Several facts are significant in this connection. When the early historic movements led to the uniting of the kingdoms, the victory of the south was followed by a notable manifestation of the art of writing and carving in hieroglyphic characters. An early monument shows that a number of kings reigned in Lower Egypt before this union took place; and in later times many towns in Upper Egypt were called by names derived from older places in the Delta. Beyond this little can be said. The civilisation of Egypt before the time of the kings is known only from objects rescued from the desert sands of the upper country. Archæology has not yet done anything to illuminate the early ages of the northern portion, and it remains for further investigation to show how far intercourse had influenced the civilisation of the Delta, and how far this had permeated into the Upper Valley of the Nile.

How far the proximity of different influences tended to accentuate any radical differences of race can only be

inferred from the distinctions subsequently maintained between the North and the South. From earliest historic times walled fortresses marked the frontiers of the districts; fierce wars preceded the ultimate union of the two peoples, and when eventually united under a common ruler, each country jealously demanded its national emblem in the diadem belonging to the double throne. Though the southern country was exposed from all sides to constant and differing influences, traceable even in the monuments of the early period, yet no event occurred in the course of subsequent history sufficiently violent or disturbing to change radically the established culture of its people. The care bestowed on the burial of the dead, the forms of graves and the character of the offerings, and the complicated mythology of later times, all illustrate a natural and unchecked development from these earliest ages. Change is apparent, but is gradual, being the natural consequence of existing conditions. It must follow, therefore, that the characteristics of the people remained radically constant, changing only in response to the same influences that render visible the changes in their culture.

(v) *Tribal Chieftains.*

The differences of surrounding influences, indeed, were not more potent than the already inherent differences of race among the population. From earliest times there are indications of petty tribes and territorial divisions, defined by the standards of the chiefs and the emblems of the presiding guardian deities. From what may be seen of the growth of the constitution, illuminated but dimly by the first light of historical record, it would appear that the early ages of the nation's growth were marked by the same

THE RUINS OF HIERAKONPOLIS, (*See* p. 15.)

inter-tribal struggles that are found generally among people in primitive conditions. A second stage sees a union ot neighbouring tribes, induced by conquest or by the ascendance of a ruler mutually acceptable. How numerous these tribal divisions really were may be seen from the many emblems painted upon the pottery and vases of the earliest character; and the primitive conditions are reflected by the naturalistic symbols, the forms of different birds and animals, spears and arrows, and the like, selected by these people as their standards. A carved slate of somewhat later date illustrates the dismantling of fortified towns by a number of allied provinces represented by the different creatures that gave them names. The districts of the hawk, the lion, the two hawks, the scorpion, and others, are here found associated; and some of these names are found again on the permanent territorial divisions of historic times. The chronicles of the country, too, record repeated efforts of the district princes to assert themselves, reflecting closely these earlier struggles of the tribal chiefs.

The union of the tribes in battle implies the dominance of a common leader, who becomes their ruler also in the time of peace. The first page of Egyptian history opens with the deeds of one named The Scorpion, under whom a number of tribes are found already united. He was the chieftain of the Hawk district of Upper Egypt, which bordered on the then southern boundary of the country. Thence he led his allied forces northward against the neighbouring peoples that resisted his authority, and, after conquering them, celebrated his victory in a festival of song and dancing. He then wears for the first time the white crown that thenceforth becomes the emblem of sovereignty over Upper Egypt. No longer the tribal

chieftain of earlier days, he assumed to himself the style and title of a king.

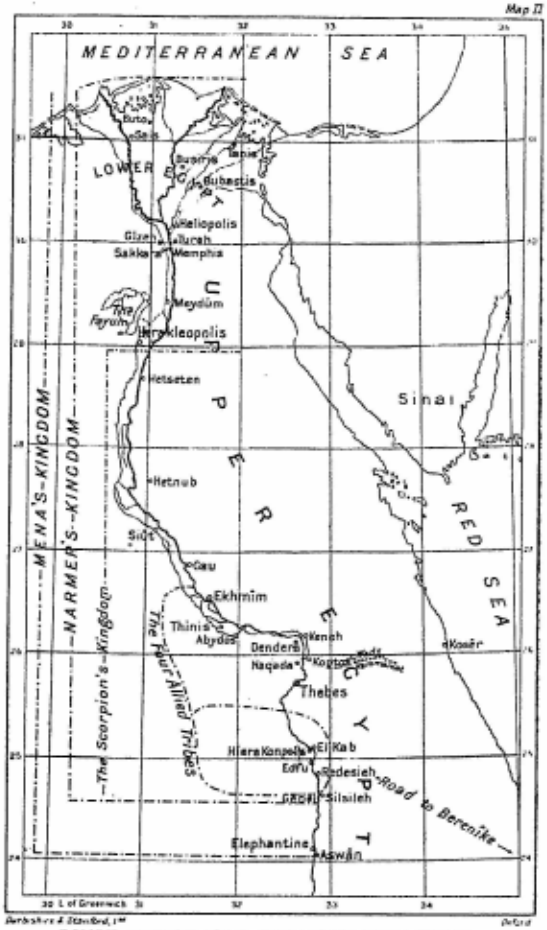
In the process of this development it is obvious that geographical conditions are ultimately dominant. The tribes of Upper Egypt and the tribes of Lower Egypt severally united into two great nations, and the penultimate stage resolved itself into a struggle between these two for the ascendancy. The distinction between the two was so marked by nature that it seems to have embittered and accentuated a warfare which left an indelible impress upon the style of the monarchy when ultimately the King of the South established his supremacy over all.

The frontier of Lower Egypt seems to have marked the boundary of The Scorpion's victory; his kingdom extended from Gebel Silsileh in the south to near the entrance to the Fayûm on the north. It remained, however, for another chieftain of the Hawk district to lead on the allied tribes to further conquest.

(vi) *Founding of the Monarchy.*

The name of this prince has been read Narmer,* and, to judge from certain archæological features of the monuments, he followed probably upon The Scorpion in direct succession. It is clear that he commanded the same forces, that he was attended by a similar retinue, and that he succeeded to the established throne of Upper Egypt. At first the western district on his northern frontier claimed attention. The people dwelling in the swampy marshes of the low-lying district to the west, reclaimed in later times,

* The better-known reading is retained, although *Bexau* is probably a more correct transcription of the name.



EGYPT UNDER THE EARLIEST DYNASTIES.

and now the fertile country of the Fayûm, held aloof from the united kingdom of the south. Against them Narmer first directed his army, and, aided by his patron god, the Hawk, defeated them. He next turned himself to decide the sovereignty of Egypt. At the head of his forces Narmer marched northward, and the frontiers which had opposed his predecessor gave way before him.

Entering through the portal of the Northern Kingdom, he vanquished as he went; thousands of the enemy were slain, and "one hundred and twenty thousand" were taken prisoners. Among the spoils were "four hundred thousand oxen" and "one million four hundred and twenty thousand goats." The king celebrated his victory with all the ostentation of a conqueror. Laying aside his white crown, he assumed the red crown of Lower Egypt in the presence of his assembled army and of his captives bound before him; the goddess of his far-off capital in the south hovered above, protecting him. Long afterwards it is found that a ceremony attended the coronation of the Pharaohs similar to that which he had in this way initiated.

Returning to Hierakonpolis, his native city, in triumph, he dedicated magnificent monuments of his victories at the shrine of his gods. It is by these—a mace head and a palette, both richly carved with scenes in low relief—that the story of his conquests has been handed down. Possibly it was he who caused The Scorpion's deeds to be recorded also in this way; for in the style of workmanship, which is alike in all these objects, there is distinctly traceable the handiwork of a special school of craftsmen. The prevailing style of work, as well as the mythological emblems employed, suggest a close relationship with the earliest culture of the distant Euphrates valley. It may be that among his captives Narmer brought back to Upper Egypt the people who had

performed this work—artists who had been schooled in the Northern Kingdom under the nearer influences of Western Asia. The history of analogous movements elsewhere makes it probable that the conquered imposed the best products of their higher culture upon their conquerors. It was thus in the final and inevitable conflict that a king of Upper Egypt wrested the sovereignty of Lower Egypt from the royal family of the north, and united the two countries by the force of arms.

(vii) *Mena and his Descendants.*

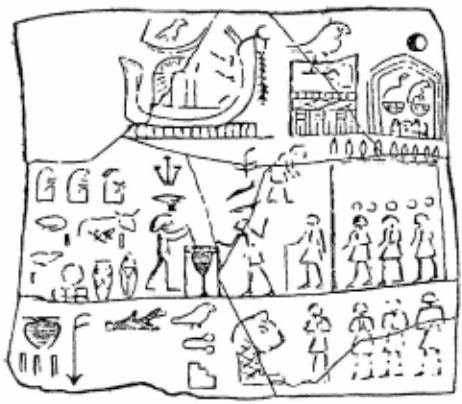
The prince who first succeeded to the double crown was Mena, famous in tradition and in literature as the founder of the monarchy. Probably he was the son of Narmer, who bequeathed it to him. The name of Mena appears upon a cylinder-seal associated with that of Narmer, possibly as his heir-apparent.* Objects found at Abydos, where the names are associated, suggest that both these princes were really buried in the necropolis, which in later times was revered as the abiding place of the earliest demi-gods and kings.

The royal mother was presumably Neith-hetep, whose name is found, together with that of Mena, upon small objects from the royal tombs of this time at Abydos and Nagadeh. This association of the king's name with that of his royal mother has many parallels in the later history of the country, and is significant in regard to the hereditary character of the succession to the established monarchy. The composition of Neith-hetep's name suggests that she

* The alternative interpretation would identify this Mena with Narmer himself, but the question cannot be answered from the evidence available.—September, 1903.

was a princess of Saïs the capital of Lower Egypt, where Neith was the presiding goddess; so by her alliance she united the royal families of the rival countries, and produced, in the person of her son, a royal heir to the throne of United Egypt. The title which accompanies her name shows clearly that it was her marriage which cemented the alliance of the two kingdoms. She bears the title of The Consort: the only other royal name associated with hers at Nagadeh is that of Narmer; and certain archæological details in the inscribed documents of the age link up these reigns very closely.

Mena was called The Fighter, and among his deeds it is recorded that he warred against the people of Ta-khent on his southern frontier. It was he who first brought this important province, lying between Silsileh and Aswân, under the yoke of the Egyptian kingdom. He also strengthened the fortifications of his western province in the Fayûm. Tradition ascribes to him the founding of Memphis, which shortly afterwards became the capital of the United Kingdom. It is not to be inferred necessarily that the seat of his government was transferred, but it may be believed that he established or used the position of Memphis as a convenient centre for the administration of his acquired kingdom in the Delta. It is even possible to read back from the later fame and description of this walled city, that in earlier days it had already played a prominent part as a frontier fortress, dividing the two kingdoms of the north and south during their struggles. The now pacified condition of the country is revealed by the hunting scenes that show him catching wild cattle in a net; and an act of peculiar interest and significance was his visit to Saïs, the capital of his northern people, to make offerings at the shrine of Neith, the protecting goddess of his royal mother.



IVORY TABLET OF MENA. (*See* p 20.)

THE CONQUESTS OF NARMER, REPRESENTED ON AN ARCHAIC VOTIVE ALTAR. (*See* p. 18.)

Shortly after his death he was deified as the founder of the monarchy, and in ceremonials through all the ages that followed he received a reverence equal to that accorded to the gods. In the processions of priests that accompanied religious rites in the time of Rameses the Great, 2,000 years later, his statue was carried first before all other kings. It cannot be that in this tradition erred. In his person he unified the monarchy of Egypt, and he founded the system of government that, with occasional breaks, remained paramount in the Nile valley through the 3,000 years of dynastic history that followed.

The culture and civilisation of his time are those of the period in which he lived, nor can any special industry or art be traced separately in its origin to his reign. Objects from the tombs show a familiarity with carving and inscribing, modelling and incising, which are characteristic of the age. There is no sudden change for better or for worse observable in those few memorials of him which have survived.

From this time the succession to the monarchy continued to be hereditary, and, as in later times, the crown might be handed down by the female side; but the traditional king-list of the First Dynasty agrees with the evidence of the monuments to show that the male line remained unbroken until eight kings had severally succeeded to the throne. Their seats of government were several. The walled city of Memphis near Sakkareh, and traditionally Thys, the site of which is lost, but is limited by archæological discoveries to the vicinity of Abydos, continued to remain important centres of administration in the middle country. In the Delta was Saïs, the capital of the north, where, under the name Het-bity, had stood the original palace of the northern kings. From here the princesses of the royal

line seem to have intermarried with the southern kings on more than one occasion, moving southward with their train of courtiers and attendant women. Near it was the religious centre and necropolis of Busiris. Far away to the south, at the opposite boundary of the kingdom, was Hierakonpolis, the original stronghold of the upper country and birthplace of the early kings, presided over by the vulture goddess of El Kab.

(viii) *Religion and Civilisation.*

With each important town there was associated a separate deity with special attributes, surviving from the local worship incidental to the tribal ages. The gradual fusion of the people and their ideas, that followed naturally on their union as a nation, led to the identification of their gods and goddesses under varying conditions, from which the complicated mythology of later times evolved.

But no special illustration reveals the manners and customs of the earliest dynastic period. The essential features of the culture remained the same. Changes of state could not eradicate nor severely change the character of the people in a land where Nature is herself unvarying. The country was now freed from persistent warfare; the absence of battle scenes and conflicts familiar on the earlier monuments makes it easier to see the picture of a people turning from their primitive instincts to husbandry, and to the development of those arts of which they had already given promise. The drainage and cultivation of the land, the reclamation of the swamps and marshes, went forward throughout the country. Already with the unification of the southern provinces under The Scorpion, a contemporary monument shows the irrigation and tillage of the

soil initiated. The men are seen at work with hoes, and a reed-built enclosure, with roof, gives shelter to them in the squared-off fields, which are enclosed on all sides by small channels filled with water. The methods employed by the first farmers of the country were those which have remained in use even to the present time. Human instinct centred then, as now, upon the economical utilisation and improvement of those advantages which Nature herself afforded. The annual overflow of the Nile, unchanging in its season and erratic only in the measure of its surplus waters, was early recognised as the supreme phenomenon by which the fate of the harvest was decided. On the earliest historical monument of the country a register of the high Nile level is recorded beneath the annals of the kings, beginning with the earliest. The fluctuations indicated by this record must have called attention to the possibility of regulating the flood by a system of channels and embankments. The irrigation works were organised under an official appointed by the sovereign for that purpose. The fourth king, Den, seems to have first turned serious attention to the Land of the Lake, the swampy province of the Fayûm, and to have conceived the idea of a great canal along the western side of the Nile to supplement the river, which here hugs the opposite cliffs. The magnitude of the scheme was recognised. The inception of the work, the surveying of the lands, and the opening of the great doors, are the sole events recorded in the annals of successive years. This marked attention to the works of public enterprise reveals the settled condition of the population. Though the industries of the people can have been little more than those which their needs dictated, yet the civilising influence of skilled artisanship is disclosed by those precious relics which have been recovered by

excavation. In the graves of the people implements of flint, vases of stone, vessels of coarse pottery, and some use of copper are mainly characteristic. But the best work which the art of the day could produce was naturally devoted to the furniture of the royal tombs. From these there have been taken examples of artistic inscribing in the hieroglyphic character, and of writing in a cursive hand of the same style; of exquisite carvings in crystal, diorite, marble, alabaster, and other varieties of stone; of marvellous elaboration in flint working for ceremonial purposes; and of a more definite acquaintance with the use of copper for making implements and vessels. The jewels of a queen, the high quality of art under Den, the sard and gold sceptre, and gold-topped vases from the tombs of later kings, are all evidences of the progress of this early civilisation.

(ix) *Sanctity and Power of the Sovereign.*

The veneration paid to the king after death reflects the sacredness of his person during life. His tomb was called "the place of protection," and became revered as a shrine. His household was buried around him, and the great officials sought places and tombs in the same vicinity. With the traditions that enshrouded these abodes of the royal dead, there became mingled in later times the legends of Osiris, Lord of the West, the accepted deity of the site, which recall the early struggles between the peoples of the north and south. The power of the sovereign, derived so nearly from the authority vested in the tribal chieftain, seems to have been from the first supreme. All officers of state received their warrant from him, and in him all authority at first seems to have been concentrated. The

administration of the north required the presence of a paramount official, whose responsibility as civil deputy to his royal master was indicated by the title of his office. He was called the Bearer of the King's Seal in Lower Egypt; and it seems probable that at first this responsible position was filled only from the royal household. The king does not seem to have deputed similar powers in the southern portion of the country where he himself resided.

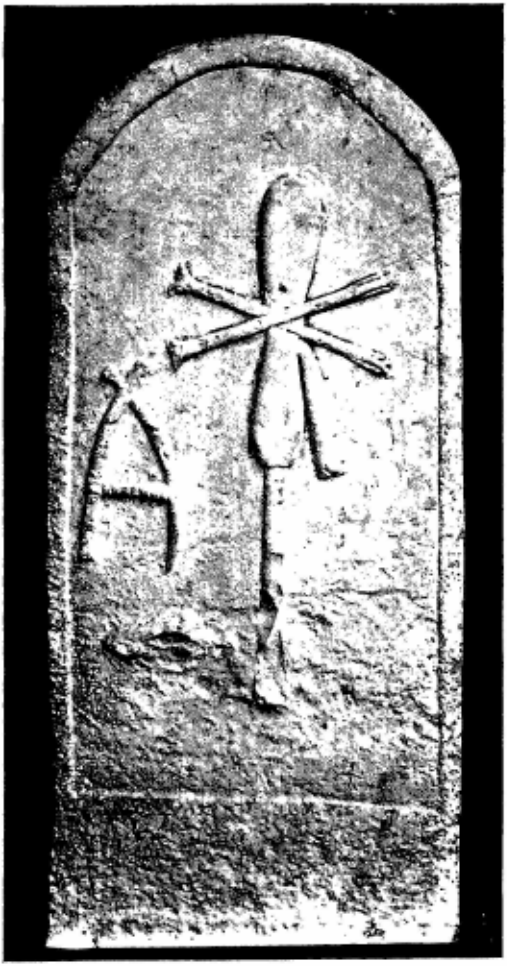
The appointment of the necessary deputies presages the enrolling of a host of minor officials also, until in the reign of Den the government of a bureaucracy under the supreme authority of the monarch stands revealed as the essential principle of state. Under this king culminated the art and progress of the Archaic Period. The annals of his reign, recorded on that priceless fragment of stone preserved in the museum at Palermo, are identified by certain corresponding events inscribed on tablets from his tomb. After directing a punitive expedition against the eastern people dwelling in the Sinaitic peninsula, he opened wide the frontier of his country to commerce. He fortified towns, built palaces and temples. He organised the public works, and appointed necessary officials, including a Governor of Hierakonpolis or Nekhen, where probably he had inherited private estates. He developed the resources of his country, which enjoyed a long tranquillity from war; and after improving the irrigation works on the east, north, and west, he elaborated his scheme for improving the Fayûm, near which he placed a royal residence. Various festivals were celebrated, and the temples had their lands and revenues allotted to them. He spent days in hunting the hippopotamus and fishing. He was buried, after a prosperous reign of more than 30 years, in a great tomb at

Abydos. His name was handed down in papyrus records, and chapters of the Book of the Dead are attributed to him. His wife seems to have been Merneit, who again, to judge from the composition of her name, was a Saïte princess; she with her servants received a tomb and monument near that of her husband.

The style which King Den adopted as the royal emblem, *seten bity*, was used by all the subsequent kings of United Egypt. In it the reed, common in the south, is associated pictorially with a bee or hornet, characteristic of the north.

(x) *Closing of the Archaic Period.*

But under the monarchs who immediately succeeded him a general decline, recorded by tradition, is indicated also by the monuments of the period. It appears from accounts that have been handed down that the dynasty was weakening, and the state apparently falling into decay. With the failure of the dynasty a struggle for the sovereignty seems to have ensued. To judge by the scanty and difficult records of the times which followed, it seems that under several successive kings the centre of government was at Memphis, the original frontier of the lower country; while a prince of Hierakonpolis—Khasekhem—sprung presumably from the family of earlier kings, laid claim to the sovereignty of Upper Egypt. The southern king claims great victories and the slaughter of thousands of the enemy, but he never wears the royal diadem of the united throne. On failure of the Memphite line of princes a chieftain of the Eastern Delta named Perabsen seems to have disputed the succession and gained the crown. Meanwhile Ne-maat-Hap, whose name implies her Memphite origin, is described as the mother of the royal children.



TOMB-STONE OF MER-NEITH. (*See* p. 26.)

The fact is stated so prominently in the inscriptions of the time, and the reverence paid to her later in the dynasty so great, that it is reasonable to suppose she was the mother of royal children who succeeded to the throne through inheritance from her, and thus inaugurated a new dynasty of kings. Her unvarying attribute is most significant: "She whose orders are always obeyed." The maintenance of her tomb was provided for by endowment, and her fame was still fresh at the close of the Third Dynasty.

Khasekhemui was three years of age only when his father's death bequeathed him the succession. His birth had been hailed as an event of first national importance. His predecessor had reigned for 17 or 18 years; he himself, to judge from a broken fragment of his annals, was sovereign 15 years at least. Neterkhet, his younger brother, appears to have succeeded him.

It does not seem possible, until further research has thrown more light upon this period, to reconstruct, otherwise than tentatively, the chronology of these kings. Here and there an odd name has been found attended by the royal emblems, and probably other information lies hidden in the ruins of Memphis and Hierakonpolis, where stood the palaces of the early lines. But for the closing stages of this period, the explanation which best satisfies the present evidence makes Ne-maat-Hap queen-regent during the minority of her son Khasekhemui, who succeeded at the age of three. That she was at one time supreme in command is evidenced by the formal legends found on the official sealings of her two sons' reigns. The decree of Neter-en, from whom presumably she was descended, had legalised the succession of her sons. Who was her consort is not known. Perabsen is not far removed from

her in point of time, but nothing associates the two names except the finding of them without other royal names in the tomb of Neterkhet. It may well have been the alliance with a northern prince which once again united the two rival houses, and once again ushered in a new dynasty of mutually accepted kings.

No striking change marked this period of confusion. The titles of the sovereigns and the various officials, the permanence of different offices, and the general progress of affairs show the character of the government maintained. Art of the Archaic Period was decadent; the fine pottery working of earlier days has ceased; carving in hieroglyphics is rare; and the characteristic objects of stone, flint, and copper are bold and plain.

But now the firm establishment of the succession marks the beginning of an era of national development. It is in architecture that the beginnings of the revival are most noticeable. In the great mastaba tomb of Neterkhet, which rises like a platform of brick in the desert northward from Abydos, with a defended stairway descending deep into the earth to numerous subterranean chambers, there is seen a final stage in the evolution of that motive which leads directly to the Pyramid Age. The same king, indeed, is famous as the builder of the first pyramid, that which rises at Sakkara in a series of steps, each platform placed above the other like a series of mastabas of decreasing size. The burial place and chambers of this king were filled with vases made of various stones, and even in the stairway the jars of wine and offerings were very numerous. Monuments of the period which followed have not been identified in any numbers, but some in the same vicinity exhibit a similar but improving quality of art. The essential character of the culture remains the same, but

THE STEP PYRAMID OF NETER-KHET AT SAKKARA. (*See* p. 28.)

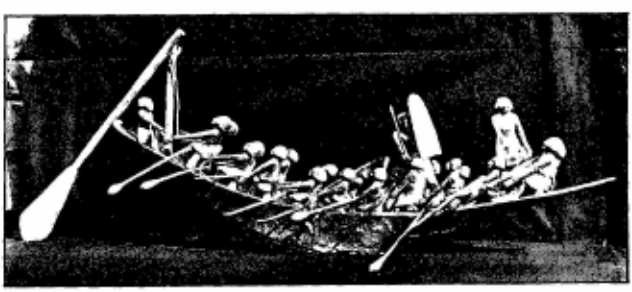
slight changes, imperceptible at first, move forward link by link until the name of King Seneferu appears, which dates the closing of the dynasty. Only then it may be realised by broad comparisons that a deep movement has been in progress, that a new phase of civilisation is arising to displace the archaic culture from which it was derived.

III.—EGYPT UNDER THE MEMPHITE RULE.

(i) *Foreign Relations and Influences.*

GRADUAL though the change had been, a general view of the characteristic features of the long period of progress and prosperity which followed on Seneferu's reign presents in many new aspects the vigorous boyhood of the nation. Marked off as an age of visible development, this new era was none the less the outcome of a national growth. The same stimulating influences from abroad are traceable as those which have been noticed in the earlier stages. A widening of the sphere of action on every side brought Egypt into more direct relations with surrounding countries. The troublesome Semitic peoples on the north-eastern frontier necessitated repeated military expeditions to repress them; and the copper and turquoise mines of Sinai proved a special temptation to successive rulers, who several times sent forces to secure and work them. By occasions such as these the Egyptians were brought into contact not only with the desert people of Sinai, but with the more advanced civilisations to the north and east. In the plains of Southern Syria the records of the wars of Pepŷ unveil the picture of a settled and a pastoral people, whose great towns were enclosed by walls for refuge, but the villages lay amidst vines and fig trees. Further east the river valleys of Babylonia had nurtured a civilisation that led the way among the enlightened culture of the ancient world. Though no record, until a much later date, shows direct

BOAT WITH ARMED NEGROS AND WARRIORS PLAYING CHESS.
Scale 1 : 12.



BOAT WITH ARMED MAN.
Scale 1 : 12.

Egyptian Models of Boats used for River Expeditions; discovered in tombs of the XIIth Dyn. at Beni Hasan.

contact with this country, yet the influences traceable in architectural details and in the development of sun-worship in the Delta make it apparent that Egypt was deriving stimulus, however indirectly, from that source. From the deserts that bound Egypt more immediately on the east and west, relations with the Berber peoples on the one hand, and the Red Sea on the other, were then as now constant but not far-reaching, resulting for the most part from the sporadic incomings of nomads or the mutual interchange of trade by long and toilful desert journeys. It was only on several well-defined occasions of a later date that these desert peoples were tempted to enter Egypt from all sides in the hope of settlement. Further to the south, however, communication with the lakes and hills of Central Africa was easier by the river valley. Many institutions of Egypt during this period suggest a comparison with those found at the present day in native states accessible from the upper reaches of the Nile. But under the earlier kings official relation in this direction was limited at first to punitive expeditions against the Nubians for the protection of the frontiers. The first of this series, under Seneferu, entailed the building of a great fleet of boats, including one of unusual dimensions. Subsequent events make it clear that these neighbouring peoples soon recognised the suzerainty of the Egyptian monarchs. Exploring parties and expeditions penetrated further and further up the Nile, until in the reign of Mer-en-ra it appears that not only the Sudân, but the outlying oases on the west, might be safely entered by small parties bent on official negotiations or in search of those commodities which their own country could not supply. Meanwhile these relations had brought the knowledge of a country rich in gold and metals, ebony, ivory, myrrh, and other

products which the Egyptian valued highly. This land lay in the hills of Erythrea, fronting the Red Sea southward from Suakin. Thence, as the annals of Sa-hu-Ra show, he obtained electrum, myrrh, and various kinds of wood. Shortly afterwards Assa obtained a dwarf from among the Dengi people dwelling on the southern borders of this land, and from that time the sovereigns of Egypt endeavoured to keep one at least always attached to the court to amuse them by his antics and appearance. Later, again, King Pepŷ the Second, though quite a child, is said to have sent command to his agent, Her-khu-ef, to bring down to the court a dwarf in his possession. In the previous reign this official had brought back 300 donkeys laden with incense, ebony, ivory, panther skins, throw-sticks, and other objects, which the Egyptians regarded with astonishment and delight. This fair and productive region remained through subsequent history one of the great attractions to the Egyptians. In later times the opposite coasts of Arabia and the whole maritime tract leading to Somaliland were visited by successive expeditions. No hostile attitude seems ever to have thwarted those commercial visits, which, to judge by the contemporary accounts, were looked upon with much enthusiasm. In later times this Land of Punt, by which general term the whole region was included, was described in writing by the Egyptians as the original home of their forefathers, and by some regarded as the abiding-place of the gods. As yet, however, the expeditions seem to have followed only the desert routes without venturing to the Arabian coasts or further southward. Though a riverside and secluded people, not taking kindly to the sea, the Egyptians, nevertheless, frequently made excursions of this kind, prompted by commercial or adventurous motives rather than the demands of politics.

They were already familiar with the building of ships for river traffic, and the wood required for these alone, as well as for other industrial purposes, must have already established a coasting trade around the Eastern Mediterranean. For these journeys they had the same forms of vessels as those which carried them upon the Nile. The meagre coast line of the country could not compare in importance with the great length of their life-giving river. None the less they ventured northwards to the coasts of Asia Minor, and were familiar with the islands of the Mediterranean. Relations with the early civilisation of Crete had long been real and mutually important, and archæology agrees with the suggestion of the early records to show that, though probably not emanating from the coast of Egypt, trade relations with the Eastern Mediterranean were already established and reciprocated at the dawn of history.

These inter-relations on all sides cannot but have influenced the culture of the Egyptians. They are faintly traceable in points of detail, but they are rather to be regarded as affording an invisible stimulus to the natural development of the native culture, which in this period attained so great a height. Internally each feature of architecture and art marks an era of development. The tombs, upon which the best work was lavished, show an enlargement from the simpler structures of earlier times. Columns ranged in deliberate order, with capitals of the lotus or clustering papyrus, supported the roofs of buildings, in which the chambers led one to the other in elaborate manner. The walls are painted with vivacious scenes, some representing the incidents of daily life—the market place, sheep, oxen, and goats returning from the fields, children and animals at play, the farmer ploughing and sowing, the harvest and the storing of the grain, women

with their burdens; others, the mysteries connected with the dead and the future state. The freer use of wood and limestone in place of the diorite and hard stones fashionable in the earlier times shows its marked effect in the relief carvings and the sculpture of the period. No work of later times surpasses the ideal excellence of some statues carved even during Seneferu's reign, while the tide of general progress was still advancing. In one of these a general and his wife, a princess of royal blood, are seated side by side, modelled, doubtless, to the form and size of the originals in life.

These and other works manifest a definite interest in life and humanity, as well as a national mind set seriously upon the contemplation of the highest problems. The philosophy which Ptah-hetep laid before Assa, and the king's reply, in which he asks to be instructed in the knowledge of old times, reveal the educated mind seeking after truth, desirous of being guided in the judgment of right and wrong by the experience of others who have lived before. The titles of the age show that the king's library was among his treasured possessions, requiring the special care of an official. In it, doubtless, might be governmental papers, the filed annals of the kings, legal documents, books of law and books of ritual; but there is little reason to doubt that it contained the folk tales and stories of the nation, songs and poetry, prayers handed down from older times, hymns and books of mysteries, works on the sciences of astronomy and mathematics, geometry and medicine, treatises on ethics and morality, books of romance and the like, in which the educated sought for knowledge or for mental recreation. In the presence of evidences such as these, it is impossible to deny that the civilisation of Egypt at this period must rank high in the history of the world.

(ii) *Religion.*

The thoughts of this people centred strangely on death and future life. The monuments which they have left to remind the present world of their past glories are tombs and sepulchres, and temples. Doubtless, the palaces of the kings were equally magnificent, but the fame of those kings endures through the everlasting pyramids which they built for their more permanent abiding places. The primitive instincts of the race, inherited through centuries of unvarying conditions, were permanent and unchanging. Each local deity of former ages still survived in the confused lists of gods and goddesses, which had become mingled in a complex mythology, when the mingling people were no longer able to distinguish the attributes of individual deities. But the great towns of former times still claimed their original presiding deities, whose power was manifested by the continued or increasing importance of the place itself. To these the kings delighted to set up new temples, each rivalling its predecessor in magnificence. Around these there had grown up in course of years a priesthood of many orders, separated slowly by their office from association with the people and the outer world, until within their mysterious circle the lore and learning of many centuries was concentrated. It was no wonder that these learned bodies grew in power, magnified by a glamour and reverence which the popular and unlettered mind accorded them, and that for the maintenance of his position as supreme authority the king deemed it fitting to assume the highest office of the priesthood, and claim for himself the position of divine intermediary before the presence of the gods.

(iii) *Social Conditions.*

The ceremonies and mysterious rituals, while they excited the interests and fanned the ardent natures of the people, cannot have been in any way intelligible to them. They remained by force of circumstances the sons of toil, with no time to devote to thoughts beyond provision for their wives and families. For some the public works, under direct control of the government, provided, then as now, a means of subsistence and a freedom that was only nominal. The quarries were always working to supply the stone required for public buildings. Limestone was readily accessible from Turah, opposite to the site of the earlier pyramids, and granite could be brought down directly from Aswân by river. But the alabaster from Hetnub, dark granite from the Wady Hammamât, and other stones from those mining districts on the eastern deserts, as well as copper and other commodities from Sinai, could only be obtained with some difficulty and privation. The making of embankments and canals for regulating irrigation provided also employment for a certain number of the population, and, then as now, no district could have been free from liability to be impressed for service in a sudden emergency. But the life of the greater number of people was naturally agricultural. In this work, though not masters of the fields they ploughed, they possessed, none the less, the elements of freedom. It is unlikely that there was any class of small proprietors farming their own land; but the peasant and his family group might find themselves year by year cultivating the same fields for their master, or even holding them upon conditions, paying away each year the greater portion of their produce for the privilege of a nominal independence. Under these conditions the

social life of the peasantry early assumed a stereotyped form, and was for the most part void of any opening for development. The peasant's house was low and poorly built, being deserted during the day, and required only for shelter during the winter nights. The furniture consisted only of the cooking-pot and store vessels. His wife, probably his sole wife, shared equally his labours. The incidents of his life were those of the Egyptian peasant of to-day—continuous employment in the fields, in irrigation, sowing, reaping, ploughing, or attending to the produce; the market, the struggle with overladen or stupid asses, the gossip with a neighbour, or at night the village circle and the story teller. The regularity, not real monotony, of his life is reflected in his sombre face, which lights up like a child's with smiles when amused at any incident. His exact relations to the state are not quite obvious. The government proceeded on its course unheeded by him; kings came and went; great changes of politics took place without his knowledge. In these affairs he had no voice, and only regarded them as bearing on himself when some unusual incident brought him into contact with them.

Just as the peasant was dependent upon his master, so the farmer of the soil was answerable to the owner of the land. The system was the practical outcome of the manner in which the land was held. A few persons owned their private estates, rewards given them by the king or secured in some manner from their former owners. The king, too, possessed his royal estates, and various lands had from time to time been attached to the maintenance of the temples or some public service. But in the main the country-side was still divided up as heritages of those few great chief people who claimed it as a patrimony, descended through all time from their ancestors, delimited probably very nearly

as it had been in the tribal ages. These chieftains, whose forefathers by alliances had established the monarchy with their swords, even as they then displayed their many standards in battle, still preserved their independent spirit as masters of the soil, submitting only to the supreme authority of the king. Now as they drew more and more from the presence of their sovereign, where their own persons were eclipsed, holding aloof from all the offices of state, they gradually encircled themselves with their own following and retainers, and in the event are found possessed of the authority and power of feudal lords. As they paid tribute to the monarch for maintenance of the state and to preserve their inheritance, so the portions which they did not farm themselves were held by others under terms of tribute to themselves, and by those again might be sublet to others. It is the exact relation of these holders to the state that is not clearly defined. The system of taxation was already fully organised in Seneferu's reign, and regularly the officers of the king went through the country assessing the flocks and crops and all the ratable effects. Yet as the power of the nobles increased, and they themselves came to seize every opportunity of enforcing their authority within their own domains, it seems most probable that, whatever may have been the case at first, they gradually eliminated all responsibility of the smaller tenants, holding themselves directly responsible to the tax-gatherers and the agents of the king.

(iv) *Political Conditions.*

These officials were many and their functions complicated. In all departments innumerable servants each claimed equally numerous titles. From the names of these, however, though little to be understood, it is possible to

glean a general idea of the manner in which this bureaucratic government was administered. The king as head of the state appointed all responsible officials. Though invested with a crown and style from which all semblance of a meaning had long since disappeared, yet the titles of many officers continued to reflect the duality of his kingdom. These were superintendents of the two granaries, of the two treasuries, and other departments, indicating that the offices had long since been combined, and that the titles survived in this form only as a name. The style of some offices may be traced even to earlier events of national history, those which preserve in some form the mention of El-Kab and Hierakonpolis, whence at first all royal authority had been derived, and where through all time the royal domain seems to have been situated. Even the hawk-sign, symbolic of the territorial holder of that district, had not disappeared from the insignia. Every form which tended to decentralise the government, or remove the semblance of power from the nominally direct control of the monarch, was rigorously avoided. A Grand Vezîr was his chief agent and responsible deputy. This office was naturally the highest of the state. It implied the position of chief administrator of the law, the superintendence of all public works, all officers, and all departments. The holder was the representative of Truth, educated in the priestly order of Maat, and he was also entrusted with the regulation of the palace. From the time of Seneferu onwards he was superintendent of both lands. In such a position the Vezîr stood necessarily second only to the king, from whom he was distinguished by his title, The Man, in contradistinction to The God. Naturally, at first, the office was filled only from the royal sons, the successor to the throne; but later he became chosen from among the royal friends, and then was selected

from among the wise men of the king's acquaintances. The Vezir was ex-officio chief judge, and the title of this office is full of interest and significance; he was called the Gate Man, he who sits at the gate administering justice. In his functions he was assisted by the law-givers of the crown, the Great Men of the Tens. What the precise functions of these officers were is not apparent. Sometimes they are obviously at the seat of government, at others they seem to be administering in the provinces. The judge himself is called The Weigher of Words. Other subordinate officers were the scribes of petitions, and numerous scribes or clerks. Other departments were organised in similar manner. The treasury was managed by the Royal Sealers. The treasury buildings seemed to have been distinguished by being painted white. There were also a Keeper of the Forests, and a Superintendent of the Granaries. The common title, Superintendent of the South, seems to imply a decentralisation for ready overlooking of the lands. The irrigation works were similarly managed from various convenient centres. The villages themselves were controlled by headmen and elders, non-official positions probably corresponding to those of to-day.

The career of a successful official is well illustrated by the story of Amten, who, under Seneferu and Khufu, rose from humble beginnings to the highest offices of state. His father had been a scribe of some estate, but his mother was a woman of no fortune. At first his father provided for him before he attained position or property. Soon he became chief scribe, under the Superintendent of the Storehouse, in one of the government centres belonging to the administration of provisions. On behalf of the king he received, registered, and distributed meat, cakes, fruit, and vegetables, in which the taxes were paid. Next he became chief crier to the civil

governor of the Xoite district, being promoted to be chief of the ushers, master crier, and finally director of all the king's flax. Then he was placed over a village, and next to govern the large town of Buto, and became concerned in the administration of several important provinces. Then he became chief huntsman, and finally governor of the Fayûm district. The promotions of this official thus moved with oriental fashion: the talent that fitted him for one position was deemed equally suitable for another, however differing in its duties. In all departments there was apparently an equal unconcern of any special qualification. The governors of the frontiers seem to have been civil rather than military officials. The continually renewed disturbances with Semitic peoples on the north-eastern borderland, and with Southern Syria, led Seneferu to strengthen the defences of that frontier. On the southern limits of the country also, near Aswân, it had been found necessary to maintain a frontier garrison. Other districts specially exposed to desert roads, or otherwise deemed suitable, were similarly protected. The management of each separate frontier was in the hands of a special officer.

(v) *The Army and State Officials.*

In the army itself one man was in supreme command under a title implying no duality of the kingdom. The king himself was no longer concerned officially with the leading of his troops. Under the generals were commanders of contingents, and special divisions had their separate commands. The army which Pepŷ the First sent against the nomad people of the east was composed essentially of many thousands of Egyptian troops out of the south country from Elephantine to Memphis. They were enrolled under the growing feudal system from the servants and retainers of

the nobles, each great chieftain moving at the head of his own people. Under him the heads of towns and villages held their separate commands of subdivisions. In addition to this main body of the troops, a special corps of negro soldiers under a leader of their own had been enlisted, and the army included the usual Libyan mercenaries under an Egyptian officer. The provision department and commissariat were in charge of the royal sealers, and the royal friends of the king attended in some uncertain, but probably non-military, capacity. The supreme command of all these forces was vested in a single general, the commander-in-chief, named Una, who rigorously enforced the principles of discipline and order, restraining pilfering and pillaging on the line of march. He himself had risen from the humblest of non-military positions, being entrusted with the honourable command on account of the skill and discretion with which he had conducted affairs of an altogether alien character. In his capacity of overseer in the king's gardens, to which he had been promoted from the position of a superintendent of the stores, he seems to have first attracted the favour of his royal master by reason of his virtues and sagacity. In an affair requiring the greatest skill and delicacy connected with the affairs of the royal household itself, he was entrusted by his sovereign with the investigation of the matters, and received as a token of the royal pleasure a present of the whole furniture for his tomb. The discretion and power which he had manifested in these matters placed him then in the command of the army, which he again conducted with signal ability. At the death of Pepŷ, his successor Mer-en-Ra appointed him chief of the bodyguard about the royal person, and rewarded him with the jurisdiction over a town, and finally the governorship of the whole of the south. The

remainder of his career was equally filled with evidences of the confidence reposed in him. The career of such a man was no doubt the outcome of his unusual capabilities. But the sequence of his appointments indicates the numberless positions for which suitable officials were required.

In the household of the king himself was every feature of a similar organisation. The whole direction was vested in the Keeper of the palace; under him were the Superintendents of innumerable departments, supervised by officers with different stages of responsibility. There was the Keeper of the Royal Robes, Superintendent of the linen and wigs, and a Superintendent of the House of the royal children. Those having access to the palace claimed the privilege of royal friendship, which was jealously disputed by those nearer to the king's person, the "nearest friends," or "well-beloved friends" of the king. In the same way numerous "royal relatives" arose, doubtless many with the remotest possible claims, and this led those who could attest to their relationship to style themselves the "real royal relatives." In this department, as in all the others, every official sought to claim the special favour or recognition of the sovereign. The numerous reappointments of a satisfactory official were looked upon and recorded as special acts of grace emanating directly from his majesty.

(vi) *The Monarchy.*

In the midst of this circle of ceremonial and ostentation the king moved supreme, the motive and charmed centre of it all. Separated from the great mass of his people by the impenetrable veil of officialdom, and by the increasing authority of their chieftains, whose own households already seemed to them the embodiment of worldly splendour, no wonder the king seemed to them at this distance, as he

claimed to be, divine. When he moved outside his splendid retinue swept by in swift magnificence; and within his household even those who had frequent access to the royal person might only kiss the ground before his feet. The great privilege of a royal son-in-law was to be allowed to kiss his august master's sandal. In his home life, indeed, though deference was duly paid him, and he himself can have had little remission from public appearances, he seems to have had an inner circle of human friendship. His wife he always reverenced as the royal mother of those who were to succeed by right of heritage to his throne, and placed her as his equal at his side. The son of one near or dear to him might be educated with his own children in the royal nursery, and be honoured with a princess as a bride. Probably he had already a harîm of secluded dancing-girls and pretty women, who whiled away his leisure hours. The children of his harîm received offices and revenues from the state. Out of doors, too, he might join in the chase, or in his light papyrus boat on the marshes would pursue a favourite sport of bird-catching or fishing. Though surrounded by so much luxury and ceremonial, the sovereign was by no means a nonentity subject to the customs of the court or the will of his officials. Nothing was ever neglected that might enforce upon his people and his surroundings the greatness of his calling and the supremeness of his power. The coronation was accompanied by great festivities, and the day of accession kept as a yearly festival. From earliest times a first duty of his reign had been the official tour of the boundaries of his country; and a royal progress through different portions of his kingdom made ostentation of his monarchy. The maintenance of this exalted position called for every possible means that might enforce his influence.

On all public occasions his power must be manifested supreme. In the great festivals, such as occurred regularly every 30 years or on special occasions, he always took the leading part, separating himself as far as possible from the aspect of ordinary vocations. It was he who for his people sacrificed to Min, god of the fields, after ceremony and processions of far-reaching import. Early to recognise and to enter into the strong religious tendency of his nation, resulting as this did in the growing influence and power of the priestly caste, he assumed to himself the high priesthood of all temples and all worships, standing forth as divine intermediary between the people and their gods. A pyramid towering to heaven alone was a fit abiding place for the future of this human emblem of divinity.

Proportionate to the growing popularity of the cult the priesthood of Ra had steadily increased its power. This worship of the Sun, the god of life, originally doubtless the local worship of Heliopolis, had slowly come into prominence amid its polytheistic surroundings, under the nearer influences emanating probably from the Euphrates valley. Already the successors of Khufu, who succeeded to the sovereignty after Seneferu's death, had included pictorially in their names for several generations the emblem of the god, and another line of the royal family, descended, as it seems, from the same common ancestor, had entered and intermarried with the priestly caste of Ra. Upon the failure of the main line this powerful family succeeded to the throne, combining with the royal function the high priesthood of the cult. Probably under Men-kau-Ra, who had preceded, this innovation had already taken place, since he first adopted in his royal title the claim of direct descent from Ra himself. An attribute so powerful to promote the continuity of hereditary succession was readily

adopted under the priest-kings who followed, and thus became included in the royal style of all future monarchs to the end: The Horus, Lord of United Egypt, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Son of Ra.

(vii) *The Kings.*

This powerful assertion of the monarchy was coeval in its origins with the dawning of this bold and striking period. Probably no line of old-world kings throughout all time has left upon the pages of history and tradition so indelible a trace. Seneferu, their father, the traditional son of Huni, was himself the builder of the pyramids at Meydûm, in which he was probably buried. His public works, including the fortification of the frontiers, were numerous, and his monuments are general throughout the country. Khufu, whose pyramid at Gizeh is one of the seven wonders of the world, built temples in many of the great places of his kingdom, at Bubastis, Dendereh, and Koptos. He was buried in his pyramid, and around him were the tombs of all his nobles and retainers. He had been born, as it seems, near Minyeh, in an old town which remained famous in later years as the nursing place of Khufu. Men-kau-Ra, the Pious, built also a pyramid at Gizeh, and like his forefathers was deified and worshipped in later times. The next line of kings, descended from the priests of Ra, maintained fully the splendour of the monarchy. The burial place moved southward to Abusîr, where the pyramids, the boat, and temple to the Sun-god, are their monuments. Sahu-ra, the second of this line, seems to have first sent abroad trading expeditions to Punt, though the produce and even the dwarf people of that district were already known. The succession of monarchs seems to

TOMB OF A FEUDAL LORD OF THE XIIth DYN. AT BENI HASAN.
(*See* p. 60.)

have been swift, both now and in the earlier line. King Assa, Ded-ka-Ra, also sent to Punt, followed at a later time by Mer-en-Ra, whose successor, Pepŷ the First, extended his conquests in Southern Syria. But from this time, though still maintained in itself, the power of the monarchy became gradually threatened by a serious rivalry. The splendour of the court, its opulence and seclusion, had been steadily emulated by the noble families, descended from the chieftains of former times, the hereditary owners of the soil. In the army of Pepŷ, under Una, these Great Chieftains, as they are styled, led each his own contingent of troops, drawn as it seems from his own patrimony, captained and officered by the retainers and chief people of his court. A feudal system had thus already uprisen, and a first duty of these feudal lords was to provide their armies for the service of the king. The system was convenient and suitable for times of war or disturbances abroad, but the history of many countries has shown how dangerous these units of power might become when in the seclusion of their little kingdoms their obligations to the sovereign became irksome or forgotten.

IV.—EGYPT DURING THE FEUDAL PERIOD.

(i) *The Feudal Chieftains.*

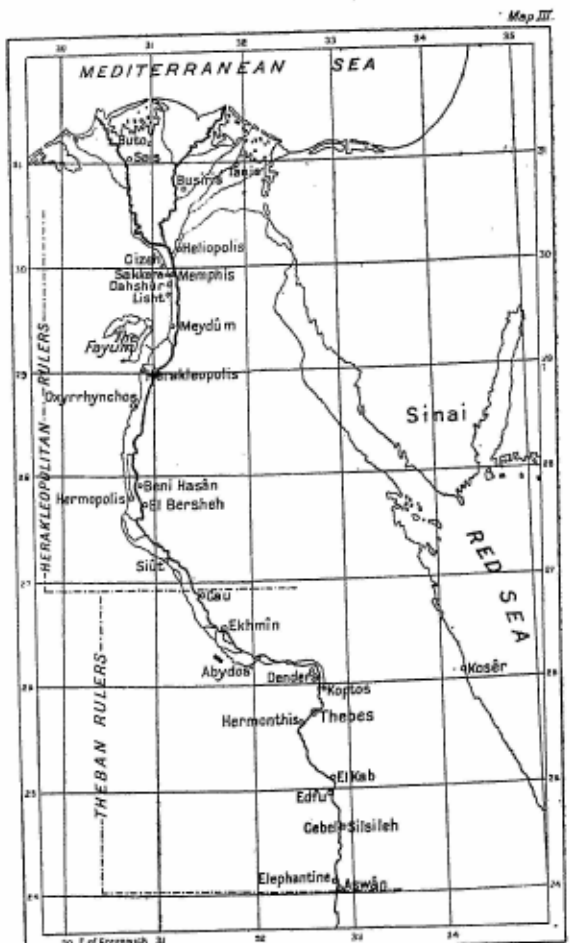
THE growing assertion of power on the part of the provincial chieftains had been fed rather than prevented by the kings themselves, who, not foreseeing the issue, had heaped upon them numerous honours and increasing powers in token of their allegiance. So long as a balance was preserved in the sovereign's favour, the system was convenient and economical to the central government. The whole administration of the provinces, the raising of the army, the gathering of the taxes and supervision of the temple worships, had slowly left the direct control of the monarch, who, grateful for the relief, reduced the numbers of his officers of state proportionately, until there remained only the Grand Vezîr, his personal agent, and the royal scribes with their staffs of clerks, while a number of officials bearing the royal signet looked to the king's interests in the various provincial districts. All other functions had gradually been vested in the great chieftains themselves, who, pleased with the plenitude of their powers, had dutifully paid their tributes or supplied their little armies upon the royal demand, while the satisfied sovereign gave them further indulgences to the full extent of the royal bounty. With this decentralisation the surroundings of the great chieftains grew to be the courts of feudal lords. Every ostentation of authority that had been assumed by the Memphite kings was now emulated by these powerful

vassals. How far the new system permeated the provinces of the Delta is not evidenced, but in Upper Egypt the districts of Beni Hasan, El-Bersheh, Siut, Gau, Girgeh, and Aswân were all centres of feudal power, some of these claiming the standard and emblem handed down from earliest times. In each province the great chieftain claimed by hereditary right the ministry of the temple, and all other offices fell to his appointment as owner of the land. Events were dated by the year of his own succession, oaths were sworn by his name, instead of the king's, as formerly, and after his name appeared the formula, "Living for ever to eternity," hitherto the sacred attribute of the crown. Each district had its own courts of justice, storehouses, treasury, offices, and militia, directly under the authority of the chieftain.

(ii) *The Chieftains' Courts.*

The court and surroundings of these feudal lords now became a reproduction on a smaller scale of the *entourage* of the earlier monarchs. The great officials of each province were the Bearer of the seal or Chancellor, the Herald, and the Captain of the forces. The treasury, the hall of judgment, and other offices were each under the care of a superintendent. Law was administered by vice-magistrates and the headmen of the villages. The royal scribes, and possibly the Superintendent of auditors, watched the interests of the crown, while numerous scribes and clerks attended to the routine of official work.

In the public works each department had its manager, as, for example, the superintendent of the irrigation works and canals. The labour itself was organised into gangs, each Overlooker of five being distinguished as a Superintendent.



EGYPT UNDER THE FEUDAL PERIOD.

In the lord's house there was an equivalent retinue and service. A Steward of the domains was the first official, under whom were Superintendents of the lands, the tomb lands, the weaving, and the warehouse. There was also a doctor with his scribes, and attached to all, numerous servants and attendants. A special herdsman and a fowler supplied the kitchen, while in the household itself were the food providers, the washermen, housemaids, and other servants. The taxation, being in kind, was arranged by a system of large courtyards and storehouses, specially marked as belonging to the treasury. As the tendency with this gathering power on the part of the lords was to eliminate the presence of the sovereign from before the people, all these relations between province and state came to pass directly through the hands of the lord and his officials. Under these circumstances the king found his powers gradually slipping away. The requests of the lords, however placed before him, were difficult to refuse, and presently came to carry the weight of demands. Every resource was tried to pacify these ambitious vassals. Their sons were educated at the royal nursery and received royal brides, while their daughters were honoured by invitation to the royal harîm. But such devices could only ward off the imminent crisis. Disaffection, imperceptible at first, then manifesting itself, was sternly repressed by neighbouring provinces. Many of the powerful lords doubtless coveted the throne, regarding jealously one another and their belittled sovereign, eager to fight for themselves, but not to combine. The hot breath of discontent fanned their ambitions, until the strain on all sides became too severe for the crumbled fabric of the constitution to withstand it, and the flame of civil and internecine war, once kindled, could not be stamped out before its devastation was

complete. City warring against city, province against province, defied and finally overturned the throne. This catastrophe, indeed, may have happened shortly after the Memphite dynasty, of which Pepŷ the Second was the last representative, came to an end. Thereafter the centre of government was transferred to Herakleopolis, and King Khety Mer-ab-Ra is believed to have reigned over the whole of Egypt. But no record has been found which throws light upon the succession of the kings, and the continuity of the kingship is to be inferred alone from a reference to the capital after a lapse of several generations. There it is seen that King Mery-ka-Ra was expelled from Herakleopolis by adverse influences. Though nothing is stated as to the cause of this overthrow, yet the account which has survived of the king's return and reinstatement seems to imply that the disturbance which had unseated him originated in the Fayûm, or further to the north. During all this period no monument has given any indication by which to glean the sequence of events in the Delta. There is some later suggestion, indeed, of a formidable power already gathering there under direct influence from abroad.

(iii) *Rebellion in the South.*

This king, Mery-ka-Ra, last of his line, had been reinstated at Herakleopolis by the help of the governor and hereditary chieftain of the province of Siut, named Khety. This family had already come into prominence and power at an earlier date. The grandfather of this magnate, the fourth of his line, had been brought up in the palace of Herakleopolis with the royal children (with whom it is recorded he had learned to swim). On returning home he had remained a personal friend of the king, wisely

governing his dominions, improving the irrigation and encouraging agriculture. He relieved in large measure the burden of the taxes, and at the same time devoted special attention to his army, which, counted by thousands, was required to resist the pretensions of a southern chief. His son Tefaba fought also against the provinces of the south, which seem to have allied from Gau, in Middle Egypt, to Elephantine in the south. Defeating them, he drove them southward and overran their territory on the western side, extinguishing the rebellion and restoring peace. So that when Khety succeeded, the Herakleopolite family were still masters of the north ; but the disturbance from the north-west coming upon them temporarily caused Mery-ka-Ra to seek the protection of Khety, whom he addresses as his father. Khety massed his great army and his imposing fleet upon the river, and defeated the allied enemies of the monarch, who, for a time at least, was reinstated in his capital amid the acclamations of the populace.

(iv) *Rise of the Theban Power.*

The southern provinces, which seem on this occasion to have united with the rebels who had driven out Mery-ka-Ra, were massed under the leadership of a Great Chieftain of Thebes, named Mentuhetep. Through five or more generations the powerful family which he represented is traced back to the Great Chieftain Antef, Keeper of the Frontier, one who claimed to have satisfied the royal desire. Then becoming more powerful, and rebels, his lineal descendants assumed the style of Horus, symbolised by the Hawk, which from earliest times had been the territorial title of the kings of Upper Egypt. They were followed by the first Mentuhetep, who seems to have already had the

support of numerous provinces, for his son led a continually increasing army against the monarch and his faithful vassal of Siut, and though defeated more than once, returned again to the attack and ultimately triumphed: In this warfare the Herakleopolitan power was broken and the dynasty ended, while Mentuhetep the Second secured the crown for the rival house of Thebes, ascending the throne himself under the name of King Neb-kheru-ra.

The passing of the crown from the line of Herakleopolis to that of Thebes, though not effected without bloodshed and civil wars, marks none the less the beginning of an era of new life in the monarchy and constitution. Probably not more than five or six generations had passed away since the death of Pepŷ the Second had heralded the discord that has completely blotted out the records of his time. Here and there archæology has detected some evidences of the intervening period, certain small seals of curious designs, showing in certain places of the western desert the presence of foreign peoples, possibly Libyan mercenaries tempted by the hope of settlement. In the Delta, too, there seem to be indications of some power alien to that of the established monarch of the south; tradition, indeed, makes mention of a dynasty of separate kings having their capital at Saïs. It cannot be believed that, in the anarchy which had prevailed, any rulers in the Delta were sufficiently powerful to extend even a nominal hold over the rebellious chieftains of Upper Egypt; but it may be supposed that the Western Delta was the centre of an independent house, whose power had resulted possibly from the feudal system, or may have been derived from relations with the outer world. However that may be, this province seems to have defied the weakening kings of Herakleopolis, and to have threatened their capital itself; nor can it be found to

have bowed before the newly established monarchy of Thebes.

(v) *Constitution under the First Theban Kings.*

The accession of Mentuhetep restored the balance of power between the monarch and the feudal lords. The history of feudalism in Egypt now entered its second stage. Previously the struggling ambitions of the chieftains had tended to eliminate all royal authority; now the relations between vassal and sovereign were more clearly defined, and those independent units of force were directed upon terms to the upholding of the monarchy they had created. The time was still to come when a line of powerful kings should recognise the dangers which beset a throne guarded by jealousies, and should contrive in a few generations to eliminate, if not eradicate, the causes.

Now, however, the re-establishment of an ordered government led at once to better organisation in the provinces, and the country, with that spontaneity which is natural to its character, revived at once its arts, and trades, and industries. Each district under the authority of a great chieftain seems to have been self-acting and almost self-supporting, like certain of the Indian village communities. A complete establishment of trades and occupations enabled the province to pursue its collective life unaided by any person or body external to itself. The great chieftain was supreme in all departments of his province. In the administration of justice and the making of laws he was assisted by the headmen of his villages, which were furnished also with a staff of police officials.

The only resident official not belonging necessarily to the province was the royal scribe, whose duty it was to audit and collect the government taxes. Some of the

contemporary paintings illustrate the taking stock of the cattle belonging to the princes. Sometimes this was done in the open air, and at other times in the office. The superintendent of the house of auditing directs the work, assisted by a staff of clerks; while all the accounts are checked by the royal scribe, representing the central government. The animals are brought before these officials by the superintendent of the cattle and his herdsmen, who are specified as the donkey-herd, the gazelle-herd, and the superintendent of a thousand head (of cattle). The storekeepers, it seems, had to give a fixed annual amount or a fixed proportion of the produce from the animals or herds committed to their care. Some years their amounts fell short, at other times they were able to pay up fully, including the arrears. These contributions were not made all in one annual payment, but at intervals during the year: the scribes were thus kept constantly busy with the writing of balance sheets and the statements of accounts.

This restoration of the peaceful course of agriculture was not effected and maintained without strenuous exertions upon the part of the crown and its officials. Each district still fostered its private army and bodies of troops, whose presence tended to promote discord between adjoining villages and districts. It is not suggested that the chieftains had the privilege of waging their private wars, but it was theirs to organise and train their troops for the service of the state, and it was only the far-sighted policy of later kings that united these bands in a national enterprise. It was now the first thought of the sovereign to "set right what was ruined, to restore what one city had taken from its sister city, that he might cause one city to know its boundary from its sister city, establishing their landmarks and reckoning their waters according to that which was in

the writings, apportioning according to that which was in antiquity."

(vi) *Amenemhat I. Re-establishes the Monarchy.*

Amenemhat the First, of whom these acts are recorded, was first of that great line of kings under whom the power of the monarchy became firmly re-established and the inimical elements of feudalism were finally eliminated. His predecessors had already prepared the way by firm government and public works, under which the country learned to appreciate the changing order. The immediate successors of Mentuhetep had been active in the quarries of Hammamât, and Se Ânkh-ka-Ra despatched also an expedition to the fair land of Punt, so reviving the ancient intercourse. This king had succeeded to the throne on the failure of the main line of Theban princes who had secured it. He seems to have been the son of Amenemhat, a Vezir under Mentuhetep the Third; his succession without struggle is therefore very significant of the increased power now concentrated about the monarch and his court. Then followed Amenemhat the First, under whom the national spirit was revived. Art and commerce of the earlier line had been reviving, but now a series of public enterprises stimulated to further progress. Buildings and temples were erected in the Eastern Delta at Tanis and Bubastis, at Memphis, in the Fayûm, and southward as far as Korosko. But the great achievement was the removal of the capital, for some reason which can only be inferred, to a more central position in the vicinity of Dahshur in Middle Egypt. Here the new residence of the court was surrounded by battlements and fortifications, apparently of unusual strength. The fact leads to the suspicion that a hostile element was still present and powerful enough to render precaution

necessary. Whence it was derived is not clear, but the isolation of other possibilities points to the Delta as the possible seat of a great house which still defied the royal authority. If so, it must have been supported from without, for the remainder of Egypt was now united.

(vii) *Decline of Feudal Power.*

The removal of the capital by Amenemhat the First was soon followed by another constitutional change of deeper meaning. The firm hold which the line of Thebes had held upon the throne, and their individual power, supported by the trend of national instinct, enabled the kings Usertesen the Second and Third to adopt a policy by which the last elements of the feudal system were finally suppressed. Formerly the chieftain of each province had controlled its administration, while a superintendent with the royal seal alone nominally represented the treasury department of the government. All other officers were appointed by the chieftain from among his retinue. Now, however, several far-reaching changes were made. The title great chieftain of the province was allowed to lapse whenever any difficulty of succession or other event gave the opportunity, and in its place the sovereign was graciously pleased to allow the assumption of a title by which the descendants of these powerful lords became the headmen officially and by birth-right of their provincial capitals. Contemporaneously all those appointments hitherto vested in the provincial administrator were transferred to the central government. The power of the monarch was now manifested absolute, and around him sprang up rapidly the bureaucracy which for some generations had been in abeyance. The Grand Vezir was still the right hand of the king, his deputy,

and the most powerful member of the state. Under his immediate direction were the superintendent of his office, the master of procedure in his office, the chief scribe, the scribes, and the judges, of whom he was the chief. Each department similarly organised its framework. The treasury, responsible for the tax-gathering, was directed by the grand master of the royal seal, the lord chancellor, under whom were the body of royal seal bearers, his deputies, officers, and servants. The great steward of the household controlled the affairs connected with the royal estate, assisted by an equally numerous staff. The country was seemingly arranged for administrative purposes into three territorial divisions or inspectorates, being the far south, the south (or Middle Egypt), and the north. Through these the "judges of the tens" and the doctors of law administered justice, under the Sovereign and the Vezîr—the high magistrate and his deputy. The army remained under the orders of a commander-in-chief of all the forces. The great feudal lord of earlier days thus became in a short space of years the headman merely of his town, responsible only for the good behaviour of his servants and the elders of his villages. Thereafter the power and foresight of the monarchy never permitted the revival of a system that had proved itself able to undermine the throne itself.

V.—EGYPT UNDER THE EARLY THEBAN RULERS.

(i) *Architecture and Art.*

THE re-settlement of the government had meanwhile been accompanied by a corresponding revival and general progress. As on former occasions of similar character, it was in architecture and decorative art that this was most revealed; and as the national instinct had in no wise changed, the best efforts were still directed to the temples of the gods and the tombs of the great dead. Each king vied with his predecessor in erecting stone temples with columned halls and shrines in the religious centres of the country. In the tombs, also, the development of architectural features that had been earlier incipient proved a remarkable stimulus to progress. The use of the arch had been already established in earlier times, and it was now found in the vaulted roofs of chambers and rock-hewn tombs. But while the plentiful supply of limestone for large roofing slabs obviated all necessity for the elaboration of the arch or vault, which was therefore mainly employed for decorative effect, yet the use of the column assumed a new importance. In the rock-hewn tombs of Beni-Hasan are found the rudiments of the Doric order in classical architecture. There the outer portico of the tomb-chamber is supported by two plain columns, part fluted, surmounted by a plain square capital and without any base. There can be no doubt that in this form there is the survival

INTERIOR OF THE TOMB OF AN OFFICIAL, XIIth DYN. BENI HASAN.

of a post of wood capped with a simple block upon which to rest the superincumbent beam or roof. In the interior of these tombs are columns carved as the clustering papyrus, bound together, while elsewhere the palm tree is found as motive for the capitals of plain columns. The walls of these rock chambers are painted with much realism with scenes from daily life in the fields or the workshop. These are incidental to the character of the whole interior decoration, which depicts the funereal furniture and provision devoted to the future of the dead. The scenes show the process of making linen in all its stages, from the growing of the flax to the weaving of the cloth; pottery making and glazing; the cutting of timber, and making of furniture, bows and arrows; leather working; the fashioning of fine flint knives for ceremonials; cultivation of wheat, the harvest and storing in the granary, the grinding of corn and the making of bread; fishing and its incidents; the occupation of the butcher; the making of wine through all stages, from the vineyard to the pressing of the grapes. Then come the representations of making boats, some of which, as shown with spreading prow and stern, sail, and numerous oars, are elegant and luxurious boats for river journeys. In smaller tombs there were placed conventional wooden models of these scenes and processes.

(ii) *Sculpture.*

It was not alone in mural decorations that the artist of the age found scope for his realism in detail. In sculpture, now as in earlier days, the Egyptian excelled. The reliefs of Usertesen the Second at Koptos, the portrait of Amenemhat the Second in yellow limestone, and the colossal statue in fine limestone of Usertesen the First, are all among the

best efforts of the national art. In smaller models, also, much exquisite work was produced; and when, from some cause, with Usertesen the Second a new type of face is introduced into the royal house, the artist worked upon the new motive with fidelity and marvellous skill. The Sphinx which lies in the desert near to the great pyramids of Gizeh dates also to the stimulus of the time. This object, which through all time has remained one of the wonders and mysteries of the world, is carved out of an outcrop of the natural rock, representing a lion with a human face in the family likeness of Amenemhat the Third.

(iii) *Literature.*

The literature also, which must form the basis of any judgment of the standard of civilisation, now assumes its widest range, expressed in the purest form of the Egyptian language. It still consists largely of ritual and religious texts, which, in their vague allusions to the complex mythology of the time, are hardly intelligible; but whenever correspondence between the cultivated people or other literary work is found, it reveals a standard of culture and refinement that must rank among the highest. The story of the travels of Prince Sanehat, and his life in Syria, are told in a simple and graceful manner, with details which show intelligent interest in the world around. The letters sent by this exile to his king in Egypt are full of pathos and power of expression, while that which gave him the royal permission to return and pass the evening of his life among his own people is expressed with a kingly dignity and grace that could only be the product of a refined civilisation. The numerous works on philosophical subjects, treatises on sciences, mathematics, and medicine show a love for

the pursuit of knowledge, the real depth of which, as fostered for centuries of years among the priesthood, can never be adequately realised. The power of this learning may only be inferred by those few incidents which show its effect when brought into contact with the outer world. Yet education was by no means confined to these classes. Wills were made and accounts kept as in modern times; even the model letters have survived, which in the schools formed the copies from which the children learned. The stories of human life which most truly reflect the spirit of an age are, unfortunately, not plentiful; but, such as they are, they reveal a stage of civilisation which by slow process of natural progress had already reached its zenith in the close of the third millennium B.C. It is not only the monuments and literature which show this clearly. The inlaid jewellery from Dahshur must ever rank among the best artistic products of the world. Though made apparently on the Egyptian soil, its general design differs from that usual in the country, and must be deemed accordingly to have been imported during this period. The same newness of ideas is illustrated further by the introduction of the scroll pattern and spirals for decorative purpose. The use in Egypt of seals made in the form of the scarab-beetle, engraved with a suitable device or inscription, originated during this period.

VI.—THE HYKSOS PERIOD.

(i) *Rise of the Hyksos Power.*

THIS increasing element of foreign influence in the art and character of the age becomes significant in view of subsequent events. It is contemporaneous in its origins with several indications of a gathering power that caused disquiet to the Egyptian throne. During the feudal period King Mery-ka-Ra had been expelled from his capital at Herakleopolis by a hostile people on the north, and was only reinstated by help of the Prince of Siut, his relative and southern neighbour. Later, King Amenemhat the First, though a scion of the Theban house, had come down with his court and government to Lisht, nearer the frontier of the Delta, where he had deemed it desirable to surround his new capital with strong fortifications. Both of these incidents may have been caused by disaffection or the growth of a hostile element in the Delta, sustained by relation with a kindred power across the frontier. It is, in fact, recorded of Amenemhat that he fought on his north-west frontier the Temehu, and on his east the Herusha and Mentu; while under the same king is first mention of the Kheta, a people who for several centuries maintained a struggle of doubtful issue with the Egyptian power. Upon the eastern horizon there had appeared, indeed, the vanguard of a mixed Asiastic people moving westward, mingling freely with the tribes and peoples whose country they over-ran, but dominant always if only by reason

KING USERTESEN III.

of the formidable engine of war, the chariot and horses, which they introduced to Western Asia. To these various tribes or peoples, and the dominion which they extended ultimately from Armenia to the western coast of Asia Minor on the Ægean, the term Hittites has been sanctioned by modern usage.

The writing of the newcomers was in a hieroglyphic script, which was possibly derived from the same parent stock as the cuneiform of Babylonia and the hieroglyphic characters of Egypt. There is, indeed, indication that an earlier wave of similar origin had already passed over these countries in former ages leaving traces of its influence, just as in later times the Turkish peoples spread over the same regions and established from Constantinople a dominion over Egypt which is still maintained.

The characteristics of this movement were diffusion and assimilation. The powerful division named the Kheta seems to have early established its stronghold upon the Upper Euphrates. Thence a partial wave passed southward, and with the intermarriages between Hittites, Syrians, and Semites, even as near as Hebron, had already reached the frontiers of Egypt. Now these peoples, infused with new character and blood, pressed by way of Tanis into Egypt itself, attracting notice by reason of their beautifully embroidered robes and unfamiliar objects which they introduced. The new element next appears in the royal line itself, the queen of Usertesen the Second, called Nefert (the beautiful), being plainly of the Hittite character. A newly-found portrait of Usertesen the Third, presumably her son, reveals him of the same racial character, while with her daughters there is associated the famous jewellery of Dahshur, which is unlike any previous example of Egyptian art, from which it is distinguished by fine inlay work and

other features in which the Hittite was proficient. These state marriages seem to have been renewed, for Amenemhat the Third, who followed afterwards, is more pronouncedly Mongoloid in feature. With this king is associated the great Sphinx at Gizeh. In this the head of a man bearing a resemblance to this king is placed upon the body of a lion, which was the emblem of supreme authority among the Hittites.

Amenemhat the Fourth, who succeeded, reigned a few years only, followed by his sister, Sebek-neferu, the daughter of Amenemhat the Third, as queen.

The accession of a female sovereign marks as often the changing of a dynasty. But the Egyptian records at this time become a blank, and though there is some indication that the monarchy endured for some time, the remainder of the succession is obscure. The pressure upon the north-eastern frontier seems to have broken it down, and before the hordes of Semite-Hittites pouring in, the government retreated back to Thebes. There is no record or tradition of any struggle. It may be that the foreign alliances had already paved the way by which the crown might be usurped.

(ii) *The Hyksos Kings.*

The title of the new rulers was Hek-Khaskhetu, left behind upon the small scarab seals, which, even as they then were important for administration purposes, now remain the only clear record of the period of foreign domination of which the Egyptian himself sought to obliterate every trace. It may be claimed that the name Hyksos is derived from this source. The term signifies a ruler over foreign lands, being distinguished by its plural form from a title applied to the chieftain of small numbers of Semites and others who had earlier crossed the frontier.

It is significant that the name of Khŷan, one of these rulers, is found in places so widely separated as Baghdad and Crete, indicating that the Hittite power was behind this invasion, by whomsoever it may have been effected. Tradition says that the barbarian hordes who had swarmed in, resistless, made one of themselves king over all. It seems clear that eventually even the Theban House in Upper Egypt acknowledged the suzerainty of the Hyksos rulers to the south, and bowed to the foreigners' yoke. From time to time, however, gathering power, the Egyptians seem to have descended upon their masters and tried to regain their freedom. King Kha-nefer-Ra, Sebek-hetep, from Thebes, appears to have driven the enemy back to Pelusium, and to have erected monuments at Tanis in the Delta, but this is only an incident in the Hyksos period.

During the greater part of the time the conquerors allowed the native line to preserve a semi-regal power upon the payment of tribute in acknowledgment of suzerainty. Their interests were watched by their own deputies armed with the authority of the royal seal. In this way there have been handed down the names of some number of these foreign rulers, engraved upon the small scarab seals and signets found in various places throughout the country, and with them many of their representative officials. The Semitic and foreign character of these names makes it possible to distinguish a list of contemporaneous kings who probably maintained the hereditary succession of the Theban house, though subject to the foreigner. How long this state of affairs continued is not determinable. The arts and industries of Egypt, which in general are a sound criterion, were reduced in this period to a standstill, and a greater number of years may have elapsed than the

monuments betray. Tradition, however, points to a domination through several centuries, and though it is difficult to find evidence to support the point in Egypt, yet the high civilisation of Crete throughout this time seems to confirm the suggestion of two or three centuries at least intervening between the traceable influences of the end of the first and beginning of the second Theban monarchies.

The final overthrow of the Hyksos rule followed by the expulsion of the foreigner, though it survives only in the bare chronicle of events, must none the less have been one of the great deeds in the nation's history. If it be possible to accept the traditional story, it would seem that Apepy, a Hyksos king, tried to enforce the worship of his strange gods upon the Egyptians, who, rising at last in sufficient power, led by their Theban house, eventually under Aahmes cast off finally their yoke.

VII.—PERIOD OF THE THEBAN EMPIRE.

(i) *The Royal Family.*

AAHMES, the hereditary prince of Thebes, was now proclaimed the accepted sovereign of the two lands of Egypt which he had freed from foreign domination. Claiming double descent from the ancient royal stock by the alliance of his forefather Antef with the Princess Sebek-em-sa-ef, he was probably heir by first right to the throne; and it was also fitting that he who had rescued the crown of Egypt from the foreigner should also be the first to wear it. His wife was Aahmes-Nefretari, and by the issue of this marriage he became the founder of that illustrious line of Pharaohs under whom the empire and prosperity of Egypt were advanced beyond the records of all other periods in the eventful history of the country. Though eclipsed in the subsequent splendour of the age, which by his valour he had inaugurated, yet his name was revered and venerated as the father of this imperial dynasty of 13 kings, which held sway during the sixteenth, fifteenth, and fourteenth centuries B.C. He was succeeded by the eldest son of his marriage, and thereafter the succession continued to be hereditary, as it had been in past time. The experiences of the past had shown the difficulties that might disturb the state from claims to the throne advanced by rival houses or by other branches of the reigning family. To strengthen, therefore, the rights of the succession and to eliminate, so far as possible, these chances of disruption,

the practice of intermarriage with the chief families of the country was discontinued; the kingly line placed itself above the reach of ordinary associations; and the marriage of brother with sister became an accepted custom of the time, so retaining and strengthening the bond of succession within the royal household. In failure of a male issue by the queen consort, the royal son of one of the ladies devoted to the king's person succeeded, his rights being strengthened by marriage with the hereditary princess. Later again, as the relations by war and by commerce with the countries of Mesopotamia and Western Asia increased, several of the kings of Egypt espoused princesses of the great houses with whom they were brought in contact. The queen consort of Amenhetep brought with her from Mesopotamia over 300 ladies in attendance. Thothmes the Fourth and Amenhetep the Fourth allied themselves also with princesses from the reigning family of Mitânni, and the practice was reciprocated. The relations long before established between Egypt and Western Asia, but evidenced hitherto only by archæological associations, now became clearly revealed by the interchange of letters in which the cuneiform script appears to take the precedence of the Egyptian for diplomatic and international affairs. These alliances, therefore, were deemed mutually desirable, and while the Egyptian princes sought their brides among the foreign courts, the princesses of the country in the same way contracted alliances abroad.

(ii) *Power of the Sovereign.*

The course of events and the policy of the kings had already tended in great measure to reduce the power of individual chieftains, which, with the final stroke of Aahmes

INVESTITURE OF AN OFFICIAL. (*See* p. 73.)

that expelled the Hyksos, seems to have almost disappeared. The methods which the Pharaohs now adopted were the more calculated to aggrandise their powers and to exalt the majesty of their position. In the earlier days of the monarchy each step towards power which the king attempted had been climbed also by the struggling chieftains who had helped him to ascend. Now in supreme and solitary splendour the monarch stood forth a god, dazzling as the sun. "This is the royal rescript," wrote Thothmes the First to his people, "to tell you that my majesty is uprisen, King of the Two Lands of Egypt, in the seat of Horus the Living, without equal for ever; Horus the Vigorous, the Mighty, beloved of the goddess of Truth; uniter of the double diadems, rising as a flame, most valiant; the golden Horus in whose years is prosperity, the giver of life; King of the Upper and Lower Lands of Egypt, by the name Aa-kheper-ka-Ra; son of Ra, Tahuti-mes, living for ever to eternity! Cause ye, therefore, sacrifices to be offered to the gods of the south, and hymns to be chanted for the well-being of the king. Then cause the oath to be taken in the name of my majesty." He was crowned on the 21st day of the third month from the time of sowing in the year 1541 B.C.

In the monarchies of modern Europe how much in ceremonial and procedure remains the same to-day as was practised in the courts of these splendid Pharaohs three and four thousand years ago! On the death of the king the chief officers of state, preceded by special messengers, journeyed at once to acquaint their new sovereign with the news and to do their homage. "*Le roi est mort, vive le roi!*" Each coronation was held as a public yearly festival; it was accompanied by those ancient rites already to them immemorial, handed down through the two thousand years or

more that had passed over the country since the founding of the monarchy. The king ascended the steps to the daïs; before him were the now meaningless emblems of the allied tribes by whom The Scorpion and Narmer had gained the northern lands and United Egypt. As with the early Stuarts in Great Britain, he received severally the crown of the South and the crown of the North; then he was crowned with the double emblem, King of United Egypt, he was invested with the insignia, and received the homage and the oath of allegiance of his ministers and dignitaries. The keepers of the sacred archives pronounced his kingly name, and the style and title of his majesty was determined for the royal signet. The ceremonies over, there followed, in name at least, the observance of those ancient customs which the first kings of Egypt had instituted—the visitation of the frontiers, the inspection of the northern wall, the joining of the two lands, and the *Shed* festival, described in the contemporary writings in terms almost identical with those which, in the Memphite period, had described the accessions of the earliest monarchs. Sometimes, for personal convenience or from politic motives of making easy the succession, the king called to his side, while still retaining the sceptre, his heir-apparent, who was invested with the equal powers of co-regent with a ceremonial similar to that which attended the coronation. The Queen Hatshepsut in this way was called to the throne by her father, Thothmes the First, making her appearance before the world in the garments of a man. It may have been that in this instance the accession of a woman might have proved distasteful, but difficulty was forestalled by the royal will apportioning to her the powers and divinity of the sovereign. The ministers and officials took the oath and made their

homage in the usual order, and all the customary procedure was fulfilled.

The will of the monarch was thus revealed as irrevocable law. He stood alone, with none to deny him. His greatest ministers of state were still his servants. Foremost among them was the Grand Vezîr as aforetime. His duty was to be the mouthpiece of the king, whose exalted position held him from any direct communication with his people. But the consistent foresight of the monarch seems to have found even in this official the possibility of an overweening power. No element of the constitution should retain a possibility of danger to the throne; the office of the Vezir was therefore divided by Thothmes the Third between two persons, one stationed in the southern capital at Thebes, the other administering the northern provinces from Memphis. Each vezîrate had its complete staff, reduplicating all those offices which had previously been held by single individuals in the central government. Two keepers of the great seal were in effect each vice-chancellors of the separate provinces; the only office which could not be divided was the chief command of the army and allied forces, which was vested as heretofore in a single individual, and soon became a position of so great power and dignity that the sovereign himself claimed it for his person, and absorbed it into the heritages of the crown.

(iii) *The Army and Foreign Conquests.*

The same wave of martial fervour, indeed, which had expelled the Hyksos was still borne onward by the swelling tide of national prosperity. In earlier ages the exploits of the troops had been limited mainly to the protection of the country's frontiers, leading occasionally to a raid or military

expedition against some troublesome neighbour. The tribute raised on these occasions had been in fact the spoils of war carried off in pillage or exacted from the villages they had overrun. There had been few pitched battles fought, nor any national wars undertaken. Save, indeed, for the garrisons of the frontier forts and the picked bodyguard of the king, there had been little attempt made to maintain a standing army. Even the Nubian wars, which had been entered into towards the close of the feudal period, had been waged by the militia of the various principalities, while for sporadic campaigns in Syria a special enrolment had been necessary.

Now, however, the arms long held in readiness to defend had been incited to attack. The kingdom had been refounded by military power, and the king recrowned Lord of the North and South amid the crash of arms resounding throughout the land. The lessons learned in these times could not lightly be forgotten. The army was therefore organised and maintained on a footing which had never previously been attempted. At the head was the general officer in command, assisted by the lieutenants-general. These officers were, doubtless, in command of squadrons, while the subdivisions fell to captains and others of lower rank. The highest positions were gradually sought out by the great princes of the kingdom; and perhaps on this account the lot of the subordinate officers became arduous and contemptible, being made the subject of contemporary ridicule. The garrison forts remained, as before, under their separate commandants.

The enlisting of the troops was done by a regular recruiting staff, assisted by scribes of various grades. The forces comprised only a nucleus of real Egyptians, being supplemented largely from allied or subject peoples under Egyptian

EGYPTIAN TROOPS (TEMPLE OF RAMESES AT ABYDOS).

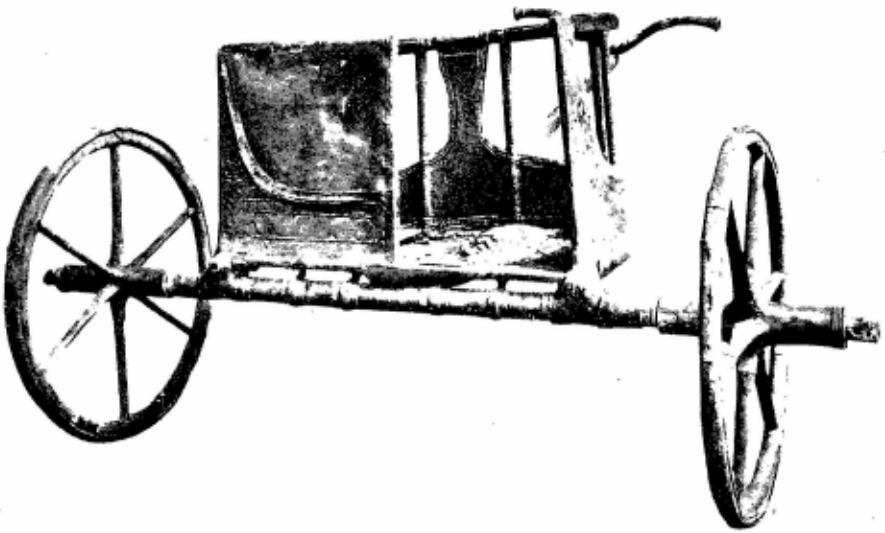
officers, and the increasing element of Libyan or transmarine mercenaries under the command of their own tribal leaders. Arrangements were made for the regular training and drilling of the soldiers from whom the army was formed.

The different commands were distinguished by their separate standards. It is not known in what proportion of the various arms the larger bodies were composed; but the companies were classed according to their offensive weapons. Troops of archers were most common, composed of various elements. The Egyptian infantry seems to have carried a large shield. In the first division of one army a line shows all the soldiers with a tall lance in the right hand, while in the left hand is borne a short curved sword, and in the belt a dagger. Every fifth man wields a light wand, seemingly the emblem of a command of four. In the body-guard of the king's person are found two classes also, one bearing a light lance in addition to the customary shield, the officers wielding clubs, while in the other the soldiers have lances and battle-axes, and are commanded by officers with staves. The dress was various, a simple Egyptian costume with a front protector being most used. But the foreign corps naturally employed their own costumes and their own familiar arms. Thus the Syrians, when enrolled, are distinguished by their dress, their long lances, and the short dagger in their girdles; while the negroes, clad in their loin-cloths, are armed with their bows and arrows only. But by far the most formidable weapon of offence was the war-chariot, from which, as it dashed by, drawn by excited horses, a fighting man, armed with his bow or other weapon, spread consternation among the enemy. The reins, though usually tied around the waist of the warrior, who controlled them by his thighs, while the shield-bearer protected his

body, were sometimes held by a separate driver, and when the king himself rode forth to battle in this way, the royal sons deemed it a privilege to drive for him.

The chariot itself, like the horse, had been introduced into Egypt from Western Asia during the Hyksos period. The vehicle was a light cart on two wheels, drawn by two horses harnessed to a single pole. The back was open, but a low frame curved around the front. A triumphal chariot of Thothmes the Fourth was decorated on the front with scenes of battle worked in low relief with exquisite and minute detail; but the instrument of war was necessarily of stouter character. The driver and the warrior were both clad in long protective dresses with leathern coat, while a suit of chain or plated mail was commonly adopted. A thickly wadded helmet and suit were also found serviceable for protection. A general uniformity was observed not only in the equipment of the chariots but in their disposition on the field of battle. Constant practice and manœuvres had enabled them to keep a solid line even in the charge at a gallop.

From these and similar glimpses at the details, it is seen that the great army was organised upon a definite and rigorous military system. The camps were laid out on a fixed plan; discipline and order were enforced no less during the respites from actual warfare than when the battle was imminent. This organisation was the growth which had followed upon the recovery by arms of the national freedom. The expulsion of the Hyksos by Aahmes had been followed by pursuit into Syria. This unhappy but attractive country had already learnt by experience the dangers of its situation. While its fields and vineyards tempted husbandry, yet each town had fortified itself with stout walls for defensive purposes, to which the peasantry



CHARIOT FROM A ROYAL TOMB AT THEBES.
(Discovered by T. M. Davis, 1905.)

retreated in times of disturbance. Fate had placed it at the meeting-place of powerful forces crossing East, West, and South, and it had as yet assumed no position as a nation, but each small district formed an independent state. Yet to the Egyptian it was the key to lands of gold and silver, oils and wine, woods and metals, and many elements of industry which their own country lacked. The impulse and the temptation were all-sufficient, and the army of Thothmes the First penetrated, as it seems, to Aleppo. The relations of Hatshepsut were more commercial, and she received the tribute and presents which brought for Syria a short tranquillity.

But under Thothmes the Third the army is found again in movement, this time with more serious design. The fortified town on the southern frontier of the Syrians called Megiddo, which came first across their path, was carried, and the chieftains who had leagued themselves in rebellion against his suzerainty were defeated. Much booty and tribute were acquired as a result, and even the kings of Syria thought it well to send their portion. Though restrained for a time, the army was kept together by a number of smaller campaigns, until further rebellion of the confederacy of Syria called for another great expedition. The king again led this in person, rapidly effecting the subjugation of the rebels. One portion of the army, advancing further, captured and plundered Karkhemish, the northern capital of the Hittites and the key to Mesopotamia, strongly placed and fortified upon the Euphrates. A further expedition extended the conquests against the Kheta, whose capital, Kadesh on the Orontes, also fell before the victorious army. The triumphal records of the time inscribed upon the temple walls at Karnak in Thebes give a long list of the subject cities, and tell of tribute

and presents sent from the Syrians, the Kheta, and even from the Mediterranean islands of Cyprus and Crete. The demands of an empire such as this were constantly calling for the mobilisation of the army; even in Syria the princes frequently manifested disaffection and attempted to throw off the yoke, whether singly or by union. But under Amenhetep the Third the tide of conquest again rolled forward over and beyond them, until the Egyptian Empire assumed its greatest extent, embracing the whole valley of the Euphrates, the earliest rival of the Nile, and reaching up the Tigris to Assyria and Mesopotamia. While the power of Egypt had spread itself over Western Asia, the upper reaches of the Nile, though less attractive, had also been brought under the sway of Thebes. Thus, for a time, perhaps three centuries, the old-world state that had slumbered many centuries in seclusion on the Nile swelled by some internal national fervour into one of the great empires of the ancient world. But it was soon to burst; the forces were already at work from outside and within that were to tear away the lightly-held fabric and to threaten even the framework of the kingdom itself.

(iv) *Foreign Trade.*

But meanwhile, contemporaneous with this imperial growth, there had arisen a wide trade relation between Egypt and the neighbouring countries. The official correspondence between Egypt and Babylonia reveals an old-established intercourse between those countries. In it appears an official proposition for the interchange of objects. From the Nile valley there were sent gold, painted wood, images in wood and gold, oil, and other produce in kind, while in exchange there came from the

HITTITE CHARIOTS CHARGING UP A HILL.

(*See* pp. 65, 76, 90.)

EGYPT UNDER THE EMPIRE.

Euphrates worked gold and enamels, rare woods like cedar and pine, precious stones such as lapis lazuli, malachite, ingots of lead, copper, and tin, horses and chariots, as well as slaves, and animals like the elephant and bear sent as curiosities. The desert trade routes to the east were crossed and recrossed by these commercial expeditions, which were a constant temptation to the predatory peoples through whose exposed lands they passed. But it was not alone by caravan that these relations were maintained. The islands of the Mediterranean and the opposite coasts of Asia Minor and Greece were brought into increasing contact by direct trade by sea, or by the medium of the enterprising Phœnician traders. From Crete, where the influence of a high period of civilisation left a fresh impress upon its arts, there came elegant vases of gold and silver inlaid with gems, lapis lazuli and cornelian, while the precious metals and copper were worked into various designs for use or ornament. From Cyprus were derived ivory, bronze, and copper, with horses and the furniture of ships, in exchange for silver, oils, and oxen. The trade thus established led to the framing of a series of legal agreements between Egypt and the countries within its sphere, first, no doubt, for the protection of the commerce from piracy or other interferences, later extended to be an international law. Thus the personal effects and property of a Cypriot who died in Egypt, leaving wife and family in his native land, might be returned to an authorised representative. Questions of piracy or pillage from afar were often laid before the Egyptian government, while the people of Syria are found sending petitions for the restitution of their rights. In this country there were all the elements of a government subject to the suzerainty of Egypt; while the Pharaoh received the right to appoint

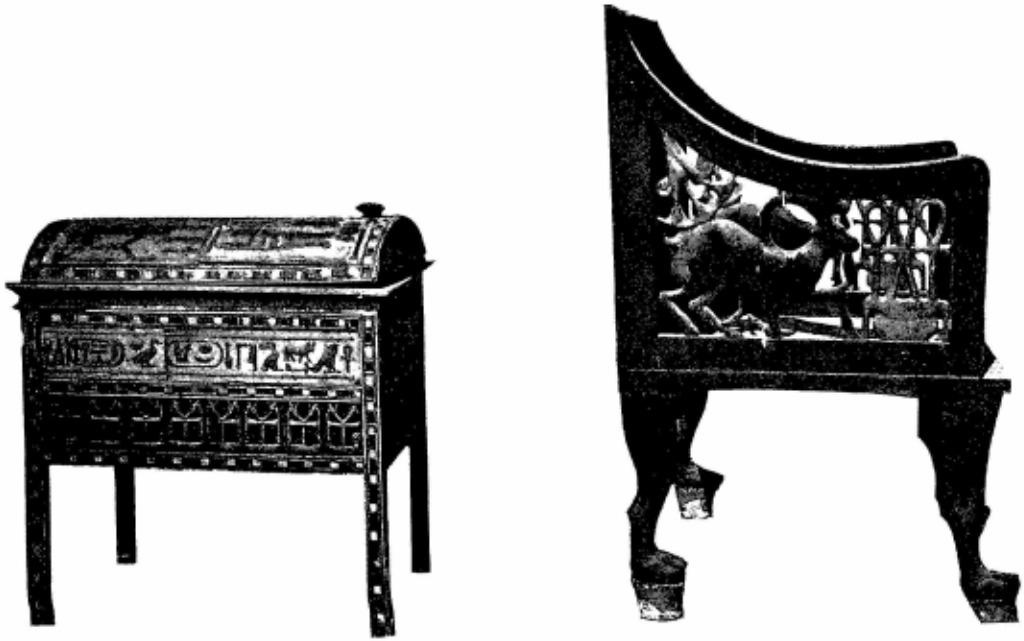
a number of chiefs, others were retained by virtue of hereditary or elective right. Female rule was lawful, and there was a definite system of municipal management. Here, as in other large towns throughout the empire, were stationed Egyptian residents to watch the interests of the central government.

In other directions also an equal encouragement was given to trade and commerce. The Upper Nile and the Western Desert contributed their produce, but it was the land along the southern coasts of the Red Sea named Punt that especially supplied the wants of Egypt. The memory of this fair country had been kept alive by occasional incidents, and the tradition of the old-time relations and mutual friendship had been preserved and handed down in the records of the priestly caste, so that when the oracle of Amen spoke to the Queen Hatshepsut it was the direct incentive to the preparation of an expedition planned and carried out with greater enthusiasm even than aforetime. The fleet of boats started from where the desert route from Upper Egypt approached the Red Sea at Kosêr, and having arrived at the destination, the Egyptian envoy was received in state by the chief men of the district and by the Princess of Punt herself. The natives were clad in much the same fashion as the Egyptians, while the wrists and right legs of the chiefs were encircled with numerous rings. A necklace of amulets was clasped around the neck, a narrow fillet of linen was bound around the head, and a small dagger was suspended at the waist. The wicker huts were built upon platforms raised on piles above the level of the ground and approached by wooden ladders; these were placed amidst the groves of palm, ebony, and myrrh trees. The Egyptian representative and his guard encamped upon the shore, where they were made

welcome and entertained by their hosts, and a mutual interchange of presents took place. The result of the exchange then enabled the Egyptians to load their boats with the myrrh and frankincense, which were a chief quest of the expedition. A number of small trees were taken whole with their roots to plant in the temple which Hatshepsut the Queen had dedicated to Amen at Thebes. Ebony, ivory, gold, cinnamon, stibium, Sangar cattle, giraffes, monkeys, apes, panthers, cheetahs, panther skins, ostrich feathers and eggs were included in the goods which the successful expedition brought back to their queen in Egypt. Accompanying them were some of the chief men of the land, who made their obeisance to the queen who received them, declaring her their queen.

(v) *Foreign Intercourse and Influences.*

The effect of these relations of war and peace was more real, and influenced more permanently the civilisation of Egypt, than any event or series of events in earlier times. The civil wars that ensued upon the close of the Memphite rule, and the disturbed condition of the country while subject to the Hyksos domination, were incidents which left no permanent impress—indeed, little trace—upon the ages which succeeded. But now the introduction of fresh ideas and new methods, the better supply, too, of materials, produced radical changes in the character of the art. The cultural influences, best illustrated by the Mykenæan art, which spread widely over the Mediterranean littoral, began to produce a marked effect in Egypt also. New motives in design and new forms were a quick response to the stimulus received from every side. In this period of Egypt's greatest power, the national feelings became a prey



FURNITURE FROM A ROYAL TOMB AT THEBES.
(Discovered by T. M. Davis, 1905.)

to foreign influences that produced more change in a short space of time than the long cycle of early years had been able to effect. With its appearance from the seclusion of old times the conservatism of the country died; and from this time forward it remained for ever subject to those newer civilisations which eventually supplanted and obliterated its own. The seat of the most lasting of these impresses was undoubtedly the country and environs of Syria, where, originally by war and then by brisk interchange of trade products, a close connection was maintained. The introduction of skilled artisans among the prisoners of war, and of female captives for the harîms of the nobles, marks now the beginning of a changing time. The gentler features of the Syrians made them in this prosperous age specially sought after by the Egyptians. The kings themselves espoused foreign princesses, and the highest people of the land were quick to follow the example. These Syrian ladies thus became the mothers of the Egyptian nobility.

Many changes are attributable to the effect of these alliances. Not only were new elements introduced into Egyptian life and art, but new words of Semitic character crept into the language; even the method of writing that had remained unchanged for 2,000 years now entered a new phase. The letters which passed between Amenhetep the Third and the potentates of the countries of the Euphrates, discovered at Tell el Amarna, whither for the furtherance of a religious movement the capital had been removed, show how closely these relations were maintained and how far-reaching was their effect. With the Mitanni dwelling on the headwater of the river on the confines of Asia Minor, there were alliances that are especially significant. Artatama, their monarch, granted his daughter in marriage to Amenhetep the Third on the seventh time of asking. The son of that

potentate, Sutarna, entertained a friendship for the Egyptian sovereign, giving to him his daughter, the sister of Dushratta, who succeeded him. This ruler sent to Amenhetep and to his sister presents which were actually loot obtained in warfare with the Kheta. Meanwhile the King of the Kheta ruling in the Lebanon had also sent presents to Amenhetep asking for a daughter in marriage.

It was not alone with the Upper Euphrates that such relations were maintained. Amenhetep asked for a princess from Kallimmasin, King of Babylonia, and received her, presents being interchanged; and Egyptian princesses were betrothed similarly to the Babylonian kings. Even the King of Cyprus wrote to congratulate the Pharaoh upon his accession, and sent presents of copper.

(vi) *Arts and Industries.*

These relations of peace and of war, by the introduction of new ideas and of skilled artisans, gave new life to the arts and industries of Egypt. To take a single illustration, it may be recorded that a piece of woven tapestry taken from the tomb of Thothmes the Fourth has been pronounced the best example of such work known to the world in the whole history of the art. But the general industries attracted also an increased attention. It may even be thought from the increase in the imports of foodstuffs at the time that agriculture itself was neglected in favour of the more technical arts. The decorations of the tombs and temples preserve the memory of this industrial movement, which formed as usual the motive for the mural decorations. The realism of Egyptian art could have no better opportunity. On the walls of Queen Hatshepsut's temple at Thebes the incidents of the expedition to Punt are related with wealth

of detail which is full of interest, carried out even to minute observations of the varieties of fish seen on the voyage in the waters of the sea. The tomb of a high dignitary of the state at Thebes shows in the paintings upon its walls the sculptor squaring and dressing the stone for a statue; the makers of stone vases drilling the inside; carpenters with the glue-pot; leather workers and sandal makers; metal workers, smelting and moulding, with blow-pipe, bellows, and crucible; skilled craftsmen inlaying jewels; the making of chariots and glass, for which purposes the workmen were specially brought from abroad.

(vii) *Domestic Architecture.*

The same scenes show the brickmakers at their work, and the bricklayers with their scaffolding. The private house of the time is represented as a low building, with windows on the upper floor; the walls are plastered white, and the large door on the ground level with wooden lintel is the only decoration. The roof is flat, and provided seemingly with an apparatus for diverting the cool breezes from the north into the interior. As furniture, wooden chairs with rush seats, stools, and couches are represented. More luxurious houses had chairs and couches of carved wood with inlay of ebony and ivory. These were sometimes painted or gilded and upholstered with mattresses and cushions. The houses might be situated in a garden, surrounded by a wall. Therein were planted vines, palms, and date-palms, olives and persea trees, and flowering plants, chiefly the poppy, cornflower, daisy, and convolvulus. For purposes of irrigation the garden was laid out somewhat regularly in lines, and hence assumed a formal appearance. But no private buildings could rival the palaces of the kings, the greatest

of which were those of Amenhetep the Third at Thebes, and his successor Amenhetep the Fourth, who, when he removed his capital to Tell el Amarna to further his religious idea—the worship of the solar disc—adopted the name Akhenaten. The former has now become known by recent researches in its site. It was built of brick upon the edge of the western desert, and near to the great necropolis of the city. Within this portal were: a vestibule leading to a large audience hall, with daïs and throne for king. Behind this was a banqueting hall with elaborately decorated harîm rooms and bath-rooms. There were also small rooms for servants and officials, and kitchens, and storerooms for grain, meats, oils, and wine. These provisions were stored in large jars and amphoræ, which were carefully sealed up, the description of contents written on the outside, and date of sealing. In the case of wine, the year of vintage is given, the name of the vineyard, and the name of the vintner. The roofs of the large chambers were supported by painted and gilded columns with lily-shaped capitals. The walls were painted with scenes of the chase, of tribute, or with scenes of private life. The ceilings were painted with geometrical patterns or scrolls and coils, or with flights of pigeons and butterflies or ducks, or a row of conventially-drawn eagles with out-spread wings. In the centre of the ceiling was a rectangular hole for light and ventilation, covered sometimes with a mat of reeds. The floors of the king's and of the harîm rooms had painted pavements, the subject being generally a tank in the middle, in which fish disported themselves among lotus flowers; around this tank were clumps of papyrus and reeds, with ducks flying, or gambolling calves. Near by was a garden planted with trellised vines, and fruit trees and flowers; while near the palace at Thebes was excavated a

lake on which the king and queen recreated themselves in a pleasure boat.

(viii) *Public Buildings.*

Even the public buildings and offices shared in the general tendency to luxury and comfort. The audience hall of the Grand Vezîr of Thotmes the Third, a rectangular chamber bounded at the back and sides by walls, while the front was open to the air, was covered by a roof supported by six slender columns having a palm-leaf capital and a circular base. Each column bore the royal style of the Sovereign and the name of the Vezîr himself. At the inner end of the hall was a slightly raised daïs bearing a throne of ordinary shape, with a low step, upon which the Vezîr took his seat when presiding at his court. On these occasions he was clad in the long raiment peculiar to his office, and immediately before him was spread upon the ground a mat. Furs and skins were placed at his back and beneath his feet, and in his hand he held his staff of office. At his right hand stood the superintendent of the hall, for the occasion master of ceremonies; and in front, upon mats with fringed edges, were spread the 40 books of the law, while the Elders of the Southern Tens (legal functionaries) were ranged in order in the aisles at the sides, with the Vezîr's scribes behind them. On such occasions, attended by much ceremony, the petitioners of the people had right of access and of hearing.

(ix) *Social Conditions.*

All of these incidents in the life of this golden age betray a general tendency of a nation which breathes the atmosphere of prosperity and satisfaction. While the noble and the rich had their chariots, coachmen and grooms, runners

and retainers, were clad with care in embroidered garments, feasted in style, fed from wrought metal dishes and bowls, to the music of harps and pipes, to the singing and dancing of girls chosen to please, the royal command enjoined the ministers none the less not to be partial to the cause of the rich, not to make the slightest distinction between the wealthy and the poor. To fulfil the happy spirit of justice, so difficult to administer under a purely oligarchal constitution, the deputy of the sovereign, the Grand Vezîr himself, is seen "going out in the early morning to make the daily favours, and to listen to the petitions of the people without making any distinction between the little and the great."

Thus for some time, maybe some generations, Egypt remained at the height of its prosperity, measured not only by extent of empire but by the attainment of a government derived from the eventful experiences of many centuries, which in name at least conserved the rights of the people no less than the nobility. But it was even from this moment that the character of Egypt's political history began to change. The conditions of the world were changing from those in which its ancient civilisation had taken root many centuries before, had grown and spread its branches, and now had flowered; the long season of the ancient world was turning; those flowers were soon to fall away, and the branches themselves to wither before the storms of the winter that was surely approaching.

(x) *The Religious Movement.*

The prevalent worship and state religion during the Theban rule, under which arose great temples and a powerful priesthood, had been that of Amen-Ra, the union of the local cult of Amen with that of the older kings

PENDANTS AND GLASS-WORK FROM TELL-EL-AMARNA.

derived from the north. Other local worships still survived, and the religions were more than ever confused. Prompted by political or religious considerations, Amenhetep the Fourth had determined, in the face of the bitter opposition of the priests, to enforce the worship of the sun-disc as the only right religion. It was an ill-timed attempt of a bold monarch to enforce a monotheism upon his people in face of centuries of tradition. He removed his capital to Tell el Amarna and changed his name to one which, like that of his palace, implied his religious professions. Though effecting momentarily a forced change in art, equally shorn of its convention, and stimulating some of the best literature that has been handed down, the effort died with him. The Theban priesthood blotted out the traces of his revolt, and his successors were jealously regarded. The priests resolved to maintain the supremacy of this religion, and the power of their caste seems to have disturbed the foundations of the state; but Horemheb, himself the great general of the army, married a princess of the royal line, seized the throne, and re-established firm government. He completed the restoration of the worship of Amen to the general peace and satisfaction. Himself a soldier, there sprang from him the illustrious dynasty of warrior kings. The works they did, the wars they waged, the triumphs they celebrated, are well known historically and in tradition.

(xi) *Last of the Conquerors.*

King Sety the First succeeded the first Rameses, who reigned only a short time, and is famous for the temples he built at Abydos and Karnak. The sculpture of his reign, as illustrated by the bas-reliefs upon their walls, possesses a subtlety, a grace, though conventional, that has not been

surpassed in Egyptian art. In imperial politics, also, he was active, restraining for a time the long-troublesome inroads of Libyan tribes and Mediterranean pirates upon his north-western frontier, and rendering his authority more durable by introducing these peoples to his army. He also cleared the way to Southern Syria, where nomadic peoples were encroaching, and in his effort to regain that territory came into conflict with the Kheta, now revealed as the great centre of the Hittite confederation, seated in strongholds upon the Upper Euphrates and the Orontes in Northern Syria. The war was waged chiefly in the Lebanon region, but it was under Rameses the Second, for his exploits named the Great, that the struggle grew most fierce. In the fifth year of his reign Kadesh itself, a royal stronghold of the Kheta, was carried after a battle made memorable by the sculptures in several of his temples that celebrate the victory. The king often led his armies in person, and a series of further campaigns lasting over 16 years, in which the Egyptian was not always victorious, was closed with a treaty, made in double, by which the equality of power on either side was recognised, and a mutual obligation undertaken to render military assistance when called upon. Though the boundary of territory is not defined, Palestine and Southern Phœnicia seemed to have remained with Egypt, while the Kheta claimed naturally their sphere of influence in the north. The treaty was concluded B.C. 1304, in the 21st year of Rameses' reign, and the peace was cemented by alliance, Rameses receiving a princess of the Kheta in marriage. So ended a struggle which, if not in name, had in fact endured for several hundred years.

There is no record of further great wars waged by Rameses the Great, but numerous monuments throughout Egypt, and

TYPES OF THE HITTITES (NORTH SYRIA).

TYPES OF THE HITTITES (ASIA MINOR).

southward through Nubia, even beyond Khartûm, attest that the remainder of his long reign was still eventful. His greatest temples are at Abydos, Thebes, and Luxor, while the huge rock temple at Abu Simbel is specially noteworthy. On the north-eastern frontier of Egypt, in the land of Goshen, he completed a great scheme of improvements, including the building of a canal to supplement the uncertain waters of the Nile, as well as several cities and a royal residence. There is reason to believe that among those employed in this work were the Hebrews, Semitic prisoners, who escaped during the next reign and subsequently developed in Palestine into a nation, from which in face of many vicissitudes a forceful people is historically sprung, and from which emanated at a later time the great teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

But for the present, though internally weakening in power, Egypt none the less maintained an organised hold over the territory which remained to it. Throughout Southern Syria and Palestine forts were erected and a regular inspection instituted. The effect of this direct contact became again evidenced in Egypt. Semitic relations, whether social or commercial, became once more the fashion, and a new vocabulary of Semitic words poured copiously into the country.

VIII.—THE PERIOD OF DECLINE.

[B.C. 1250–750.]

(i) *The Changing Conditions.*

THE conquests of Rameses the Great mark the climax in the history of ancient Egypt. Two elements dangerous to the constitution had been fostered by the trend of the preceding centuries. The one was the power of the priesthood, which was able to sway the will of kings; the other was the growing proportion of Libyan mercenaries in the army. The country was now paying the penalty of its greatness in the oppression of a standing army. Aided it must seem by looseness of government or disaffection within, the Libyan peoples soon seized upon the Western Delta, and, though for a time expelled, the incursion was followed by piratical descents of peoples from across the seas who also gained a temporary footing. It was only the efforts of individual kings who sought to grapple with the inevitable that had held even the kingdom together. The provinces of Syria, the whole of the empire, were gradually lost under a succession of weak rulers glorying vainly in the name of Rameses. The Assyrians loomed large upon the new horizon, advancing surely and terribly to devour the remnants of the ancient world, while across the Mediterranean the uprising of new civilisations destined in their turns to become great and then to fade, was slowly changing the conditions which for so many centuries had fostered the Egyptian life and culture. The story of later

ages, the struggle with the newer world, and the final submergence of the older traces that had fitfully lingered on and sometimes recurred, belongs hardly to the story of ancient Egypt. So, too, this period of decline, relieved rarely by some glimpse of national revival, lacks all the instructive individuality of history that characterised the earlier centuries.

(ii) *The Priests and Priest-Kings.* [B.C. 1075–950.]

The priesthood, powerful in their knowledge and traditions, were now grown formidable by reason of the vast acquisition of territory which the devotion of the great kings and their own skill had secured for them. The cult of Amen, cherished and nurtured at Thebes, was naturally that which rapidly became paramount. The high priest, Heri-hor, married the daughter of Rameses the Sixth, and eventually seized the throne: the style and titles of supreme political and military power were attached to that of the high-priesthood, for which first dignity was claimed. In the north the rightful heirs to the throne contested this assumption, but eventually inter-marriage re-established amity. But in the general disturbance of the constitution the Libyan officers again appear.

(iii) *The Libyan Mercenaries and Kings.* [B.C. 950–750.]

For some centuries these Libyan peoples had caused annoyance upon the north-western frontiers. The traces of them had been left, indeed, at an early date, even as far back as the Memphite period, and it seems probable that some of them had long been included in the Egyptian army. Their efforts in numbers to gain a footing in the country were unceasing, and now their warlike character

and persistence had at length rendered them a formidable enemy. Though at first easily defeated, by the time of Sety the First they had become powerful enough to resist many expeditions sent to punish them; and in the end to secure peace the king adopted a policy of conciliation, as a result of which great bodies of these barbarians were enrolled into the standing army of the country, while others of the same peoples profited by the occasion to swarm in and settle. The issue was the same as that of a similar experiment made at a later time in the Roman world.

Now these peoples and their Mediterranean allies, having gradually usurped all military power, and having occupied in numbers the western Delta, are found creeping into the country no less politically than geographically. Shishank, the scion of a great Libyan family at Bubastis, was placed at the head of affairs at the right hand of his sovereign, the last of the priest-kings, Pa-seb-khanu the Second; and by marriage with a princess of royal blood sufficiently legitimised his claims to enable him eventually to secure the throne. To ensure the succession of his family the usurper married his son to a daughter of his predecessor, while for another son was obtained the high-priesthood of Amen. He thus secured to his family all the highest offices attributable to the crown. The name of this king is familiar by reason of his relations with the Israelitish kings who had now established themselves in Palestine.

The initiative of Shishank was quickly emulated, and soon the north and centre of Egypt fell into the hands of the great Libyan families, who divided up the territory between them, maintaining their supremacy for more than one and a half centuries. But during these later years it is evident that a stronger power was driving them from the south.

IX.—THE DISINTEGRATION OF EGYPT.

[B.C. 800–650.]

(i) *The Rise and Dominance of Ethiopia.*

MEANWHILE a new force and a new state had uprisen across the southern frontier. Two hundred years before it seems that when the Libyan power, advancing southward, could no longer be resisted, the heirs of the last priest-king had retreated across the frontier, and there established an ecclesiastical kingdom, now known as Ethiopia, where the theocratic ideal of the priesthood was nurtured and developed in seclusion. In this strange state every affair of moment was directed by oracles of Amen; even the king was elected by priestly vote from among a select list of royal descendants, and might be as easily dethroned. The powers of the priesthood were absolute, being revealed through the oracles of the god, which were irrevocable. They directed in this way not only the affairs of state, the wars that might be waged, the decrees that should be put forth, but were so far supreme that they might even command the sovereign to end his own existence.

This district had been early annexed to the Egyptian territory, and under the empire had formed a large and important province, embracing the whole of Nubia and the Northern Sudan, governed by a Viceroy called the Royal Son of Kush, who resided near Nepata, on that part of the river defined by Gebel Barkal between Berber and Dongola. Under these conditions it had been tributary to the Egyptian Crown; but the new kingdom of the priests

was independent and controlled its own affairs. In this way it had maintained its own integrity, while the parent State had become a prey to the Libyan chieftains, who further added to the weakness of Egypt by discord and disunion among themselves.

The opportunity and inducement to the Ethiopians were all-sufficient. Soon after 800 B.C. they descended upon the upper country, which they occupied as far as Thebes, and before the middle of that century the Ethiopian Piankhy wrested the whole of Egypt from the 20 princes who held it. Just as there seems to have been little or no resistance offered to the conqueror, so now the country remained tranquil for some years under the new rule, until in the twenty-first year of this reign the spirit of ancient Saïs and Memphis revived.

(ii) *The Insurrection of Tefnekht.*

Tefnekht, the most powerful of the petty princes of the North, now assayed to deliver Egypt from the foreigner. Being himself Prince of Saïs and Memphis, he at once united almost the whole of the Delta and Middle Egypt under his leadership. Then turning southward, he advanced, in face of occasional opposition, even as far as Thebes. The Ethiopians now roused themselves to quell this rebellion, and several battles were fought on river and on land, which were unfavourable to the Egyptians, who were driven northwards as far as the Fayûm. But as the issue was still doubtful, the King, Piankhy himself, advanced to lead his army in person. The issue did not remain in doubt. Piankhy seems to have conducted his campaign with the same discretion and skill with which he controlled also the reins of government. From Thebes he set out after

COURT OF THE TEMPLE OF AMENHETEP III. AT LUXOR

celebrating a religious festival, and soon he was assaulting Memphis, the key to the North, the temples of which he spared. Moving still northward, Tefnekht, deserted, burned the stronghold of Saïs and fled to a small island, where eventually he surrendered. For a time the Egyptian spirit of independence was crushed. It is more singular to observe that Piankhy did not attempt to hold the country, but merely desired to prove that his power was supreme over it, as he allowed the former princes to retain their possessions under his suzerainty.

But that which Tefnekht had not been able to accomplish seems to have been effected by his son, who remained in undisturbed authority for about six years. Then Shabaka, the grandson of Piankhy, laid claim by heredity to the Egyptian throne, and invading the country soon compelled the allegiance of its princes. His warlike movements did not stop there. Impelled probably by politic motives, he joined King Hosea of Israel and other Syrian rulers in an alliance against the Assyrian power. The first attempt at coalition failed, and the second was broken down by the quickness of Sargon, who fell upon the allies when divided, and eventually defeated Shabaka at Raphia (720 B.C.).

(iii) *The Assyrian Invasions.*

For some time Egypt prudently withdrew from Asian affairs, but at length a new and powerful coalition called for help against Sennacherib, who had succeeded Sargon upon the Assyrian throne. The youthful Pharaoh, Taharqa, was only too willing, but again the skill of the Assyrian was too quick, and the Egyptian forces suffered a heavy defeat. The spirit of Taharqa was not dismayed; he returned to gather a new army, and although it seems as though the

Assyrian army reached almost the frontiers of Egypt, for a the time the menace was averted; so that when in 672 B.C. King of Tyre again sought assistance against Sennacherib's successor Assarhaddon, Taharqa, jealous for the safety and the prestige of his kingdom, again lent his help against the Assyrian. This time the challenge was fateful. Drawn on, the Assyrians crossed the deserts, aided by the Prince of the Bedouins upon the frontier, and swept over Egypt from north to south, parcelling out the land among 20 vassal chieftains. Assarhaddon styled himself King of Lower Egypt, of Upper Egypt, and of Ethiopia. His political agent for the government of Egypt was Nekau, Prince of Saïs. It was in vain that Taharqa himself and then his stepson profited by occasions to attempt the release of Egypt. About 662 the Ethiopian was finally driven from the country by the army of Assurbanipal.

X.—THE EGYPTIAN RENAISSANCE.

[B.C 645-525.]

(i) *Rise of the Saïte House.*

THE disasters which had overtaken the house of Saïs by the annihilation of the allied army of Tefnekht 150 years before, and the burning of the capital itself, had been finally retrieved when Psamtek, son of Nekau, succeeded his father as the chief agent and ally of Assyria in Egypt. Policy achieved that which the force of arms could not at such a moment have obtained. Already the most powerful chieftain in the country, Psamtek now sought a peaceful alliance with Ethiopia, and by marriage with the daughter of Taharqa attained a position of precedence which none could rival. The allegiance of his own country, the friendly relations of Ethiopia, and the loan of mercenary troops from Gyges, King of Lydia, placed him in a position of supreme military and political authority. The moment, too, was opportune. The Assyrian arms were busy upon the Euphrates and in Mesopotamia, and occupied so nearly for the safety of their weakening empire, the Assyrians could give little thought to the distant Valley of the Nile. The temptation to Psamtek was overpowering: he threw off his allegiance; the Assyrian garrisons were driven out, and Egypt for the last time was free. The powers of the local princes were curtailed and the government was internally reunited under a central monarchy. The country, with its old spontaneity, revived. Art, based on archaistic motives improved, and a national renaissance filled the

opportunity. Public works and improvements were undertaken, and for more than a hundred years the country maintained her independence, and indeed made some effort to maintain external political relations.

(ii) *Foreign Relations.*

From the first a consistent policy of these new Saïte kings was the recompense of the foreign allies who had helped to recover the freedom of the country, and the favours shown to the Greek colonists led them to enter Egypt in increasing numbers. Their position in the army and in politics became of increasing importance, for it was realised that it was only by their aid that the independence of the monarchy could be maintained. The indulgencies shown to them were increased proportionately, until after a few reigns they were granted the privilege of a special city upon the sea, inside the geographical boundaries of the country, but without the pale of Egypt's laws, where Greek manners and Greek arts persisted without influence or molestation from those of the ancient country.

The position of Egypt during the lull of Asiatic storms was temporarily so secure that Nekau the Second was able to turn his military enterprise again towards the east. At the moment when the Medes and Babylonians together were destroying the remnants of the Assyrian power (608 B.C.) the Pharaoh deemed it opportune to lay claim to some of the former Egyptian Empire in Asia. Though Palestine was recovered, the Babylonian resisted further advance, and the Egyptian army was annihilated. But the spirit of war continued to breathe unrestrainable. A series of campaigns against Ethiopia, which was ultimately successful, was only the preliminary to another stand against Babylonia, and this

time in alliance with Zedekiah, King of Jerusalem. The coalition failed, and it is possible to interpret one record to imply that 20 years later, Nebuchadnezzar, in retaliation, carried his arms into Egypt, pursuing and plundering even to the southern frontier. He retired, but Egypt, now the arena of wars, and the scene of constant anarchy and changes, was unable by any great national movement to recover its lost supremacy among the nations.

XI.—THE PERSIAN INVASION AND THE FINAL CONQUEST.

[B.C. 332.]

It must seem, indeed, that it was only Egypt's position, separated by the deserts from the great Asian battlefield, that suffered it to retain even for this brief space its independence. Almost the last political effort of the Egyptians was to join in the coalition of Lydia, Babylon, and Sparta against the new menace of the Persian Empire now looming large under Cyrus in the East. The attempt failed, and though for a time the punishment was withheld, in the reign of Psamtek the Third, Egypt lost her independence. Though the story of later Egyptian history is refreshened by this respite which the talent of the Saïte kings, aided by the political conditions of the world outside, attained, yet the inevitable end had only been postponed. That which Assyria had effected, but not maintained, was accomplished as easily by the Persians. The battle of Pelusium was in effect the knell of Egypt's independence: when in 525 B.C. Cambyses entered the country a conqueror, her history for the old world closed. It was in vain that under Amenrut the Egyptians threw off their yoke in an expiring effort, and under Necht-Hor-heb, recalled for a moment a last glimpse of her former individuality. The order of things had changed. Persia, too, might fall, but the triumphs of Alexander heralded the dawning of the new world which was to obscure the old. It was but a question of time unillumined by any special epoch of life upon the

ancient land of Egypt, left helpless by the conflicts of the preceding centuries. Without any internal strength she became the prey in turn again to the strongest of the new powers contending for a new empire in an arena which she herself had never entered.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

	B.C.
Founding of the Monarchy	Before 3000
Accession of Seneferu and End of Archaic Period	„ 2800
Accession of Unas	„ 2650
Death of Pepŷ II and Fall of the Monarchy	„ 2500
Rise of Feudalism	„ 2400
Restoration of the Monarchy	„ 2200
Marriage of Usertesen to Nefert	„ 1900
Advent of the Hyksos	„ 1800
Expulsion of the Hyksos by Aahmes	About 1575
Accession of Thothmes I	... 1545
Reign of Thothmes III	1515–1461
„ Amenhetep III	1427–1392
„ Rameses II	1325–1258
Signing of the Treaty with the Hittites ...	About 1300
Heri-hor seizes the Throne	„ 1075
Shishank captures Jerusalem	„ 930
Piankhy captures Memphis	... 775
Accession of Shabaka	... 728
First Assyrian Invasion	... 672
Reign of Psamtek I	645–610
Nebuchadnezzar Invades Egypt	... 567
Conquest of Egypt by Cambyses	... 525
„ „ Alexander	... 332

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