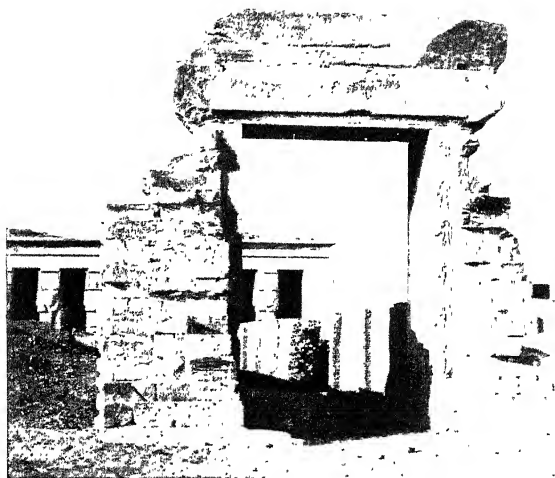


THE BOOK OF THE MASTER



TEMPLE OF THE VIRGIN MOTHER.
DENDERAH

Frontispic

THE
BOOK OF THE MASTER

OR

THE EGYPTIAN DOCTRINE OF
THE LIGHT BORN OF THE VIRGIN
MOTHER

BY

W. MARSHAM ADAMS

Formerly Fellow of New College, Oxford
Author of "The House of the Hidden Places, A Clue to the Creed
of Early Egypt from Egyptian Sources"

In Nature's infinite Book of Secrecy
A little I can read.

Antony and Cleopatra.

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

SOME years have now passed since I suggested, first in the columns of the *New Review* and afterwards in a separate book, a clue to the mysterious religion of ancient Egypt. That clue was afforded by a comparison of the secret passages and chambers contained in the Great Pyramid, or "Secret House," of Memphis, to which the Egyptians of old gave the title of the "Light," with the secret passages and chambers portrayed in the sacred papyrus describing the "Entrance on Light," which we at the present day call the *Book of the Dead* but which the Egyptian priests entitled *The Book of the Master of the Secret House*. And the correspondence which I pointed out to exist between them resulted in the two mysteries partially at least illumining and disclosing each other. Considering the difficulties naturally surround-

ing such a subject, the reception accorded to my work has been very encouraging. Here and there it is true some critic, impelled perhaps by an unwonted sense of injured omniscience, gave vent to utterances of a dark and oracular character. For instance in one famous weekly Review, the writer gave to the public and myself his personal and almost passionate assurance that, no matter what the appearances might indicate, no correspondence was ever intended between the building and the papyrus; as if he had been intimately acquainted with the authors of both, and a few thousand years or so were but an unconsidered trifle in his long and learned existence. But for the most part the book was freely recognised as the first attempt to give some consistent account of the hitherto uncomprehended religion of Egypt, taken solely from Egyptian sources; and the testimony borne by the highly distinguished Egyptologist, Professor Maspero, carries especial weight. "The Pyramids and the *Book of the Dead*," he wrote to me (adding at the same time that no Egyptologist had dealt with the subject before myself), "reproduce the same original, the one in words, the other in stone." And the pre-

valence of a tradition among the priests of Memphis (a fact which I learned later from the same authority) supporting my contention that that Secret House was the scene where the neophyte was initiated into the mysteries of Egypt, lends it a force which only direct evidence could rebut.

During the period which has elapsed since publication, I have not ceased to follow up that clue to the best of my power, more particularly by ascertaining the degree of accuracy which may be attached to the astronomical conceptions, which form so large a part of the imagery employed. For the directly religious portion of the teaching has engaged the attention of many experts in the hieroglyphic texts; and our knowledge of the forms in which the divine ideas were conceived among that ancient priesthood, if not yet clear and consistent, is at least free in great measure from the distortion and misrepresentation wherein those ideas were involved, when filtered through the highly imaginative but singularly inobservant intellect of Greece. On the other hand, with regard to the scientific principles embodied in the Egyptian conceptions, except for the researches of the late Dr. Brugsch, no writer, so

far as I am aware, possessing a moderate knowledge of mathematical astronomy, and at the same time some acquaintance with the hieroglyphic text, has devoted himself specifically to the subject ; and hence it has naturally come to pass that an amount of contempt has been poured upon the science of early Egypt comparable only to the piles of filth which the ignorant hordes of wandering Arabs heaped upon the majestic monuments and temples themselves. Yet surely it is not a little difficult to understand the position of those who, while recognising with a late astronomer, Professor Proctor, that the temples of that country were erected by "astronomers for astronomers," can nevertheless placidly regard those stupendous structures, which for thousands of years seem rather to have defied assaults than to have needed repair from the hand of man, as the mere monuments of a folly even more stupendous than themselves. It is fairly amazing to think that while even to this day the grandeur of those marvellous ruins towers above the most finished buildings of later nations, and while every modern investigation only brings out more clearly the profound skill and forethought lavished upon their construction, yet even

scholars should be content to regard the whole line of Pharaohs as animated by no other spirit than that of Charles Dickens's happy-go-lucky creation, Mr. Wemmick, in *Great Expectations*. "Hallo!" said that casually minded individual, "here's a church, let's have a wedding." "Hallo!" according to these writers, cries one Egyptian monarch, "here's a cataract, let's build a temple." "Hallo!" cries another, "here's a pole-star, let's put up a pyramid." On the contrary, as we become more familiar with the Wisdom of Egypt, so do we find that wisdom to justify itself the more clearly to our perception, and the stricter the precision required, the more closely do the scientific conceptions appear to respond. Here then at least we are upon firm ground, and can apply the severest tests at each fresh step of seeming advance; while the inner or mystical doctrine conveyed, that is to say, the presentation of the Invisible Light therein shadowed forth, will become far easier both to follow and to check, if we rightly apprehend their mode of regarding the manifestations of the light which is seen.

Accordingly, when in the interval it was my good fortune to visit the country for the second

time, I gave attention to both these points. With the sacred writings in hand I went through the secret places of the Great House ; and I greatly doubt whether anyone will do the same, bearing in mind the tradition of the priests, and picturing to himself the midnight watch of the lonely neophyte amid the impenetrable darkness of those solemn chambers, without recognising how apt was that awe-inspiring structure for the initiation into the secrets of the unseen world. With regard also to the scientific aspect, I was so fortunate as to detect certain points hitherto unnoticed which seemed to throw much light on the astronomical conceptions ; and on my return to England I gave the result of my researches (if I may be permitted so large a word) partly in a public lecture which I was privileged to deliver in the Hall of New College, Oxford, on the Scientific Precision of the Astronomy of Early Egypt, and partly in a letter which I published in *The Times* on the geographical and astronomical conditions fulfilled by the situations of the principal temples.

Under these circumstances, it appeared to me that the time had arrived when we may enlarge somewhat upon our former horizon and enter

with greater freedom upon the nature of the doctrines inculcated in the sacred writings. But in executing this task it has been necessary, of course, to go over in some part the same ground as before; and where this has been the case I have not thought it advisable to rewrite that which I saw no probability of improving by revision, though even here the passages will, I think, be found to have gained in significance by the change of context. In especial *I have endeavoured to disencumber the subject from all the symbolism of whatever kind* in which it has been enwrapped, so as to throw some portion at least of the *Book of the Master* open to all the world. For they alone, it is true, will see the full bearing of such a record upon the development of mankind and the light which it throws on social problems, who have painfully traced back custom and rite and doctrine and law from age to age and from country to country by the laborious comparison of record and tradition and relic and monument, and can comprehend the almost indestructible tenacity which characterises the grasp of antiquity, and the vitality even now possessed by ideas and creeds long ago to all appearance buried in profound oblivion. But

who is there, however careless of such problems, or disinclined for the study of history, who yet does not feel some thrill at the thought of penetrating the very heart and mind of men whose bones were mingled with the dust thousands of years before the sacred plough traced out the walls of Rome, or Abraham went forth from Haran in the faith of the true God. For the earliest known form of man's spiritual life is fraught with a charm indescribable and incommunicable. We cannot but be touched with some feeling of pathos as we watch those far-off generations looking forward to the mysteries of the tomb which they have solved for so many ages, but which, to us, remain enigmas still. We cannot but experience some sense of awe when we find them expecting the same immortality beyond the grave which forms the hope of so many millions among ourselves. And even such details as the construction of the kalendar, or the reckoning of the years, become irradiated with a sudden glow when we recognise that as those long-departed students gazed silently and persistently into Nature's infinite Book of Secrecy, their vision pierced beyond the veil of sense ; and that for every festival and every cycle, the outward

aspect of the earth and heaven imaged to their mind some interior and eternal truth. And that interest quickens with an ever-growing freshness as we pass from the celebration and ceremonies of their common life to the deeper doctrine of the Hidden God, and the Instruction of the Postulant in the secrets of the Eternal Wisdom.

But there is one feature in special which appears to me to possess an unique and pre-eminent interest. Commenting upon a review of my book which appeared in *The Freemason*,—a recognised organ of the famous brotherhood,—a Roman Catholic professor of theology addressed to me the following letter, the contents of which he courteously gave me permission to publish, and which is the more worthy of consideration because the doctrines of that theology are as severely and systematically defined as the most rigid conceptions of mathematics :

“ Many thanks for sending me a copy of *The Freemason's* review of your attractive and remarkable book. I, of course, know nothing of Freemasonry (though I have followed what you say easily enough), but I have been greatly struck with the notice in question. For whereas the reviewer, writing evidently as an expert in that subject, strongly commends your book as contain-

ing matter of deep interest to his fellow Masons, I, on the other hand, as one whose special avocation is the study of Catholic theology, have been surprised beyond measure at the profound doctrines of the Catholic faith, and the numerous illustrations of our own Scriptures, which seem to me, in reading your book, to have been foreshadowed beneath the symbols of that most mysterious religion, almost as though we had in it the very 'Word of God' of which the Apostle speaks, the 'mystery which has been hidden from ages and generations.' This double significance would be extraordinary enough if your views on the subject were derived either from the teaching of Catholicity or from the secrets of Masonry, but its singularity is enhanced a hundred-fold when one reflects that they come neither from one source nor the other, but from the records of ancient Egypt."

Now with regard to the phrases and doctrinal allusions, current, as I believe, among the Masonic brotherhood of the present day, which in dealing with the building which was literally the Masonic "Light" of Egypt I was led to employ, I have in the present work reduced them as far as I found it possible. For, although I was careful to explain that such expressions were designed to refer only to the actual masonry of the building in question and the analogous features in the Egyptian ritual, yet in more than one quarter I found that the

book was supposed to be written on Masonic principles ; an altogether erroneous view except in so far as those principles may be in accordance with the doctrines which we find in the papyri. On the other hand, a notable instance wherein the deeper study of Egyptian theosophy brings out with increased force the analogy dwelt upon by the Catholic professor will be found in dealing with the temple of the Virgin Mother Hathor, from whose womb came forth the divine Horus, the second member of the Egyptian Trinity. More startling still, when we turn to the Gospels themselves, we find their teaching echoed by the Egyptian Ritual with a directness even greater than in the sacred writings of the Old Testament. Thus, though the Hebrew scriptures reveal many of the names of God, they do not assign to Him the name of the Light. But the Light is the very term by which the mystical Evangelist designates the Second Person ; while in the first ages of the Church the Illuminate was the title conferred upon those who were permitted to assist at the Christian " mysteries." So, also, the title of Master, of such great significance in the Ritual of Egypt, is nowhere given in the Old Testament to the

Almighty, but it is the single title of authority claimed for Himself by the divine Master in the Gospel; and it is twice employed by Him in a mysterious manner when giving commandment for preparing the divine mysteries in the upper chamber. Again, the second birth of the soul is nowhere, by open expression at least, taught in the writings either of Moses or of the prophets; and if those scriptures therefore contained the full teaching revealed to the Jews, why should Nicodemus have been rebuked for ignorance of that doctrine? But Moses, nevertheless, whose skill in all the wisdom of Egypt was famous fifteen hundred years after his death, must have been well acquainted with it, for it formed a most important element in that creed, and was indeed the very act whereby the departed was rendered capable of initiation into the mysteries. And thus we are brought face to face with a most profound and fascinating problem, which would solve a thousand anomalies. Was there along with and even before the existence of a recorded revelation an unwritten and inscrutable mystery handed down by the "Sekhem Ur am Sekhemmu," the Grand Master among the Masters, generation after generation, from

the earliest ages to which our own scriptures refer,—the time when the prophet Enoch who foretold the scepticism of the latter days walked the path of God and was caught up bodily into the hidden Light? To my own apprehension, I confess, there is much to render it far from improbable that such a view may be correct; and that in searching for the key to the *Book of the Master* we may have chanced upon nothing less than the revelation of a revelation. But upon this point, of which all can form their own judgment, I have entered into no discussion, preferring to leave the analogy to speak for itself. And I have confined my efforts to attempting to express in a clear and popular form, which all may easily follow, an outline of those deeply veiled doctrines of which I may have caught a glimpse; and thus to present such an account of the earliest recorded religion as may afford to all some conception of its transcendent majesty and supernal beauty.





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N B —Unless express mention is made to the contrary, the quotations throughout the work are taken from the Egyptian texts





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THE BOOK OF THE MASTER

CHAPTER I

THE RESURRECTION OF EGYPT

NUMBERLESS as are the changes and catastrophes of world-wide influence which have crowded this century of revolution, none is more startling or universal than its revelation of secrets and publication of that which has been sedulously hidden. It is not merely that the Rontgen rays of the press penetrate every corner of our lives and pierce through well-nigh every veil; that what is done at home to-day is to-morrow accurately known in the streets; that the counsels of statesmen are scarcely determined in confidence before they are published and discussed in every town and village; but the secrets also

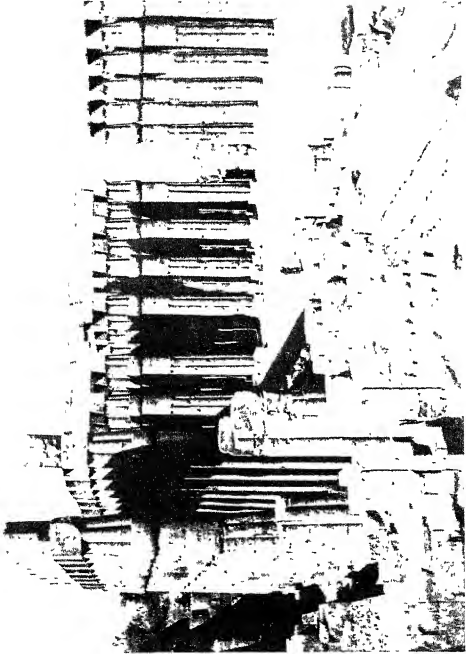
of the past have yielded themselves up, and we can plainly read the motives which our forefathers successfully concealed from the men of their own generation. From the long-forgotten archives of our own state papers, from Venice, from Genoa, from I know not where, light has poured in upon motives and transactions buried in oblivion not for decades but for centuries. On every side we have been deluged with private letters, private memoirs, private despatches on affairs of state, private reports from ambassadors and confidential agents, private instructions from ministers and monarchs, documents of every kind never intended but for the eye of the person addressed, until curiosity has become an extinct sentiment, and it is almost impossible to realise that not so long ago the most cherished of all our personal privileges was privacy. Nay, the tomb itself has burst open its hiding-places, and civilisations which perished thousands of years ago have unrolled themselves before our eyes. We may tread the streets of Pompeii, which had already been hidden from mortal eye for one hundred and fifty years when the fathers of the first General Council met at Nicæa to define the Christian faith. We may gaze upon the

gems which went down into the tomb at Mykene with the ill-fated house of Atreus. We may consult in the heart of London the very tablets which made up the famous library of the Assyrian Assur-Banipal. Alike in space and time, the ends of the earth have come upon this generation. As the distances upon our globe have shrunk until we hold daily and familiar intercourse with the farthest corners of the world, so the chasm of the ages has been bridged across by the newly opened records of the past.

Amid all this busy scene of revival and revelation, the resurrection of primæval Egypt stands out with peculiar eminence. For more than a thousand years from the day when the barbarous Omar entered the capital of the ancient kingdom, and the funeral rites of the classic learning were celebrated in the flames of the great library at Alexandria, to the day when Champollion, like another Sirius, heralded the dawn of a new era of Egyptian brilliance, an ever-growing obscurity buried the entire land. Less than a century has elapsed since the most appalling penalties in this world and the next were fulminated by the Sultan against the official who should dare to allow a Christian "to approach the sacred port of Suez, the

starting-point of the Holy Haj." To-day that port is the crowded entrance of the most cosmopolitan highway on the globe. For centuries past, Egypt, as it was the earliest so it was the most jealously guarded seat of Moslem law. To-day its courts recognise a multiplex jurisdiction of alien nations, for which no precedent exists in the history of any other state. Within living memory, its hieroglyphs were an enigma hopelessly abandoned ; its temples hidden beneath the accumulated filth of generations of Arabs ; the very age of its ruins unguessed within thousands of years. To-day the mighty buildings stand clearly forth to attest their pristine majesty ; the canons of the kings may be consulted in their original records, and the errors ascribed to careless scribes, who thought no mortal eye would ever look upon the papyri concealed within the grave-clothes of the mummy, are controverted by the hieroglyphic scholarship of Europe.

A peculiar fascination surrounds every detail of life in early Egypt. For all other empires, except perhaps the Babylonian, can be assigned with more or less certainty some point of historic origin. The days of the founders of Rome or of Athens are but the middle ages



TEMPLE OF LUXOR.

of history when compared with the days of Khufu or of Mena. India does not claim for her earliest Vedas an antiquity exceeding four thousand years. The sacred writings of China count less than a thousand more. A thousand years earlier still, the beginnings of Babylonia become very dim. On the banks of the Nile alone do we find, centuries before the date of the Accadian Sargon, a settled monarchy and a constituted state, an elaborate ritual and organic hierarchy, a specific architecture and a copious alphabet. Hence it is that the principal anomaly which usually blurs our conception of antiquity, namely, the interference of an element alien to the environment, in the formation of the customs of a race, more particularly when that race has been transplanted from some wholly diverse soil, is absent from the horizon of Egypt; and the picture which we may draw of Egyptian civilisation has its source, its development, and its consummation in the conditions of Egypt alone. No feature of attraction is wanting in that remarkable scene. The stately river, the source of perennial life and freshness to the entire land, the long line of majestic temples crowning the banks, the laughing population crowding its waters, the

dances, the games, the songs, the wrestlings, the perpetual feasts, the boats of pleasure jostling with the sacred boats of the dead,—all these things make up a picture which, set in the dazzling clearness of the cloudless sky, leaves a charm that can neither be rivalled nor forgotten.

That picture, too, demands no painful effort of the imagination to fill up for ourselves from broken and disjointed details. We are not called upon, as in classic writings, to piece out into such consistency as we may, the fragmentary hints of social life laboriously gathered from chance allusions hidden in a score of different writers. Nor need we content ourselves with descriptions of events written centuries after their occurrence. We can go straight to the fountain head, and consult the original records. On the huge gate-towers of the temples, on the walls, on the enormous sarkophagi, on the architraves, on the pillars of the immense buildings, we find the deeds of the princes set out in the sacred hieroglyphs. For the battle of Lake Regillus we must trust to the traditions preserved by Livy. For the first great battle of Megiddo, which preceded by hundreds of years the famous encounter wherein Josiah perished long before ever

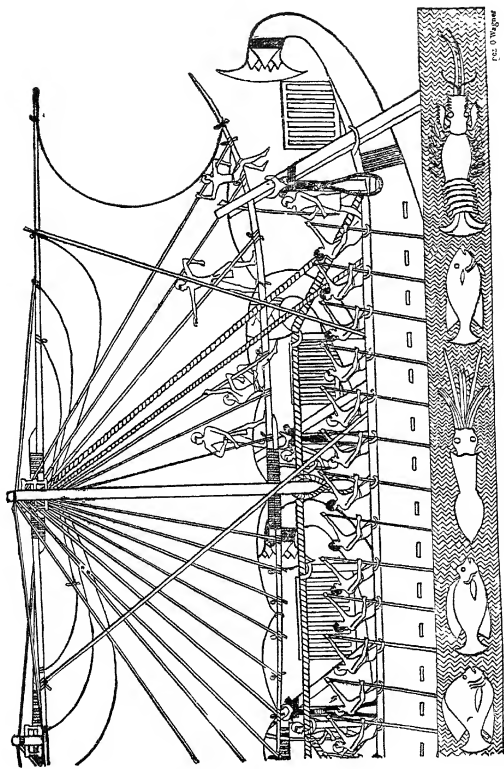


FIG. 0 Wagner

EGYPTIAN SHIP IN THE TIME OF HATASU.

Regillus was fought, we have the cotemporary account of the conqueror Thothmes and the lists of the spoils drawn up by royal officers. Nay, more, the monuments of Egypt give us not descriptions alone, but actual re-



Bust of Thothmes I.

presentations of the scenes. Of the triumphs celebrated by the renowned Julius, what trace is left for posterity to gaze upon? But the triumphs of Rameses and of Seti, which took place well-nigh as long before the time of Cæsar as Cæsar's day was before our own, live yet in every detail. The garments, the ornaments,

the countenances, even the colour of the hair of the different races which took part in those processions, all may be seen to-day upon the walls of the palaces which witnessed them. Of Moses and of Solomon, of the founder of Rome, nay of the great apostle of the Gentiles, we possess not even a tradi-

tional likeness. But the features of Pharaoh may be as familiar to us as they were to his adoring subjects. A triple enclosure formed by massive columns, of infinite pathos in their lonely grandeur, is all that is left to tell us how the earth-shaking Poseidon was worshipped in his home at Pæstum. But every feature of the procession which trod the long aisles of Karnak, the vessel of purification, the wings on the sacred scribe, the company of the singers, the quadruple ranks of priests, the sacred ark borne upon their shoulders, the cherubim with outstretched wings shadowing the Deity enthroned between, have all been preserved for our inspection, no less than the words of the solemn litany which the worshippers addressed to Ra, the unseen Light.

Two marked peculiarities characterise the records of the earliest times. Nothing is more striking than the knowledge of science which the priests of Egypt are more and more generally admitted to have possessed, in proportion as the facts are more carefully investigated. What architect of the present day would undertake to erect a building, more than four hundred feet high, full of chambers of the most elaborate description which should never

need repair for six thousand years? What other nation not only discovered the transcendental relation between radius and circumference—the foundation of all curvilinear measurement—but utilised it as a principle of architectural construction? Where else shall we find a building oriented with such perfect accuracy that, if Mr. Flinders Petrie be correct, the minute displacement wrought in the course of ages represents (and consequently measures) the secular variation due to a recondite cosmical force? Where else shall we find an antique kalendar based on a correct knowledge of the motion of the earth? What other people knew, as Dr. Brugsch and M. Maspero aver, the proper motion of the sun in space; or who devised the lovely cycle of the herald star, which measured whole ages by the rising light as it dawned for a moment on the eastern horizon?

Equally striking and even more distinctive, perhaps, is the perpetual presence of the life-giving river. From end to end of its territory, from age to age of its history, in the religion, in the commerce, in the honours of the dead, wherever we may turn and on whatsoever object we may fix our eyes, we never for a mo-

ment lose sight of the blue waters of the Nile. That beautiful stream, flowing tranquilly for hundreds of miles beneath the serene sky, alone gave verdure and plenty to the long and narrow strip of fertile soil which lines its borders, cut off by deserts on either hand, and alone permits the very existence of an Egyptian people.

According to ancient tradition and agreeably also to the records, the ancestors of the race in very remote times were not of northern but of southern extraction,¹ being originally natives of Poont, situated near the Equatorial sources of the Nile. In harmony with this tradition, we find that the central point of the Egyptian universe was the Aptu, or southern "Apex of the Earth," in the "Holy Land of Khent," mentioned by Dr. Brugsch, that point on the Equator which is intersected by the meridian of Memphis, just by the western shore of the great Equatorial lake from which the famous river derives its streams. From that point of origin, we may mark out the four cardinal points of the universal sphere, the thrones of the four Egyptian spirits of the Light, with

¹ Some Egyptologists still cling to the superstition (*for of record in its favour what is there?*) that the Egyptian race came into the country from the North. Not so, Prof. Maspero nor Prof. Petrie

Hāpi in their midst, protecting the southern fountains of the Nile. These four bright spirits, the guardians of the heavenly dome, were imaged to the Egyptians under the form of the cynocephalous ape, the creature which bears the closest resemblance to humanity. And from them, as the four living creatures before the throne of Ra, assistance was invoked by the holy Departed in the Ritual of Egypt at the moment when the full splendour of the orbit was bursting upon his illumined sight. From that country, the earliest immigrants appear to have followed a twofold route. In part, according to a very ancient tradition mentioned by Dr. Brugsch, they proceeded along the banks of the river, sojourning for a while, it would seem, at Meroe, where the hoary temple of Amen and the ruins of Assur, discovered in that island by Caillard, attest their ancient presence; while others appear to have come down by the Red Sea, as Mr. Petrie's discoveries indicate, and thence to have crossed the desert to Coptos. From this most important circumstance, it is essential to bear in mind that to the Egyptian the south was the "Great Quarter," to which especial reverence was due. And this explains why it was that every year

the sacred images were carried into the ancestral country. An echo of the same tradition is found in the visits of the gods of Homer to the "blameless Ethiopians," for blamelessness would be the essential note of the reverence due to the parent race. Consistently with this, we read in the ancient inscription on the coffin of Amamu, how the holy dead, "after flying over the whole face of heaven," is "established among the blessed company in the south." And in that same archaic papyrus we are told of the celestial land of Khent, or Khent-Amenti, the habitation of the hidden God, imaged on earth by the "Holy Land of Khent" at the Aptu, or southern apex of the earth. Hence also the most sacred portion of the temple was placed toward the same quarter; and the Great Pyramid from the entrance to the innermost chamber was oriented north and south.

In truth, to the mind of the Egyptian the whole bed of the immense river was but the sacred image of the unseen land watered by the "Celestial Nile," of which the Ritual speaks; the "Nuter Khart," or holy land of the dead, with its triple division into Rusta, the territory of Initiation, Aahlu, the territory of

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Illumination, and Amenti, the place of union with the unseen father. At the northern extremity of the river, where the ocean gives an entrance to the country, was the mouth of Rosetta, or Rusta, imaging, as we learn from a papyrus of the time of Khufu, the mouth of the tomb. All along the valley of Upper Egypt as we ascend the stream, at Denderah, at Abydos, at Thebes, were the great shrines sanctified by the manifestation of the Deity. At the southern limit of the kingdom, immediately below the tropical arch traversed at that epoch by the sun in the height of summer, is the Cataract, or "Gate of the Nile," through which the forefathers of the race entered the country, imaging in the Ritual the point in



Atf-crown of
Illumination.



Zodiacal
Light of
Supreme
Heaven.

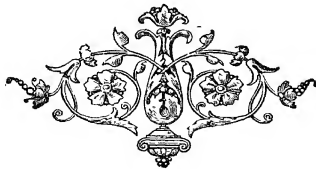
Aahlu, or territory of illumination, where the holy dead, when he has achieved the "Passage of the Sun," opens the gate of the celestial Nile and re-

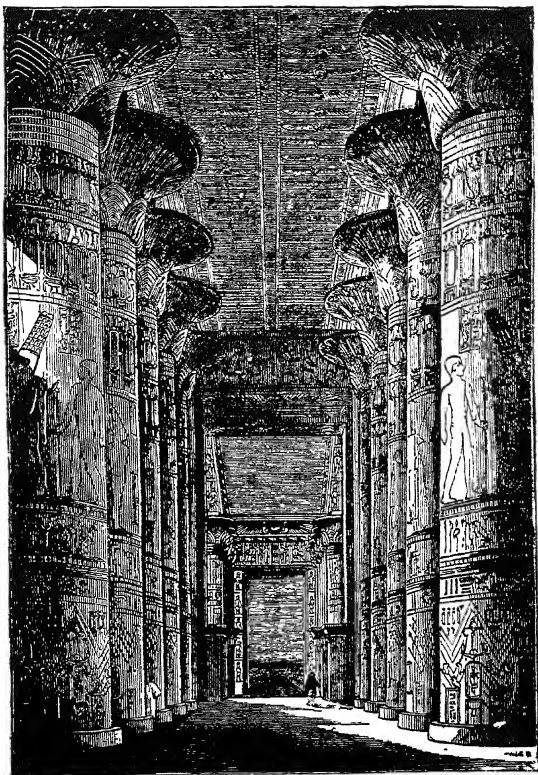
ceives the "Atf-crown of Illumination," fashioned after the form of the zodiacal light, the glory of the supreme heaven. And far towards the south lay the sacred land of

Poont, the distant fatherland, like Amenti, the unseen home of God their father. The same celestial origin and end, thus reflected in the entire country, were concentrated and epitomised in the capital. At the junction of the two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt, where the Nile branches out into the great angle of the delta, stood Memphis, more properly "Men-nofer," the "Holy Foundation," the seat of the double government of Egypt, with its palace dedicated to the Creator-spirit Ptah, its cemetery bearing the title of "Blessed Immortality," like our own "God's Acre," and its canal called after the Voyage of the Unseen Waters. There, too, was the territory of "Sochet Ra," the Fields of the Sun. And close to the sacred city on the western bank of the river, upon a lonely rock, rose the Great Pyramid, that house of Osiris, to which, says the papyrus of Amen Hotep, Thoth, the Eternal Wisdom, "conducts the Illuminate."

From every portion of that country the past has yielded up its records. Egypt, for so many centuries the land of the buried, has suddenly become the land of the risen, dead; and the message which the long-silenced voice proclaims as with a tongue of fire is the primitive

belief in the divine origin and end of man. Everywhere and always throughout ancient Egypt is heralded the same doctrine of eternal Day. From the orbit of the earth, from the pole-star of the heavens, from the dawning of Sirius, from the radiance of the sun, from the renewal of the moon, from the waters of the river, from the palaces, from the temples, from the very cere-cloths of the rifled dead, comes forth a voice which for ages has been hushed in the grave; and that voice with startling clearness bears testimony to a judgment beyond the tomb, and the Fatherhood of the unseen God.





GREAT HALL OF COLUMNS AT KARNAK (RESTORED).
(BUILT BY SETI I.)



CHAPTER II

THE RELIGION OF LIGHT

TO whatever quarter of the globe we may turn our attention, tracing out the earliest records of the inhabitants, there is no community, "literally from China to Peru," as Sir H. Maine has observed, over the customs and constitution of which religion has not exercised a potent and permanent influence. But the country where, beyond all others, that principle prevailed in its fullest and most creative force was undoubtedly the land of Egypt. Highly complex in its structure and regulated in its every detail by the strictest observance of custom, the constitution of Egyptian society presents, nevertheless, a very clear appearance, if we regard the nation as a patriarchal family, founded on a hierarchical basis, and organically settled throughout the country upon a system dictated by re-

ligion. The whole land was divided into the same number of provinces (or nomes as they are somewhat affectedly called after the Greek fashion) as the divine spirits who, according to the Egyptian creed, composed the tribunal by which the dead were judged. In each province the capital was a sacred city, being the territory attached to a great temple, which itself constituted the enclosure around a shrine of the Deity. To every temple a distinctive priesthood was assigned, the members of which could not enter the priesthood of another district; while the monarch, though practically obtaining his throne by descent, appears to have undergone a form of election and to have been consecrated to his office by the high-priest of the patriarchal province. Nor were the temples alone dedicated to sacred things, but the structures of daily life shared the divine significance. And for every division of the country, as De Rougé has shown, the palace and the canal, no less than the temple and the district, bore a name of mystery, and reflected the region of the Holy Dead.

Most characteristic of all was the omnipotent and all-dominating sense of the fatherhood of

God, producing the familiar and in some respects even joyous aspect which the Egyptian imparted to the idea of death; ever regarding our present existence only as an antechamber of one to come, and our occupations in this life as a foretaste and counterpart



Horus

of a life beyond the tomb. Hence in theory, as M. Maspero informs us, every Egyptian had a right to an eternal man-



Osiris

sion. And when the Christian apostle wrote that we have a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens, he only gave expression to the same image as the Egyptian priests when they spoke of the eternal house which the divine

Horus built for his father, Osiris. For the same reason the ancestor of a family never

withdrew his presence. Hence temples were palaces, and palaces were temples. And the greatest work which the greatest sovereign could achieve was to build for himself an imperishable tomb.

But though the influence of their religion was spread thus widely, and though the ranks of the priesthood appear to have been open to all who could endure the training, the inner doctrines were not taught publicly nor expressed in plain and definite language. On the contrary, they were carefully hidden from the uninitiated, and were conveyed in terms of studied obscurity and by means of illustrations which themselves could not be understood without previous instruction. To the sense indeed, which the priests at least possessed, both of the divine personality and of their own ultimate union with the personal deity, far more probably than to any artificial pretension to a supposed exclusiveness, may be ascribed the mystery enshrouding their religion. For mystery is to God only what privacy is to man, our sense of which deepens with deepening intimacy. And though three hundred years of continuous wrangling over the secret truths which most profoundly affect the heart

and mind have gone far to coarsen and deaden our spiritual sense, the soul still resents as the most unpardonable offence, the profanation of a vulgar touch. For whether we acknowledge it or not, the springs of our entire existence are hidden. From the darkness of the womb to the darkness of the tomb, the source of our every action is veiled from us. Mystery is the beginning ; mystery is the ending ; mystery is the whole body of our life. We cannot breathe, nor sleep, nor eat, far less think or speak, without exercising powers which to us are inconceivable, by means of processes which to us are inscrutable. Who is so ignorant as not to know these things ; who so learned as to make them clear ?

Of the various forms and symbols in which the priests enwrapped the mystery of Egypt, there is one class which at once conceals and reveals the secret wisdom as with a radiant veil. No ordinary image, it is clear, no mineral, no plant, no animal, though they may shadow forth partially the particular attributes or actions of the Deity, could suffice to convey the full expression of the relation between God and man. Only the orbs of heaven, obeying in their lustrous course the laws which know no change,

could adequately express the living energy, the illuminative power, and above all the illimitable endurance of the divine attributes;—a form of imagery which suggested itself with great facility to the mind of Egypt. Bathed in a cloudless and translucent atmosphere, with all the unfaltering mechanism of sun, moon, and stars perpetually opened before them, the priestly astronomers of that country, or the “Mystery Teachers of the Heavens,” as they were officially called, pictured the invisible glories of the unseen creation to be reflected in the serene and luminous orbit of our own planet amid the firmament, as that firmament itself with all its radiant beauty is reflected in the clear waters of their own familiar river. And hence it is that in their sacred writings we find well-nigh every religious idea to be conveyed by some astronomical analogue; while with each astronomical conception and conjunction there appears to correspond some manifestation of the Deity. A beautiful allusion, for example, is made in the Egyptian Ritual to the illuminative action of the sun as the earth, the vessel of God, performs her daily rotation and annual circuit around in the heavens. For we read there how the holy departed

has appeared in full splendour in the vessel of Ra; and how Thoth, the Divine Wisdom, clothes the spirit of the justified a million times in a garment of true linen, of that substance, that is to say, which by its purity and brilliancy reminds us of the mantle, woven out of rays of light, wherewith the sun enwraps the earth afresh each day she rotates before him; just as the soul of man is invested with new radiance each time that he turns to the presence of his Creator. From their profound theosophy, each phenomenon of nature conveyed to them a corresponding manifestation of the divine personality, and according to the Ritual it was the Deity indwelling in the soul which confers upon the man the power of perceiving these relations. "I am perception," we read, "the imperishable soul." In the noonday glow of the sun they beheld the splendour of Ra; in his setting, the death of Osiris; in the new dawn, his resurrection as the incarnate Horus; in the glowing fire, the creator spirit Ptah; in the harmonious proportions of the universe, the Eternal Wisdom, Thoth, "the Mind and Will of God"; in the starry firmament crowned by Alcyone and the Pleiades (the sacred bull and attendant cows),

the ineffable beauty of Hathor, the living tabernacle of the sacred Light.

Thus, in the religion of ancient Egypt, the deepest and the most fascinating mystery of antiquity, the visible creation was conceived as the counterpart of the unseen world. And the substance consisted not of a mere vague belief in a life beyond the grave, but in tracing out the Path whereby the Just, when the portal of the tomb is lifted up, passes through the successive stages of Initiation, of Illumination, and of Perfection, necessary to fit him for an endless union with Light, the Great Creator. That Path it was, through the secret places of the universe, which appears to have been the subject of the secret mysteries which were communicated to the postulant, according to Egyptian tradition, by the Master of the Secret Scroll, in the secret chambers of the House which bore the mystic title of the Light. And in order to follow his instruction, we must commence by raising our eyes to the heavens around us, and understanding how our earthly sphere is itself a member of the starry host.



CHAPTER III


THE FESTIVALS OF THE SUN AND MOON

TIME, the most powerful factor in the determination of human affairs, is also the most impalpable. Of everything else which forms the subject of measurement, for instance of the velocity of the wind or of the extension of space, we can conceive, by analogy at least, some kind of mental picture; but of time we find it equally hard to pronounce whether it have or have not any distinctive existence. If there be any one mental fact which man accepts for himself as unquestionable, it is that we know our past and are ignorant of our future, yet between past and future who shall define the point of separation? So subtle, so imperceptible, is that infinitesimal and ever-moving barrier between the two limitless expanses, that atom of existence which we call the present moment, that it eludes even the

grasp of thought. If a man says "I am"—the simple declaration of his own existence, and as short a sentence as he can well utter,—when he pronounces the word "I," the word "am" is in the future; when he says "am," the word "I" is in the past. Yet alike from the moment which has just gone by, and from that which is even now at hand, we are separated by a gulf as absolutely impassable as that which divides us from the days of the Pharaohs, or from the future of a thousand years to come. "God himself cannot undo the past," says Pindar. "Shadow forever veiled, forever near, Thou who art called To-morrow," cries the French poet in a well-known ode. "I am Yesterday," says Osiris in the Egyptian Ritual, signifying that he for whom the past is still in existence is freed from the conditions of time which limit the mortal intellect.

But time, though in itself inconceivable, produces effects which are both palpable and universal; for none can overlook the changes which time works on all visible things, and more particularly in the two most potent forms of change, namely, those of growth and motion. Wherever either the increase in magnitude or the change in position in any given body dur-

ing a given period can be measured, there it is evident that time can be measured along with it. Thus the varying aspect of the flowers or the direction of the falling shadows marks the passing hour. The recurrence of certain well-known scents and sounds proclaims the advent and departure of the seasons. The gradual alteration in ourselves or in our friends tells us of the lapse of years. Nor can we measure time except by change.

How then to find a definite and constant standard, never altering and never ceasing, whereto we may refer this most fugitive and elusive element? In the mechanism of the heavens alone—that is to say, in the relative changes of the celestial bodies, constantly varying yet ever renewed after fixed intervals of time—can such a measure be found, which will continue to recur unflinchingly though ages pass away. Chief among such periods is that of the orbit of our own planet, the motion which gives the key to all the varying aspects of the universe. From that orbit, the line of the Pharaohs derived one of their proudest titles, “Neb Sennen,” Lord of the Orbit () , proclaiming at once the universality and the endurance of their dominion; and from it the

Initiate in the Egyptian Ritual obtained his Illumination in celestial things. That motion also is invested in no slight degree with the serenity of the heavens ; and no natural image is fraught with greater radiance or tranquillity than that of the rolling year as it circles perpetually about the feet of God. Even in the midst of cloud and fog, the mere striking of a clock, that record of planetary motion, serves to remind us how circumscribed is the surrounding gloom, and how the dull earth beneath our feet is, even as we gaze upon it, shining to its far companions in the fields of light. As that lustrous orbit is woven, revolution after revolution with never-failing beauty, cycle after cycle of age-long periods, like golden serpents, twine themselves around it, and span the gulfs of time with the years of the Most High.

Such a system of harmonious periods, and of measured intervals, corresponding to universal, not arbitrary, standards, was a natural, and indeed an essential, element in the theosophy of a priesthood whose religious teaching was intentionally veiled under the analogies of the Light. And the celebration of certain sacred festivals, dependent for their date upon the recurrence of the various phenomena, pre-

Festivals of the Sun and Moon 29

sents the most significant and the most picturesque feature in the social life of Egypt. Singularly enough also, in tracing the periods and festivals familiar to the Mystery Teachers at the Court of Pharaoh, we shall sometimes discover the key to certain conceptions which we familiarly employ, but of the origin of which



The Balance of Thoth.

we can give no account. And we shall perceive, not probably without some pleasure, that they are not the fruit of any arbitrary arrangement, however ingenious, but are the products of universal concords, and represent, so to speak, the beats and bars of the music of the spheres.

That the moon was the sacred and, at least

in early times, the secret standard of Egyptian science, there seems little doubt. Thoth, the great Lord of Wisdom and of Measurement, the divine recorder before whom stood the balance of Justice, wherein the light and darkness of man's moral life were weighed, was lord, not of the sun, but of the moon; and to that latter orb we are indebted for our fundamental standard of time. For if we consider the motion of the moon relatively to the sun, we shall find that the time that orb takes in covering a space equal to its own disc is just an hour; and thus we have a practical definition of that important unit. Now, that measure of the "Hour" was peculiarly sacred in Egypt; each of the twenty-four which elapse during a single rotation of the earth being consecrated to its own particular deity, twelve of light, and twelve of darkness. "Explain the God in the Hour," is the demand made of the adept in the Ritual when standing in the Hall of Truth. And that God in the Hour, we learn, was Thoth, the "Lord of the Moon" and the Reckoner of the Universe."

Turning now to the motions of our planet, we find, as Dr. Brugsch has shown, that the

¹ See Note A, page 193.

Egyptian solar kalendar employed a double principle, one for the civil, the other for the sacred, reckoning. In the former, the year came to a close at the end of every three hundred and sixty-fifth day, so that the opening of the new year ran round the entire circle of the seasons in the course of 4×365 or 1460 civil years. But in the sacred kalendar a day was intercalated at the close of every fourth, or Grand Year. Hence, therefore, as in our own kalendar, the four great turning-points of the year, namely, the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes (or days when light and darkness are equal all over the world), and the Summer and Winter Solstices, when the sun attains its greatest northern and southern declination, would always fall on a fixed day of the sacred kalendar. And these festivals were represented in the Ritual by four jets of flame encircling the basin of solar fire, at each of which was stationed one of the divine spirits which "proclaimed forth Truth before the Lord of the Universe."

This reckoning being established, the mid-summer solstice was chosen for the opening of the sacred year, the time, that is, when the sun attains the northern limit of his tropical

The Book of the Master

dominion, amid the full lustre of his summer splendour. That period, too,

was peculiarly suited for such a purpose in that country; for the tropical boundary extending at that epoch as far as about 24° north, the sun for a few days at midsummer entered within the limits of Egypt, being vertical to Philæ, situated on the island in the first cataract, or "Gate of the Nile," as the Egyptians called it, at the southern boundary of the kingdom. And agreeably with this arrangement advantage was taken of the slowness with which at that period of the year the sun, owing to the obliquity of the ecliptic, changes its declination, to divide the circuit into two wholly distinct portions, a short period of rest and a long one of motion, corresponding to the brief period during which the sun remained within the lim-



Pillar from Philæ

its of the kingdom, and the prolonged interval

between the departure and return. The latter period, or "Orbit," consisting of three hundred and sixty days, was symmetrically divided according to two different forms, namely, into twelve equal months,¹ each consisting of three decades of days, and into three equal seasons, each consisting of twelve decades of days, namely, those of the Inundation (Se), or rise, of the river, the Winter (Pir), and the Heat (Semou), answering more or less to our spring. The shorter period, consisting of the sacred interval, or Jubilee, lasted in the ordinary year for five, and in the grand, or fourth, year for six days, and was entirely taken up with a series of special festivals. Hence every half-orbit, or passage from summer to winter, or from winter to summer, contained eighteen such decades of days, and these decades, each headed by a solar snake,—the spiral curve traced out upon the surface of the earth by the vertical sun in the course of each half-orbit,—are depicted in a striking representation of the kalendar on the walls of the famous temple of Denderah.

It may now be not uninteresting or uninteresting to compare for a moment the system

¹ See Note B, page 195.

of Egypt with our own leap year, for which we are, in fact, indebted to that country, through the astronomer Sosigenes, who was imported by Julius Cæsar from Alexandria, to remedy in some degree the confusion of the Roman kalendar. That famous Greek appears to have performed his task very much after a fashion not unknown to adapters. He cared—perhaps he knew—very little about the astronomical principles involved in the Egyptian reckoning, and nothing at all about the niceties of further adjustment which it demanded; indeed, before half a century was passed, his own corrections required to be corrected. He took no heed of standard or of measure, of orbit or of sacred interval. But first he cut up the year into twelve unequal and unmeaning bits—to say he divided it into portions is far too scientific an expression—which rags bore indeed the name of the insulted moon, but of which that mighty measurer condescended to make no sort of recognition. And then he threw the “odd day” in along with the “odd month”; much as a child who has broken his toy horse, glues a bit of tail to the shortest of the legs, and calls aloud on creation to admire his handiwork.

Nor is the difference between the Egyptian and the Roman treatment of the kalendar accidental or unimportant. On the contrary, it suggests the key to its use in the ancient country as the great politico-religious instrument whereby the social economy of the nation was co-ordinated with the theosophy of the priesthood. Among modern nations, monotony of recurrence seems to be the single object desired, so as to offer every facility for the arrangements of business or pleasure, and to confine within the strictest limits the diminutive period allotted to the life to come. Any system, therefore, which breaks the regular routine, more particularly if it be connected, as in ancient Egypt, with the commemoration of sacred events, provokes impatience much more than admiration. And the various adjustments of the kalendar appear to be regarded as if they were odds and ends of time left littering about the heavens by the sun and moon, and requiring an ingenious astronomer (like Sosigenes) to fold together and put away tidily.

Very different from this narrow and ungracious spirit was the joyous temper wherewith the Egyptian "Mystery-Teachers of the

Heavens" regarded those sacred intervals. Throughout the symbology of that country, life was the centre, the circumference, the totality of good. Life was the sceptre in the hand of Amen; life was the richest "gift of Osiris." "Be not ungrateful to thy Creator," says the sage Ptah-Hotep, in what is perhaps the oldest document in existence, "for he has given thee life." "I am the Fount of Light," says the Creator in the Ritual. "I pierce the darkness. I make clear the path for all; the Lord of Joy." By them, therefore, the intervals were gratefully accepted as a kind of breathing space, wherein time, like the sun at the solstice, appears for a while to rest, and man, like the immortals, might enjoy, without impairing, the treasure of life. Accordingly the interval of Jubilee, or time of praise, separating, or rather uniting, year with year, took place not in the gloom of winter, as with us, but in the full height and glow of summer,—at the period at once of accomplishment and renovation, when the sun was in his fullest strength, and the rising waters of the Nile began to renew their life-giving floods; and each of the days stood prominently out as a celebration of some distinct form of divine

manifestation. As at the commencement of each year is renewed the divine gift of life, so on the first day of that period of continuous praise was celebrated the birthday of Osiris, the God of Light and Life, Prime Mover of Creation. On the second, the birthday of Horus, God, of God, Lord of the New Dawn, as the dawn itself is renewed at each fresh rotation of the earth. On the third, the birthday of Seb the Creator-spirit of earth, as our planet enters upon a fresh circuit round the parent orb. On the fourth, the birthday of Isis, with her double relation of human and divine motherhood; as all nature was reawakened to fresh life and vigour on the renewal of the river. On the fifth day was celebrated the birthday of Neith, the Lady of Waters, from whose divine personality gushed the stream of life, who "gave to every mummy the draught for which he thirsted," as the parched lands thirsted for the waters of the Nile. And every fourth, or Grand, Year, was celebrated a sixth festival—that of "Hep-Tep," or "Completion-Beginning," when the revolution and the rotation of our planet were simultaneously completed and begun afresh; while at the same time the sun himself, in his

mighty march through space, drawing with him our whole planetary system, completes an arc of his enormous orbit about equal in length to the course of our planet around him. Such was the symphony of light and joy which for the Egyptian heralded the opening of the glowing year.





CHAPTER IV

THE RISING OF THE RIVER AND THE ORIENT OF THE STAR

WHILE the periods of the sun and moon lent their harmony to the kalendar of Egypt, there was another cycle of a nature wholly distinct and far more peculiar to the country, which defined its seasons, and gave occasion for its chief festivals. In Egypt alone among inhabitable countries, the single source of life is the river. That narrow strip of land, abundantly fertile as it is wherever irrigated by the waters of the Nile, is itself but a part of the barren and boundless deserts which stretch on either hand from ocean to ocean; and were those fertilising streams from the distant sources of the equatorial mountains to fail, Egypt as a populated country would cease to exist. These are the conditions which continually and inexorably

impress themselves upon the minds of the



The Waters of the Nile

inhabitants, and which distinguish the land, not only from our Northern climates but from

all other lands ; for nowhere else is there to be found a highly cultivated and populous nation so wholly dependent for its daily bread upon rain which falls not within their own borders but upon far remote and even unknown regions.

Like the other institutions of the country, its festivals were racy of the soil. Pregnant too as they were, like other Egyptian conceptions, with mystical significance, the external events which they celebrate are marked by the stages in the annual rise and fall of those waters, which figured to them the perennial streams of the "celestial Nile." For their river, as they maintained, "came down from the southern heaven," being the outflow of the tropical rains in its distant reaches of the south ; and from that quarter, as ancient tradition and modern research unite in testifying, the forefathers of their race set forth to their more famous home. Accordingly the flood of the Nile ran like a sparkling torrent alike through the religion and the science of the country ; and as the gradual rise and fall of its never-failing stream marked the course of our planet in its circuit round the parent orb, the celestial festivals which celebrated the phenomena attendant upon its advance were mingled

with rejoicings which hailed the progress of the reviving waters.

Of the three seasons, each consisting of a hundred and twenty days, the Inundation ("Se"), which commenced at the close of the sacred interval of divine birthdays, was undoubtedly the principal. But the approach of that season had been heralded for many weeks beforehand by various signs in the higher reaches of the river, and these anticipatory

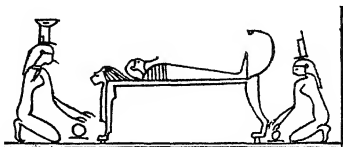


The Solar Eye Impersonated.

symptoms appear to have been celebrated during the close of the previous year. As early as the end of March, and far into April (the beginning of the Egyptian month Epiphi), the Khamsin wind commences to blow with violence, forming the breath of "Typhon," the destroyer. Then comes the vernal equinox, the "Eye of the Sun," which looks forth once more from its winter obscurity. Later on, the tropical rains, sweeping before them

the mass of decaying matter accumulated in the river from the vegetation of the previous year, turn the waters of the Nile for a few days green and unwholesome; when Osiris, as the Ritual says, makes such a stench in the river that gods and men and the very devils stand aghast,—a marvellous image when applied to the moral cleansing of all mankind by Osiris, and the absolution pronounced upon the Justified in the Ritual by the “four Ministers who proclaim truth before the Universal Lord.” A few days after “green Nile,” as that phase is called, follows the period when the river turns red, at which time the waters are peculiarly sweet. This remarkable phenomenon invariably accompanies the returning flood and is to be witnessed at this day, while Herodotus has left us a very fine account, quoted at great length by Professor Maspero, whose endorsement of it is a singular proof of the unchanging character of the Nile. In the upper reaches of the stream it takes place about the beginning of May, which is the time assigned in the kalendar of Denderah to the sailing of the bark of Ra, but it does not reach Philæ till the middle of June, so that in Lower Egypt it appears to be connected with the solstice, and

celebrated in the festival entitled the "Eye Filled with Blood." About five days before the summer solstice (for we count always with reference to that epoch), occurs the festival now known as the "Night of the Drop," which appears to have been celebrated under the title of the "Tears of Isis." Then comes the period of lowest level, the death of the river, when Osiris is wrapped "in his bandages,"



Mummy Laid out between Isis and Nephthys.

shortly followed by the birth of the Deity at the solstice, and the other divine birthdays which succeeded it. On the day after the close of the sacred interval, was celebrated the opening of the New Year, or the first of the month Thoth; and on the second of that month, when the rising of the river became perceptible at Memphis, took place the festival of the "Rose Crown of Hapi," the presiding genius of the Nile, and guardian spirit of the

Holy Dead on their entrance into the new life. About fifty days afterwards, the water has risen sufficiently in the river for the public sluices to be opened in Upper Egypt, to which process allusion would seem to be made in the festival of "Opening the Doors"; and two days later we arrive at the festival of high Nile and the "Erection of the Tat," or sacred measure of the waters—a ceremony of which a survival has been preserved until very recent times. Fifty days still later, the flood reaches its greatest height; and the water festival of ten days' duration took place. To the season of Inundation succeeded that of Winter (Pir), when the period for the important operation of Ploughing, or "Digging the Earth," commenced; during which season the waters gradually return to their normal level, the subsidence commencing at Philæ and ending in Lower Egypt. Then came the season of Semou (or Heat), when the harvest was reaped; in the course of which the preliminary festivals begin for the coming year.

In this blended chorus of rejoicing from heaven and earth, the stars also had their voice. Inconceivably distant as are those burning suns so far transcending our own

luminary both in size and power, their very remoteness enables them to discharge certain functions in regard to celestial measurement which are denied to the nearer and more conspicuous orbs. For instance, the interval between two successive transits of the sun at noon over the meridian of any given place (or in other words, the length of the solar day), depends not only on the time occupied by the earth in rotating round her own axis, but partly also on the change in the earth's position which has taken place during that interval; and as the rate of that motion is subject to a slight variation, now quicker, now slower, the interval between two such transits differs slightly from day to day, and consequently does not afford a constant measure of time. But in regard to the stars, so enormous are their distances that the immense orbit of the earth shrinks, when compared with them, into a mere point of space; and the interval between two successive transits of the same star (or the length of what is called a sidereal day) depends solely on the time occupied by the earth in performing a complete rotation round its axis. But that rate of rotation never undergoes, so far as is known, any appreciable

change, and hence the successive transits of any given star over a given place will furnish the prime requisite for celestial measurement, *i. e.*, a definite and never-failing measure of time. For the same reason, the solar day will be a little longer than the sidereal day; the difference being on an average about four minutes every day, or the time the earth takes to rotate through one degree of the celestial sphere. And anyone who has watched a given star for several nights together will have noticed that its rising takes place about four minutes earlier every evening, and that at any fixed hour on each night it is one degree more advanced in the heaven than on the previous night. In fifteen days, therefore, this difference will amount to an hour, and, accordingly, as we learn from a most interesting paper published by Professor Renouf on a kalendar of the Nineteenth Dynasty, the observations of the stars were taken every fifteenth day. From this relation, when taken in conjunction with a phenomenon of singular beauty, we derive the key to the most celebrated form of the Egyptian reckoning.

Since a given star rises at any particular place, such as Memphis, about four minutes

earlier each day, it follows that there will be in each year one day when the star will rise at that place just so long before the dawn as to be visible for a few moments on the horizon before vanishing in the increasing splendour ; which phenomenon is astronomically described as the "heliacal rising" of the star, but which we may more shortly and conveniently call its Orient. Now the number of degrees by which the sun is below the horizon when the orient of the star takes place is not fully determined, and varies to some extent with the locality ; but ten degrees below is usually taken as the sun's position when the star is lost in the dawning light, so that the time would be about forty minutes before full sunrise. Let us consider now the relation between two successive oriens (which will of course be a year apart) of some particular star ; and for that purpose let us choose, like the Egyptians, Sirius, or, as they called it, Sothis,¹ the most brilliant of the distant suns, the flaming sentinel to us of the fiery hosts of space. Suppose then that on some particular day (such as midsummer day) Sothis is on the horizon of Memphis when the

¹ The true name employed by the Egyptians was Sopht, but the form Sothis is here preserved as being more familiar

sun is eleven degrees below it, that is, one degree below the point of the dawn. On that day the orient of Sothis will take place, that is, it will rise just before the dawn and will remain visible on the horizon for about four minutes (while the earth rotates through one degree), after which it will be lost in the break of dawn. But on the anniversary of that day (owing to a relation between the earth's motions of rotation and revolution somewhat too complex to enter upon here) that phenomenon will take place one minute later, so that the star will be visible for three minutes, on the next for two, and the next again for one. On the fourth anniversary, therefore, it will come to the horizon only at the break of dawn, and consequently will not be visible at all that day; but its orient will take place on the following morning, when it will remain visible for four minutes, and the same phenomena will again recur.¹ Hence for every grand cycle (four years) there will be the difference of a day in the orient of a star, and consequently of three hundred and sixty-five days in a cycle of 4×365 ,

¹The problem has been worked out mathematically in a treatise published by Professor Graves, the astronomer of Oxford, in A. D. 1640

or 1460 civil years. But that difference of a day corresponds exactly with the day intercalated in the sacred kalendar every fourth, or Grand, Year; exactly as in the case of our own Leap Year. And that arrangement, therefore, was not the result of mere convention, but was founded on a definite astronomical relation.¹

That lovely cycle with its tetrachord of starry light just gleaming on the horizon and then vanishing, lost in the growing splendour, appears from the allusions in the Ritual to have had its spiritual analogue in the festival of the "Shapes," or divine forms of beauty, wherein the departed was re-created in the image of the starry spirits, before merging his lustre, though not his existence, in the splendour of the manifested Godhead.

¹ See Note C, page 195.



CHAPTER V

THE SACRED LANDMARKS OF THE AGES

AMONG the various peculiarities characterising the Nile, it has, I think, generally escaped attention, that of all countries Egypt is the one peculiarly suited, not by its atmosphere alone but far more by its situation, to provide a natural basis for universal measurement. For it alone among inhabited regions affords certain positions on the earth's surface so correlated with the great planes of celestial reference as to render the periodic motion of our planet among the heavenly bodies easy to measure and to record. To the students of most countries, those fundamental planes, such, for instance, as the Ecliptic and the plane of the moon's orbit, present themselves merely as viewless tracts of the infinite expanse upon which the mind of man has built up the intellectual measurement of the material

universe. They are recognised indeed as intersecting certain portions of our globe ; but for the most part, sea, and mountain, and desert claim the lonely regions through which they pass, too remote from the neighbourhood of man for us easily to realise that the position of a monument, or a particular bend in a river, may mark, for example, the tropical boundary, and thus may tell us where the plane of our own planet's orbit passes through the surface of the earth. Very different is the case with the fertile strip of land called into being by that strange river, the Nile, which, taking its rise from the great lake of the Equator, intersects in its lower or Egyptian course the planes in which the earth and moon respectively move, and other great planes of astronomical reference. Upon the banks of that river, therefore, and there alone, could man erect substantial and enduring monuments to be the landmarks of ethereal and illimitable space ; while by the shadow of a column or the direction of a shaft he could fix forever the celestial bearings of our planet in its ceaseless motion. For it must not be forgotten that, numerous and complex as are the variations of the celestial bodies, the laws which determine them are fixed

and incapable of caprice ; so that if the relation which a single point on the surface of the earth bears to the heavenly orbs at a single precisely defined moment of time can be precisely measured and unalterably recorded, the precise position of every other heavenly body, and of all the celestial planes, whatever be their variations and oscillations, becomes definite and calculable in relation to it (so far as the limits of human science extend), for every moment of time past, present, or to come.


Now a precisely defined moment of time is afforded by the commencement of the Egyptian kalendar, which dates not from a particular year or month, but from the exact moment of the orient, or heliacal rising, of a particular star. And with regard to a place, we find that the position of the capital of the kingdom at the period is distinguished by peculiar relations both in regard to Egyptian and to universal measurement. Situated close to the apex of the Delta, the most distinctive point in the long course of the parent river, and marking the junction of the northern and southern kingdom, lies Memphis, or Men-nofer, the famous city built by the equally famous Fourth Dynasty of Egypt. And on a rocky eminence

not far from that spot, commanding the immense desert which stretches far away to the Western Ocean, rises the Great Pyramid, built by the astronomer-monarch Khufu, about 4235 B.C., that is to say, within a very few years of the foundation of the hieroglyphic kalendar. Distinctive, too, as is the situation of this building with reference to the conformation of the country, it is equally remarkable in its relation to the two principal points to which all human measurements of space must be primarily referred, namely, the centre and the pole of the earth ; since its distance from the pole is just equal to its distance from the centre.¹

A notable feature in the building which has been the subject of much speculation strikingly illustrates this relation to the pole. For the single shaft which gives entrance to the interior does not run horizontally, nor does it open level with the ground ; but it emerges at about fifty feet from the bottom, being inclined upwards from within at such an angle as to point, according to the measurement confirmed by Prof. Flinders Petrie, to the position occupied by the pole-star between five and six thousand years ago. Nor again was that di-

¹ See Note D, page 197

rection unintentional, as the building itself bears witness. For if we turn to the sacred texts of Egypt, and compare them with this sacred monument, we find them to be full of allusions to astronomical conceptions, and more particularly to what is called in the papyri the "Horizon of Heaven,"—a circle evidently entirely different from what we mean in speaking of the celestial horizon of any given locality, and occupying a definite and important position in the universal sphere. Now more than two years ago I drew attention to the identity of this circle, hitherto undefined by Egyptologists, with the great circle forming the celestial horizon of an observer stationed on the Equator, and having in his zenith the point of equinox (or, in other words, with the circle which we call the solstitial Colure). But, as that circle passes through the pole, the orb by which its position would be indicated was the pole-star, towards which the entrance shaft of the Great Pyramid is astronomically directed, and which imaged to the Egyptian the entrance to the unseen world. Accordingly, during my late visit to Egypt, one of my principal objects was to test this relation; and I confess that

the confirmation I obtained afforded me nothing less than amazement. For, in common with the rest of the world, I had always believed that no hieroglyph is to be found on the exterior of the building.¹ But on arriving at the fifteenth step (the very step I had specially mentioned), where the entrance shaft, hidden from an observer standing immediately below, lies fully exposed to the view, I saw a single immense hieroglyph, deeply sculptured, immediately above the entrance; and that hieroglyph was no other than the hieroglyph of the "Horizon of Heaven" (). Had the founder of the building desired to confirm my views by a single stroke, in his own silent and absolute fashion, he could not have adopted a more efficacious plan than by placing that particular hieroglyph in that particular position.

Looking now to the other extremity of the upper kingdom at the south, we find that on the island of Philæ, at the "Gate of the Nile," there is an ancient inscription, a passage in which lays stress on the "great vault of the

¹ I do not speak, of course, of those modern impertinences which a distinguished Egyptologist, now dead, whose name, *honoris causa*, I shall not mention, thought fit to inscribe some thirty years ago.

sun according to his time," as a characteristic feature of the spot, and of an enclosure over which "the sun stood in the centre." Such a description could not be true at the present day. For as the latitude of the island is a little more than 24° , while the tropical boundary is less than $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, the sun could not be vertical to any part of it. But since, for a very long period, the obliquity of the Ecliptic has been gradually lessening, the tropical boundary must have been greater in former ages; and the phenomenon would have been visible, and very noticeable, about the time of Khufu. For calculating the diminution at the rate given by Airy, viz., about half a minute (of arc) per century, we find that the obliquity at that epoch was very nearly 24° . The position of Philæ, therefore (or more properly Pilak), would be almost vertically under the sun at the summer solstice, and consequently would mark for all time the position of that orb relatively to the earth, at the epoch from which the hieroglyphic kalendar dates its reckoning.

Similarly, if we calculate the position which would be occupied by the moon at the epoch of the opening of the kalendar, when at the farthest distance from the Ecliptic compatible with

eclipse, it will be found to be vertical to the latitude of Luxor. And what is even more remarkable, as relating to an epoch long antecedent to the foundation of the kalendar, the farthest limit¹ ever attained by the sun through the variation of the Ecliptic is about $24^{\circ} 33'$; and that latitude is marked by the venerable temple of Ombos.

But besides the relations of our planet to the sun, moon, and stars, there is yet one motion which affects the entire orbit and which we find more especially illustrated by the position and design of one famous temple. That motion is the extremely slow revolution performed by the axis of the celestial sphere around the axis of the Ecliptic in about 26,000 years, which is called the cycle of precession, since its effect, as is well known, is to cause the point at which the earth cuts the plane of her own Equator slightly to precede each year the position which it occupied at the previous revolution. That this cycle was familiar to the astronomers of early Egypt² is, I think, sufficiently clear (though it will be confirmed by other considerations in

¹ According to the calculations published by the Smithsonian Institute at Washington.

² See Note E, page 197.

the later chapters) from the solution afforded by it to certain apparent anomalies, which Dr. Brugsch, the eminent authority on the hieroglyphic kalendar, has plainly stated, but without attempting to explain. For example, during the later dynasties, as he mentions, a double form of reckoning was employed; the same day appearing, for instance, in the reign of Thothmes III. (about 1500 B.C.) under two distinct dates no less than thirty-eight days apart. Such a circumstance in our kalendar would be wholly unintelligible except upon the hypothesis of some confusion; but when we consider the continuity of the Egyptian reckoning, extending through hundreds and thousands of years, it admits of a simple explanation as follows. Since the rate at which that precession takes place (about $50''.2$ in a year) is sufficient to carry the point of equinox round the circuit of our orbit in about 25,800 years, it follows that in the three hundred and sixty-fifth part of that period, that is to say, about every seventy-one years, it will fall one day earlier. Hence it follows that when we speak of the same day (such as the thirtieth April) occurring in two different kalendars seventy-one years or more apart, we imply that the earth occupied on those

two days a similar position in regard to the point of equinox, but not the same position on the orbit, and consequently not in regard to the celestial universe ; the node itself, or point of equinox, having in the interval travelled a short space along the orbit in a direction contrary to the motion of our globe. Suppose, then, that, in addition to a kalendar having reference, like our own, to the equinox of the current year, a second record were kept relative to the equinox of the epoch at which the kalendar was commenced,—a suggestion entirely in agreement with Egyptian custom and mode of thought,—then the peculiarity would be explained. For since the point of equinox falls a little earlier relatively to the orbit every year, the archaic date will fall a little later. And as in nearly 26,000 years it traverses the circle of the year, and falls again on the anniversary, in 2,650 years the archaic date would be thirty-seven or thirty-eight days later ; so that if the kalendar were formed in the time of Khufu, the difference between the current and archaic dates in the days of Thothmes III. would just correspond to the difference found in the two kalendars. Such a form of reckoning also would be made the more easily, because at the

epoch of the foundation of the kalendar the vernal equinox appears to have been marked by the orient of another brilliant star well known to Egyptian astronomers, and called by them Sah, namely our Betelgeux, the first in the constellation of Orion; so that that star would supply a fixed point from which to measure the precessional motion. And it is interesting to note that in an ancient Egyptian manuscript, called the Sai an Sinsin (which has been translated by Dr. Brugsch), describing the transformation of the soul in the unseen world, we find that in the opening passage where the mystical conditions surrounding the entrance of the Holy Dead into the splendour of the invisible light are imaged forth by the conjunction of the heavenly bodies, special mention is made of that same orb, Sah, in that same position on the horizon.

By a similar reference to the archaic date we may throw some light on the peculiar sanctity attaching to certain days of the month for which it is otherwise difficult to account. For instance, in the *Book of the Master* to which reference has been already so frequently made, and the papyrus of which probably belongs to the third cycle, command is given no less than

three times that the most important festival of the year, the birthday of Osiris, should be celebrated on the fifteenth of the month, and twice on the sixth. But that birthday was, as we have seen, the first festival of the sacred interval; and what connection could such a festival have with any particular day of any month whatever? A very close connection, if the archaic date be taken into consideration. For at the commencement of the second cycle the archaic date of Osiris' birthday would fall twenty-one days later than at the original epoch; and remembering the six days of sacred interval in the Grand Year, we reach the fifteenth day of the first month of the year, while a similar calculation for the third cycle brings us to the sixth of the second month. For a similar reason, another great festival, that of the bark of Ra, is ordered to be celebrated on the birthday of Osiris, since that day coincided with the rising of the sacred Nile and the beginning of the new life.

Now it is this principle which we shall find in especial to pervade the design of the celebrated temple of Hathor, the mother of Horus, which illustrated to the Egyptians the divine beauty of the starry universe.



CHAPTER VI

THE TEMPLE OF THE VIRGIN MOTHER

SOME four hundred miles from the apex of the Delta, higher up along the Nile, lies the city of Annu, or Denderah, wherein was situated the temple dedicated to Hathor, identified in the sacred texts of the temple with Isis, the Queen of Heaven, whose most ancient and distinctive title was the Virgin Mother. This latter name still bears the trace of its original meaning, being a corruption of the words Ta M Ta Rer or "Place of the Orbit."¹ And the name becomes highly significant in itself, and throws no little light on the title which the Pharaohs bore of "Lord of the Orbit," when we observe that the length of the river in its course through Upper Egypt is just one millionth part of the orbit of the

¹ See Note F, page 198.

earth,¹ and that Denderah is little more than two degrees from the tropical boundary, where the plane of our orbit intersects the Nile. That the design of this temple was of very ancient date the records leave no manner of doubt. It is probable indeed (although some of the evidence adduced is not very convincing²) that the structure as it now stands is due to a comparatively late epoch, some authorities maintaining that it was not completed until the Christian era had begun. But of the antiquity of the original building there can be no question. For while, as Prof. Dumichen has observed, the religious ceremonies depicted on the walls belong to a very remote period, the inscriptions recount how Thothmes III. (more than 1500 years before the time of Christ) gave command to rebuild the temple according to the ancient design, so

¹ Reckoning the radius of the earth's orbit (or in other words the distance of the sun) to be between $92\frac{1}{2}$ and 93 millions of miles

² For instance, a considerable amount of argument in support of a date not anterior to the time of the Romans has been expended on the presence of a certain Greek inscription, which states that in the time of the Emperor Tiberius a portion of this temple (there called after the Greek fashion the Pro-Naos) was dedicated to a Greek goddess. With equal justice might one of our own grand mediæval churches be ascribed to the close of the eighteenth century, on the strength of an inscription recording in gilt letters the important circumstance of its whitewashing by the churchwardens.

that at that period the plan was already reckoned as antique. Further, the same records tell us how that original building was erected by Pepi, a monarch of the Sixth Dynasty, who reigned nineteen centuries before the time of Thothmes, and how even that was not the farthest point to which the history of the structure ascended. For the plan upon which Pepi religiously carried out the ancient design did not originate in his own mind, but was brought to light by him from a crypt, or secret chamber, being written "in archaic characters," say the records, by Khufu himself, the astronomer-architect of the Fourth Dynasty, and buried by him on the spot eight hundred years before the days of Pepi.

In this temple of the great Mother of God, structure and situation alike appear designed to illustrate that starry universe of which she was the queen. Thus the fundamental principle of precession stands out with great clearness when, in accordance with the principles laid down in the last chapter, we examine the position of the temple. For, since the locality is close to the verge of the tropics, where the plane of our orbit (or, which is the same thing, of the ecliptic) passes perpendicularly upwards

through the surface of the earth, the sun at midsummer would nearly occupy the zenith of the place. If, then, an observer at Denderah should stand with his face towards the north, as the temple records inform us that the founder stood when on the night of midsummer he laid the foundation-stone of the building, he would have the plane of our orbit rising immediately in front of him, while the pole of the ecliptic would lie at his feet at the farthest verge of the celestial horizon. Now it is around that pole of the ecliptic that (in the course of about 25,800 years) the celestial axis describes the precessional circle. Hence, then, alike to the builder of the temple, and to the long line of pontiffs who took up their position, year after year, and generation after generation, to celebrate the chief festival of the temple, the stars in their nightly revolution around the axis of that horizon would trace out the same circle as in the mightier movement of precession ; while the gradual change in the hours of their rising and setting, as the centuries passed away, would measure the age-long hours, each spanning over a thousand years, of a single circuit of the axis,—the vast precessional day. Now, that this relation was essential to the plan is evi-

dent from the prominence given in the inscriptions to the pole of the ecliptic, or "Turning-point [in Egyptian the Akh] of the Circles of Light," as it is there called, and again from the emphatic stress laid in another part of the records upon the same central point. "He saw the Akh as the Akh, which is in the heaven of Hathor, the Lady of Annu," say the records, speaking of the founder. That is to say, he saw the pole of the earth's orbit as the turning-point round which during his midnight watch he beheld the heavens revolve, exactly as an observer standing in the same position would behold at the present day.

Another illustration, or rather application of the same principle becomes evident when we compare the temple and the Great Pyramid,—those twin buildings of mystery due to the same primæval astronomer, Khufu, the one erected by him, the other only designed, but left to his successor, eight hundred years later, for accomplishment. For the position of the pole-star which, we saw, was indicated by the entrance shaft of the Great Pyramid was $26^{\circ} 7'$ above the horizon of that building; and $26^{\circ} 7'$ is the latitude of Denderah, that is to say, its distance measured along a meridian from

the Equator. But in that position the star's true distance from the pole was $3^{\circ} 53'$; and $3^{\circ} 53'$ is the meridional distance between the temple of Denderah and the Great Pyramid. Thus while the celestial relation between the star and the horizon of the Great Pyramid measures the terrestrial relation between the Equator and the temple of the heavens, the terrestrial relation between the temple and the Pyramid measures the celestial relation between the star and the heavenly pole. The same relation, moreover, suggests a singular connection between the position of the star and the erection of the temple. For the date at which the star occupied the position thus indicated was about the year 3440 B.C., that is to say, not in the time of Khufu but of Pepi. Eight centuries, therefore, it would seem, after the epoch when Khufu secretly designed the celestial plan of the universal temple, his royal successor, Pepi, who himself bore the title of Grand Master (Sechem Ur), recognised the signal that the hour had arrived for the manifestation of that design, when the star which indicated the celestial pole illuminated the dark masonry of the twin building, and he saw the point "shining in the great house of watch-

ing," as it says in another part of the inscription. Until that hour should come, the Grand Architect concealed the design for the temple of the universe; when the predetermined measure of time was accomplished, the Grand Master erected the building on the spot measured by the star and the pole of the heavens.

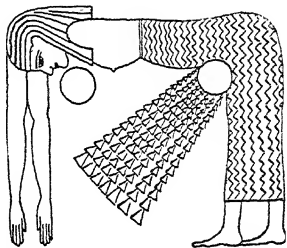
From that same measure also arises another relation illustrating at once the connection of the temple with the precessional motion, and the meaning of various expressions in the temple records. For that measure ($3^{\circ} 53'$) is within a few seconds just the sixth part of the space contained between the Equator and the ecliptic, and conveniently divides it therefore into six equal parts on either side of the Equator; and that is the space through which, owing to the effect of precession, the heavenly sphere appears to be shifted, once northward and once southward in the course of the vast cycle. Hence, then, we have the meaning of a remarkably beautiful image contained in the records, describing the temple as "The Seat of the Heavenly Dances in the Six Heights of Osiris," that is to say, of the space-sweeping motions of the starry host through these six heights of the tropical heaven, as now advancing, now re-

ceding, they weave their never-ending measures, led by the star that marks the heavenly pole.¹

A similar reference to the structure of the heavens is manifested everywhere throughout the temple. On one side of the vast entrance-hall, or "Khent," the walls are covered with a representation of the fourteen ascents of the moon, leading up on the fifteenth to the throne of Thoth, the Lord of Measurement, and corresponding to the number of days between new and full moon. On the opposite side are depicted eighteen boats, each led by a solar serpent, or spiral, representing the eighteen decades which, as we have seen, made up the half-orbit. And in the area of the same entrance-hall rise eighteen enormous columns, divided into three rows, each containing six columns, corresponding with the number of decades of days. To these columns, therefore, in the "Habitation of Horus," and to the foundation of the building at midnight, as the records relate, it would seem that allusion is made when we read in the papyrus of Ani, of "the night of setting up the columns of Horus and making him to be established as heir to the things which

belonged to his father." And again in the *Book of the Master* we read that Horus himself gave the command, "Let the pillars be here"; that is, in his own Habitation.

In the centre of the temple is the hall of the Altar, with entrances opening east and west; and beyond it lies the great hall of the temple, entitled the "Hall of the Child in his Cradle," from whence access is obtained to the secret and sealed shrine entered once a year by the high-priest, on the night of mid-summer. From



Hathor with the Splendour Proceeding from her Womb.

that shrine the image of the holy Mother was on that night conveyed by the priests in procession up a secret staircase to an open chamber on the roof, there to hold communion with her divine father Ra. And upon the walls is depicted the figure of the Virgin Mother with the rays of the divine splendour streaming from the circle of her womb, forcibly recalling the striking vision of

the prophet Ezekiel, when he beheld a "great cloud coming up from the North," and the "splendour within the circle," and "the fire enwrapping," and the "amber in the midst of the fire,"—the sacred Mother retaining her virgin purity transparent as amber in the midst of her fiery espousals, and surrounded by the great cloud of the heavenly host coming up from Nazareth in the north of the Holy Land to the place of birth, bearing the Eternal Splendour in her womb.

But of all the astronomical features presented by this deeply interesting building, by far the most remarkable is the celebrated wall-painting which was transferred bodily, early in the present century, from the temple at Denderah to Paris, where it formed the subject of the liveliest and most prolonged discussion among scholars, and where it may still be seen. The subject of this picture is somewhat difficult to convey, but its appearance may be described as follows. Suppose a panther's hide to be cut square, the spots to be filled up with sacred symbols, interspersed with stars, and the figures to be grouped into a kind of spiral which, opening out from the centre, gradually widens into a circle surrounded by a square border,

then we shall have a general conception of the form of the picture. In the space between the circle and the square rim is depicted at each of the four principal points, in a double form, the divine Horus, the child of Hathor, Queen of the starry Universe, to whom the temple was dedicated. The two forms, precisely similar, face each other, at each of the four points of the orbit, thus representing the equalisation of light and darkness all over the earth at the two equinoxes, and at the poles for each half of the year. Midway between each quarter is the figure of the holy Mother, under the form of Nut, the mistress who presided over the waters, the celestial giver of those heaven-descended rains which fed their life-giving river. And the whole is enclosed by a hieroglyphic inscription which runs round the border.¹

To this representation, sometimes most inaccurately called a "Zodiac," the scientific writers in the *Description de l' Egypte* assign the more correct title of a Planisphere. Astronomically speaking, in fact, it represents the aspect of the heaven as it would revolve before the eyes of the monarch as he stood with his

¹ See Note H, page 200.

face to the north on the night of the foundation of the temple ; while an examination of the mystical figures and symbols thereon inscribed shows immediately their intimate connection with the celestial path of the holy departed. For, numerous as they are, there is scarcely one which does not appear in the vignettes and illustrate the text of the sacred papyri ; and more particularly of the *Book of the Master*, that most jealously guarded papyrus wherein the Divine Wisdom set forth at large the path of the holy dead on their entrance into light. In a word, the picture affords a representation of the visible heaven as seen from the dwelling-place of the Virgin Mother, whose very name Hat-hor implies that she herself was the Habitation of the incarnate Horus ; while the mystical symbols representing the starry groups, image forth the supernal powers and spirits which the holy departed, according to the creed of Egypt, encountered in his progress through the heights as he mounted from the plane of earth to the burning throne of Ra.

To effect a comparison between the chambers of the building and the different parts of the planisphere, and through them with the constellations of the heavens, is not a difficult

task. For, as in other great temples, the various halls and chambers in that of Hathor had each its distinctive name, and sometimes a good many names, bearing reference, for the most part, to the mysteries of the Light and of a divine Birth. The "Hall of the Golden Rays" was the title of one of the great halls. The Chamber of Gold, the Chamber of Frankincense, the Chamber of Birth, the Place of the Altar, the Dwelling of the Golden One, the Chamber of Flames, and the Throne-room of Ra, are among the hieroglyphic titles attaching to the various portions of the temple. Now, as the planisphere contains the hieroglyphs which indicate the northern and southern points, we are enabled to correlate the parts of that picture with the various parts of the temple, and thereby to discover a striking correspondence between the different parts of the inscription and the titles of the chambers and halls occupying the same relative positions. Commencing with the northern entrance leading to the Hall of the Golden Rays, we read "Head of the Circles of Annu" (or Denderah), "Horus the Entrance of the Golden Heaven." Opposite the two openings, one towards the rising, the other towards the setting sun, we have the hieroglyph

(Khut Su) signifying "Horizon of Light." By the Chamber of Incense, we read "Palace Chamber of Holy Adoration" (Tuat), "Palace Chamber of Supreme Light" (Tes Su). By the Chamber of Birth, we find mention of the "Head of the Nurse of Ra, Meeting-place of the Region of the Gods." In the same way, by the Chamber of Flames, we have "Heavenly Flame of Burning Gold," and by the Chamber of Gold, the "Golden Heaven of Isis." And as the chief hall of the temple was the Hall of the Child in his Cradle, so the chief representation on the planisphere is the holy Mother with the divine Child in her arms.¹

Conceive now that the monarch, standing with his face to the north and keeping watch from midnight to midnight, should project upon the surface of the heaven that sacred design. Then every portion of the celestial surface before him will be divided into groups of stars or constellations corresponding to the sacred images depicted upon the planisphere, and consequently with the various chambers of the temple to which those images themselves correspond. Thus the whole field of the watcher's view would be marked out with precision

¹ See Note J, page 202.

into well-defined groups or constellations, each represented by its distinctive symbol, immediately recognisable by those, and those alone, who should understand the nature of the temple plan and should be acquainted with the temple structure. And as each midsummer came round, opening a fresh Egyptian year, the hosts of highest heaven gathered around the "Child in his Cradle," and the festival of the starry universe was fitly celebrated in the temple of Hathor, the Mother of God, herself the "Habitation" of the holy Light.

Deeply solemn must have been the scene surrounding the Grand Master, Pepi, on that memorable night when, obedient to the star-given command of his long-departed predecessor, he stood and measured the earth. Every feature, every detail, every ornament, speaks with a silent eloquence which echoes through space and time. There lay before the monarch the archaic design, traced out in characters telling of an age already bygone, and, itself new risen from the tomb, giving expression to the eternal destiny of man beyond the grave. In his hand was the royal "Khus," the masonic rule of ancient Egypt. Upon his head sparkled the luminous tiara of Hathor,

figuring forth the supernal beauty wherewith the Illuminate should be crowned in the day of immortality. Far in the northern horizon the pole-star shone before his feet, proclaiming the advent of the long-appointed hour. All round, throughout the immensity of the illimitable vault, burned amid the profound stillness of the night the countless multitudes of infinitely distant suns, recalling the sublime passage in the *Book of the Master*: "I make the shining circles of the years; and billions are my measurement." Upward from out the darkling depths of the unfathomable abyss, stretching like boundless wings on either hand, and high aloft by the zenith of the translucent dome, rose, invisible to the common eye but present ever to the mind of the astronomer, the plane of our planet's orbit,—that celestial plane of man's earthly course,—girt by the zodiac, like an azure belt of gleaming gems,

"Those lights most lustrous of the firmament
Which through the heaven lead the gliding Year."

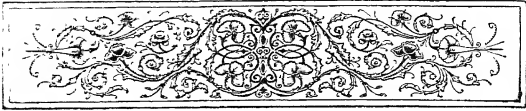
Then when the circuit was accomplished, and the surface of the heaven grouped into constellations according to the sacred plan, the monarch gave the signal for laying the founda-

The Temple of the Virgin Mother 79

tion of the temple, and, fixing his eyes upon the northern centre of the revolving heaven, commanded the attendant ministers to stretch out the measuring cord in the predetermined direction, which he as Grand Master, and he alone, foreknew.

From that mysterious temple of the Holy Mother, with its shrine of secret birth, wherein the relations between the heavens and the earth are so sedulously embodied yet so jealously concealed, we proceed to contemplate the deeply veiled teaching of the Egyptian priesthood as to the universal fatherhood of the Hidden God.





CHAPTER VII

THE HIDDEN GOD

DEEPLY embedded in the heart of some ancient forest, we find here and there a massive and hoary boulder, its antiquity far exceeding that of the venerable trees, and its whole appearance telling of a distant soil and a bygone day. As we sit upon the granite block with the branches waving high above our heads, our wonder at its presence is deepened by the quiet scene. For countless ages that great stone has lain motionless, lifeless, changeless, amid all the infinite movement of changing life around it. No human power brought that huge mass where it lies, no eye can trace the path along which it was driven by the forces of nature. And not until we have traced the mighty variations and convulsions which in the recesses of time our whole globe has undergone, and have looked

priests of back far beyond the earliest seed-time of the forest, to the days when the surrounding country for hundreds of miles formed the bottom of an immense ocean, through which the icebergs bore the huge rocks torn from its frozen shores, can we understand the position of that primæval stone.

Something of a similar character may not infrequently be discerned in regard to the religious belief and worship of a nation, when a tradition or custom survives the convulsions and changes of the centuries and remains firmly embedded in the national life, though every trace of significance is long buried in the past. Most superstitions, it is probable, had once an intelligible meaning, even if that meaning were founded on a mistaken belief; but such survivals are by no means due to superstition alone. Who, for instance, can explain the Latin titles used for the psalms in the Prayer-book of the Church of England, without going back more than three hundred and fifty years to the time when England used the same language in her public worship as the rest of Christendom? So in the Latin Mass the Kyrie Eleison betrays its connection with the Greek, and the word Hosanna, in the

office for Palm Sunday, carries us back to the Hebrew.

But there is one word in particular which is employed, not on any special occasion, but in every service; not once or twice, but after every petition; not as a portion of the prayer, but as its summary and its seal. If a stranger stand outside the closed doors of a church while service is going on, there is one word, and probably but one, which he would hear distinctly repeated again and again. "Amen," "Amen," "Amen," that is the aspiration which, time after time, comes rolling forth with the full strength of choir and congregation. That is the word by which the apostle denotes the absolute nature of the Deity as compared with created matter. "In Him all things are Amen." Amen is the single word which the seer of the Apocalypse heard the Four Living Creatures utter before the throne in response to the chorus of universal adoration. And that is the title under which the same writer invokes the advent of his Divine Master at the conclusion of the vision: "Amen, Veni Domine Jesu." That, too, is the name which the Master assumed to Himself: "Amen, I say to you." And that is the name by which the Egyptian

old addressed the secret Deity—Amen, that is to say in Egyptian, “The Hidden One.”

That the existence of the one God was widely known, by some classes of men at least, among the nations of antiquity there can be little doubt. Among the Chinese, according to the eminent authority, Dr. Legge, the word *Ti* represented the same idea as we express by the word God; and its assumption as a title by the earliest dynasty of the Emperors of China would be quite in accordance with the ancient belief that the monarch ruled as the divine representative. So, in the sacred books of India, when the disciples of Manu approached that sage to beg for instruction in the wisdom which afterwards formed the foundation of Indian law, they addressed him as follows: “For thou, O lord, alone knowest the purport [or rites] and the knowledge taught in the whole ordinance of the Self-Existent [Svayam bhū], which is unknowable and unfathomable.” And their master, in his reply, laid down the principle of the one uncreated God, the Giver of Light. “The Divine Self-Existent,” he said, “indiscernible, making the elements and the rest discernible, appeared with creative force, dispelling the darkness.”

Again in the *Mahabharata*, the earliest production of post-Vedic literature, a translation of which, as well as of the laws of Manu, is given in the magnificent series of the *Sacred Books of the East*, the most enduring monument to its illustrious editor, a similar doctrine is ascribed to Vyasa. "In the commencement was Brahman, without beginning or end, unborn, luminous, free from decay, immutable, eternal, unfathomable, not to be fully known."

Equally explicit are the utterances of some of the Greek poets.

"One Self-begotten, from whom all things sprang," is one of the lines attributed to the famous Orpheus.

"To God all things are easy, nought impossible," so sang Linus, a brother of the same bright band. A fuller but not less accurate description is given by Xenophanes :

"One God there is, greatest 'mongst gods and men ;
Not like to mortals, or in form or thought.
In full he sees, he hears, in full he knows,
And without labour doth his mind move all."

Another poet, Cleanthes, strikes at the root of the exclusiveness arising from the characteristic principle of ancient idolatry, that a

deity listens to no prayers except from his own descendants, by proclaiming that all men are the offspring of God, and that consequently the right of prayer to him is universal :

“ O thou most glorious and immortal one,
 O many-titled, O Omnipotent,
 Zeus, Lord of Nature, ruling all by law,
 Hail, whom to worship is the right of all,
 Since all of us are of thee ”

So Aratus, whom St. Paul quotes in his famous speech to the Athenians. “ God is the source of our song and God is beginning of all things. We too are offspring of God.”

A similar passage, though capable of a more pantheistic interpretation, is contained in the *Orphica*.

“ God First ; and God the Lord of Thunder last ;
 God head, God midst and all things are of God ;
 God Male and God immortal Womanhood.
 God the great stay of earth and starry Heaven,
 God breath of all, God fire’s unwearied rush,
 God Ocean’s root and God the Sun and Moon.
 God King himself the Patriarch supreme
 One strength, one Lord, one generator of all,
 One King, one mould the base of every form.
 Fire, Water, Earth and Air and Night and Day
 And Wisdom Firstborn and Exhaustless Love
 All have their Being in the Godhead vast.”

Even the Roman mind, dim-eyed as it was for the invisible world, was not altogether without a glimpse of this truth, to which Horace has given expression when speaking of the supreme Deity :

“ From whom none greater than himself is born ;
Nor doth his equal or his second live.”

But the truths which sparkle here and there in the teachings of India, China, or of Greece, fade and vanish before the blaze of Egyptian theosophy. Take, for example, the following extract given by Mr. Budge from the hymn to Amen-Ra, the hidden Deity, the self-existent Light :

“ Hail to thee, Ra, Lord of Law, whose shine is hidden ; Master of the Gods, the God Kheper Ra (Self-Existent Light) in his boat ; by the sending forth of his Word the gods sprang into existence. Hail, God Atmu (Light), Maker of Mortals. However many are their forms, he causes them to live ; he makes different the colour of one man from another. He hears the prayers of him that is oppressed ; he is kind of heart to him that calls unto him ; he delivers him that is afraid from him that is strong of heart ; he judges between the mighty and the weak.

“ O Form, One, Creator of all things. O One, Only Maker of existences. Men came forth from his two

eyes, the gods sprang into existence at the utterance of his mouth. He maketh the green herb to make the cattle live and the staff of life for the (use of) man. He maketh the fish to live in the rivers, the winged fowl in the sky; he giveth the breath of life to the germ in the egg; he maketh birds of all kinds to live, and likewise the reptiles that creep and fly; he causeth the rats to live in their holes and the birds that are on every green twig. Hail to thee, O Maker of all these things, thou Only One."

Nor was the unity the only truth concerning the Godhead known to the priesthood of Egypt. Throughout the extent of the kingdom, at Thebes, at Ombos, at Denderah, at Memphis, at Annu (or On), a Triune God—of whom some knowledge seems to have been attained by Greece—invoked by many names, but everywhere consisting of three persons, co-substantial and coeternal, was worshipped as supreme. "I am Tmu in the morning," says the Creator, in a well-known passage, "Ra at noon, and Harmachi in the evening"; that is to say, as the dawn, the noon, and the sunset are three distinct forms co-existing perpetually and co-equally in the substance of the sun, so also did the three divine persons co-exist perpetually and co-equally in the substance of the Uncreated Light. Thus after declaring the

sacred Unity in the most emphatic and explicit terms, the hymn already quoted proceeds to invoke the three persons by name, using, nevertheless, the singular pronoun for the collective three.

“He is of many forms,” so the hymn proceeds. “O Amen, establisher of all things, Atmu and Harmachis, all people adore thee, saying, Praise to thee because of thy resting among us, homage to thee because thou hast created us. All creatures say, Hail to thee, and all lands praise thee. From the height of the sky to the breadth of the earth and to the depths of the sea art thou praised.”

Thus as the whole body of Egyptian temples prove upon inspection to form a definite and co-ordinated system based upon astronomical relations, so also does the worship of Egypt, when seen in the light of the universal fatherhood, reveal itself with a majestic unity not unworthy of its unrivalled shrines. Had the case been otherwise indeed; had the real objects of Egyptian worship been a mass of deities local and unrelated, then, inasmuch as the form of government was well-nigh a pure theocracy, the authority of the monarch being derived not merely from his descent but from his personal union with Ra, and inasmuch as

heresy was punished with excommunication and even, as M. Maspero states, with death by fire, it would have been inevitable that each successive dynasty, as it proceeded now from This, now from Memphis, now from Thebes, now from Sais, should have torn up by the root the religion established by its predecessors; and the annals of Egypt would have been as full of religious discord and confusion as those of our own Tudor princes.

If the divine Trinity, however, were the only secret of the Ritual, there would not be so great a difficulty in following its symbols. But there is a depth of mystery beyond, a mystery the greater because manifested in a visible form. Throughout the sacred writings of Egypt, there is no doctrine of which more frequent mention is made than that of a divine birth. "I am thy nurse, thy dandler," says Isis to the divine Horus in the inscription on the coffin of the queen who bore the name of Ankh Nes Ra Nefer Ab (signifying "Her Life is the sacred Heart of God"). And the figure portrayed upon that coffin six and twenty centuries ago, and now to be seen in the British Museum, with its sacred seals impressed upon the secret parts of the body,

its incision in the womb, and the rays descending upon the head, proclaims unmistakably the birth from a virgin mother beneath the overshadowing of the supernal light. And nowhere is that celestial birth more vividly expressed than in the temple of Hathor, the great hall of which speaks of the holy Child in his Cradle, in the midst of the vast company of the heavenly hosts. Nor do we read in the Ritual only of an incarnate, but of a suffering and a dying, God. We are confronted with the tears of Isis, and with the agony of Osiris. Moreover, not only is the twofold action of the same sacred person as man and God recognised, but it is embodied in an animal symbolism; just as among Christians the symbol of the lamb is used for the divine person, the calf and the eagle for the evangelists. Take, for example, the vignette of the Ritual representing the resurrection of Osiris as taking place in the presence of the Egyptian Trinity. The human form, being the highest available, is required by the supreme three; and in order to represent the lower nature, or divine humanity, it is necessary to take a lower creature whose characteristic should indicate that of the divine person represented. Of

such a nature was the cat, whose eyes, varying in form like the sun with the period of the day, imaged to the Egyptian the splendour of the light. And thus we have the cat cutting off the head of the serpent of darkness, in the presence of the sacred three. And when the original meaning of that symbolism was lost, that is, when the knowledge of God was no longer retained in their science, it would naturally give rise to the foolishness of animal worship.

No less profound was the relation between the Creator and his works, as intimated in their well-known symbol for created life, called the Ankh,¹ or sacred mirror, wherein every great deity contemplates perpetually his own image; but which is rarely grasped in the hand of any except Amen. But how should the universe be represented by a mirror, and, if it be, why should the heavenly powers behold themselves reflected in it? Since Egypt gives only the symbol but affords



The Ankh; or,
Sacred Mirror
of Creation.

¹ Another signification, that of a fisherman's knot, has of late been adopted by some authorities; but the shape of the knot differs essentially from that of the Ankh, the head of the latter being upright upon the stem. And again, how should a fisherman's knot stand upright on the knees of the gods? And if it could, why should it?

no clue to the connection, and since that profound relation is not affected by the lapse of ages, let us hear the great master of mediæval philosophy. According to the teaching of Aquinas, the universe exists in a twofold manner, first ideally in the mind of God, and secondly materially, externally to him, so that in creation the Almighty contemplates his own mind as in a mirror. As a dramatist, before he gives living expression to his characters, conceives in his own mind their forms, their countenances, their actions, passions, and conditions of life, with all the details of their environment, and as his work reflects the image of the author's mind, so in the theosophy of Egypt did the entire cosmos, embracing all space, all time, and all orders of created being, reflect a single thought in the mind of the Creator. Man himself, therefore, had a double or a counterpart in the divine idea, the sacred "type," the festival of which is celebrated in the Ritual, and which possessed such sanctity that the monarch himself is represented as sacrificing to his own "double."

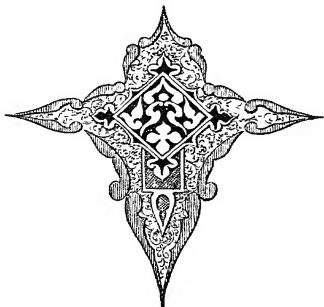
Thus in the theosophy of Egypt the divine relations of the invisible creation were made manifest by those of their visible counterpart. And

the same relation of the material to the immaterial world will be found to underlie our own scientific conceptions, wherein the expressed form is ever the counterpart of the impressed force. For can any mathematician define the very nature of force otherwise than as that which sets matter in motion? But if force be that which sets matter in motion, it cannot itself be material, if the fundamental law of motion be true that matter at rest remains at rest. Unless therefore our whole conception of dynamical science is wrong from the beginning, the motions of the material universe (and it is of the motions of the heavenly bodies, and not merely of their existence, that the Ritual continually speaks) must be the result of an immaterial force impressing itself upon the material world, the mind of the Creator giving form to his creation. And it is in the perception of that action that the supreme gift of the human mind, the imaginative faculty of genius, is most fully exercised; for genius is the power of giving expression to the unexhausted forms of creation potentially existing in the mind of the Creator.

Most powerful and most hidden of all motives is the passion which grows the more

reticent in proportion as it is enduring, the passion which dominates at once the senses and the spirit, the master-mystery of love. But Love himself was none other than the hidden God. In Greece, where some rays of Egyptian wisdom penetrated with a brightness unknown to more distant lands, this truth was not unknown. Love was the third in the Trinity of Hesiod. And in Parmenides we read how strife has entered into the deepest places, "but in the centre Love stands calm." But in the teaching of Egypt, the Creator's love, so conspicuous in the sublime hymn already quoted, is the motive power of the universe. "I am the Inundation," says the Creator in the Ritual—the fulness of the torrent of life. And again, "I am the Fount of Joy," the inexhaustible source of happiness to the soul. Most striking too is the allusion which occurs in another hymn to Amen, where it speaks of the crown of illumination, or "Atf" crown of the monarchs, fashioned after the form of the zodiacal light which sometimes crowns the supreme heaven before the summer dawn. That crown we learn from the Ritual was placed upon the head of the Illuminate on his accomplishing the "Passage of the Sun," and the

hymn proclaims that "North and South of that crown is love." That Love it was, wherein the catechumen of the Egyptian Wisdom was instructed from the Secret Scroll, and into the mysteries of which he was initiated and illuminated by the Master of the Secret House.





CHAPTER VIII

THE SECRET SCROLL

“THIS Book is the Greatest of Mysteries. Do not let the eye of anyone look upon it—that were abomination. The *Book of the Master of the Secret House* is its name.” So runs the emphatic declaration contained in the great papyrus, of which we have made such frequent mention; and the whole contents are in harmony with it. For throughout there is scarcely a paragraph the expression of which is not studiously obscure and difficult of interpretation. Yet recondite as are both subject and form, we find in it a clue, in some degree at least, to penetrate the mystical teaching of the Egyptian priesthood, that is to say, the doctrines which they taught not merely as to the nature of the Creator and his original relation to the creature, but also as to the means whereby the creature is

admitted to participate in the mysteries of the Creator.

The papyrus in question, which was found in the coffin of a priest named Auf Ankh, is now preserved at Turin. And a facsimile of it was published by Lepsius in A.D. 1842. That distinguished Egyptologist thought good to call it the *Book of the Dead*; a title which usage has rendered almost too familiar to disturb, but which, in itself, is by no means happy, for it gives the idea of regarding the holy departed as dead, whereas the whole conception of the doctrine was the instruction in Life and Light. A much better description is that given by Champollion, who called it the *Funereal Ritual*; and though Dr. Budge vehemently controverts that title, his objections are urged with more warmth than force. But neither one term nor the other can, it is clear, compete in authority with that which the papyrus claims for itself, namely, the *Book or Scroll of the Master of the Secret House*.

The whole history of the sacred writings, among which this papyrus is perhaps the most important yet discovered, is by no means free from difficulty. They are made up of a great number of chapters, composed at various pe-

riods extending over several centuries, and they occur sometimes carved on the walls of the tombs, but more often written on papyrus and hidden in the grave-clothes of the mummy. Frequently only one chapter is employed, but often also a considerable number, though no papyrus has yet been discovered containing in one the whole series of chapters. These sacred writings are usually divided by Egyptologists into four Collections, according to the different periods to which they belong. The first is that of the ancient empire, written in hieroglyphics, to which the important inscription on the coffin of Amamu belongs. Then comes the Theban recension, also in hieroglyphics, of which the papyri have been with great labour collated and published by M. Naville; followed during the succeeding (twentieth) Dynasty by another written in hieratic or priestly characters. And last of all we have the recension of the (twenty-sixth) Saite Dynasty, to which the *Book of the Master* is due.

During the later ages, at least, there can be little doubt that papyri were prepared for sale with a blank left for the name of the mummy, to be filled up before placing in the coffin. But it does not follow that this was the cus-

tom in earlier ages, and the rarity of inscription on the tombs of that period tends to contradict the probability. Neither is it likely that every chapter of the Ritual was open to every purchaser. On the contrary, it is by no means improbable that, as the whole country of Egypt represented various stages in the path of the deceased, so the chapters employed in the various localities may have varied also either in their order or in a portion of their wording. And this latter supposition would account for the different readings which we find introduced, especially in the *Book of the Master*; implying not (as we with the characteristic carelessness of modern times suppose) an ignorance or indifference on the part of the priests, but a collection of texts, to be duly chosen, one or other, according to circumstances. Moreover, from several allusions in the writings, we find that the efficacy attached to them arose from the deceased having been permitted to become acquainted with them during lifetime, so that the papyrus attested the instruction in Wisdom of which the departed was possessed at death. Now the object with which that instruction was conferred was the union of the departed with Osiris, the

Creator, in virtue of which union we find the title of the Osiris prefixed in the papyri to the name of the departed, somewhat as we ourselves prefix the title of Saint to the names of those who shine like the light, and as the stars for ever and ever. And this again agrees with the direction given, for instance, in the *Book of the Master*, that the recitation is to commence on the day of the funeral, and accounts for the frequent commencement of the chapters with the words, "Saith the Osiris Auf Ankh"; implying that the whole Ritual was recited by the departed through the mouth of the priest.

The chief difficulty in understanding that book of mystery arises not merely from the great variety of the imagery, but much more from the complexity of its application. For the figures which are drawn from all kinds of familiar objects are rarely or never employed singly, so as to present a definite image whereby the signification might perhaps be detected; but parts of two or three are always used together, so as to present no meaning except to the instructed. Thus, for example, we find the holy departed addressed as "Osiris the Bull of the West," meaning the Strong One of heaven; the

union with Osiris being assumed as begun, and the image being taken partly from the generative power of the bull and partly from the setting sun, which goes down into the west to illuminate the unseen world. Occasionally, also, the image of the doctrine signified is itself conveyed by another image. Thus Professor Renouf has shown how the partial eclipse of the sun, which is caused by the intervention of a planet, was represented by the Egyptians under the form of a tortoise crawling across the disc, and that image of the tortoise is applied in the papyri to the partial obscuration of Osiris' Godhead by his temporary death.

Among the different images, however, there is one class which in this papyrus occurs with a frequency unsurpassed except by those of light, namely, those which relate to some form of building. To this class belong the festivals of the "Northern Passage" and of the "Southern Passage," that of the "Hidden Lintel," that of "Osiris who dwells in the Roofed House" and in the "Pool of the Great House." So in the kalendar of Esne we read of the festivals of the Sockets, and again of the Opening of the Doors, which is closely connected in

the Ritual with the Raising of Osiris from the Open Tomb. The whole progress of the departed seems, in fact, to take place in some kind of house. The Ritual is full of references to his going out and coming in, to "going in after coming out," to passing gates and gateways, and doors and staircases. And though no doubt the secret places there mentioned have also a mystical significance, and refer to those secret places of the universe wherein, according to Egyptian belief, man, when set free from the flesh, was initiated into the mysteries of creation, yet inasmuch as that doctrine was to be learned while still on earth, so it was necessary that there should be a house on earth wherein those places should be illustrated. And where shall we look for such a building if not in that great house wherein, according to Egyptian tradition, the Secret Wisdom was imparted to the postulant; that house, the places of which claimed for their Master the Master of the Secret Scroll; that house whereof every feature and every proportion speak of the measurement of the universe?

Again, it was during the time of the Saite Dynasty that the order of the chapters is said

to have been fixed for the first time. What canon, then, or standard of order did the revisers employ? It certainly was not the relative antiquity of the chapters, for the only one which claims to remount to the First Dynasty stands one hundred and thirtieth in the papyrus; while that which is attributed in it to the Fourth Dynasty, and which is entitled the "Entrance on Light in one chapter," as though it had once been the single chapter in use, comes sixty-fourth. But while the written records were liable to variability and error, no change could affect, no lapse of time could impair, the record erected in stone three thousand years before by the astronomer-architect Khufu. And thus as early as the Twelfth Dynasty, the inscription on the coffin of Amamu, buried in the sacred city of Abydos, shows that the secret places determine the order of the Ritual. "*Thou hast not gone dying,*" we read, "*thou hast gone living to Osiris. Now thou hast found the words of order, the Mystery of the Secret Places.*" For the doctrine contained in those mystic writings was nothing else than an account of the Path pursued by the Just when, the bonds of the flesh being loosed, he passed through stage after

stage of spiritual growth,—the Entrance on Light, the Instruction in Wisdom, the Second Birth of the Soul, the Initiation in the Well of Life, the Ordeal of Fire, and the Justification in Judgment; until, illumined in the secret Truth and adorned with the jewels of Immortality, he became indissolubly united with Him whose name, says the Egyptian Ritual, is Light, Great Creator. That secret doctrine which the Ritual gives in writing the Secret House materialises in its immutable masonry. And so closely does the path embodied in that masonry correspond with the Path of the departed as described in the sacred writings, that the traveller who to-day penetrates those mysterious recesses may follow almost step by step the mystical progress of the holy departed through the grave and gate of death to the final resurrection of the Open Tomb.





CHAPTER IX

THE SECRET HOUSE

IT is difficult to conceive a greater contrast than is presented by the two forms in which the record of Egyptian doctrine was preserved. The papyri are fragile, numerous, varying in length and order. The monument in stone is unique, solid almost to indestructibility, incapable of variation, and standing unchanged and unchanging, regardless of the assaults, whether of time or of man. That extraordinary pile, the most majestic and most mysterious ever erected by the hand of man, stands close to the verge of the immense desert which stretches its arid wastes across the whole breadth of the African continent to the shore of the western ocean, just at the spot where the busy life of the earliest civilisation on record was bordered by the vast and barren solitude. Of all the other structures which

made the marvels of the ancient world, scarcely a vestige is left. Where are the hanging gardens, the boast of the monarch of Babylon? Where is the far-famed Pharos of Alexandria? Centuries have passed since earthquake laid low the Colossus which bestrode the harbour of Rhodes; and a madman's hand reduced to ashes the temple of Artemis, the pride of Ephesus. But the Grand Pyramid of Ghizeh still remains, undestroyed and indestructible, ages after the lesser marvels have passed away, as it stood ages before ever they came into being. More than sixty centuries have gone by since that building, which never since has needed the care of man, first concealed from view its hidden places, those secret chambers of which no other building on the globe, not even among the later pyramids, contains the like. Upwards of two million times has the sun risen and set upon its mighty walls, since first the pure and unbroken surface of polished casing-stones flashed back the rays like a veil of dazzling lustre and vindicated its ancient title of "The Light."

In external appearance the building erected by Khufu differs only in a single feature from the later pyramids. Like them it is quadran-

gular in form and oriented towards the four cardinal points of the compass. Like the later pyramids also, within very slight limits of variation, its elevation (as is well known) is such that the perpendicular height of its apex bears the same proportion to the circuit of the base as the radius of a circle bears to its circumference. Like them also, it is constructed exteriorly in courses of huge stones, forming a series of steps, each from two to three feet in height, and level all round the course; these steps being now exposed to view, but originally concealed from top to bottom by perfectly fitting casing-stones, which offered no foothold for ascent and gave to Memphis its sacred title of the City of the White Wall. But whereas in the later pyramids the building is carried fully up to the apex (or point to which all the ascending lines converge), in that of Khufu the structure falls short of that point by about twenty courses, the pyramid being truncated and the summit forming a platform about twenty feet square; so that what the Egyptians called the "Benben," or pyramidal crown, is not to be found there. Seen from below, the ascending courses resemble a series of terraces or cliffs, rising majestically to the cloudless

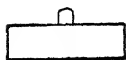
heaven. But from this platform they present rather the appearance of four streams of stone descending from a common fount, like the four streams of the celestial Nile given in the vignette of chapter cx. And the four together encircle the whole building in a cascade of rock, thus illustrating the "Beating Circle of the Waters," which we find inscribed in the same vignette; an illustration, it is to be observed, which could not have been detected by an Egyptian of old (while the casing-stones were still unremoved) unless he had been taught the concealed construction of the building.

From the fact that this peculiar feature is confined to the Great Pyramid, or at least for no other apparent reason, modern writers have assumed it to have been originally shaped like the rest, and have attributed the present height to havoc supposed to have been made by the Turks. But though those barbarous destroyers were indeed capable of stripping off the casing-stones, many of which still lie in confusion around the foot, while others have been plundered for the buildings in Cairo; yet to destroy a solid mass of masonry, firmly cemented together, over thirty feet high, with a base of four thousand square inches, and that at an

elevation of upwards of four hundred feet from the ground, was a task which would require a very different class of engineer to accomplish. Besides which, we have a direct chain of evidence from three different sources to the contrary, extending back for nearly two thousand years, that is to say, to the time before the destruction had begun. About two hundred and fifty years ago, Professor Greaves, the Oxford astronomer, who visited the pyramid and has left a most interesting volume upon it, gives a drawing of the building which shows the summit shaped just as at present. Four hundred years before his time, Abdallatif, a historian of the twelfth century, tells us that at the top the Great Pyramid ended in a platform. And fifty years before the Christian era, Diodorus describes the building as "tapering up as far as the summit, which makes each of its sides six cubits."

Equally conclusive is the evidence borne by the building itself, the summit of which betrays no symptom either of incompleteness or destruction, but presents a flat surface structurally enclosing the Secret House. On the centre of the platform and inseparably affixed to it are some huge blocks arranged in the figure of a

rough cross. And on the highest of these stones are sculptured a number of holes, forming a square figure, consisting of seven ranks of seven holes each, exactly similar (except in the number of holes) to the "Hotep," or Table of Offerings, belonging to the time of Thothmes III., which is now to be seen in the Museum at Boulaq.¹ In a word, every detail goes to show that the founder never designed to erect



Summit of Great Pyramid. Central Transverse Section



Hieroglyph of the "Hotep."

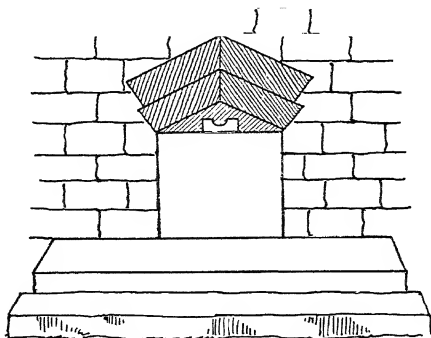
the Benben—the image of the Trinity invisible in the supreme height, —but raised in its stead a "Hotep," or sacrificial Table of Offering. And

agreeably with this, we find in the chapter already quoted that mention is made of the "Field of the Hotep," and of the Waters in the Field of the Hotep; reminding us of the stone cataracts which descend from the summit.

To an observer immediately at the foot, the single entrance to the pyramid, opening at the seventeenth course, is hidden from view. But on mounting to the fifteenth step we perceive, two courses yet above us, a low gateway, surmounted by a double arch, opening downward

¹ See Note K, page 202

to the dark interior ; just as the catechumen in the fifteenth chapter approaches the " double arched gate of the horizon," when he invokes " Haroeris, the great guide of the world, the guide of the souls in their secret places, the



Gateway of the Double Arch.

Light dwelling in the Horizon." From this point the first veil of secrecy begins. For so effectually was the opening concealed from the uninstructed eye by a revolving stone, that its position once forgotten was almost impossible to recover ; and for two hundred years after passing under the barbarous Omar, the build-

ing remained impenetrable, until Caliph Al Mamoon, in the ninth century of our era, forced an opening at random through the solid masonry, and hit accidentally upon the entrance passage. Entering by the low gateway thus built in the northern side at a considerable height above the ground, we see before us the grave-like passage, gaping downwards to the depths of darkness and pointing outwards to the pole-star—that boundary point of mortal vision at which, as at the entrance of the grave, the finite mystery of earth passes into the mystery of the infinite heaven. As we cross the gate on the seventeenth course, we recognise the point where, in the seventeenth chapter, the catechumen is admitted as a postulant and exclaims: “I go from the Gate of Taser (the Ascent). What is the Gate of Taser? It is the Gate where the god Shu (the Light) lifts the disc of heaven. The Gate of the North is the Gate of the Great God,” he continues, speaking evidently of the same gate; exactly as in the pyramid the only entrance is the Gate of the Ascent in the seventeenth course of the northern face.

Bidding now with him farewell to the light of earthly day, and treading the descending

passage, we pass, some little way down a very fine and beautifully ruled double line, scored perpendicularly on the slanting wall so as to point downwards to the foundation, and separating the upper from the lower section of the passage; corresponding to the point in the Ritual where the departed, hitherto bereft of every faculty except that of motion, begins to have his faculties gradually restored to him. Continuing the long descent, we arrive at an aperture in the western wall, and passing through the opening thus disclosed, mount gently into a kind of grotto at the bottom of a Well, or square perpendicular shaft, with footholds cut in the precipitous sides. Into that Chamber of the Deep Waters the postulant descends on the western side, as the sun at the close of day goes down into the western waters, and bursts forth in splendour on the hidden world.

Returning from the bottom of the well to the passage, and pursuing our course still farther downwards, we come, after a short level continuation, to the subterranean chamber, or the Place of Fiery Ordeal, a chamber hewn out of the solid rock, and having an inaccessible floor covered with huge blocks

of varying height, resembling a pool of petrified flame, or the masses of the mountain chains formed by the action of the earth's central fire; beyond which terrible chamber a small passage leads to nothingness. Resuming our exploration of the edifice and coming forth from the Place of Ordeal or subterranean chamber, we remount the entrance passage until, at a little distance below the scored line, we come to a granite gate, or portcullis, built in the roof. This important gate, which originally was totally hidden by masonry and was only discovered by the falling of a stone when Al Mamoon was forcing his entrance into the pyramid, stands at the threshold of the Double Hall of Ascent concealed within. Not only was the whole gate carefully hidden, but the lower portion of the passage within was blocked with enormous stones, still unremoved, and perhaps irremovable. So even now the lintel is still hidden, and admission is only effected through a hole forced by violence in the wall of the passage above the blocks; while a precisely similar difficulty attends the crossing of the Lintel of Justice in the Ritual before entering the Double Hall of Truth. Creeping with difficulty through the hole, we

find ourselves in a small, low corridor, the floor-line of which (about 1561 inches in total length) slightly projects beyond the gateway at the upper end; the whole corridor being inclined upwards at an elevation slightly less than that of the depression of the entrance passage, and corresponding to the lower portion of the Hall of Truth where the Initiate justifies himself before the judges of the unseen world, "the Gods of the Horizon and the Gods of the Orbit." Then, stooping beneath the low gateway, by which it is terminated (but not obstructed) at the top, the "Gateway of the Festival," we stand upon a kind of landing-place, from which the whole system of the interior passage opens out. On every side is "the crossing of the pure roads of life" of which the coffin of Amamu speaks. Straight in front runs a level passage leading direct to the Queen's Chamber, the place of "Isis, the divine mother, the queen of the pyramid," as an ancient papyrus calls her; corresponding to the place where the soul receives its second birth. Within that chamber, on the eastern wall, is sculptured a staircase of five ascents, representing the five degrees ascended each month by the moon, wherein,

according to Egyptian teaching, Osiris, the divine son of Isis, each month renewed his birth. On the western side is the opening to the mouth of the well; and down the ladder of the shaft (as we see in the papyrus of Ani) the regenerate soul, on coming forth from the Chamber of Second Birth, descends to become re-united with the postulant awaiting it in the Well of Life. And upwards towards the south, above the roof of the passage leading to the Queen's Chamber, runs the upper ascending corridor, called by some writers the Grand Gallery. This remarkable chamber consists of a corridor, about one hundred and fifty-seven feet long and twenty feet high, built entirely on a slope, floor, walls, and roof, except a small portion at the southern or upper end. On either side of the sloping floor are twenty-eight ramps, with corresponding depressions; the floor-line at the upper end being closed abruptly, just above the Queen's Chamber, by an immense stone forming a dais, or Throne of Judgment. From the lower entrance of the chamber at the northern end to the foot of the throne, the direct ascent is about 1816 inches, the height of the throne is 36 inches, and the length of the seat about

61 inches, so that when the darkness is lit up by torches it forms the most conspicuous and dominating feature of that marvellous chamber. At the back of the throne the gallery is brought to an abrupt termination by the southern wall closing down within a few feet of the seat, and leaving as an exit farther south a narrow and grave-like tunnel. In the sloping roof of the gallery, running upwards from north to south at a somewhat greater inclination than the floor, are thirty-six overlappings, like the waves of a river of light, and corresponding to the number of decades of days in the orbit of the Egyptian year. On the side wall of the dais at the upper end of the gallery are also seven overlappings, one above another, arching over to the summit as if representing the orbits of the planets, and having the effect of rays of light petrified in the masonry around the throne. And in the position corresponding to the orbit of our own globe runs a deep groove, or orbit, along its entire length, offering a close connection between the "Orbit" and the "Passage of the Sun, in the Double Hall of Truth," in the Ritual. Above the throne rises the habitation of the "seven great spirits in the service

of their Lord, the Creator," who, the sacred books tell us, "protect the coffin of Osiris"; while from its loftiest point a passage, inaccessible from below,—the "Opening of Hathor," to use the language of the Ritual,—leads to the secret heights. In that Hall of Splendour dominated by the throne of Light the Justified receives his Illumination and Investiture.

Now comes the most mysterious portion of the building. Stripped of its noble proportions and reduced to an altitude so low that a man must creep on hand and knee to pass, the passage pierces the southern wall of the upper gallery, and runs straight on, first into the ante-chamber, or "Place of Preparation," and then into the splendid hall, called the King's Chamber, in the most secluded portion of the building. In each of these halls is one, and only one, object. In the ante-chamber is a kind of veil of masonry, which no one can pass without bowing the head. In the King's Chamber is a sarkophagus, not closed, but open; while the air-channels, wherewith this deeply buried room is amply ventilated, proclaim that it is not a chamber of the dead, but of the living, corresponding to the place of resurrection where,

in the final chapter of the Ritual, Osiris is awakened from his slumbers. In this portion of the building the structure changes its material for granite, forming, as it were, a house by itself within the pyramid; an inner house yet, within the house of Osiris, entered by the low and grave-like passage leading from behind the throne. This is the House of Glory described on the coffin of Amamu already quoted, the house to which the Illuminate approaches, after passing the tribunal of Osiris. Here is the "Gate of the Pure Spirits," which they alone can enter who are washed in the waters of life and radiant with the splendours of the Orbit. And here, too, it would seem, takes place the solemn address, described in the Sai-an-Sinsin, "of the Gods in the House of Osiris," followed by the response of the "Gods in the House of Glory"; the joyous song of the holy departed who stand victorious before the judgment-seat, echoed triumphantly by the inner chorus of their beloved who have gone before them into the fulness of light. Over the chamber of the Open Tomb, are the hidden heights, the secret spaces, to which the Opening of Hathor, the Queen of Imperishable Beauty, leads; and the whole is

dominated and crowned by a gigantic triangle of granite, immutably expressing the divine Trinity of Egypt.

Such is the complex and hitherto wholly unexplained system of gateways and passages, shafts, channels, and chambers ; some leading upwards, some leading downwards, some level ; some rough in the last degree, others exquisitely polished ; some magnificent in their proportions, some so low that a man must creep, so narrow that he can with difficulty pass, to be found within the Pyramid of Light. It is absolutely unique ; no other building, it may be safely averred (not even among the later pyramids), having contained any structure bearing the least resemblance to the higher chambers. What then was the design, the secret and jealously guarded design, with which this wondrous edifice was constructed ? That its various features are meaningless, or the mere result of caprice, is a suggestion to which the forethought and lavishness of calculation displayed in every detail unmistakably give the lie. Nor again can we maintain that they are necessary for the purposes of an ordinary tomb. For, in the first place, they are not to be found in the other pyramids which were used for that purpose ;

and secondly, if there be any intention which the architect has openly manifested, it is to create such a series of obstructions that no human body could be buried there. What the concealed significance may be of that secret masonry ; for what purpose the complex plan was designed ; at what epoch the huge structure was erected, are questions which have perplexed many minds in many lands, and have resulted in a discord more akin to Babel than to the grandeur of its silent majesty. It was built by the Jews in the days of their captivity, just to give them something to do, says, or rather said, one school of theorists. It was built by Chemmis, but attributed by Egyptians in hatred of him to the shepherd Philition, is the account given by Herodotus. It was built by Ibn Saluk, say the Arabs, just before the flood, to preserve the royal treasures from the predicted inundation. It was built by Melchisedec—or somebody,—vehemently asserts the Scottish Professor of Astronomy, who seems always to write in a whirlwind of miscellaneous indignation. It was indisputably intended by the founder for his tomb, one party stoutly maintains,—a tomb in which he left especial instructions that he should not be buried, and in

which nobody could possibly have been buried, replies another. It was an observatory, maintains a third,—where every place for observation was carefully closed up, retorts a fourth. It is the “prophetic floor-roll of human history,” screams Professor Smyth,—with all the dates gone wrong, softly sneers Mr. Flinders Petrie.

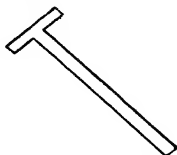
Only when we compare that Secret House with the Secret Book of its Master do we understand the meaning of its secret places—darkness illuminating darkness and mystery revealing mystery. And only then also do we perceive how, in those places, we possess the key to the “Words of Order” of the Secret Book. Thus, then, the determination of the Egyptian theosophy is removed from the indefinite domain of archæological speculation, and referred to the comparison of two existing and well defined records. Here is a papyrus claiming to be the secret scroll peculiar to the Master of the Secret House; there is a secret house in which, according to Egyptian tradition, the secret Wisdom to which that scroll relates was communicated to the postulant. That scroll commences with the Entrance on Light; and the Light was the name by which that house was known. The scroll is full of

references to secret passages and chambers ; and secret chambers and passages make up the whole interior of that secret house. Prominent among all those chambers mentioned in the scroll is the Double Hall of Truth ; and prominent among the chambers of the house is the Double Hall of sculptured Splendour. In the scroll, the final chapter tells of the Resurrection of the Body, and in the house the final chamber is the chamber of the Open Tomb. And while each record is in accordance with the other in expressing the Truth in Light, the images, conveying the doctrinal truth expressed in the Ritual, are in accord with the relations of scientific truth expressed in the building.

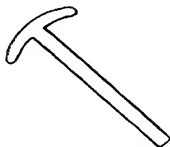
Such a method of recording the creed of a priesthood is so alien to our modern ideas and customs as at first sight to seem scarcely intelligible. But it is entirely in accordance with that intense conservatism which, as Professor Wiedemann has well insisted in his valuable treatise, characterised the Egyptians from the earliest times, and which still renders the fellah of to-day so close a representative of his predecessor six thousand years ago. And it is difficult to conceive a device which could be more

enduring, or more effective for keeping the doctrines of that religion at once secret and immutable, than by embodying them in the hidden masonry of this stupendous building. Again, since the religion of the country was the foundation upon which the whole political system was erected, we have in the concealed chambers of this Great House or Pir Aa, from which the Egyptian monarchs derived their familiar title of Pharaoh, a key to the politico-religious constitution of the country—a key which none could imitate, none could alter, none destroy; which no man could comprehend, unless initiated, nor any forget or mistake, who had once received illumination.

Nor is it unworthy of notice that in the masonry of the different parts of that structure we may detect the forms of many of the mystic



Entrance Passage with Gateway



Sceptre of Anup.

symbols, whereby the priests so expressed the divine conceptions as to be intelligible to those

alone who had been initiated in the Secret House. Thus if we represent the Entrance Passage together with the masonry of the Gateway we have the form of the Sceptre of Anup, the Guide of the Soul. Again, if we



Opening from Well
to Chamber of
Divine Fire.



Sceptre of Ptah,
Spirit of Divine
Fire.

represent the descent traversed by the Initiate from the Head of the Well to the opening into the Chamber of the Fiery Ordeal, we have

the form of the Sceptre of Ptah, the Spirit of Divine Fire. Similarly if we represent the course traced by the overlappings of the rays in the roof of the Upper Hall of Truth we have a representation of the Celestial Nile as depicted in



Roof of Upper Hall



Hieroglyph Symbol of the Nile

the vignettes of the Ritual, and the hieroglyph of its earthly counterpart. And once more if we draw the great throne in the Double Hall of Truth with the central line of the light running down to depths of the rock on which it is built, we



Symbol of
Divinity

obtain the hieroglyph denoting Divinity. And if we add to this the lower portion of the building or, territory of Initiation, there results the hieroglyph for the territory of the Holy Dead.

Nobly indeed does the stupendous monument respond to its sacred title of the Light. That secret house is the house of a tomb; but it is not a closed, but an open tomb. It is a tomb not of a man, but of a god; not of the dead, but of the risen. It is the tomb of the divine Osiris, whose birth on earth, descent into the under-world, resurrection and judgment of the dead, were the most prominent features in the creed of Egypt, and in union with whom the holy departed passed in safety the divine tribunal, and was made glorious by the Unseen Light.





CHAPTER X

THE ENTRANCE ON LIGHT

LIGHT is the first principle of created life. There is no life without growth; there is no growth without light. Colour, perfume, savour, every varied object of sense, vanishes if light be absent. Each beam is a separate celestial gift, direct from the hand of the Creator; as in the bas-relief on the tomb at Thebes, discovered by Mr. Villiers Stuart, where the diverging rays form a pyramid of light, and to each ray is attached a hand of blessing.

Universal, too, as is the necessity for light in living nature, equally extended is its manifestation in the form of motion. Wherever life exists in man or beast or bird or fish there also is that power which is denied to inanimate matter—the power to originate motion. To live and move and have our being are three

states inseparably connected with one another. Mathematician and poet alike acknowledge the universality of motion in living form. "Motion, fount of beauty," exclaims Pindar, in one of his loftiest odes. "All nature is in motion," says Professor Price, in his lucid treatise on infinitesimals. So, too, the unfailing harmonies of the heavenly bodies express themselves in the periods of their orbits. And through the correlations of those luminous circuits, as through a veil of glory, the correlations of interior truth were shadowed forth by the Egyptian Mystery-Teachers of the Heaven. Depth below depth, space beyond space, height above height, from the company of planets around our sun, to where the "clusters of countless stars are but a faint nebulous gleam," light is everywhere the Omnipotent Creator, the laws of light the expression of infallible truth.

Yet how to seize with material grasp the intellectual relations of the most ethereal element known to man? How imprison in permanent form the flashes of the fiery spark, as it darts with inconceivable speed from space to farthest space? How render palpable to the direct touch the distant courses of those flying orbs? In a word, how shall we build

up the mystery of the depths, and find material expression for the manifestation of light? Light itself gives us a reply. For if, as in the bas-relief at Thebes, the diverging flood of rays be represented as pouring down equally on either side, then we shall have the quadrangular form of the pyramid, its sides so oriented as to face the four cardinal points, as in the pyramid of Khufu, the "Light" of Egypt.

But earth and sun are both in motion. The earth perpetually encircles the parent orb. The sun, carrying with him the whole planetary system, proceeds, if Herschel be correct, ever onward with a somewhat slower motion, traversing in a period of four years (the grand cycle of the Egyptian astronomers) a space about equal in length to the annual path of the earth. Now we have seen already (chap. v.) that the length of the Nile in its course through Upper Egypt (from Philæ to the Great Pyramid) is just a millionth part of that orbit; and that the positions of the great temples illustrate the principal relations by which that orbit is determined. But if, in accordance with the same principle of measurement, we take a thousandth part of that distance again (or

the thousand millionth part of the orbit), we shall have (within a yard or two) the base-circuit of the Great Pyramid, so that we have a remarkable connection between the building, the river, and the course of the earth, which illustrates many allusions in the sacred writings. And since the form of that circuit is square, the base-line of the building will be one-fourth of it, that is to say, it will be the thousand millionth part of the distance traversed by the sun through space in a single year. Again if we take for altitude a line having the same proportion to the base-circuit as the radius of any given circle bears to its circumference, then that altitude will be the thousand millionth part of the radius of our planet's orbit, that is, of the earth's distance from the sun. And this is the well-known relation between altitude and base to be found in the Great Pyramid.¹ Nor was that dominating relation a solitary instance, but it constitutes the most marked and almost the only characteristic which the later pyramids possess in common with that of Khufu, thus constituting a sign whereby the masonry of the lesser habitations

¹ Special attention to this relation between radius and circumference was paid by Mr. Flinders Petrie, who fully confirms it.

tacitly asserted their kinship with the Great House. That sign, too, was in itself significant of the light. For since the sun gives forth his rays in a direct line, while the illumined body travels in a circle around it, the relations thus embodied between radius and orbit image forth the relation between Illuminator and Illuminate.

How then shall we avail ourselves of this mighty measure, this rule of light and standard of motion? A closer observation of the same wonderful edifice suggests a means. For on examining the base-circuit of the building we find it to be composed of casing-stones with a bevelled horizontal edge, so exquisitely finished that, according to Mr. Flinders Petrie, it is equal to the "finest work of the optician." Now on the occasion of the visit of the Empress Eugenie to Egypt in 1869, one of these casing-stones was measured *in situ* by Mr. W. Dixon, and found to contain just 25.025 British inches, that is to say, as Sir J. Herschel has pointed out, just the ten-millionth part of the polar axis of the earth. That this length was a standard measure among the builders of the early dynasties is shown by the discovery of Mr. Flinders Petrie, who found at Ghizeh, in

the neighbourhood of the pyramids, two specimens of twenty-five inches¹ (within a small decimal) belonging to the time of Khufu. And as the Egyptians were certainly familiar with the decimal system, expressing units, tens, hundreds, thousands, and millions by distinct hieroglyphs, this stone in the base-circuit of the Secret House supplies a simple and unalterable unit of length, based upon an invariable standard of universal measurement. Were this relation, however, an isolated instance, some question might not unnaturally arise as to an accidental connection; but the intention of the architect is strongly confirmed by a kindred discovery, due also to Mr. Flinders Petrie. For that acute observer has pointed out that the length of the raised pavement around the building was a simple measure (one-twentieth) of a geographical mile. And since a geographical mile is a measure of the earth's circumference at the equator, a knowledge of it implies

¹ Professor Petrie maintains this twenty-five-inch cubit to be 'evidently an Egyptian edition of the royal twenty-five-inch cubit of Persia.' But why a Persian cubit should be employed at Ghizeh, or what we know of Persia some thousands of years before the time of Darius, he does not tell us. It is difficult to see why he might not with equal reason pronounce the Capitol of Romulus to be "evidently an Italian edition of the Capitol at Washington."

as well a knowledge of the length of the polar axis.

Striking, too, as is this relation, the connection of the stone with the base-circuit yields another result entirely in harmony with universal measures. For, taking as the measured length of that base a line of 9140 inches (being the average of the results obtained by the principal surveys executed since the great Napoleon first opened the dull eyes of Europe to the inexhaustible treasures of ancient Egypt), we find that the length of the casing-stone is contained just 365.25 times in it, thus giving the number of days in the sacred year; while these simple details go far to show the nature of the wisdom which must have been professed by the officer of the Pharaohs who bore the title of the "Prophet of the Pyramid."

While these general relations between earth and sun suffice to determine the general aspect of the building, a closer comparison with the action of light discloses a yet more peculiar principle in its construction. For since our atmosphere may be conceived as divided into successive layers of air, each ray as it travels will be slightly deflected or refracted as it passes from a finer to a denser medium, the re-

fraction being greatest when the body is on the horizon, and imperceptible when it is near the zenith. Conversely, if on any given day the position of the sun be observed at equal intervals, from dawn to noon and from noon to sunset, the apparent place of the sun will, owing to refraction, be slightly different from its true position at any observation ; and a diagram representing their mutual relations will offer the appearance of a house having many stories, slightly truncated at the summit, since near the zenith the true and apparent positions are identical (and the only motion is that of transit). And that is precisely the appearance presented by the Great Pyramid when the casing-stones are removed.¹

To measure the motions of the earth, however, is the commencement, but only the commencement, of the universal scale. That which we need for the mystery of the depths is nothing less than the span of measurable space. In other words, we require to define the extreme limits, on either hand, within which no fount of original light is found except our own sun, since the distances of the stars are beyond accurate measurement. But the distance of

¹ See Note L, page 203.

the limiting point of measurable space, or rather the radius of the limiting horizon (since the distance will be the same in every direction), is about twenty billions of miles, or twenty-five hundred million times the length of the earth's polar axis. That axis, therefore, is contained in the radius of measurable space, two hundred and fifty times as often as itself contains the edge of the casing-stone. Now, if that casing-stone be divided into twenty-five equal parts, each of such parts will, as Sir J. Herschel has shown, be of a length differing from our inch by its thousandth part—in fact, less than the breadth of the finest hair. This unit, therefore, which we may call the polar inch, measures not only the axis of the earth but of the depths of solar or measurable space, being contained in the former two hundred and fifty million times, and in the latter two hundred and fifty thousand billion times. But in that ancient chapter of the Ritual (lxiv.) which claims to have been revealed in the days of the Fourth Dynasty, we read that the Creator, when revealing himself to the new-born soul as the measurer of space, employs this very ratio as standard. "I who know the Depths is my name," so

runs the text of this sublime chapter ; " I make the shining cycles of the years, and billions are my measurement."

That the inch, whether in our own or any other form, was not an open and recognised Egyptian measure there can be little doubt. But the mention of these cycles of the shining years suggests a principle of singular beauty, involving the use of that polar unit as the secret key to the architectural standards of ancient Egypt. Among the many valuable results due to the industry of Mr. Flinders Petrie, is a collection of cubits of various lengths, employed by the architects of the earliest dynasties. These architectural units are very numerous and, unless referred to cosmic principles, quite miscellaneous, having no apparent co-ordination, either among themselves or with anything else. When, however, taking as our unit the polar inch, we compare them with the measure of light as expressed in the celestial periods (remembering always that the radii of the " shining circles of years " are both consonant with the construction of the pyramid, and illustrate the analogy of illumination), we find a most remarkable correspondence in measure after measure, not

absolute indeed, but differing only by decimals of an inch.

For example, if we consider the cycle of the equinox as a circle of about 25,800 years, the radius is about 4,122 years; and taking a century to an inch, the half radius gives us the well-known cubit of 20.6 inches. But this measure is the more common form of the Egyptian cubit, the standard employed for the sacred "Tat," or Nilometer, which measured the waters of life, the symbol regarded as the highest expression of sanctity, and the final ornament placed upon the holy dead. Again, since the orbit of the earth is not strictly a circle, but an ellipse with the sun in one focus, there will always be one point in the orbit which will be in "perihelion," that is to say, nearer the sun than any other. And this point is not stationary, but makes a circuit of the earth's orbit in about one hundred and fourteen thousand years, whereof the half circuit gives us (at an inch to ten thousand years) the fifty-seven-inch cubit of the Eleventh Dynasty. Various other examples might also be added, while the same principle will be found to throw light on many of the serpentine forms¹ men-

¹ A single example must suffice. Thus, the famous *Uræus*, or sym-

tioned in the *Book of the Master*. It would seem, therefore, that if we take as a standard a scale representing the axis of the earth, the sole immutable measure of space, and mark off upon it a series of such units proportional to the immutable periods of the heavenly bodies, we shall have a table of the cubits employed by the architects of those early times. And thus when the film is brushed away, which the

bol of the snake, connected in some not very definite manner with solar phenomena, has always been intimately associated with the royalty of Egypt. But it appears to have escaped attention, that in the Ritual are to be found several serpentine forms of various lengths, and, what is most striking in itself but easily explained by the results already attained, that when those several lengths are expressed in inches, they prove to be proportional to the measures of the various serpentine curves traced by the motions of the earth and moon. Thus, in chapter cxxx., we read of a snake "seventy cubits in his coil." But taking the well-known cubit of 20.6 inches, and repeating it seventy times, we obtain 1442 inches, which is proportional (within the seven-hundredth part) to the number of minutes of time ($24 \times 60 = 1440$) in the daily rotation of the equator or coil of the snake; so that it expresses our own division of the heavens into twenty-four hour-circles, each divided again into sixty equal parts, or minutes of time, both which measures were familiar to the Egyptians. And this central circle, of which the unvarying rotation has, for countless ages, measured the motion of the earth in reference to the celestial sphere, appears to be "the great Uræus," of which elsewhere we read as gleaming and guiding millions of years. Other examples of a more complex character might be adduced, but these may be sufficient to show that in the inch we possess a clue to the secret significance of numerous symbols, and that, for that very reason, it was not openly set forth as the standard, but its place was supplied by the cubit, which betrays no meaning except to one already so far initiated.

dust of ages has cast over these relics of antique science, their aspect remains no longer lifeless and repulsive; but we recognise in them the glowing insignia of universal truth, the gems from the azure depths sparkling with the lustre of intrinsic light.

Turning now to the Secret House itself, to the master of which the secret papyrus belonged, we find a similar principle prevailing throughout the interior of the building, the lengths of its various passages and chambers when expressed in polar inches (or twenty-five-millionth parts of the polar axis) being apparently proportional to the radii of the celestial periods which correspond respectively to the stages in the progress of the departed. And so strongly marked is the prevalence of this principle, that while a mere knowledge of the measures, however exact, suggests nothing of the spiritual meaning, the insight which we have already obtained of the co-ordination of the building with the Ritual enables us to determine the dimensions of many of the parts. For example: if we consider the cycle of equinox, then its radius of 4122 years will, at an inch to a year, give us the length of the entrance passage which points to the polestar. Again, with regard to the double chamber,

corresponding with the Double Hall of Truth in the Ritual. For if we take seven cycles of eclipse, corresponding with the seven Halls of Judgment in Truth of which we read in the Ritual, then, since each of such cycles contains two hundred and twenty-three lunar months, we shall have, at an inch to a month, the total length of the floor-line of the lower ascending corridor (7x223 inches), or Chamber of Judgment. Similarly also with regard to the upper portion of the same double chamber, which is dominated by the immense stone or throne at the higher end, corresponding in the Ritual with the throne, or "Stone of God," in the Double Hall of Truth. For if we take the radius of the cycle of "perihelion," wherein the point of earth's nearest approach to the solar throne travels slowly around the orbit, we shall have, at an inch to a century, the direct ascent to the foot of the throne; thus imaging the direct ascent of the Illuminate in the Hall of Truth to the throne, or "Stone of God," whereon, in the Ritual, Osiris sits to bestow upon him the "Atf"-crown of celestial light. And thus throughout the teaching of Egypt the visible light was but the shadow of the invisible Light; and in the wisdom of that ancient

country the measures of Truth were the years of the Most High.

With this brief survey of the celestial periods, and their analogues embodied in the masonry, we take up once more the *Book of the Master* of that Secret House—the earthly counterpart of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens—which the divine Horus built for his father Osiris, the “House of the Great God,” to which, as the papyrus of Amen-Hotep tells us, Thoth, the Eternal Wisdom, conducts the Illuminate. And as we gaze around in silent contemplation, from every corner of the universe the profound words of the Ritual come echoing back to us: “Billions are my measurement. I who know the Depths is my name.”





CHAPTER XI

THE INSTRUCTION IN WISDOM

AS the created light is the primary force manifested in the system of creation, so also is the Uncreate, or Self-begotten, Light (Kheper-Ra) the prime mover and creator whether of the visible or of the unseen universe. "Light Great Creator is his Name," we read in one of the chapters added to the Egyptian ritual at the Saite recension. And again in another ancient papyrus: "The God of the Universe is in the light above the firmament; and His symbols are upon the earth." Now it was with that divine Light, immortal, invisible, intolerable to mortal eye, the Light which none may look upon in the flesh and live, that in the ancient creed of Egypt, as in that of Christendom, the holy dead was to be at last united, person with person, in an indissoluble bond. No language less

universal than that of faith can enable us to express that sublime belief. For in no other creed do we find that man never loses his individuality, which yet becomes united personally with the Deity in so intimate union, that in the Ritual the Osiris-soul can with difficulty be distinguished from the Osiris-Godhead. "The sun is worshipping thy face," says Osiris, in the Ritual, to the soul new born into the divine existence; that is to say, the very splendour of creation, the source of light and life to the visible world, bows down in worship before him who has become a participator in the divinity of its creator. "He is I, I am he," the soul responds, almost in the actual words of the Gospel.

Long and manifold was the process whereby, in the teaching of Egypt, the human nature became united with the divine—an union effected, through the god-man Osiris, not as in the gross and distorted myths of the classic nations, by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by the interior taking of the manhood into God. Without and within the transformation was complete. The soul, instantly illumined by the fulness of the Godhead, became forthwith capable of corresponding with

the divine Energy. The senses, restored to incorruption, were gradually fashioned into instruments capable of expressing the soul's assimilation to that condition of infinite power, for which the bounds of space and time exist not, but past and future alike stand open in an endless present,—that transcendent freedom, wherein Act is coincident with Will, and Will commensurate with Thought.

In order, then, that the senses may be so quickened and irradiated as to perceive the action of the creative mind in the exterior universe, that progress must be made by the departed in person which, while still unreleased from subjection to the senses, the student of science makes dimly through the intellect. For whoever would understand the framework of the heavens, the structure of man's sacred dwelling-place, must commence by tracing out the horizon of the point of Equinox, which equally divides the light from the darkness, the horizon marked by the star which indicates the pole, and must apprehend how the axis of the earth is for man the prime measure of space and the standard rule of the Depths. If he would learn the secret of living form, the ocean will be his teacher, as he passes from

shore to profoundest depths and fathoms the secret places of the teeming waters. The measure of the celestial orbits will be revealed to him by the moon, as from that companion orb he watches the rotation and the revolution of our planet. To understand not merely the motion but the evolution of our globe, he must dare the place of the earth's central fire, undismayed by the cavernous gloom of the lurid abysses. And there, gazing backwards for uncounted ages, he will trace, amid convulsions and cataclysms inconceivable, the "Lord of Law" and the "Words of Order," as the huge mountain chains rise higher and higher from the chaos to prepare the surface of the globe for the dwelling-place of man. Before him next stretches the shadow of the earth, that dim and vast expanse where the majesty of the open heaven is enshrouded in night; and he perceives how the conjunctions of eclipse are due to the same power as the orbits of illumination, and that the hour of darkness is measured by the giver of light. That shadow traversed, a yet more awful vision, the terrible splendour of the solar fount in all its fulness, bursts upon his sight; and as he mounts the seven-fold ascent of the planet-

ary spheres, he gazes undazzled on the stupendous jets and sprays of flame that dart thousands and myriads of miles on high. Then, far beyond in the infinite depths of space, his eyes, now radiant as "the eyes of Hathor," seek out the well-loved Sothis, the harbinger of the dawn, the portal of the illimitable heavens, "that land of a million fortresses." And in anticipation of each successive stage of this amazing progress, this reconquest of the senses to the dominion of the reason, we may watch the course of the postulant accepted by the "Master of the Secret," as he is inducted, chamber by chamber, into the hidden places of the Egyptian Ritual.

Yet though a man understand the material forces of the universe, though he know all the phenomena of the heavens, and the composition of the most distant suns ; nay, though he wield with so masterly a grasp the wand of science as to evolve at will an organic world from the atoms of the abysmal depths, all this, in the mind of Egypt, was not sufficient, even for initiation into the inner mysteries of divine realities. No mere expansion of the intellect, however pure and lofty ; not even the scientific definition of absolute truth, could suffice

to open the secret things of God, any more than the most exact acquaintance with the features and the proportions of the Secret House would disclose their interior significance, without the teaching of the hidden wisdom. And hence, at the commencement of the Ritual, in the heading of the first chapter, before a word of doctrine has been revealed, we are told how it proceeds from Thoth, "The Mind and Will of God," as the inscription of Hermopolis entitles him.

Now there are three modes in which such knowledge may be communicated to those prepared to receive it—namely, by simple instruction, by distant vision, or by personal participation. Each of these modes is, it is evident, an advance upon that which precedes, a preparation for that which follows it. No man can become a participator in the divine nature who has not been illuminated by its contemplation. No man can contemplate the Deity who has not been instructed in truth; nor can any receive that initiation until he be dead to the flesh. As, therefore, in his induction in the Secret House the catechumen could ascend but a few steps in the light of common day, and passed, when the disc of the starry

heaven was opened by the Master of the Secret, into the profound darkness of the descending passage; so, too, when the great preparation of death had been accomplished, when soul and spirit had been released from the dominion of the senses, when, by the sacred purification of embalment, the corruptible body had put on incorruption, then "on the day of the funeral," we read, the unseen Master commenced to instruct the catechumen in the stages which must be undergone preparatory to his initiation. For, to the Egyptian of old, to have become acquainted with the Secret House was to have mastered the Secret of the Tomb. For him the grave had no darkness, death held no terror; for he knew beforehand the starry path, wherein each step brought him nearer to the Creator-Light.

Taking in our hands now the *Book of the Master*, let us resume our position at the foot of the exterior ascent, beneath the entrance marked by the star, along with the catechumen; and with him let us forecast the time when, bereft of speech, of will, of life, he will go forth, senseless and soulless, to the mouth of the tomb and commence "the Entrance on Light" (chap. i.) while "borne to the land of

the holy dead." The very first words are a welcome, addressed by Thoth, the Eternal Wisdom, *not to Osiris himself, but to the departed, who bears, we must remember, the title of "Osiris."* " 'Hail, Osiris, strong one of heaven,' says the Divine Wisdom, King of Eternity,"—so runs the opening chapter when divested of the enshrouding imagery. "I am the great God near the divine vessel, I have fought for thee, I am he among the divine beings who causes the Osiris to be justified before his enemies, the day of weighing the words of thy accusers. O Osiris!"—so the Teacher continues to the departed, with striking significance when we reflect that according to Catholic teaching also, the Divine Wisdom is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Child of Mary—"O Osiris! I am One among the Divine Persons, the Child of the holy Mother." And again: "O ye that cause the soul to enter perfect into the house of Osiris, let the soul of the departed enter the house, justified with you! May he see as ye see. Hail, openers of the roads. Hail, guides of the paths, guides of the soul established in the house of Osiris. Open ye the roads, make ye straight the paths of the departed trium-

phant with ye." "If this scroll be known on earth," so the chapter concludes, "write it upon his bandages. It is that by which he cometh forth, in full splendour¹ according to his desire, and goeth to his house." Then reciting chapter by chapter as we mount step by step, we become informed, in the course of that brief but steep ascent (ii.-xv.), of the preparation which awaits him when the last glimpse of earth is hidden from his sight. Thus we learn how, after death, the departed comes forth into the light of immortality, even as the sun, when he sets, bursts forth in radiance on the world which is hidden from our view. Then, since the departed cannot yet bear the judgment of interior justice, he is warned beforehand that when he has commenced the descent he must "pass the road above the earth," the ascending passage concealed by the hidden portcullis, behind the secret portal of which, we descry in the vignette illustrating the chapter, the face of the Unseen Teacher,—that countenance on which the holy dead, when Initiation has begun, shall presently be strengthened to gaze in distant but unveiled vision. Before that lintel can be passed and

¹ See Note M, page 204.

the road above the earth be traversed, many trials, he now learns, are waiting for him. There are tasks of justice to be fulfilled, if he omitted those good works on earth, the memorials of which may be his sponsors ("Ushabti"). Apep, too, the dark serpent that devours the hidden Light, as the winding darkness of the autumnal equinox enshrouds the light of the year, lies in wait to crush him in its multitudinous folds, while he treads the path where light and darkness balance. Still mounting upward, and at each step approaching nearer to the gate of the grave, the catechumen is instructed how, when that serpent shall be passed, his foes shall be repelled and his senses restored in the fulness of eternal beauty. Passing in silence over that which shall happen to him in the well enclosed within the western wall, the territory of "the lord of the west," since that knowledge cannot yet be imparted, the divine Teacher directs him, when the mystery of new life is accomplished, to the fiery ordeal, and, after entering and coming forth from the dread chamber, to approach once more the Lintel of Justice. For then, and then only, can he set foot upon the threshold of justification, when "the stains

have been burnt from his heart " by the raging fire.

On the fifteenth course, now high above the horizon of the earth, our eyes already face the outer entrance of the secret places, revealing the path of the horizon of heaven, the double-arched gateway whereon the symbol of the horizon is inscribed; and similarly in chapter xv. the departed "comes towards the land of eternity." "May I proceed," he continues, "as thou dost, without halt, like thy holiness, Ra, thou who hast no master, great traverser of waters, with whom millions of years are but a moment." Then, as he bends his head towards the entrance of the Secret House, and gazes on the dark passage which points towards the pole-star, "I proceed to heaven," he says; "I kneel among the stars." And at the conclusion of the chapter he learns the words to recite when his sun is setting, and he kneels with his hands towards the land (of the unseen), "O height of Love, thou openest the double Gate of the Horizon."

With these sublime words of thanksgiving, the instruction of the catechumen comes to a close; sufficient knowledge having been imparted to direct his course until the ordeal be

passed, beyond which he can as yet look no farther into the mysteries. In the following chapter (xvi.), as we ascend the last course before quitting the outer light, the divine voice is for a season hushed, and the Ritual silently offers three pictures for our contemplation. On one of these the sole object presented is the sacred scarab, a symbol of the Eternal One, the self-created being who knows no beginning and no end. On the second is the figure of the departed standing before Amen, the hidden deity; the third contains simply a blank stele or tombstone.

In that moment of silence the departed is alone.





CHAPTER XII

THE INITIATION OF THE POSTULANT

THE friends are gone. The sun, which from his earliest years has greeted the awakening of the departed, is for ever hidden from his sight. The "Gate of the earth" is passed; and the Catechumen of Wisdom has become the Postulant of Immortality. Silence inconceivable to mortal ear reigns around him, darkness unimaginable to mortal eye lies before him. But under the direction of Anup, the guide of souls, he passes on beyond that Gate of Ascent, where the divine light lifts the disc of the tomb. "It is the region of his father Shu" (the Light), the Ritual continues: "he effaces his sins, he destroys his stains." Then as the departed advances through the darkness, and fearlessly commences the descending path, the inner Light, unseen by mortal eye, reveals itself in

vision. He beholds the lower world (xvii.), the territory of Initiation, the entry of the hidden places, concerning which the divine Wisdom has instructed him, the place "wherein he must enter and from whence he must come forth," the transformations which he must desire to make that he may be transformed into the likeness of God, the good works which he must do, the throne of the regenerate soul, and the blessed company of Osiris after the body has been laid to rest. In that same vision, too, he sees the entrance of the under-world, or Rusta, and learns that it is the northern door of the tomb of Osiris, as the sole entrance of the pyramid is the gate of the north.

With the eighteenth chapter begins the "Book of Performing the Days," that is, the period of preparation for Initiation and Ordeal, the due performance of which enables him to pass "the road above the earth, there to receive the crown of justification when his victory is assured." He utters a prayer to the divine Wisdom for justification against the enemy through the heavenly circles of the guardian spirits. As he pursues the descending passage of the heavenly horizon, the

reconstruction of the inner man, the new creation to life immortal, slowly commences (xxi.). One by one his faculties are re-awakened to spiritual life; his mouth is opened that he may respond to the teaching of the divine voice,—the germ or “egg” of the illuminative life. His heart is given back, never again to rise against him with unruly passion; and he knows no more the icy numbness of the paralyzed affections. Gradually the new-formed body gathers force and substance; that is to say, not the natural body, which never bursts its sacred swaddling bands till wakened in the last chapter of the Ritual, but the spiritual or astral body (called by the Egyptians the “Sahu”), wherewith man, already raised in incorruption yet still awaiting the open manifestation of Osiris’s resurrection, converses with the “Starry Spirits,” the intelligences of the transcendant spheres. With the new life commences the attack of his spiritual enemies now rendered palpable to his sight (xxvii.—xxxii.), the dread inhabitants of the unseen world, that wage in man the great battle of contending light and darkness. Sloth, the tortoise, strives to delay his steps; the asps put forth their venom; crawling reptiles infest his path. From

every side the raging passions, the devouring crocodiles which inhabit the waters of life, rush furiously to the attack; but he repels all those creatures of darkness by the astral brightness of his starry nature. "Back, Crocodile of the South!" he cries; "I am Sothis"—the star of the eternal dawn. "Back!" he exclaims again to the serpent; "thou art overwhelmed by the waters of heaven. Depart from the place where Ra gives renewal of life." His foes defeated by the divine protection (xxxiii.-xli.), the body raised in incorruption acquires in every limb and every feature the seal of God. His hair, from which the light glows forth in streams, is as "the hair of Nu," the sacred Nile glowing with the streams of life; his countenance, shining as the sun, is radiant as the face of Ra; his eyes, glorious as the eyes of Hathor, gleam with immortal beauty; his fingers are as the Uræi, the sacred serpents, the insignia of the royal power; his feet burn with the fire of the Creator-Spirit Ptah; his humanity is as the humanity of Osiris, the incarnate God. "There is not a member of him," says the Ritual, "which is not divine."

Resplendently beautiful as is the astral body

assumed by the new being, he is not yet prepared for Initiation. His self-dominion, the head of his glory, may be taken from him; he may incur the second death of defilement from the creatures of darkness (xliii.-li.). But still by the same guidance avoiding all these dangers, he comes forth as the day, through the gate of the west, to the passage which conducts him to the Well of Life, as the sun passes the gate of the western ocean to the under-world. And as he crosses that threshold he is fed with the celestial food which they may not eat who are partakers of that which is hateful to Ra (li.-lxiii.). Avoiding defilement through the strength of that food, he receives the breath of the Creator-Spirit Ptah, and drawing near to the Well of Life, is granted a first draught of its refreshing streams. In the depths of that Well, wherein, as the Sai-an-Sin tells us, approach is made to Osiris, shall presently take place the regeneration of the renewed man (or "Ka"), by reunion with the new-born soul amid the living waters. "I give the waters of life to every mummy," says the goddess Nut, who presides over the waters, in the inscription on the vase of Osur-Ur (given in *Records of the Past*), "to reunite it with

the soul, that it may henceforth be separated from it no more forever. The Resident of the West has established thy person amid the sages of the divine Lower Region. He giveth stability to thy body, and causeth thy soul never to distance itself from thee. He keepeth remembrance of thy person, and saveth thy body now and forever."

During this arduous preparation, while the departed passes from earth in absolute weakness to wage the prolonged conflict of light and darkness, the imperishable soul, restored to her native element, is born a second time, as Osiris was born of Isis, the Queen of the Pyramid; being at once her son, her maker, and her spouse. "I am Yesterday," says Osiris in the sixty-fourth chapter, said to be almost coeval with the founder of the building; that is, "I am He who was before time began," since however far back in time a day may be, yesterday was always before it. "I am the Dawn," he continues, "the Light of the Second Birth, the Mystery of the Soul, Maker of the gods, by whom are fed the hidden ones of heaven." So in the inscription on the coffin of Ankhnes-Ra-Neferab—that is, of her "whose life was the Sacred Heart of Ra,"—we read concerning Isis,

that it is she "who opens for thee the secret places by those mighty names of thine. Thy name is Infant and Old Man, Germ and Growth, Son of Heaven, who makes the road for thee according to his word. Thy name is Everlasting, Self-Begotten, the Dawn, the Day, the Evening, the Night, the Darkness. Thy name is the Moon, the Heart of Silence, the Lord of the Unseen World." And on another part of the coffin of the same holy queen, the spirits of Annu, called in the Ritual the "secret birth-place of the gods," are invoked as those "who preside over the sacred birth." With the new birth of the soul comes also the restoration of power in its original divine image. For as in the condition which is subject to decay, the corruptible senses dominate and inform the soul, so, according to the theosophy of Egypt, in the condition of immortality does the illumine spirit inform and dominate the regenerate senses. While we are subject to the flesh, the external universe impresses itself continually upon the mind, dimming and imprisoning the original "type" or image of the Deity, which feebly struggles to express itself in the masterpieces of poet or artist. But when the soul is born into new life, it regains that cre-

ative image, and is endowed with the power of co-operating with the divine Energy. For, as we learn from an exquisite chapter in the Ritual, it is the fragrance of innocence, which perfumes the freshness of the lily and the breath of the creative beauty.

In that secret chamber the regenerate soul comes glorious as the day, and "opening the door," once so carefully concealed, comes forth in full radiance to the fields of Aahlu, the territory of illumination, to take its seat upon the lower throne above the head of the Well, between the Chamber of the Orbit and the Chamber of the Shadow. "The gates of heaven open to me," he says; "the gates of earth open to me." That solemn enthronisation being witnessed by the postulant in the depths below, he remembers that the time of ordeal draws near, and after praying, as instructed beforehand, that his sins may be rubbed out, he celebrates the "festival of the soul passing to his body." But not immediately may that passage be accomplished. Raised, though he be, in incorruption, glowing, as he is, in every member with the immortal light, he cannot yet bear unveiled the overwhelming glory of the soul. Therefore,

in the teaching of Egypt, around the radiant being, which in its regenerate life could assimilate itself to the glory of the Godhead, was formed the "Khaibit," or luminous atmosphere, consisting of a series of ethereal envelopes, at once shading and diffusing its flaming lustre, as the earth's atmosphere shades and diffuses the solar rays. And at each successive transformation (lxxvii.—lxxxvii.) it descended nearer to the moral conditions of humanity. From the form of the golden hawk, the semblance of the absolute divine substance of the one eternal self-existent being, it passes to the "Lord of Time," the image of the Creator, since with creation time began. Presently it assumes the form of a lily, the vignette in the Ritual representing the head of Osiris enshrined in that flower; the Godhead manifested in the flesh coming forth from immaculate purity. "I am the pure lily," we read, "coming forth from the lily of light. I am the source of illumination and the channel of the breath of immortal beauty [the nostril of Hathor]. I bring the messages [of heaven]; Horus [the Eternal Son] accomplishes them." Later, the soul passes into the form of the Uræus, "the soul of the earth," the serpent-

ine curve traced, year by year, upon the earth along the path immediately irradiated by the vertical sun, as the senses are irradiated by the supreme illumination of the soul.

And finally it assumes the semblance of a crocodile ; becoming subject, that is, to the passions of humanity. For the human passions, being part of the nature wherein man was originally created, are not intrinsically evil, but only become evil when insubordinate to the soul. And thus the crocodile, which attacked the departed before new birth, is rendered divine in the regenerate form. Therefore it was that the crocodile was held in high reverence by the Egyptians, for it spoke to them of the time when man should regain the mastery of his passions, and when the last barrier between himself and his glorious soul should be removed forever.

Immeasurable as is the distance which thus separates the two beings which make up the perfect manhood, there is no hesitation or delay on the part of the soul. That radiant creature in its glory has not forgotten the frail companion in union with whom it dwelt during the days of its humiliation. Restored to its native purity, welcomed by the Almighty to a participation in his own Energy, throned

on its seat of absolute dominion, yet such is the ardour with which that soul returns the love of man that, like the Creator himself, it cannot rest satisfied with its own inexhaustible bliss, but hastens to come down from its seat of power, that it may raise and glorify expectant humanity. And thus the vignette shows us the winged creature flying towards the postulant. Meanwhile the latter, from below watching its flight, prays in an ecstasy for the reunion. "O bringer!" he cries, "O runner in his hall!"—the Hall of Truth, where the throne of the soul is erected. "Great God! let my soul go where it desires. O conductors of the bark of millions of years, led through the gateway clearing the path of heaven and earth, accompany ye the souls to the mummies!"

The prayer is granted (xci.—xciii.). Leaving its throne on high,¹ and passing through its various transformations, the soul descends the ladder of the Well, as in the papyrus of Ani. Then the divine protection is obtained, and, amid the living waters in the pool of the Per-

¹ An inspection of the lower portion of the Upper Hall of Truth just by the head of the Well (where the postulant is waiting) will disclose the Throne of the Soul formed in the masonry by the abrupt termination of the lower part of the floor-line, and exactly corresponding to the Throne of Judgment at the head of the same ascent.

sea, the tree of immortality (as the Ritual elsewhere calls it), the earnest desire of the postulant is fulfilled, and he is re-united with his living soul. "My soul is from the beginning," he says, "from the commencement of time. The eye of Horus [the divine son] made for me my soul, preparing its substance. The darkness is before them; the arms of Osiris hold them. Open the path to my soul and my shadow [Khaibit] and my spirit, to see the great God within his sepulchre the day of making up the souls." If that knowledge is possessed, the Ritual adds, he enters on Light; he is not detained in the lower world.

That priceless gift conceded, the postulant, though he cannot yet participate in the divine splendour until his ordeal be passed, yet can he behold it openly from afar and enter on his initiation into the sacred mysteries. Offering a prayer to the divine Teacher, and "holding in his hand the sacred mysteries," he turns his opened eyes successively in three directions (xcv.-cvi.). First he gazes toward "the opening where Thoth is"; and he beholds the Secret Wisdom which gives to truth its splendour, the countenance of the divine Teacher, whose voice instructed the catechumen, and whose

power protected the postulant. Then, as his eyes grow clearer, he offers a prayer to Anup, the starry guide who has led him thus far towards his heart's desire ; and, turning, he discerns the bark of Ra, the vessel of God, foretold to him before his entry on the path by the divine Teacher, —the vessel which shall bear him safely across the deep waters. And in the vignettes of the Ritual, we see the vessel bearing upon it at one time a fivefold, at another



The Fivefold Throne.

a sevenfold staircase, the fivefold dominion of the regenerate senses, and the sevenfold elevation of the illuminate intellect. Yet one more vision opens out to the Initiate. As he raises his eyes to the extreme end of the Chamber of the Splendour, far removed from the head of the Well, yet forming part of the same divine structure, he discerns the "opening where Hathor is," the azure depths of ethereal loveliness leading to the Secret Heights above. For a moment he gazes in silent rapture on the far-off opening of the unimaginable vision, and then calls to his aid "the Opener of the Great Sanctuary": "Oh, assistant! — oh, assistant!" he exclaims, "I am among the servants of Immortal Beauty!"



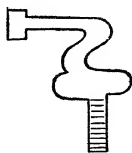
CHAPTER XIII

THE ILLUMINATION IN TRUTH

FORTIFIED by the remembrance of that enduring vision—the far-off glimpse of the divine Wisdom, Holiness, and Beauty which is granted to him who has received the waters of life and is initiated into the divine mysteries,—the departed turns from the scenes of future Illumination, and descends towards the place of impending trial (cvii.—cxvi.). Around him stand revealed the “Gods of the Western Gate,” the spirits who came unseen to his assistance at the hour when the sun of earthly life went down into the west. From above flows down the torrent of the “Celestial Nile,” and mingles with the stream which waters the fields of Aahlu, the home of the regenerate. And high aloft, far as his quickened eyes can pierce, are assembled the bright companies of starry beings from every quarter,

to assist at his victory, his judgment, and his coronation, as he enters and comes forth from the subterranean Chamber of the Fiery Ordeal.

That ordeal undergone, the character both of the doctrine and of the scene in which it was imparted appears to undergo a transformation. Not that the air of mystery is in any way lessened, rather it deepens, if possible, as we penetrate into the more secret parts. But, the period of weakness and of expectancy once passed, a sense of power and triumph grows more and more distinctly perceptible as we enter the secret places of absolute "Truth" (cxvii.-cxxv.). Turning back with the Initiate from the "Meskwa," or place of ordeal, we retrace our steps upwards, under the direction of the celestial guide, who conducts us to the "Gate on the Hill," the lintel hidden in the roof far up along the passage of the star. In remounting the ascent, the Initiate once more "enters and comes forth" from the gateway of the well, that he may again receive strength for the coming judgment. And as



Well of Life and Chamber of Fiery Ordeal.

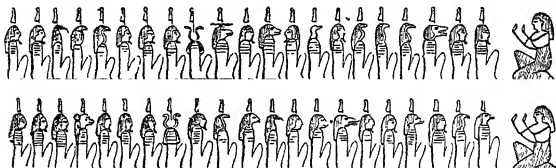
he approaches the hidden portcullis, which now he is called upon to pass, and behind which sits in person the Eternal Wisdom, he recites for himself the unforgotten words wherein the divine Teacher warned him of the hour drawing near of entering into judgment and of issuing from thence. Arrived at the hidden portcullis carefully concealed within the roof, that arduous "Gateway reserved for the Gods," the divine Osiris-souls, the gateway which none can enter except "after coming out" from the place of ordeal, obstruction meets him at every step. Alike in the Ritual and in the building, each portion of that most mysterious gateway, the secret of whose masonry still remains undisclosed, refuses entrance to the upward path except to the adept. "'I will not let thee go over me,' says the sill, 'unless you tell me my name.' 'The Weight in the Right Place is thy name,'" is the profound reply of the adept. For, as the raising of the portcullis depends upon the true adjustment of the weight, so also is justice the virtue without which the path on high remains forever closed. "'I will not let thee pass me,' says the Left Lintel,"—so continues this strange dialogue,—"'unless you tell me

my name.' 'Return of the True is thy name.' 'I will not let thee pass me,' says the Right Lintel, 'unless you tell me my name.' 'Return of Judged Hearts is thy name.'" For without truth and without self-judgment no step can be taken of progress in the upward path. With that doctrine we may compare the "Golden Words" of Pythagoras, himself a pupil of the priests of Egypt :

" Do innocence; take heed before thou act ;
Nor let soft sleep upon thy eyelids fall,
Ere the day's actions thou hast three times scanned,
What have I done, where erred, what left unwrought ?
Go through the whole account, and if the sum
Be evil, chide thee ; but if good, rejoice.
This do, this meditate, this ever love,
And it shall guide thee into virtue's path."

But to him who has learned of Wisdom, however long, however arduous the search, the entrance into truth cannot finally be denied. The Hidden Lintel is crossed ; and the memory of that passage is forever kept sacred by the grateful departed. " I have come through the Hidden Lintel," he cries, triumphantly, later on ; " I have come like the sun through the gate of the festival." The lintel crossed, the person of the divine Teacher is disclosed,

having before him the true balance of light and darkness. The "secret faces at the gate" unveil themselves; and the adept stands within the Double Hall of Truth—of truth in death and truth in life, of truth in justice and truth in mercy, of truth in darkness and truth in splendour. Then, as he surmounts each



The Judges of the Dead

obstacle besetting the entrance to the path which leads on high, and achieves the triumph over death, he beholds the long array of the Judges of the Dead, the celestial powers who take account of the mortal actions of mankind, each supreme in his own province of the holy land, each bearing on his head the Plume of Truth. And to each in turn the adept, whose stains have been washed from his heart in the furnace of the ordeal, pleads his innocence of

the sin of which that power is the special avenger. Very terrible are the images under which those heart-searching spirits are presented—terrible as the moral effects of our own transgression, when viewed by the inner light of truth. The “Eyes of Fire,” the passion which shrivels the intellect; the “Face of Smoke,” the pride that clouds the judgment; the “Crackler of Bones,” the sin which corrodes the entire manhood, these and such as these are the fearful insignia of the infernal powers. Most terrible of all is the spirit “whose mouth is twisted when he speaks, because his face is behind him,” the spirit of conscience, which keeps its dread eyes inexorably on our past, and speaks to us with mouth contorted in the agony of self-condemnation; like the cry of the penitent, which echoes as bitterly now as when uttered three thousand years ago, “My sin is ever before me.”

Undeterred by that august tribunal, which, as we learn at the threshold, none can endure but he who has truly judged himself, the departed, protected by the divine guardian, ascends the Passage of the Shadow where the light is eclipsed, and achieves through truth his victory over death (cxxxvii.–cxxx.). As he

draws near the low but unobstructed gateway, the glow of the splendour begins to appear, and he sees before him the sacred orbit of the circling earth, defined by the four burning points of Solstice and Equinox, like a basin of fire surrounded by four jets of flame. In front of those cardinal points of the heaven, are seated the four divine spirits, having the resemblance of an ape, the form nearest akin to humanity. To those four universal guardians and heralds of truth, the justified prays that he may be purified yet further from his transgressions. "O ye," he says, "who send forth truth to the universal Lord, nurtured without fraud, who abominate wickedness, extract all the evil from me! Obliterate my faults and annihilate my sins." "Thou mayest go," is the gracious reply of the four heavenly teachers; "we obliterate all thy faults, we annihilate all thy sins." In this manner, as the Ritual declares, his separation from his sins is effected "after he has seen the faces of the Gods." From henceforth death has no more power over him, and in rapture he returns thanksgiving to the supreme judges, the Gods of the Orbit, towards whom he now advances, and to Osiris on his throne. As he stands at the entrance of the upper

chamber, where the slight projection of the lower floor bears witness to the passage from death to life, the divine voice, which has been silent till its first lesson is exhausted, recommences his illumination, and he is "instructed" to stand at the bark of Ra—no longer in the lower portion of the vessel, but free of every part. Obedient to the divine command, he passes the "Gate of the Gateway," and celebrates the birthday of Osiris, the Opening of the Eternal Year. Then as he advances a step and stands within the hall upon the slight projection, he beholds the whole building before him, the vast universe of space, in its immeasurable grandeur now free to his immaculate spirit. And as at the lintel of justice all was barred, so here every part lies open. "The heaven opens," we read,¹ *i. e.*, the chamber of the splendour with its sevenfold rays around the solar throne; "the earth opens," the chamber of the shadow; "the north opens," to the chamber of the pole-star; "the south opens," to the inner heights; "the west opens," to the entrance of the Well; "the east opens," to the Chamber of New Birth, with its fivefold eastern

¹ Here again special attention is invited to the Interior of the Secret House.

ascent ; “ the northern and southern chapels open,” to the ante-chamber and the Grand Chamber of Resurrection. Here, too, is the “ crossing of the pure roads of life,” of which the coffin of Amamu speaks. Behind are “ the roads of darkness,” which the departed, in the Ritual, once prayed so earnestly that he might pass. In front lie the fields of Aahlu, the blessed country where the justified executes the works which he is privileged to do for Osiris.

A burst of triumph greets the justified when, having accomplished the passage of the sun, he enters the Chamber of the Orbit, the Hall of Illumination. “ The deceased,” we read, “ passes through the Gate of the Gateway. Prepare ye his Hall when he comes. Justify his words against the accusers. There is given to him the food of the gods of the Gate. There has been made for him the crown which belongs to him as the dweller in the Secret Place.” In another place the justified himself exclaims : “ I have opened the gate of heaven and earth ” (at the junction of the Halls of the Orbit and of the Shadow). “ The soul of Osiris rests there. I cross through the halls. No defect or evil is found in me.” And once more the deceased

prays that he may pass this hall. "Place me before thee, O Lord of Eternity. Hail, Dweller of the West, good Being, Lord of Abydos. Let me pass the roads of darkness; let me follow thy servant in the gate."

A similar note of exultation marks the passage in the Sai-an-Sinsin, where we read of the great tribunal and the House of Light. "Thou comest into the House of God with much purity," exclaim the mourners, addressing the departed. "The gods have abundantly purified thee in the great tribunal. Thou art not shut out of heaven; thy body is renewed in the presence of Osiris. Thou hast not been shut out from the House of Glory. Thou seest the Path of Beauty, completing every transformation which thou desirest." And the ancient coffin of Amamu bore on the outside this inscription, full of desire and hope: "An act of homage to Anup, who passes the deceased over the distant paths, the fairest of the holy land"—that is, the land of the holy dead. "Thine eyes," say our own sacred writings, "shall see the king in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off."

The gateway passed, the divine voice resumes its instruction, and teaches the justified

of "going to the heaven where Osiris is"; of being "received into the Sacred Heart of Ra," the fount of life; of "the adoration which he must render"; of the vessel of eternity in which the holy souls forever move; of the rejoicings of heaven in the manifestations of the God-head to man, and of the names and places wherein those manifestations are vouchsafed. And now the justified stands within the full glory of the Orbit and looks forth, not with the vision of mortal seer, but as the deathless spirits who encircle the throne. While he stands gazing, splendour after splendour, revelation after revelation, bursts upon his sight. Down from the radiant throne of the burning sun, along the limitless floor of space, along the sevenfold wall of the planetary heights, along the overarching roof of the celestial vault, streams, rivers, floods of light come sweeping down on him whose eyes are opened; each orb, each satellite, each distant luminary mingling its unveiled lustre in a glory beyond thought, like the torrent of the summer rays, like the inundation of the overwhelming Nile. But the Illuminate breathes freely the air of opened heaven. His senses, forever vivified, pierce through the utmost bounds of

space ; his quickened intellect grasps each starry law and harmony ; his purified spirit, undazzled by the blinding radiance, discerns the hidden love that occupies the throne. No longer as a stranger, or at a distance, but as a prince admitted to the highest honours of the court, the justified takes his place in the very line of direct approach, while around and above him the measureless expanse is filled with rank beyond rank of spirit-ministers. " He has passed his billions," we read ; " the circle of flaming ministers is around him. His blessings follow him. ' Come,' says Truth ; and he approaches her Lord."





CHAPTER XIV

THE MASTER OF THE SECRET

AT that gracious word of Truth, the abysses of mystery reveal their most secret depths. First, the Chamber of the Shadow is lit by the irradiating brightness ; and the Illuminate discerns the nature of sin viewed in the light of truth (cxliv.—cl.). The seven halls of mortal sin, each measured by its cycle of eclipse, lie open to him who has looked upon the face of God ; and each name of mystery betrays the form of darkness. “Babbling” Malice, that delights in overthrow ; “Fire-faced” Anger, leaping on a sudden to the front ; Envy, the “Eater of Dirt” ; Hatred, silent and “vigilant” ; Lust, the consumer, the overthrower in a moment, “that lives off reptiles” ; Pride, with its “face of stone” ; Sloth, that hardens irretrievably the heart, the “final stopper of the rejected” ;—all these

betray their nature to him over whom death has power no longer. And he discerns (as in the vignette of the Ritual) the seven avenging spirits, each armed with the two swords of physical and spiritual destruction.

Mounting then the steep ascent, he beholds the mystery of judgment disclose itself in successive stages as the gates of Aahlu,—those gates of the divine being whose “Heart is Beauty”—unfold before him. At each of the first ten portals flows a celestial stream of sparkling waters, which shed their undying lustre over the person of the Illuminate. Ascending still towards the throne of Osiris, at the nineteenth portal he is clothed with robes of power; and at “the gate of the Burning Crown” he stands beneath the sevenfold arch of the planetary spheres. Immediately beyond is the “Stone of God,” where he receives from the divine occupant a “Crown of Illumination,” the “Atf”-crown of Egypt fashioned



Osiris on Throne of Judgment.

after the zodiacal light of highest heaven. And behind the throne is seen "the Gate of Peace, the end of the course," with its seven crowns of joy.

"I have finished the course," he cries (cxlv.), "I am the Lord of the Resurrection, the Avenger of his Father, the heir to his Father the Holy One. I am come. I execute for my Father the throwing down of all his foes. I come full splendour with all the truth of the word. The Master of the Devotion in the dwelling of my Father. I come full splendour into the temple to offer the incense. I distribute the sacred garments. I receive at my rising the diadem and crown myself with it on my throne in the dwelling of my Father, and the princes of heaven." And again in the following chapter: "O Masters of the Altars, I have made the ways, I am Horus the son of Osiris. My Mother, Isis, protects me. I come. I bring the serene life to my Father, Osiris. I come full splendour to the gates of the recess, and I know the mysteries that are in it. I come full splendour to the gate of the Master of the height. O Lords of Eternity, I have performed my course, I am Horus the son of Osiris, the Heir of the Holy One."

But not as yet can the Illuminate attain the infinite serenity which lies beyond that gate. Death and judgment are not the only secrets to be disclosed when the eye of faith becomes the eye of sight. The place of the divine birth, the chamber in "the fields of Aahlu," must be visited before the Illuminate become the Master of the Secret. And as he passes portal after portal of the fields he recites the titles of her whose habitation he now approaches: the "Mistress of Holy Awe," the "Mistress of Heaven," the "Regent of the Earth," the "Help of the Meek-hearted," the "Mistress of Prayer," the "Light of the Secret River." Then having learned the majesty of its queen, he scans the sevenfold arch, the mystery of the transcendent heaven, to hold converse with the seven supreme Intelligences who overarch the splendour of creation.

And now the "writing which confers perfection" is delivered to him (cxlviii.), the scroll which none but the king and the chief priest may look upon; and from it he learns the prayer "for the food and drink of the dwellers in the house." Yet once again, in the strength of that divine refreshment, must the depths be sounded and the secret places be traversed,

before the Illuminate can pass as Master through the gate of Peace (cli.-clxiii.). One secret of death still remains, most terrible and inscrutable of all. While we are yet imperfect, we can gain some knowledge of the effect of moral death upon ourselves, and even form a faint adumbration of its nature when viewed in the light of absolute truth. But the mystery of its divine permission who can penetrate? If the Omnipotent be all good, why did he ever allow of evil? If he be all merciful, why does he permit his creatures to suffer? How can our actions be justly "balanced" when the forces which produced them were not of our creation? Why are we to be made parties to the battle of light and darkness when no choice was given whether we would exist or not? Why are the souls of just men secretly snared and overthrown? Whence comes the "foul flux" which is purged from man, and which causes all living creatures to shudder? Such questions as these we ask, and ask in vain. Yet if that darkest shadow, that horror which forms the depth of human agony,—the enshrouding of the eternal justice in the blackness of utter eclipse,—is still liable to arise and overpower the soul, how can man

ever repose in safety, and what revelation or degree of glory will suffice to bring him peace? But that it, too, is destined to pass away in light, when the secrets are revealed and illumination is transformed into union, who can doubt? So at least we read in the creed of ancient Egypt, where, when the other mysteries of death and of judgment have been disclosed to the Illuminate; when he has entered into the secrets of the new birth, and conversed with the supreme Intelligences who "watch before the tomb of Osiris"; when time exists for him no more, and he understands the design of the eternal House from foundation to consummation, he makes a final circuit of its secret places. Clothed in power and crowned with light he traverses the abodes or scenes of his former weakness, there to discern, by his own enlightened perception, how it is "Osiris who satisfies the balance of him who rules the heavens"; to exert in its supernal freedom his creative will, now the lord, not the slave, of the senses; and to rejoice in the just suffering which wrought out his Illumination and Mastery.

Finally, when that grand progress through the habitations of humanity has been com-

pleted, the Master returns in majesty to the celestial company assembled in their ranks before the solar throne. Mounting beneath the sevenfold arch, he treads the stone of God itself, and passes through the gate of Peace, with its seven crowns and titles of victory. Then, outstripping in his flight the power of mortal thought, he passes beyond the shining orbit of the earth, beyond the vast expanse of solar glory, across the awful chasms of the unfathomable depths to far-off Sothis, the land of eternal dawn, to the ante-chamber of the infinite morning. He "has his star established to him in Sothis," says the Ritual. And here the Illuminate, now become a Master, is instructed in the last mysteries which precede universal glory, the mysteries of the divine sorrow, the "tears of Isis," whence comes the source of the celestial Nile, the fount of illumination to man. Here he passes within the triple veil, and is invested with the imperishable jewels of supernal lustre.

Then comes the final mystery when the tomb is opened and the body is raised in immortality. "Hail thou, my Father of Light," we read in the chapter (cliv.) which tells us how the body of the holy one shall not see

corruption. "I come having this my flesh freed from decay; I am whole as my Father, the self-begotten God, whose image is in the incorruptible body. Do thou establish me. Do thou perfect me as the Master of the Grave. This," so the chapter proceeds, "is the mystery of the change, in the body, of the life that comes from the destruction of life." And as we read we cannot but recall the words of the apostle: "Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, for the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed." So too in the final chapter of this book we hear the resurrection proclaimed as with a trumpet blast, as in the innermost chamber of the House we find the Open Tomb. "I have opened the doors," exclaims the Osiris-soul, now glorious in the house of Light and united indissolubly with the Creator,— "I have opened the doors. . . . Well is the great one who is in the coffin. For all the dead shall have passages made to him through their embalming," when their body in the flesh shall be raised in incorruption. Again and again is celebrated the mystery of the open tomb. As the eclipsing planet which moves nearest to

the sun crawls like a tortoise across the face of that orb, defacing it for a moment by its own darkness and then is swallowed in the radiance, so also death, that dark spot which crawls across the vision of the eternal splendour, is swallowed in the resurrection of Osiris Ra, the Uncreated Light. Four times is that gospel of ancient Egypt proclaimed in the final chapter, which bears no title in the *Book of the Master*, but which elsewhere is called the chapter of the opening of the heaven. "The tortoise dies; Ra lives!" Death is swallowed up in Light; God lives for evermore. "O Amen, Amen," so continues that chapter of mystery, "Amen, who art in heaven, give thy face to the body of thy Son. Make him well in Hades. It is finished."

Thus ends the strange and solemn dirge of ancient Egypt. Once perceived, the intimate connection between the secret doctrine of Egypt's most venerated books and the secret significance of her most venerable monument seems impossible to dis sever; and each form illustrates and interpenetrates the other. As we pursue the dark utterances and recognise the mystic allusions of the book, we seem to stand amid the profound darkness enwrapping

the whole interior of the building. All around are assembled the spirits and the powers that make the mystery of the unseen world: the "Secret Faces at the Gate," the "divine beings of the Horizon and of the Orbit." And dimly before our eyes, age after age, the sacred procession of the Egyptian dead moves silently along as they pass through the "Gate of the Hill" to the tribunal of Osiris. In vain do we attempt to trace their footsteps till we enter with them into the hidden places, and penetrate the recesses of the Secret House. But no sooner do we stand within the mysterious light than the teaching of the sacred books seems lit up as with a tongue of flame. The luminous veil itself melts slowly away, disclosing the Path of Illumination and the splendours of the unseen; the spirits of the just grow lustrous with the rays that proceed from the tribunal. For though none may look upon these things unveiled till the guardian of the starry Gate has opened for him the portal of the Light, yet for him who has been mystically initiated in the deep waters, and illuminated by the Spirit of sevenfold beauty, the invisible things become manifest by the visible creation, and a light which is not of earth reveals in its divine unity

the full secret of the Hidden Places: the Entrance to the Path of Heaven, the Well of Life, the Initiation into New Birth, the Ordeal of Fire, the Lintel of Justice, the Judgment in Death, the Illumination in Truth, the Throne of Radiance, until within the veil the passage of the grave is passed and we reach the grand chamber of the Open Tomb.

Thus only, according to that primæval creed, could man fulfil his marvellous destiny; and thus only can that destiny accomplish his heart's desire. If it be true, as some have held, that

Veil after veil shall lift,—but there must be
Veil after veil behind;

that man, throughout all eternity, shall never know, even as he is known, then is his creation vain, and his resurrection a mockery. No skill in the secrets of the material universe, no dominion over the forces of life and death, no power to pierce the veil which hangs before the unseen world and to hold communion with the spiritual Intelligences, will satisfy his secret aspirations. For the soul of man—so the very craving for infallible Truth, the rudimentary

instinct of the heart, proclaims—can know no rest, nor can his spirit ever be satisfied, so long as the thinnest film remain to interrupt the unclouded vision of the Hidden Love; until he stand face to face and eye to eye with “Him who knows the Depths.”

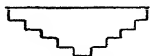




NOTES

NOTE A

The motion of the moon seems also to have been expressed architecturally in a different and very curious form. Since that body moves in an orbit which differs from that of our planet by about five degrees, and crosses the ecliptic twice in the course of each lunar month, five degrees will be the limiting distance which it will attain each time ; so that the motion of the moon relatively to the earth may be represented as a series of five ascents and descents, each of one degree, as in the following diagram. And this appears to have been the form of the ancient pyramid of Meydoon, which is situated not far from the spot where the plane of the lunar orbit intersects the course of the Nile. And a similar figure is sculptured also on the eastern wall of the Queen's Chamber in the Grand Pyramid.



The Fivefold Throne.

A more practical application of the moon's motion is found in the lunar kalendar of Egypt. For the interval between the dates when the moon successively comes to the full (always in relation to a given place, such as Memphis)

consists of about twenty-nine and one-half solar days. Suppose now we take as an unit of time thirty solar days, then each lunar month would fall short of that period by half a day; and from this we obtain the key to a most singular correlation between the lunar motions and the Egyptian months (consisting always of thirty solar days) pointed out by Dr. Brugsch in the Table of Edfu; which kalendar was made public in the days of the Ptolemies, but never apparently while a native monarch reigned. On the first day was celebrated the "Conception of the moon," when that orb, unseen amid the lustre of the day, was on the meridian at noon. On the second day took place its Birth or first appearance in the heavens; and so forth throughout the circuit, each day being dedicated to some festival connected with that orb; and the fifteenth day being held in especial reverence, since on it the moon would come to the full, crossing the meridian at or near midnight. And thus in the lunar representations on the walls of the temple of Denderah we have fourteen steps leading up to the fifteenth or highest, whereon was enthroned Thoth, the Lord of the Moon. During the first month, therefore, the lunar intervals would of course correspond more or less precisely with the solar days. But whereas the two sets would grow progressively asunder, the lunar names remained affixed to the same solar days. Thus the first day of each solar month was called the "Conception of the moon," and the second, "New moon," although neither phenomenon might have taken place anywhere near the time,—a method of expression necessitating, it would seem, a double form of register, and simple enough to those who held the clue, but to a stranger hopelessly misleading.

Notes

NOTE B

TWELVE EQUAL MONTHS. PAGE 33

With regard to the designation of the particular months, the practice appears to have differed in the sacred and civil kalendars. In the former, the different months are expressed merely as the First, Second, Third, or Fourth Month of the particular Season, the days being numbered like our own. But for popular use their names were as follows :

<i>Season of Inundation</i> (<i>Se</i>)	<i>Season of Winter</i> (<i>Pir</i>)	<i>Season of Heat</i> (<i>Semou</i>)
Thoth	Tybi	Pachons
Paophi	Mechi	Payni
Hathor	Pharmuti	Epiphi
Choiak	Phamenoth	Mesori

NOTE C

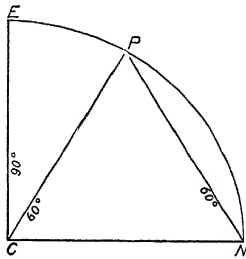
From this highly important cycle we may draw some conclusion as to the date of the foundation of the Egyptian kalendar ; the date, that is to say, when mere tradition came to an end, and systematic records organised upon astronomical principles began to be preserved. Since in the course of each cycle (of 1460 years) the heliacal risings, or orients, make the circuit of the civil year, and since there is also a corresponding series of settings performing a similar round, the two series would in each cycle make up a double interchange. When, therefore, Herodotus tells us in a well-known passage (*Enterp.*,

143) how, according to the Egyptian records, the stars had changed their order four times since their reckoning commenced—"the risings twice taking the place of the settings, and the settings twice taking the place of the risings,"—the meaning becomes perfectly clear if referred (as Rawlinson suggests) to the heliacal risings and settings of Sothis, the determinant of the kalendar. And the very circumstance that Herodotus himself in all probability did not understand—and was not intended to understand—the drift of the extract, strongly corroborates his statement that the passage was not his own but was read to him from the Sacred Books. For it is little less than inconceivable that a person, ignorant of astronomy, should so misrepresent a statement made to him by astronomers, as to blunder by accident into the correct exposition of a different and highly complex astronomical relation. We learn, therefore, that two such cycles (four reversals) had been completed since the institution of the scientific kalendar; so that the cycle current in the time of Herodotus would be the third. And as there is evidence that that cycle was completed in A.D. 139, it would have commenced in B.C. 1321; at which epoch Sothis rose heliacally at Memphis about a week before the solstice, and the Rising of the river was heralded by the Orient of the star. Hence, therefore, we conclude that the commencement of the first of such cycles and the institution of the scientific kalendar took place (2×1460 years previously, *i. e.*) at midsummer of B.C. 4241,—a few years before the reign of the astronomer-architect Khufu, the most famous monarch of antiquity.

NOTE D

DISTANCE FROM POLE IS EQUAL TO DISTANCE FROM CENTRE. PAGE 54

This property may perhaps be clear from the following considerations. Suppose C to be the centre of the earth, P the situation of the Great Pyramid, N the North Pole, and E the point where the meridian of the building cuts the equator, then EC will be the latitude of the building, viz, 30° , whence it will be seen at once that the triangle CNP will be equilateral, since the angle at C is 60° , and the radii CN and CP will be equal to each other, assuming the earth to be a sphere. Hence therefore PN , the distance from the Pyramid to the North Pole, will be equal to PC , the distance to the centre of the earth.



NOTE E

FAMILIAR TO EGYPTIAN ASTRONOMERS. PAGE 58

Since, owing to the effect of precession, there is a gradual change in the right ascension and declination of every star, there is also a corresponding change in the day of heliacal rising. Thus, while the star whose orient at Philæ (in Egyptian, Pīlak) marked the period of the solstice for the third cycle was, as we have seen, Sothis,

or Sirius, that for the second cycle appears to have been Pollux, and that for the first Regulus, the principal star in the constellation of the Lion, which is identified by Professor Renouf with our own constellation of the same name. In making this and similar calculations, I have taken $50''.2$ for the yearly precessional motion, and half-a-minute of arc per century for the variation in the obliquity. The formulæ for finding the day of orient, or heliacal rising (when the right ascension and declination of the star have been determined for the required epoch), are given, I may observe, in Maddy's *Astronomy*.

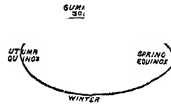
Before quitting this subject, it is worth noticing how many classical names of stars and constellations, meaningless in the Greek and Latin, acquire a signification when referred to the Egyptian tongue. Thus Ur Oon (Great Being) gives us Orion; Kas Pehu (Lake of the Inundation), Cassiopeia; Ark Ter (Shrine of Meeting), Arkturus; and Kha Nub (Place of Gold), Canopus. Some names indeed are scarcely distinguishable from the Egyptian words, so slight is the change in pronunciation when compared with the immense difference in time and place, such as the star Khaph in the constellation Cassiopeia, signifying, in Egyptian, Power; Scheat (Schete) in Pegasus, Secret; and Nath (Nut) in Taurus meaning the heaven.

NOTE F

PLACE OF THE ORBIT PAGE 63

In connection with this point, a singular illustration suggests itself with regard to the form (hitherto unexplained) of one of the most important symbols of Egyptian monarchy. At the present epoch, the earth reaches

the apsides, or turning-points, of her orbit, that is to say, her greatest and least distances from the sun, a few days after passing, respectively, through the summer and winter solstices. But inasmuch as those points have a slow relative motion round the orbit, the period of the year at which they were attained six thousand years ago (or about the time of which we speak) took place about the times of equinox. Hence if we represent the orbit in its true elliptic form, a tangent at the extremity of the major axis will define both the point of equinox, through which it passes, and the direction of the minor axis, or line of solstice, to which it will be parallel, thus indicating the relations of the universe. And the figure thus described exactly gives us the royal cartouche always encircling the names of the Egyptian kings;



Orbit.



Royal Cartouche. which thus images forth the celestial foundation and universal jurisdiction of that monarchy so long as the earth preserves its divinely appointed course.

NOTE G

From the foregoing considerations, when bearing in mind the archaic date of the erection, and the celestial bearings of the temple at the epoch, we may clear up a peculiarity of some difficulty in the records, which M. Mariette, the famous authority on this temple, has pointed out but left without any solution. It is beyond dispute, says that eminent writer, that when the records speak of

the north, they mean the east—a peculiarity, however, which he seems to regard as a mere Egyptian eccentricity, scarcely needing discussion. And he then proceeds to point out that “the North of the hieroglyphic records” is just 75 degrees to the westward of what he calls “true North,” that is to say, the north as defined by our cardinal points, which of course shift slowly round the heavens as the axis describes the precessional circuit. But the time which has elapsed since Pepi fulfilled the command of Khufu by erecting that temple is between 5400 and 5500 years; and 75 degrees, therefore, will be about the arc of precession which the celestial axis has traversed during that period. Hence, then, if the north of which the temple speaks is not the shifting north of our planet, but the changeless point of the heavens to which the axis of our planet pointed when the pole-star gave the signal for the erection of the temple of the universe, the expression is exact.

NOTE H

HIEROGLYPHIC INSCRIPTION RUNS ROUND THE BORDER.

PAGE 73

As no translation, so far as I am aware, of this inscription has yet been published, I beg to submit the following, which commences on the point marked as north on the planisphere and follows the order of the hieroglyphs:

Turning-point of the circles of Light.

Head of the circles of Annu (Denderah); Horus, Entrance of the Golden Heaven, Seat of Sacred Dances in the six Heights of Horus, Son of Osiris.

Palace chamber of Height of Holy Adoration; Palace chamber of Height of Light.

Ahi, Lord of the Palace Chamber, Height of the Hour of living Osiris, Burning Height of priestess of Holy Moon.

Chief of the Southern Splendour.

Meeting-place, Region of Gods. Head of nurse of Ra, Living Breath of the waters of passage of the double Hour.

Heavenly Flame of Burning Gold.

Golden Heaven of Isis

Horizon of Light.

The Great One of the Lady Mother.

With regard to the deities represented on the planisphere, which are very numerous, their various characteristics are the same as are ordinarily portrayed in the sacred pictures. And of the different figures here depicted the following may be more particularly mentioned. The Thigh and the Knife, both well-known Egyptian constellations, are found, respectively, in the vignettes of Chapters 15 and 50; the sacred Ankh or symbol of life, in Chapter 41; the Lotus, in Chapter 81; the Cow (Mehuret) with the Ankh, in Chapter 71, and again in Chapter 162; the Plough in Chapter 110; the Balance in Chapter 125; and the deity with the Uræus head in Chapter 145; all these with others being in the *Book of the Master*, which contains also a great number of allusions in the body of the text. Another of the sacred writings to which we have also referred, the inscription on the coffin of Queen Ankhnes Ra Nefer Ab, possesses no vignettes, but contains several allusions which are illustrated by the planisphere, as, *e. g.*, the "Ram," the "Four Heads on the Neck," and the repeated allusions to the "Eight."

NOTE J

While there is nothing much to surprise us—when once we have brushed aside the schoolboy scholarship so predominant at our Universities, which cannot imagine any conception of antiquity originating except in Greece—in finding the sacred images employed in this mystical temple of incarnate Light repeated again and again in the mystical writings, we may well be astonished to find that this same planisphere illustrates also nearly all the images employed in one of the most familiar passages of the prophet Isaiah (chapter xi.)—that which relates to the Rod from the stem of Jesse. There is the “Rod” itself, fashioned like a “stem,” with roots, and forming the “Tam” sceptre of Egypt; and close by it is the Branch, in the hand of the woman. There are the “two girdles”—the sole vestments of the divine Horus—one round his neck, the other his loins. And there too are the Cow, the Bear, the Lion, the Lamb, the Asp, and the Little Child. And this resemblance is all the more striking when we remember that the temple to which the planisphere belongs was dedicated to the mother of God, and observe that the most conspicuous figure depicted upon it is that which is also displayed so prominently on the walls of the building,—the sacred mother holding in her arms the divine infant, the second Person of the Egyptian Trinity.

NOTE K

TABLE OF OFFERINGS. PAGE 110

In his interesting work *Noemi*, Mr Baring Gould speaks of an archaic relic near Sarlat in the Dordogne,

which is evidently a Table of Offerings. He describes it as a dolmen, or sepulchral chamber, roofed by a flat stone having a number of holes scooped in the centre ; and he mentions that the market women lay their fish upon it for luck ; a most singular survival of the ancient custom, since fish, as may be seen in the vignettes of the *Book of the Master*, formed a principal portion of the offerings. Indeed the burial customs of the most widely scattered nations receive singular illustration when compared with the religion of the dwellers on the Nile, the seat of the earliest records and the cradle of civilisation.

NOTE L

That this resemblance is not due to accident appears the more clear when we consider the number of courses of which the exterior of the building consists. For suppose that from dawn to noon on midsummer day (the opening of the sacred year of Egypt) observations be taken at every two minutes,—that being the time occupied by the moon, the great measurer of the heavens, in performing an unit (one circular minute) of her orbit relatively to the sun. Then since on that day the period between dawn and noon at Memphis is about seven and one-half hours (reckoning dawn to take place forty minutes before sunrise), the number of such observations will be a little over two hundred and twenty ; and the corresponding number of courses, therefore, will be about two hundred, a few being wanting at the top, since there is no refraction at the zenith. And this result exactly corresponds both with the number of courses and the truncated form of the Great Pyramid. Now at the commencement of each lunar month, when the moon, unseen in

the full lustre of day, comes to the meridian at about the same time as the sun, the entrance of Osiris into the moon was celebrated. And thus each course of that mysterious pyramid marks the unseen motion of the Queen of Heaven, as step by step she mounts the height, on the day when beneath the overshadowing rays the divine light entered unseen within her womb.

NOTE M

FULL SPLENDOUR. PAGE 151

Ra Neb : " Full Splendour." This expression is usually translated " Every day " ; but Ra undoubtedly means " Noonday lustre," and Neb used as an adjective signifies " All."



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