



SPHINX OF AMMUN-RA,—THEBES.

PANORAMIC VIEWS OF HISTORY.

No. 1.

N impetus has been given lately to the study of history by the publication of Dr. Ridpath's Cyclopædia of History, and we propose, in a series of short articles, to call attention to some of the prominent events of history brought out by it, having special reference to those historical records which bear in some measure a missionary aspect.*

That history bears evidence to a gradual improvement in the religion of mankind is plainly to be seen. Old dynasties with their different forms of religion have passed away, and the old temples, obelisks, sphinxes (such as shewn in the illustration above) and shrines of innumerable form, now to be seen, in a greater or less state of preservation, bear testimony to the yearnings of the human heart (as great amongst the ancients as among ourselves) for the cultivation of those spiritual powers which are common to mankind.

A recent traveller, for instance, says with regard to Egypt: "Everywhere we tread upon buried cities, pointing to a time when Egypt was incomparably more prosperous and more civilized than it is now. We pass miles of tombs, palaces, obelisks,

* The illustrations in this article are from the work named, and are kindly furnished us by the Balch Bros., Publishers, Toronto.

temples, at Heliopolis, Memphis, Thebes and Karnak. Look at the temple of El Karnak, with its gateway 300 feet wide—its hall of assembly, one suite only, consisting of 134 columns, each seventy feet high and twelve feet thick, built about 1400 B. C. The whole of Notre Dame would stand comfortably inside the great temple. Mark the obelisk 180 feet high, about 1400 B. C.; the largest in the world. Yonder, out in what is now a vast plain, periodically flooded by the Nile waters, stand the statues of Memnon, seventy feet high, raised by Amenoph III., about 1500 B. C. Dominating the desert, as indestructible relics of the ages, against which the waves of time seem to dash themselves almost in vain, stand the three pyramids of Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerynus. Not far from the pyramids the mighty head of the Sphinx, disfigured but not destroyed, looks the world in the face with its insoluble enigma. The face alone measures thirty feet; the paws, which have been unburied from time to time, 140 feet. The chapel between them, the altar of which is preserved in the British Museum, is now completely covered in the sand drift."

Yet, while Egypt was busying itself upon these works, as senseless as they were colossal, works which may be seen to-day, but merely as curiosities and marvels of skill and toil, without containing the least element of promise for the future