

religious or funerary. We learn from them what the Egyptians thought about their gods or the condition of the soul after death; what else they contain is for the most part a wearisome catalog of the titles and functions of the kings. Of history or even historical allusions there is next to nothing. And such history as there is, is naturally a record of Egyptian victories and glory, not of disaster or defeat. There seemed small probability that we should ever discover any reference to the successful escape of a body of despised Bedouin serfs from their Egyptian taskmasters, or to the loss of an Egyptian army in the waters of the sea.

Doubtless ancient Egypt possessed an historical literature, but it was written upon papyrus. And but few relics of the old literature of the country upon papyrus have survived. These have been found almost entirely in tombs, and consequently, with few exceptions, are theological in character. Some day, perhaps, we shall discover the library of some temple or individual in which historical works will be included; but until we do so our knowledge of ancient Egyptian history must remain what it is to-day, a thing of shreds and patchwork.

It is not only the earlier chapters of the book of Exodus that have Egypt as their background, the later chapters of Genesis also are equally Egyptian. The history of Joseph is as much the history of an Egyptian official as it is the history of a Hebrew slave. If, therefore, it is indeed history and not fiction, it must be true in its local coloring, and be confirmed by Egyptian research in both general outlines and details.

And such in fact is the case. We are only gradually beginning to discover how extraordinarily accurate in its coloring the narrative is. The Egyptologist, as he studies it, is more and more compelled to admit that the writer was at all events well acquainted with the details of old Egyptian life. Even such an unimportant point is noticed as the necessity there was for being freshly shaved before a subject could be admitted into the presence of the Pharaoh. And in matters of greater moment there is a similar amount of accuracy. The "chiefs" of the bakers and the butlers are mentioned in a list of the officials at the royal court; the seven kine seen in the dream of Pharaoh are the seven forms of Hathor, the cow-headed goddess, who symbolized the Nile; the gold chain placed around the neck of Joseph was the usual sign of royal favor in the age to which Joseph belonged, and Joseph's change of name was in strict accordance with Egyptian usage. In the paintings of the tombs we see the great official seated at a table by himself, while his guests sit at other tables below him, and we hear of the public "granaries," under the charge of a great minister of state, to which the agriculturists had to bring their yearly tributes of grain and out of which the salaries and wages of the servants of the king were paid.

According to tradition the Pharaoh of Joseph was Apophis II., of

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