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EGYPT, AND SOME ACCOUNT OF THE BOOK
OF THE DEAD.

Read before the Hamilton Association, January 8th, 1891.

BY H. B. WITTON, ESQ.

For ages the land of Egypt has commanded the attention of antiquarians, historians, warriors, statesmen and travellers. To this day, thoughtful men of many countries turn towards Egypt a longing lingering look, for since the dawn of civilization shed a glimmering light upon the earth, in the far background of the picture of man's doings, where all is hazy, indistinct, and almost lost in the aerial perspective of the past, Egypt shows a distinct if faint outline. Who but has felt some interest in that land? In youth we eagerly read of Joseph, and his brethren who sold him as a slave into Egypt; of his eventful life; his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams; his exaltation; his provision against famine, and relief of his family who for fear of hunger had gone down into Egypt to seek food. And with what zest we read on how Joseph made himself known to his brethren; and how the Israelites settled in Egypt and increased in numbers, so that they threatened to overrun the land; and how Pharaoh, having recourse to sterner measures than modern Malthusians have ventured to suggest, commanded that the male children of the Israelites should be put to death; and further on we read how the mother of Moses, to screen her child from that cruel edict, hid him in an ark of bulrushes, which she floated on the Nile, where he was found by the King's daughter, who adopted him as her son; of his sympathy for the wretched, his gifts as a leader and lawgiver, and of the Israelitish oppression and exodus. These narratives are indelibly impressed on the memory. We never forget them, and they whet the desire to learn something of the researches of Champollion, Lepsius, Petrie and the other Egyptologists of the nineteenth century.

Hardly less interesting than Egypt itself is the river by which it has been formed; for the saying of Herodotus, more than two thousand years ago, that Egypt is the gift of the Nile, is literally