

daughter," in the peaceful occupation of keeping sheep; and in the sweets of conjugal and domestic felicity with Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro. There he found that training which was needful to equip him for the splendid career for which he was preparing, and of which the first impulses had already begun to stir within his soul—acquired that stability of thought, that maturity of wisdom, that solidity of character, that acquaintance with himself, that knowledge of his own weakness and insufficiency, of his own utter insignificance and non-requisiteness for the accomplishment of the smallest of Heaven's designs, which were indispensable for the carrying forward of his life's work to a successful termination; and then, when God's time had arrived for his promotion, nothing is more remarkable than the incredible rapidity with which greatness rushed upon him. When the forty years of solitude and inactivity in Midian were ended, God sent him back to Egypt—not to Rameses II., the brilliant and warlike prince who had meanwhile died, but to Menephtah II., his thirteenth and eldest surviving son, a man about sixty, who had inherited his father's cruelty and disregard of human life, if not his energy and genius. This feeble sovereign—whom an inscription¹ describes as "a hero who takes no account of hundreds of thousands of enemies on the day of the turmoil of battle," and who records² of himself that in the Libyan war he "slaughtered the people and set fire to them, and netted, as men net birds, the entire country"—was undoubtedly the tyrant who exacted from the suffering Israelites bricks without giving them straw, and from whom Moses demanded the liberation of his countrymen; and when this was obstinately and perseveringly denied, God strengthened him to lead them out in spite of that monarch's reluctance and opposition, to freedom in the Sinaitic desert. To Moses, under God, it was owing that the exodus from Egypt was a brilliant success. It was he who led the van in that memorable midnight march which gave birth to Israel as a nation—who with his shepherd's crook at God's command opened up a pathway for the fugitives through the sea, and closed it again upon the chivalry of Egypt, if not upon Menephtah himself—a doubtful ques-

¹ Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 123.

² *Records of the Past*, vol. iv. p. 47.