

of the year by the state of the river, they proclaimed a plentiful crop by surrounding Isis with a multitude of breasts; on the contrary, when the presage of fertility was not favorable, they exposed an Isis with a single breast, thereby to warn the people to make amends for the smallness of the harvest by the culture of vegetables, or by some other industry. All these changes had each its peculiar meaning, and Isis changed her dress as often as the earth. Next to the symbolical *king*, or the emblem of the sun, the Egyptians had no figure that appeared more frequently in their assemblies than *Isis*, the symbol of the earth, or rather the sign of the feasts that were successively characterized by the productions of the earth in each season.

Having already contracted a habit of confounding the Most High with the sun, they by little and little mistook the symbol itself of the sun, the Osiris, the moderator of the year, for a man—Osiris, from the letter or symbolical personage he was before, becoming in the minds of the people a real person, a man who had formerly lived among them, they made his history to relate to the attributed which attended the figure. And in looking for the origin of Isis they ran into the same mistake. Isis was looked upon as the wife of Osiris: she partook of the titles of her husband; and being in their opinion raised to a real person, and a considerable power, they invoked her with confidence, they gave her the honorable titles of the Lady, the Queen, the Governess, the common Mother, the Queen of heaven and earth.

What contributed most to seduce the Egyptians, was the frequent joining of a crescent or a full moon to the head-dress of Isis. Thence they took occasion to give it out that Osiris' wife, the common mother of the Egyptians, had the moon for her dwelling-place.

So soon as Egypt was possessed with the ridiculous notion that the statues of Osiris, Isis and Horus, which served to regulate society, by their respective significations, were monuments of their founders; that Osiris had lived in Egypt and had been interred there, they framed stories agreeable to this belief. For want of a tomb containing in reality the body of Hammond or Osiris, they were contented with a cenotaph, an empty tomb. A vast concourse of people gathered near these pretended tombs, and with pomp celebrated an annual feast there. Plutarch often mentions the feasts of Osiris' tomb, and informs us that when the Egyptians were reproached with placing in heaven gods whose tombs they showed, their reply was that the bodies of these gods had been embalmed and interred in Egypt, but that *their souls resided among the stars*.

These tombs, though merely representative, were become a necessary part of the ceremonial. The Cretians, being of Egyptian extraction, had their own feast of Osiris and Jehov, the feast of their gods, and, of course, the empty tomb was inseparable from that solemnity.