

## Educational.

### EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES.

The year 1881 has added considerably to our knowledge of Egyptian antiquity, partly owing to the discovery of inscriptions in the pyramids, and partly owing to the finding of many antiquities of the time of the Theban dynasty in Upper Egypt. Although the value of the inscriptions above-mentioned was at first overrated, and that of the antiquities considerably diminished by the chaotic condition in which they were found, they yet yield a rich field for the further development of Egyptological science. It is extremely interesting, therefore, to listen to what one of the most celebrated Egyptologists says about the value and kind of those antiquities, and the hopes for science which are derived therefrom. Dr. Brugsch-Pascha recently gave a lecture on this subject in Vienna, and we believe we shall benefit our readers and all friends of science by reporting the most important parts of Dr. Brugsch's address. Through all antiquity there can be traced a spirit of reverence towards the dead. This trait is seen not only in the more civilized, but in all ancient peoples. It is proved by their manner of burial, for their tombs were constructed to endure for ages, and within them was laid everything that had become dear to the departed during their lifetime. From such sepulchres and their contents we draw conclusions very important to the knowledge of the history and culture of ancient nations, and it may be rightly said, "When men are silent, stones will speak." Among the nations whose ruined tombs provide us with such a rich fund of antiquities the ancient Egyptians rank first. The laws of their religion were: First, to praise and thank the gods; second, to love all mankind; and third, to honour the dead. Their dead, therefore, were buried with great solemnity and ceremony. Most of the ancient tombs are ruined, but even the ruins tell their own tale. The Egyptians laid little value on their dwelling-houses considering them to be merely temporary resting places—ante-rooms to the long period after death—and spent very little trouble on their arrangement or construction. All travellers in Egypt will have been struck by the entire absence of human dwellings, contrasted with the number of ruins of tombs and temples. There is nowhere to be found the ruins of a regal palace. Here and there are seen monumental remains of large brick edifices, but nothing betrays by whom they were inhabited. The tombs, on the contrary, are built of lasting materials, and the interiors richly decorated. On enquiring into the condition of the people it is necessary to fix on great periods. We distinguish two of these periods; the first and most ancient is the Memphis period, until about 250 B.C., the second and youngest was the Theban dynasty. The first of these periods is characterized by the building of the pyramids, which stretch for miles along the edge of the desert. The ancients were aware that the more ancient pyramids were the graves of Egyptian kings. The size and height of the different pyramids vary greatly. The discoveries of the past year have for the first time shown, beyond all doubt, the disposition and construction of the interior of these immense masses of stone. The first of these discoveries was that of the pyramid of King Cheops. The centre of this and all other pyramids consists in a sepulchre hewn in a gigantic granite monolith, with a roof of the same material, upon which rests the whole weight of the pyramid. On the north side a slanting passage leads into the tomb; this passage is divided by two or three falling blocks—the first of which closes the opening on the exterior of the pyramid—into so many chambers. When first built a pyramid was not higher than from 80 to 100 ft.; but if the king for whom it was built lived long, he caused other stone coatings to be built over it. There have been found in some cases five repetitions of such a casing, and the length of a king's reign can be deduced from their number. The local sequence of the pyramids from north to south corresponds with the sequence of the dynasties; a proof of the civilization of all Egypt, which progressed also from north to south. About 1830 to 1840 great interest was taken in the pyramids but as the inscriptions in the interiors were not then discovered scientific research remained without any great result, a few stones with the names of kings being all that was found. Dr. Brugsch has counted four or five. But a step has been made by last year's discoveries. In February some arabs who had sunk a kind of shaft into a ruin from above, found all the inside walls covered with inscriptions. But the hope raised of discoveries of historic value was not realized. Here, too, nothing was found but the names

and titles of several kings, and some copies of the course of life of the soul, which, in ancient Egyptian conception, wanders like the sun, from east to west. Still, the inscriptions were of value, for they taught us the most ancient language in the world, as it was spoken 3,300 years ago. Brugsch, when he visited the spot, found that the pyramid had already been robbed. The corpse of King Cheops was gone. Brugsch only found one hand, and a great quantity of linen, so fine that the Arabs burst out into the exclamation, "Silk!" In another pyramid examined by Brugsch he found the body of the king therein buried lying on the earth, but perfectly preserved. It was that of a young black haired man, apparently about 26 to 30 years of age. It is yet hoped that some pyramid may be found, the contents of which have not been disturbed, and one which seems untouched is now being opened. The operation will take same time, and a year may elapse before it is accomplished, for the immense number of stones which a pyramid contains is incredible. If the pyramid of Cheops were coated with lead, that lead would be sufficient to entirely cover the tower of St. Stephen, in Vienna, and if the stones of the pyramid were placed side by side, they would be sufficient to surround the whole of France. The lower classes of Egyptians were not entombed in pyramids. For them vertical shafts were dug in the rocks, with a second shaft at right angles, at the head of which the dead were deposited. The vertical shaft was then filled with sand, and a hall for prayer built above it. When the Memphis dynasty, from what cause we know not, was at an end, that of Thebes arose. Then the building of pyramids ceased, for the very nature of the mountainous country, with its narrow valleys forbade such a proceeding. The tombs were now made in the rocks of the mountains, into the bosom of which deep shafts were dug. An interesting discovery has been made of a well preserved roll of papyrus, containing a finished plan of a rock tomb by the hand of the architect. The shafts leading into the Royal tomb are slanting, and each of them is always divided into four successive corridors. Then comes a fifth chamber, the so-called "waiting room"; then a sixth, and chief room, the "golden hall," in the centre of which stands the sarcophagus; and behind this the seventh and eighth rooms—the "statue-hall" and "treasure-chamber." In the golden hall was placed everything that had belonged and was dear to the king; his arms, his whip, and his eating and drinking vessels, &c. The statue-hall contained a number of statues of Osiris, with the head of the king. There still exist twenty-five such tombs. But everything they contained has long since been removed, not only by the Romans and Arabs, but also by the Egyptian themselves—either robbed or removed by order of the Egyptian Government. There have been robbers in all times, also among the Egyptians. A document exists relating to the most ancient theft of which we have any knowledge, in the year 1100 B.C. This document is in Vienna. It contains the process against the thieves, the conduct of the case before the justices, and the Royal verdict. After the Egyptian came the foreign thieves; who they were we do not know. When Strabo went to Egypt, a century after Christ, he visited forty open tombs on the walls of which he found, not Egyptian but Greek inscriptions; then, as now, travellers used to immortalize themselves by writings on walls. Now only twenty-five of these Royal tombs are known to exist, so the rest must have been completely ruined and erased.

The emptying of the Royal tombs by order of the ancient Egyptian Government has been found out as follows: About six or seven years ago some travellers, among whom was Dr. Brugsch, saw in Thebes some remarkable Egyptian antiquities, small statuettes, which had evidently been brought from Royal tombs. They belonged to the twenty-first priest dynasty. In spite of the deep interest Dr. Brugsch took in the matter, he was unable to make further researches, for he was accompanying a high personage. Last July the origin of these antiquities was ascertained. Two Arab brothers quarrelled, and their dispute revealed the fact that in a certain ravine, which was not a Royal tomb, there was hidden a mass of mummies with everything belonging to them. One of the brothers, being promised immunity, offered to show the way to the ravine. It was a deep chasm in the rocks, ending in a cavern full of coffins, mummies, and the objects generally found in tombs. There were so many that they filled a large Nile steamer to such an extent as scarcely to leave room for the crew. On examination it was found that the brothers had not themselves heaped up these antiquities, but that the Royal tombs had been emptied by order of the Egyptian Government about 1000 B. C., in Salomo's time, and their contents taken to the cavern in question, no doubt, with the intention of