

in part has crumbled, but for the most part, in that rainless atmosphere, it exhibits broad, smooth masses of masonry. "If Egyptologists are right," says Miss Edwards, "in ascribing the royal title in hieroglyphics over the door to Ounephes, the fourth king of the first dynasty, "then this is the oldest building in the world. It had been standing five hundred years before the great pyramid of Gizeh was begun. It was over two thousand years old when Abraham was born. One's imagination recoils from the brink of such a gulf of time."

This great field of the dead, where "every step is o'er a nation's dust," is the most ancient necropolis in the world—all that is left of so much pomp and power and splendour. How true the words of the prophet Hosea: "For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them."

Other pyramids are near, the most interesting, of which is that of King Unas, made accessible by Messrs. Tho. Cook & Son, with great expenditure of labour. The interior contains two large chambers, with lofty, pointed roof and enormous inscriptions. In one of these rooms, lined with oriental alabaster and adorned with bright paintings, lies the sarcophagus of the king, "dating back," says Lepsius, "over three thousand years before Christ."

Most marvellous of all the discoveries of Sakkara is that of the Serapeum or the mausoleum of Apis, the sacred bull, which had spent its life at the temple of Memphis. The Greek historian, Strabo, states that even in his day an avenue of sphinxes leading to the Serapeum, was almost buried by the sand. "Without this clue," says Mariette Bey, "the Serapeum would still be lost beneath the sands." One day that shrewd explorer perceived the head of a sphinx showing above the drifted desert. With enormous difficulty he excavated this avenue for 600 feet, and found it bordered by an army of sphinxes, one hundred and eighty-one of which were in their original position. The entrance to the Serapeum was seventy feet below the surface. "The sand," says Mariette, "was almost as fluid as water, which made it almost impossible to dig."

We rode to the small, rude house in which Mariette lived for four years, and, leaving our donkeys, walked with an Arab guide to this vast mausoleum. On every side heaved and rolled the undulating desert, with no sign of human structure save the pyramids behind us and the rude hut we had just left. We approached the prison-like door in the side of a deep hollow, and, being furnished with lighted candles, proceeded to explore this vast catacomb. Here Mariette found three thousand monuments, the most important of which, however, are those of the