

belonging to the fourth dynasty, Asychis by name, is mentioned by Herodotus as the earliest known man to put in peril his ancestor's body; and the Father of History denounces with an unusual vigor so frightful a scandal: "He who stakes such a pledge and fails to redeem the debt shall sleep, after his death, neither in his father's tomb nor in any other, and burial shall be denied to his descendants." Thus did that reverent era punish the villany of ingrates.

Now contrast this with the modern treatment of mummies. For the last hundred years has been conducted a traffic in the contents of ancient sepulchers. Pyramids have been broken into, mausoleums have relentlessly been pillaged, bodies been used for fuel, burning the faster because of the resins and gums with which they were embalmed. Modern funerals are a mere mockery. Processions are met in the street as coarse and tumultuous as anywhere among the heathen; a singing, swinging, screaming throng, full of gesticulation that means nothing, proceeding afterwards to the residence of the departed man for a festivity at the expense of the heirs. The dignity of the former generations is all swept away, and a shallow hypocrisy is flaunted in its place.

Add to all this the devastations and demoralizations of the wars which have been waged on the soil of Egypt. The history of the region around Cairo and Alexandria is nothing but a bulletin of siege and rapine. The Nile has run with blood more than once since the day of the ten plagues. Lately, the moral destructions have been by far more serious; for intemperance and immorality have become rampant. I have myself seen viler pictures, more indecent photographs, on public sale in the windows of Cairo than I ever saw in Paris, even during those awful days just before and after the Commune. And drunkenness is the beastliest of sins when it lays hold of those Mohammedan renegades. If one disobeys the Koran, and dares the loss of heaven, for the sake of giving himself up to intoxication, his sin will burn him soul and body.

Thus it appears that the scourge has fallen on Egypt as the prophet predicted. Does one insist, then, that still there is hope for a country so lost? The answer to that question is found in the same way as was the answer to the other we have already considered. The "smiting" and the "healing" seem to have followed the usual law of divinely ordered providences. As we did before, we must look at particulars.

Now, one of God's processes in the fulfilment of prophecy is what we call restoration. He deals invariably with remnants. Some abiding good is supposed to be left behind whenever such ruin is wrought. The old times come back again, and the ancient standards are raised afresh into prominence. There is intense significance in the expression used in this verse of Scripture that we have just now been quoting, for the declaration is made that Egypt shall "return even to