

called Lake Meris, which received the surplus waters when the overflow of the Nile was too great, and, on the contrary, gave of its own abundance when the supply was insufficient.

Invasion of the Hyksos. — 7. Towards the twenty-second century before the present era, Egypt, which was then divided into several independent states, was invaded by wandering tribes of shepherds, believed to have come from Arabia. These invaders burned the cities, destroyed the temples and reduced the ancient inhabitants to slavery. The Egyptian dynasty, founded at Thebes, was the only one to escape bondage. The Egyptians called the conquerors Hyksos or Shepherd Kings. The latter made Memphis their capital, and like the Egyptian monarchs assumed the title of Pharaoh. There were then two dynasties, one at Thebes which was subject to the other at Memphis.

During the rule of the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings, Jacob's son, Joseph, was brought into Egypt and later on became minister to one of these kings. Pharaoh's kindly welcome to Jacob and his family and his granting them full liberty to settle in the north of Egypt was due to the fact that Abraham's descendants were shepherds also. (About 1920 B. C.)

Soon the conquerors became civilized and adopted the language and customs of the Egyptians. These Shepherd Kings reigned about 500 years. Towards the year 1700 B. C., the Theban princes thought they were sufficiently strong to reconquer Lower Egypt. The struggle was long and desperate. Finally, the Hyksos were driven out (about 1680 B. C.).

V.—The New Empire.—Conquests.—8. After the expulsion of the Hyksos, the Theban kings began a series of struggles which extended their dominion into Asia as far as the Euphrates and the Tigris, into Ethiopia in Africa, and the Isle of Cyprus in the Mediterranean.

The Pharaohs, fearing that the Hyksos would again attempt the invasion of Egypt and find powerful allies in the descendants of Jacob, the Hebrew people who inhabited the Delta, wished