

Egypt an inscription which he places near the xvii. dynasty, and during the rule of the shepherd kings, which reads thus:—"A famine having broken out during many years, I gave corn to the town during each famine." Men have built history on slighter foundation than the probability of this monumental sentence being a record regarding the famine of Joseph's history.

It is not our work at this time to expound Joseph's life; the simple facts illustrative of his faith are alone before us. We cannot, however, let pass the fact that "the death of the righteous" was prepared for by a righteous life. If, as most likely, the partiality of his father gave him occasion for "putting on airs," and thus inviting the envy of his brethren, his severance from home and hard service in the land of the stranger sufficiently atoned therefor; if, too, any lingering feeling might remain, as we estimate his character, that his treatment of his brethren, when in Egypt they came for bread, was not worthy of the full and free forgiveness which marked his after years, let it be remembered that Egyptian customs and castes ruled even the despotic king, and it may be that simple prudence demanded a self-restraint not readily maintained. We know at length "Joseph could not refrain himself longer" (xlv. 1); and in the light of the strong sense of God's presence under which he lived (xxxix. 9), we can but see in Joseph one whose upright and chivalrous example has, under God's good blessing, encouraged many to say *No*, when *Yes*, though wrong, would seem the readier word; has comforted many that they should not despair even when days were darkest, since the greatest trials are found in the end to be divinely ordered for good. As an example of integrity and manly faith, alike in the dungeon, in a situation of trust, or on Egypt's actual throne, a faith unshaken by adversity, unalloyed by prosperity and power, a faith that could look away from the land of pyramids, temples, labyrinths and tombs, to a better heritage—better because God had promised—no one of all this Roll Call of Heaven's own selecting impresses more the heart, strengthens the conscience, and says with inspiring voice, "Go thou and be likewise."

The tarrying, too, of that embalmed body among the Hebrews was a pledge of what, in a much deeper and wider sense, our Jesus

tarrying with His people now should be to them. Let us, more than they, read the lines aright. Jacob was buried at once in the land of covenant. Joseph said, "God shall surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence" (Gen. l. 25); more fully, "Egypt, which is the world to you, is about to become a house of bondage, a furnace of affliction. Its smiles are not enduring, its joys will bring bitterness. There is to be a season of ever-deepening gloom. But courage—be of good cheer, be not dismayed. The darkness is not for ever; this weary Egypt, this region of cloud and storm, of oppression and trouble and woe, is not to be your dwelling-place always. Canaan is ere long to open to you its blessed gates. I leave my memorial with you; and as often as ye look at this coffin, remember God will assuredly visit you; your Joseph in that assurance died. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink of this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come."

What says this faith to us? Cleave not to Egypt. Be not drawn by the world's smiles to love this present evil age. Fix hope and faith beyond the cloud land—within the veil.

Through that spirit which our Christ gives, may there

"— Come a flash of seeing
How every cloud must pass,
And vision become perfect,
Undimmed by darkling glass.
The glory that excelleth
Shines out with sudden ray,
We seem to stand so near the land,
No longer far away.

"The glisten of the white robe,
The waving of the palm,
The ended sin and sorrow,
The sweet eternal calm.
The holy adoration
That perfect love shall bring,
And face to face in glorious grace,
The beauty of the King!

"Oh, this is more than poem,
And more than highest song;
A witness with our spirit,
Though hidden, full and strong.
'Tis no new revelation
Vouchsafed to saint or sage,
But light from God, cast bright and broad
Upon the sacred page.

"Our fairest dream can never
Outshine that holy light,
Our noblest thought can never soar
Beyond that word of might.
Our whole anticipation,
Our Master's best reward,
Our crown of bliss is summed in this,
'For ever with the Lord.'"