

queen seated together, sometimes one queen on his knee, and usually accompanied by his children, of whom he had seven daughters but no son. It is evident the court lived very much within itself and took very little part in the government of the land. The despatches from Phœnicia and Palestine, and especially from Jerusalem, reveal to us the fact that whilst the king was living his life of pleasure the empire was falling into decay. Revolt and rebellion was the tenor of every letter from his consuls, and what his warrior father and the mighty Thothmes III. had won was fast being lost in the love-dream of this boy-king. Many of the tablets show that the writers understood the state of affairs and hardly expected any interference from the indifferent reformer.

By means of the hieratic writings (that is, abridged hieroglyphics) on wine jars recently unearthed, we learn that the city was commenced early in the king's reign, was completed in the eighth year of his reign, and that he ruled therein for the brief period of nine years. To build a city like this in five or six years implies rapid work and not too massive material. The greater part of the palaces, temples and other important edifices are simply built of bricks of Nile mud faced with plaster and painted. When, therefore, at the death of Khu-en-aten, who is supposed to have been murdered, the priesthood was again victorious over both the heretical religion and the Asiatic influences by which the king had been surrounded, the overthrow of the city was

sudden and complete; how sudden and complete is proved by the tablets.

The correspondence breaks off suddenly with a half-told tale of disaster and dismay. The Asiatic Empire is falling to pieces, its enemies are enclosing it on every side. The Hittites have robbed it of its Northern provinces, the Abiri are attacking it from the East, and revolt is shaking it from within. The few governors and vassals who remain faithful to the Pharaoh send more and more urgent requests for instant aid: "If troops come this year," say a number of the tablets, "there will remain both provinces and governors to the king, my lord; but if no troops come, neither provinces nor governors will remain." But the king had more than enough to do fighting off the powerful hierarchy of Thebes, and no answer was returned to these pressing appeals.

These letters give us practically all we know of the closing centuries of the 18th dynasty. The Egyptian inscriptions had already informed us of the conquests of the Pharaohs from the reign of Aahmes to that of Thothmes III.; but for the reigns of Amenophis III. and his son we had very little information. Of the events that took place during this period among the Syrian and Canaanite tributaries we know nothing; we did not know either the name or the location of the heretical capital of Khu-en-aten, or even that such a capital had existed; the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, therefore, create a new chapter, interesting alike to the students of Egyptian history and of Hebrew literature.

SOLACE.

BY AMY PARKINSON.

How sweet is the soothing with Jesus we find,
For sorrow-pressed spirit or care-laden mind;
How precious the peace His redeemed ones know,
Though round them rough tides of adversity flow.

To the timid and trembling His tender "Tis I"
Gives assurance of safety, when peril is nigh;
On a sufferer's pillow the touch of His hand
Is grateful as dew in a dry, desert land.

No grief-bowed head but may lean on His breast,
No earth-weary heart in His love but may rest,
He hath solace for each,—and in safety, at last,
He will bring where all trouble for aye shall be past.