

sixth dynasty she recovered her independence under the king Psammet'ichus I, but after a century she was finally reduced to the condition of a Persian province.

Egyptian Society and Government.—Egypt, at the dawn of history, had already become a united empire. There is evidence that this first

empire, under Menes, had grown up from a union of towns and villages which were previously independent,



EGYPTIANS SOWING

each under its own ruler and priests. These towns became grouped into districts, or "nomes," under local governors; and these in turn were gradually brought under the common authority of a king who ruled over the whole country. The people were not equal, but were divided into classes. The upper classes included the priests, whose office was hereditary, and the warriors, who were devoted exclusively to military pursuits. The lower classes comprised the common people, including the artisans, the farmers, and the herdsmen. The land was generally owned by the upper classes, and let out to the peasants, who paid their rent in the products of

the soil. Above all these classes was the king, or Pha'raoh, who was looked upon as a divine person. He was the fountain of all authority; and the labour, the property and the lives of the people



EGYPTIAN SHOEMAKER'S SHOP

were at his disposal. The king was assisted in his government by a body of councillors, who carried out his will. The highest offices of the state were held by the priests, who were exempted from all taxes and held the best parts of the land. The government was supported by the army or warrior class which was also exempt from taxes and held large landed estates.

Egyptian Civilization.—The Egyptians, like the Babylonians, were first of all an agricultural people. They also