

long after Joseph's death, bears incidental testimony to the permanence during life, and after, of the Hebrew slave boy's influence. Let us endeavour to realize the position in which Joseph stood. The civilization and power of ancient Egypt grows upon us as we read its records and its inner religious faith. "The wisdom of the Egyptians," into whose mysteries Joseph in all probability was initiated—for it must be remembered Joseph married into a priestly caste (Gen. xli. 45., and women in Egypt had accorded to them a higherrank than among the orientals—has many marks of an early and marvellous purity, beyond which in some directions it may be questioned whether our nineteenth century has made further advances. When Joseph ruled, the pyramids of Sakkarah, Gezeh, Meydoom, Dahshoor, were already objects of history long past, and of wonderment; the sphinx had for centuries looked calmly over the Nile valley to catch the first gleams of the morning horizon; the grotto tombs of Benu Hassan were in all probability shining in recent grandeur. The king, or Pharaoh, is more than the State. Everywhere is he to be seen, equalling the gods in stature, conquering and ruling, gathering the riches of the earth into his treasure cities. His subjects are as pigmies beside him; the Nile flows at his bidding, and the gods go with him to battle as equals, not superiors. He is Pharaoh, the eye of the earth, as the sun is the eye of heaven. The people live for him, and at his word they toil. Of such a Pharaoh over such a kingdom Joseph was prime minister. It was not the pressure of want or trouble that led him to plan among his dying hopes the departure of the children of Israel, and to number his sons, the grandsons of the great Egyptian priest, among the people who were simply probationers upon Egypt's bounty.

Joseph's body was embalmed (Gen. l. 26). We have become in some measure familiar with Egyptian mummies, and can understand how that body, coffined but untombed, could have been preserved and carried four hundred years, after to rest in the land where Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had been laid, though apparently in another tomb (compare Josh. xxiv. 32, with Gen. xxxiii. 19). This act receives more emphasis when we consider how the great men of Egypt looked upon it as a life work to build their sepulchre—a practice

in its folly hinted at in Job iii. 14. Those Egyptian tombs, the wonder of this age which is just beginning to unravel their mysteries, were esteemed as nought by Joseph, as by faith he looked forward to another grave and a future heritage, and thus his steadfastness was declared.

The ancient Egyptians appear to have had some belief in a resurrection or resuscitation of the body—hence the marvellous care with which they embalmed the dead. To what extent, if to any, Joseph accepted the national view, we are not able to determine; hence it will scarcely be fair to argue, from his "commandment concerning his bones," any faith in the divine revelation regarding the body's resurrection, for it is very manifest that the doctrine of Paul (1 Cor. xv. 35-44) is not hastened in its accomplishment by the embalming of this corruptible, as it assuredly is not retarded by the martyr fires which have scattered the ashes to the four winds of heaven. One cannot view the rifled tombs, the empty sarcophagi and crumbling mummies which are the museum wonders of our day, without feeling how Time mocks man's efforts to secure immortality by treasuring earth's dust. Even the skill of the Egyptian embalmers, which has preserved through ages, without festering corruption, the bodies that otherwise must be hurried out of sight, has only retarded—if such a word can be used under the shadow of Eternity—not weakened, the inevitable decree, "Dust to dust, and earth to earth." Joseph's command is simply to be received as a sign of the faith he had in the divine blessing to his father's house—a faith which, as it had sustained him in adversity, remained his guide when in not only prosperity, but honour, and enabled him still to esteem himself, not an Egyptian potentate, but of kin with the peculiar people of God, who at present were but strangers and sojourners, but who looked for a country, a heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city—

"Glorious dwelling of the holy,
Where no grief or gloom of sin
Through the pure and pearly portals
Evermore shall enter in:
Christ its light and God its temple,
Christ its song of endless laud!
Oh, what precious consummation
Of the precious things of God!"

Dr. Brugsch Bey has discovered in Upper