

History. — Till the nineteenth century nothing was known of the history of Egypt except what was gleaned from the incomplete accounts of the Bible and the legendary lore of a few Greek writers.

Bonaparte's expedition into Egypt (1798-1801) drew scholars and artists to the study of the country and the careful examination of the plans of the monuments. But these monuments were covered with mystical characters, hieroglyphics. In 1822 Champollion, a Frenchman, finally succeeded in fathoming the secret of the Egyptian writing and thus it became possible to know the true history, religion, customs and arts of the ancient Egyptians.

Division of the History of Egypt. — The history of Egypt is generally divided into three great periods during which thirty dynasties held sway. The first period, comprising the Old Empire till the eleventh dynasty, lasted about 1500 years; the second period, the Middle Empire, included the eleventh to the eighteenth dynasty, and lasted for more than 7000 years; lastly, the third period, comprising the New Empire, included the eighteenth to the twenty-seventh dynasty and lasted until the Persian conquest, that is, about 1200 years. The last dynasties, the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth and thirtieth, are connected with this third period and succeeded one another during the sixty years wherein Egypt finally secured independence from foreign rule.

III. — The Old Empire. — 4. When the dispersion of man took place Cham, Noah's second son, settled in Western Asia and later in Africa.

Egypt is alternately called in Scripture "The Land of Cham or the Land of Mesraim" because it was peopled by the descendants of Cham's son, Menes or Mesraim. The Old Empire founded by Menes lasted from 4500 to 300 B. C. The Kings of Egypt took the title of Pharaoh, denoting sovereign power. The principal Pharaohs of the Old Empire took up their residence at Memphis in Lower Egypt on the banks of the Nile.

The Pyramids. — 5. The most eminent kings were those of the fourth dynasty, who erected the Pyramids to be used as royal burial places. These monuments of gigan-