THE TREASURY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

ARTHUR E. WEIGALL

The Treasury of Ancient Egypt

Miscellaneous Chapters on Ancient Egyptian History and Archæology

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Ancient Egyptian Religion

An Essay by Eugène Hyvernat (1858 – 1941)

God and man, those two essential terms of every religion, are but imperfectly reflected in the Egyptian religious monuments. A book similar in scope to our Bible certainly never existed in Egypt, and if their different theological schools, or the priests of some particular theological school, ever agreed on certain truths about God and man, which

they consigned to official didactic writings, such writings have not reached us. Nor is the vast body of religious monuments bequeathed to us by ancient Egypt of such a nature as to compensate for this lack of positive and systematic information. The figured and inscribed monuments discovered in the temples, and especially in the tombs, acquaint us with the names and external aspects of numerous deities, with the material side of the funerary rites, from which we may safely conclude that they admitted the dependency of man on superior beings, and a certain survival of man after death. But as to the essence of those gods, their relation to the world and man as expressed by the worship of which they were the objects, the significance and symbolism of the rites of the dead, the nature of the surviving principle in man, the nature and modes of the survival itself as depending on earthly life, and the like, the monuments are either silent about or offer us such contradictory and incongruous notions that we are forced to conclude that the Egyptians never evolved a clear and complete system of religious views. What light can be brought out of this chaos we shall concentrate on two chief points:

The Pantheon, corresponding to the term God; and

The Future Life, as best representing the term Man.

(a) The Egyptian Pantheon.—By this word we understand such gods as were officially worshipped in one or more of the various nomes, or in the country at large. We exclude, therefore, the multitude of daemons or spirits which animated almost everything man came in contact with—stones, plants, animals—and the lesser deities which presided over every stage of human life—birth, naming, etc. The worship they received was of an entirely local and private nature, and we know almost nothing of it.

Each nome had its own chief deity or divine lord, male or female, apparently inherited from the ancient tribes. With each deity an animal, as a rule, but sometimes also a tree or mineral, was associated. Thus Osiris of Busiris was associated with a pillar, or the trunk of a tree; Hathor of Denderah, with a sycamore; Osiris of Mendes, with a goat; Set of Tanis, with an ass; Buto of the city of the same name, with a serpent; Bast of Bubastis, with a cat; Atàm, or Tàn, of Heliopolis, with a serpent, a lion, or possibly, later the bull Mnevis; Ptah of Memphis, with the bull Apis; Sovek, in the Fayàm and at Ombos (Kôm Ombo), with a crocodile; Anubis of Assiàt, with a jackal; Thoth of Hermopolis, with an ibis or a baboon; Amon of Thebes, and Chnàm, at the Cataract, with a ram; Horus of el-Kab and Edfu, with a hawk. According to some scholars, this association at first was merely symbolical; it was not till the Nineteenth Dynasty that sacred animals, having gradually come to be considered as incarnations, or at least as dwelling-places, of the various gods, began to be worshipped as gods (Breasted, "Hist. Anc. Egypt.", 59, 324). But this view, once quite common, is now generally abandoned, and fetishistic animal-worship is now considered as the true basis of the Egyptian religion [cf. Chantepie de la Saussaye, "Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte" (1905), I, 194 sqq.]. In any case the origin of the association of certain animals with certain gods, whether symbolical or not, is unknown; as a rule, the same may be said of the various attributes of the various gods or goddesses. We understand that Thoth, being a lunar god, could have been considered the god of time, computation, letters, and science (although we do not know how, being associated with the ibis or a baboon, he became a lunar god); but we do not see why the ram-god Chnàm should have been represented as a potter, nor why the cow-goddess, Hathor, and the cat-goddess, Bast, were identified with beauty, joy, and love, while the lioness-deity, Sekhmet,

was the goddess of war, and Neith was identified both with war and with weaving. The names of the gods, as a rule, give no clue. At an early date the crude primitive fetishism was somewhat mitigated, when the deities were supposed to reside in statues combining human figures with animal heads.

Triads.—In other respects gods and goddesses were imagined to be very much like men and women; they ate, drank, married, begat children, and died. Each nome, besides its chief god or goddess, had at least two secondary deities, the one playing the part of a wife or husband to the chief deity, the other that of a son. Thus, in Thebes the group of Amon, Màt (or Ament), and Chons; in Memphis the group of Ptah, Sekhmet, and Nefertem; etc. Sometimes the triad consisted of one god and two goddesses, as at Elephantine, or even of three male deities. Those groups were probably first obtained by the fusion of several religious centers into one, the number three being suggested by the human family, or possibly by the family triad Osiris, Isis, and Horus, of the Osiris cycle. In some cases the second element was a mere grammatical duplicate of the first, as Ament, wife of Amen (Amon), and was considered as one with it; it was then natural to identify the son with his parents, and so arose the concept of one god in three forms. There was in this a germ of monotheism. It is doubtful, however, whether it would ever have developed beyond the limits of henotheism but for the solar religion which seems to have sprung into existence towards the dawn of the dynastic times, very likely under the influence of the school of Heliopolis. But before we turn to this new phase of the Egyptian religion, we must consider another aspect of the ancient gods which may have furnished the first basis of unification of the various local worships.

The Gods of the Dead.—Gods, being fancied like men, were, like them, subject to death, the great leveller. Each community had the mummy of its god. But in the case of gods, as in that of men, death was not the cessation of all life. With the assistance of magical devices the dead god was simply transferred to another world, where he was still the god of the departed who had been his devotees on earth. Hence two forms of the same god, frequently under two different names which eventually led to the conception of distinct gods of the dead. Such were Chent-Ament, the first of the Westerners (the dead) at Abydos, Sokar (or Seker), probably a form of Ptah, at Memphis. Sometimes, however, the god of the dead retained the name he had before, as Anubis at Assiut, Khonyu at Thebes, and Osiris, wherever he began to be known as such.

Legend of Osiris.—Each of these gods had his own legend. Osiris was the last god who reigned upon the earth, and he was a wise and good king. But his brother Set was a wicked god and killed Osiris, cutting his body into fragments, which he scattered all over the land. Isis, sister and wife of Osiris, collected the fragments, put them together, and embalmed them, with the assistance of her son Horus, Anubis (here, perhaps, a substitute for Set, who does not seem to have been originally conceived as his brother's slayer), and Nephthys, Set's wife. Isis then, through her magical art, revives her husband who becomes king of the dead, while Horus defeats Set and reigns on the earth in his father's place. According to another version, Qeb, father of Osiris, and Set put an end to the strife by dividing the land between the two competitors, giving the South to Horus and the North to Set.

Sidereal and Elemental Gods.—It is generally conceded that some of the local gods had a sidereal or elemental character. Horus, of Edfu and el-Kb (Ilithyaspolis), and

Anher, of This, represented one or other aspect of the sun. Thoth of Hermopolis and Khonsu of Thebes were lunar gods. Min, of Akhmim (Chemmis) and Coptos, represented the cultivable land and Set, of Ombos (near Nakadeh), the desert. Hapi was the Nile, Hathor the vault of heaven. In some cases this sidereal or elemental aspect of the local gods may be primitive, especially among the tribes of Asiatic origin; but in other cases it may be of later date and due to the influence of the solar religion of Re, which, as we have already said, came into prominence, if not into existence, during the early dynastic times.

Solar Gods, Re or Ra.—That Re was such a local god representing the sun, is generally taken for granted although by no means proven. We cannot assign him to any locality not furnished with another god of its own. We never find him, like the vast majority of the local gods, associated with a sacred animal, nor is he ever represented with a human figure, except as a substitute for Atàm, or as identified with Horus or some other god. His only representative among men is the pharaoh, who in the earliest dynastic monuments appears as his son. Finally, it is difficult to understand how the kings of the southern kingdom, after having extended their rule to the north, should have given up their own patron god, Horus, for a local deity of the conquered land. It looks as if the worship of Re had been inaugurated some time after the reunion of the two lands, and possibly for political reasons. At all events, the solar religion soon became very popular, and it may be said that to the end it remained the state religion of Egypt. Re, like the other gods, had his legend—or rather myth—excogitated by the theological school of Heliopolis in connection with the cosmogonic system of the same school. He had created the world and was king over the earth. In course of time the mortals rebelled against him because he was too old, whereupon he ordered their destruction by the

goddess of war, but on the presentation of 7000 jars of human blood he was satisfied and decided to spare men. Tired of living among them, he took his flight to heaven, where, standing in his sacred bark, he sails on the celestial ocean. The fixed stars and the planets are so many gods who play the parts of pilot, steersman, and oarsmen. Re rises in the east, conquers the old foe (darkness), spreads light, life, wealth, and joy on all sides, and receives everywhere the applause of gods and men; but now he comes to the western horizon, where, behind Abydos, through an enormous crevice, the celestial waters rush down to the lower hemisphere. The sacred bark follows the eternal river and, unretarded, the god passes slowly through the kingdom of night, conquering his foes, solacing his faithful worshippers, only, however, to renew his course over the upper hemisphere, as bright, as vivifying, as beautiful as ever. Soon each phase of the sun's course received a special name and gradually developed into a distinct god; thus we find Harpochrates (Horus's Child) representing morning sun; Atàm, the evening sun; Re, the noon sun; while Harmakhuti (Horus on the two horizons—Harmachis, supposed to be represented by the great Sphinx) is both the rising and the setting sun.

Cosmogony and Enneads.—Different cosmogonic systems were excogitated at a very early date (some of them, possibly, before the dynastic times) by the various theological schools, principally by the School of Heliopolis. Unfortunately, none of these systems seem to have been handed down in the primitive form. According to one of the versions of the Heliopolitan cosmogony, the principle of all things is the god Nàn, the primordial ocean, in which Atàm, the god of light, lay hidden and alone until he decided to create the world. He begat all by himself Shu, the atmosphere, and Tefnàt, the dew. In their turn Shu and Tefnàt begat Qeb, the earth, and Nàt, the vault of heaven.

These two were lying asleep in mutual embrace in the Nàn, when Shu, stealing between them, raised Nàt on high. The world was formed, and the sun could begin its daily course across the heavens. Qeb and Nàt begat Osiris, the cultivable land and the Nile united in one concept, Set the desert, and the two sisters Isis and Nephthys. To this first ennead, of which Tàm (later supplanted by Re) appears as the head, two others were added, the first of which began with Horns, as son of Osiris and Isis. The three enneads constituted as many dynasties of gods, or demi-gods, who reigned on the earth in predynastic times. We have seen above that the third of these dynasties, called "the shades" (nekues) by Manetho, represents the predynastic kings mentioned on the Palermo Stone. The Heliopolitan Ennead became very popular, and every religious center was now ambitious to have a similar one, the same gods and order being generally retained, except that the local deity invariably appeared at the head of the combination.

It has long been customary to assert that in Egypt human life was compared to the course of the sun, and that Osiris was nothing but the sun considered as dead. It is far more correct, however, to say, with Professor Maspéro [Revue de l'histoire des religions (1887), XV, 307 sqq.], that the course of the sun was compared to that of human life. Osiris is not a sun that has set, but the sun that has set is an Osiris; this is so true that when the sun reappears on the eastern horizon, he is represented as the youth, Horus, son of Osiris.

The great prominence given to Re and Osiris by the Heliopolitan School of theology not only raised the Egyptian belief to a higher plane, but brought about a certain unification of it—a consolidation, so to speak, of the local worships. Naturally, the local gods retained their original external appearance, but they were now clothed with the

attributions of the new Heliopolitan deity, Re, and were slowly identified with him. Every god became now a sun-god under some aspect; and in some cases the name of the Heliopolitan god was added to the name of the local god, as Sobek-Re, Chnàm-Re, Ammon-Re. It was a step towards monotheism, or at any rate towards a national henotheism. This tendency must have been encouraged by the pharaohs in their capacity rather of political than of religious rulers of the nation. There could be no perfect and lasting political unity as long as the various nomes retained their individual gods.

It is significant that in the only two periods when the pharaohs seem to have had absolute political control of Egypt—viz. from the Fourth to the Fifth and from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Dynasty—the systems of Re, in the former period, and his Theban form, Ammon-Re, in the latter period, come clearly to the front, while the local religious systems fall into the background. These, however, though they were no more than tolerated, seemed to constitute a menace to political unity. The effort of Amenhotep IV to intro-duce the cult of his only god, Aton (see above, in Dynastic History; Second Period), was perhaps not prompted exclusively by a religious ideal, as is generally believed. A similar attempt in favor of Re and his ennead was perhaps made by the Memphite kings. From Khafre, second king of the fourth dynasty, to the end of the sixth dynasty, the word Re is a part of the name of almost every one of those kings, and the monuments show that during that period numerous temples were erected to the chief of the Heliopolitan Ennead in the neighboring nomes. Such encroachments of the official religion on the local forms of worship may have caused the disturbances which marked the passage from the fifth to the sixth dynasty and the end of the latter. That such disturbances were not of a merely political nature is clear in the light of the well-known

facts that the royal tombs and the temples of that period were violated and pillaged, if not destroyed, and that the mortuary statues of several kings, those of Khafre in particular, were found, shattered into fragments, at the bottom of a pit near these pyramids. Evidently, those devout "sons of Re" were not in the odor of sanctity with some of the Egyptian priests, and the imputation of impiety brought against them, as recorded by Herodotus (II, 127, 128; cf. Diodorus Siculus, I, 14), may not have been quite as baseless as is assumed by some modern scholars (Maspéro, Histoire Ancienne, pp. 76 sq.).

If the foregoing sketch of the Egyptian religion is somewhat obscure, or even produces a self-contradictory effect, this may perhaps be attributed to the fact that the extremely remote periods considered (mostly, in fact, prehistoric) are known to us from monuments of later date, where they are reflected in superimposed outlines, comparable to a series of pictures of one person at different stages of life, and in different attitudes and garbs, taken successively on the same photographic plate. The Egyptians were a most conservative people; like other peoples, they were open to new religious concepts, and accepted them, but they never got rid of the older ones, no matter how much the older might conflict with the newer. However, if the writer is not mistaken, two prominent features of their religion are sufficiently clear: first, animal fetishism from beginning to end in a more or less mitigated form; secondly, superposition, during the early Memphite dynasties, of the sun-worship, the sun being considered not as creator, but as organizer of the world, from an eternally pre-existing matter, perhaps the forerunner of the demiurge of the Alexandrine School.

(b) The Future Life.—As early as the predynastic times the Egyptians believed that man was survived in death by a

certain principle of life corresponding to our soul. The nature of this principle, and the condi tions on which its survival depended, are illustrated by the monuments of the early dynasties. It was called the ka of the departed, and was imagined as a counterpart of the body it had animated, being of the same sex, remaining throughout its existence of the same age as at the time of death, and having the same needs and wants as the departed had in his lifetime. It endured as long as the body, hence the paramount importance the Egyptians attached to the preservation of the bodies of their dead. They generally buried them in ordinary graves, but always in the dry sand of the desert, where moisture could not affect them; among the higher classes, to whom the privilege of being embalmed was at first restricted, the mummy was sealed in a stone coffin and deposited in a carefully concealed rock-excavation over which a tomb was built. Hence, also, the presence in the tombs of lifelike statues of the deceased to which the ka might cling, should the mummy happen to meet destruction. But the ka could also die of hunger or thirst, and for this reason food and drink were left with the body at the time of the burial, fresh supplies being deposited from time to time on the top of the grave, or at the entrance of the tomb. The ka, or "double", as this word is generally interpreted, is confined to the grave or tomb, often called "the house of the ka'". There near the body, it now lives alone in darkness as once, in union with the body, it lived in the sunny world. Toilet articles, weapons against possible enemies, amulets against serpents, are also left in the tomb, together with magic texts and a magic wand which enable it to make use of these necessaries.

Along with the ka, the earliest texts mention other surviving principles of a less material nature, the ba and the khu. Like the ka, the ba resides in the body during man's life, but after death it is free to wander where it pleases. It was

conceived as a bird, and is often represented as such, with a human head. The khu is luminous; it is a spark of the divine intelligence. According to some Egyptologists, it is a mere transformation which the ba undergoes when, in the here-after, it is found to have been pure and just during lifetime; it is then admitted to the society of the gods; according to others, it is a distinct element residing in the ba. Simultaneously with the concepts of the ba and the khu, the Egyptians developed the concept of a common abode for the departed souls, not unlike the Hades of the Greeks. But their views varied very much, both as to the location of that Hades and as to its nature. It is very likely that, originally, every god of the dead had 'a Hades of his own; but, as those gods were gradually either identified with Osiris or brought into his cycle as secondary infernal deities, the various local concepts of the region of the dead were ultimately merged into the Osirian concept. According to Professor Maspéro, the kingdom of Osiris was first thought to be located in one of the islands of the Northern Delta whither cultivation had not yet extended. But when the sun in its course through the night had become identified with Osiris, the realm of the dead was shifted to the region traversed by the sun during the night, wherever that region might be, whether under the earth, as more commonly accepted, or in the far west, in the desert, on the same plane with the world of the living, or in the northeastern heavens beyond the great sea that surrounds the earth.

As the location, so does the nature of the Osirian Hades seem to have varied with the different schools; and here, unfortunately, as in the case of the Egyptian pantheon, the monuments exhibit different views superimposed on one another. We seem, however, to discern two traditions which we might call the pure Osiris and the re-Osiris traditions. According to the former tradition the aspiration of all the departed is to be identified with Osiris, and live with him in

his kingdom of the Earu, or Yalu, fields—such a paradise as the Egyptian peasant could fancy. There ploughing and reaping are carried on as upon the earth, but with hardly any labor, and the land is so well irrigated by the many branches of another Nile that wheat grows seven ells. All men are equal; all have to answer the call for work without distinction of former rank. Kings and grandees, however, can be spared that light burden by having ushebtis (respondents) placed with them in their tombs. These ushebtis were small statuettes with a magic text which enabled them to impersonate the deceased and answer the call for him.

To procure the admission of the deceased into this realm of happiness his family and friends had to perform over him the same rites as were performed over Osiris by Isis, Nephthys, Horus, and Anubis. Those rites consisted mostly of magical formulae and incantations. The mummification of the body was considered an important condition, as Osiris was supposed to have been mummified. It seems, also, that in the beginning at least, the Osirian doctrine demanded a certain dismemberment of the body previous to all further rites, as the body of Osiris had been dismembered by Set. Possibly, also, this took place in the pre-dynastic times, when the bodies of the dead appear to have been intentionally dismembered and then put together again for burial (Chantepie de la Saussaye, op. cit., I, 214). At all events Diodorus narrates that the surgeon who made the first incision on the body previous to the removal of the viscera had to take to flight immediately after having accomplished his duty, while the mob pretended to drive him away with stones (Diodorus Siculus, I, 91), as though he impersonated Set. This custom, however, of dismembering bodies may be older than the Osirian doctrine, and may explain it rather than be explained from it (Chantepie de la Saussaye, op. cit., I, 220). When all the rites had been duly

performed the deceased was pronounced Osiris so-and-so—he had been identified with the god Osiris. He could now proceed to the edge of the great river beyond which are the Earu fields. Turn-face, the ferryman, would carry him across, unless the four sons of Horus would bring him a craft to float over, or the hawk of Horus, or the ibis of Thoth, would condescend to transport him on its pinions to his destination. Such were, during the Memphite dynasties, the conditions on which the departed soul obtained eternal felicity; they were based nn ritual rather than on moral purity. It seems, however, that already at that time some texts show the deceased declaring himself, or being pronounced, free of certain sins. In any case, under the twelfth dynasty the deceased was regularly tried before being allowed to pass across the waters. He is represented appearing before Osiris, surrounded by forty-two judges. His heart is weighed on scales by Horus and Anubis, over against a feather, a symbol of justice, while Thoth registers the result of the operation. In the meantime the deceased recites a catalogue of forty-two sins (so-called "negative confession") of which he is innocent. Between the scales and Osiris there is what seems to be a female hippopotamus, appearing ready to devour the guilty souls; but there was no great danger of falling into her jaws, as the embalmers had been careful to remove the heart and replace it by a stone scarab inscribed with a magical spell which prevented the heart from testifying against the deceased. The concept of retribution implied by the judgment very likely originated with the School of Abydos [see Maspéro, "Revue de l'histoire des religions" (1887), XV, 308 sqq.].

According to another tradition, which is represented along with the foregoing in the Pyramid Texts, the deceased is ultimately identified not with Osiris himself, but with Re identified with Osiris and his son Horus. His destination is

the bark of Re on the eastern horizon, whither he is transported by the same ferryman Turn-face. Once on the sacred bark, the deceased may bid defiance to all dangers and enemies, he enjoys absolute and perfect felicity, leaves the kingdom of re-Osiris, and follows re-Horus across the heavens into the region of the living gods. The same concept was resumed by the Theban School. An important variant of this re-Osiris tradition is to be found in two books due to the Theban Ammon-Re School of theology, the "Book of what there is in the Duat" (Hades) and the "Book of the Gates". In both compositions the course of Re in the region of darkness is divided into twelve sections corresponding to the twelve hours of night, but in the latter book each section is separated by a gate guarded by gigantic serpents. Some of these sections are presided over by the old gods of the dead, Sokar and Osiris, with their faithful subjects. The principal features of these two books is the concept of a retribution which we now meet clearly expressed for the first time. While the innocent soul, after a series of transformations, reaches at last, on the extreme limit of the lower world, the bark of Re, where it joins the happy crowd of the gods, the criminal one is submitted to various tortures and finally annihilated,

The Treasury of Ancient Egypt

PREFACE.

No person who has travelled in Egypt will require to be told that it is a country in which a considerable amount of

waiting and waste of time has to be endured. One makes an excursion by train to see some ruins, and, upon returning to the station, the train is found to be late, and an hour or more has to be dawdled away. Crossing the Nile in a rowing-boat the sailors contrive in one way or another to prolong the journey to a length of half an hour or more. The excursion steamer will run upon a sandbank, and will there remain fast for a part of the day.

The resident official, travelling from place to place, spends a great deal of time seated in railway stations or on the banks of the Nile, waiting for his train or his boat to arrive; and he has, therefore, a great deal of time for thinking. I often try to fill in these dreary periods by jotting down a few notes on some matter which has recently been discussed, or registering and elaborating arguments which have chanced lately to come into the thoughts. These notes are shaped and "written up" when next there is a spare hour, and a few books to refer to; and ultimately they take the form of articles or papers, some of which find their way into print.

This volume contains twelve chapters, written at various times and in various places, each dealing with some subject drawn from the great treasury of Ancient Egypt. Some of the chapters have appeared as articles in magazines. Chapters iv., v., and viii. were published in 'Blackwood's Magazine'; chapter vii. in 'Putnam's Magazine' and the 'Pall Mall Magazine'; and chapter ix. in the 'Century Magazine.' I have to thank the editors for allowing me to reprint them here. The remaining seven chapters have been written specially for this volume.

Luxor, Upper Egypt,
November 1910.

PART I - THE VALUE OF THE TREASURY.

"History no longer shall be a dull book. It shall walk incarnate in every just and wise man. You shall not tell me by languages and titles a catalogue of the volumes you have read. You shall make me feel what periods you have lived. A man shall be the Temple of Fame. He shall walk, as the poets have described that goddess, in a robe painted all over with wonderful events and experiences.... He shall be the priest of Pan, and bring with him into humble cottages the blessing of the morning stars, and all the recorded benefits of heaven and earth."

Emerson.

CHAPTER I. THE VALUE OF ARCHÆOLOGY.

The archæologist whose business it is to bring to light by pick and spade the relics of bygone ages, is often accused of devoting his energies to work which is of no material profit to mankind at the present day. Archæology is an unapplied science, and, apart from its connection with what is called culture, the critic is inclined to judge it as a pleasant and worthless amusement. There is nothing, the critic tells us, of pertinent value to be learned from the Past which will be of use to the ordinary person of the present time; and, though the archæologist can offer acceptable information to the painter, to the theologian, to the philologist, and indeed to most of the followers of the arts and sciences, he has nothing to give to the ordinary layman.

In some directions the imputation is unanswerable; and when the interests of modern times clash with those of the past, as, for example, in Egypt where a beneficial reservoir has destroyed the remains of early days, there can be no

question that the recording of the threatened information and the minimising of the destruction, is all that the value of the archæologist's work entitles him to ask for. The critic, however, usually overlooks some of the chief reasons that archæology can give for even this much consideration, reasons which constitute its modern usefulness; and I therefore propose to point out to him three or four of the many claims which it may make upon the attention of the layman.

In the first place it is necessary to define the meaning of the term "Archæology." Archæology is the study of the facts of ancient history and ancient lore. The word is applied to the study of all ancient documents and objects which may be classed as antiquities; and the archæologist is understood to be the man who deals with a period for which the evidence has to be excavated or otherwise discovered. The age at which an object becomes an antiquity, however, is quite undefined, though practically it may be reckoned at a hundred years; and ancient history is, after all, the tale of any period which is not modern. Thus an archæologist does not necessarily deal solely with the remote ages.

Every chronicler of the events of the less recent times who goes to the original documents for his facts, as true historians must do during at least a part of their studies, is an archæologist; and, conversely, every archæologist who in the course of his work states a series of historical facts, becomes an historian. Archæology and history are inseparable; and nothing is more detrimental to a noble science than the attitude of certain so-called archæologists who devote their entire time to the study of a sequence of objects without proper consideration for the history which those objects reveal. Antiquities are the relics of human mental energy; and they can no more be classified without reference to the minds which produced them than

geological specimens can be discussed without regard to the earth. There is only one thing worse than the attitude of the archæologist who does not study the story of the periods with which he is dealing, or construct, if only in his thoughts, living history out of the objects discovered by him; and that is the attitude of the historian who has not familiarised himself with the actual relics left by the people of whom he writes, or has not, when possible, visited their lands. There are many "archæologists" who do not care a snap of the fingers for history, surprising as this may appear; and there are many historians who take no interest in manners and customs. The influence of either is pernicious.

It is to be understood, therefore, that in using the word Archæology I include History: I refer to history supplemented and aggrandised by the study of the arts, crafts, manners, and customs of the period under consideration.

As a first argument the value of archæology in providing a precedent for important occurrences may be considered. Archæology is the structure of ancient history, and it is the voice of history which tells us that a Cretan is always a Cretan, and a Jew always a Jew. History, then, may well take her place as a definite asset of statecraft, and the law of Precedent may be regarded as a fundamental factor in international politics. What has happened before may happen again; and it is the hand of the archæologist that directs our attention to the affairs and circumstances of olden times, and warns us of the possibilities of their recurrence. It may be said that the statesman who has ranged in the front of his mind the proven characteristics of the people with whom he is dealing has a perquisite of the utmost importance.

Any archæologist who, previous to the rise of Japan during the latter half of the nineteenth century, had made a close study of the history of that country and the character of its people, might well have predicted unerringly its future advance to the position of a first-class power. The amazing faculty of imitation displayed by the Japanese in old times was patent to him. He had seen them borrow part of their arts, their sciences, their crafts, their literature, their religion, and many of their customs from the Chinese; and he might have been aware that they would likewise borrow from the West, as soon as they had intercourse with it, those essentials of civilisation which would raise them to their present position in the world. To him their fearlessness, their tenacity, and their patriotism, were known; and he was so well aware of their powers of organisation, that he might have foreseen the rapid development which was to take place.

What historian who has read the ancient books of the Irish—the Book of the Dun Cow, the Book of Ballymote, the Book of Lismore, and the like—can show either surprise or dismay at the events which have occurred in Ireland in modern times? Of the hundreds of kings of Ireland whose histories are epitomised in such works as that of the old archæologist Keating, it would be possible to count upon the fingers those who have died in peace; and the archæologist, thus, knows better than to expect the descendants of these kings to live in harmony one with the other. National characteristics do not change unless, as in the case of the Greeks, the stock also changes.

In the Jews we have another example of the persistence of those national characteristics which history has made known to us. The Jews first appear in the dimness of the remote past as a group of nomad tribes, wandering over southern Palestine, Egypt, and the intervening deserts; and

at the present day we see them still homeless, scattered over the face of the globe, the "tribe of the wandering foot and weary breast."

In no country has the archæologist been more active than in Egypt during the last half century, and the contributions which his spade and pick have offered to history are of first-rate importance to that study as a whole. The eye may now travel down the history of the Nile Valley from prehistoric days to the present time almost without interruption; and now that the anthropologist has shown that the modern Egyptians, Mussulman and Copt, peasant and townsman, belong to one and the same race of ancient Egyptians, one may surely judge to-day's inhabitants of the country in the light of yesterday's records. In his report for the year 1906, Lord Cromer, questioning whether the modern inhabitants of the country were capable of governing their own land, tells us that we must go back to the precedent of Pharaonic days to discover if the Egyptians ever ruled themselves successfully.

In this pregnant remark Lord Cromer was using information which the archæologist and historian had made accessible to him. Looking back over the history of the country, he was enabled, by the study of this information, to range before him the succession of foreign occupations of the Nile Valley and to assess their significance. It may be worth while to repeat the process, in order to give an example of the bearing of history upon modern polemics, though I propose to discuss this matter more fully in another chapter.

Previous to the British occupation the country was ruled, as it is now, by a noble dynasty of Albanian princes, whose founder was set upon the throne by the aid of Turkish and Albanian troops. From the beginning of the sixteenth century until that time Egypt had been ruled by the

Ottoman Government, the Turk having replaced the Circassian and other foreign "Mamlukes" who had held the country by the aid of foreign troops since the middle of the thirteenth century. For a hundred years previous to the Mamluke rule Egypt had been in the hands of the Syrian and Arabian dynasty founded by Saladdin. The Fatimides, a North African dynasty, governed the country before the advent of Saladdin, this family having entered Egypt under their general, Jauhar, who was of Greek origin. In the ninth century Ahmed ibn Tulun, a Turk, governed the land with the aid of a foreign garrison, his rule being succeeded by the Ikhshidi dynasty of foreigners. Ahmed had captured Egypt from the Byzantines who had held it since the days of the Roman occupation. Previous to the Romans the Ptolemies, a Greek family, had governed the Nile Valley with the help of foreign troops. The Ptolemies had followed close upon the Greek occupation, the Greeks having replaced the Persians as rulers of Egypt. The Persian occupation had been preceded by an Egyptian dynasty which had been kept on the throne by Greek and other foreign garrisons. Previous to this there had been a Persian occupation, which had followed a short period of native rule under foreign influence. We then come back to the Assyrian conquest which had followed the Ethiopian rule. Libyan kings had held the country before the Ethiopian conquest. The XXIst and XXth Dynasties preceded the Libyans, and here, in a disgraceful period of corrupt government, a series of so-called native kings are met with. Foreigners, however, swarmed in the country at the time, foreign troops were constantly used, and the Pharaohs themselves were of semi-foreign origin. One now comes back to the early XIXth and XVIIIth Dynasties which, although largely tinged with foreign blood, may be said to have been Egyptian families. Before the rise of the XVIIIth Dynasty the country was in foreign hands for the long period which had followed the fall of the XIIth Dynasty, the classical period of Egyptian history

(about the twentieth century B.C.), when there were no rivals to be feared. Thus the Egyptians may be said to have been subject to foreign occupation for nearly four thousand years, with the exception of the strong native rule of the XVIIIth Dynasty, the semi-native rule of the three succeeding dynasties, and a few brief periods of chaotic government in later times; and this is the information which the archæologist has to give to the statesman and politician. It is a story of continual conquest, of foreign occupations following one upon another, of revolts and massacres, of rapid retributions and punishments. It is the story of a nation which, however ably it may govern itself in the future, has only once in four thousand years successfully done so in the past.

$$$Photo by E. Brugsch Pasha.
The mummy of Rameses II. of Dynasty XIX.—Cairo Museum.

Such information is of far-reaching value to the politician, and to those interested, as every Englishman should be, in Imperial politics. A nation cannot alter by one jot or tittle its fundamental characteristics; and only those who have studied those characteristics in the pages of history are competent to foresee the future. A certain Englishman once asked the Khedive Ismail whether there was any news that day about Egyptian affairs. "That is so like all you English," replied his Highness. "You are always expecting something new to happen in Egypt day by day. To-day is here the same as yesterday, and to-morrow will be the same as to-day; and so it has been, and so it will be, for thousands of years." Neither Egypt nor any other nation will ever change; and to this it is the archæologist who will bear witness with his stern law of Precedent.

E. Dicey. 'The Story of the Khedivate,' p. 528.

I will reserve the enlarging of this subject for the next chapter: for the present we may consider, as a second argument, the efficacy of the past as a tonic to the present, and its ability to restore the vitality of any age that is weakened.

In ancient Egypt at the beginning of the XXVIth Dynasty (B.C. 663) the country was at a very low ebb. Devastated by conquests, its people humiliated, its government impoverished, a general collapse of the nation was imminent. At this critical period the Egyptians turned their minds to the glorious days of old. They remodelled their arts and crafts upon those of the classical periods, introduced again the obsolete offices and titles of those early times, and organised the government upon the old lines. This

movement saved the country, and averted its collapse for a few more centuries. It renewed the pride of workmanship in a decadent people; and on all sides we see a revival which was the direct result of an archæological experiment.

The importance of archæology as a reviver of artistic and industrial culture will be realised at once if the essential part it played in the great Italian Renaissance is called to mind. Previous to the age of Cimabue and Giotto in Florence, Italian refinement had passed steadily down the path of deterioration. Græco-Roman art, which still at a high level in the early centuries of the Christian era, entirely lost its originality during Byzantine times, and the dark ages settled down upon Italy in almost every walk of life. The Venetians, for example, were satisfied with comparatively the poorest works of art imported from Constantinople or Mount Athos: and in Florence so great was the poverty of genius that when Cimabue in the thirteenth century painted that famous Madonna which to our eyes appears to be of the crudest workmanship, the little advance made by it in the direction of naturalness was received by the city with acclamations, the very street down which it was carried being called the "Happy Street" in honour of the event. Giotto carried on his master's teachings, and a few years later the Florentines had advanced to the standard of Fra Angelico, who was immediately followed by the two Lippis and Botticelli. Leonardo da Vinci, artist, architect, and engineer, was almost contemporaneous with Botticelli, being born not much more than a hundred years after the death of Giotto. With him art reached a level which it has never surpassed, old traditions and old canons were revived, and in every direction culture proceeded again to those heights from which it had fallen.

The reader will not need to be reminded that this great renaissance was the direct result of the study of the remains of the ancient arts of Greece and Rome. Botticelli and his contemporaries were, in a sense, archæologists, for their work was inspired by the relics of ancient days.

Now, though at first sight it seems incredible that such an age of barbarism as that of the later Byzantine period should return, it is indeed quite possible that a relatively uncultured age should come upon us in the future; and there is every likelihood of certain communities passing over to the ranks of the absolute Philistines. Socialism run mad would have no more time to give to the intellect than it had during the French Revolution. Any form of violent social upheaval means catalepsy of the arts and crafts, and a trampling under foot of old traditions. The invasions and revolts which are met with at the close of ancient Egyptian history brought the culture of that country to the lowest ebb of vitality. The fall of Greece put an absolute stop to the artistic life of that nation. The invasions of Italy by the inhabitants of less refined countries caused a set-back in civilisation for which almost the whole of Europe suffered. Certain of the French arts and crafts have never recovered from the effects of the Revolution.

A national convulsion of one kind or another is to be expected by every country; and history tells us that such a convulsion is generally followed by an age of industrial and artistic coma, which is brought to an end not so much by the introduction of foreign ideas as by a renascence of the early traditions of the nation. It thus behoves every man to interest himself in the continuity of these traditions, and to see that they are so impressed upon the mind that they shall survive all upheavals, or with ease be re-established.