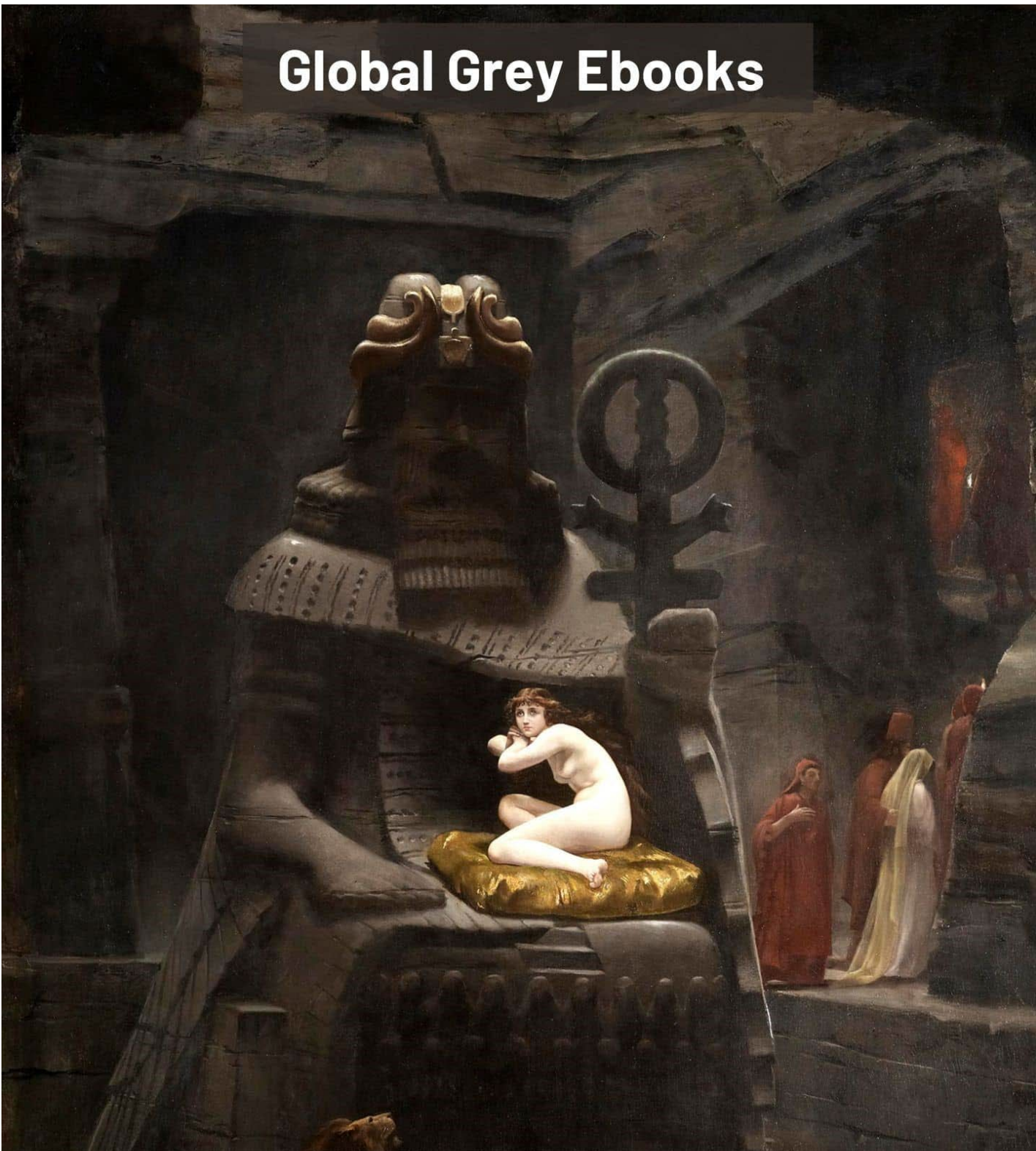


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**THE HOUSE OF
THE HIDDEN PLACES**

W. MARSHAM ADAMS

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The House of the Hidden Places by W. Marsham Adams.

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Preface

THE singular correspondence which may be traced between the passage-chambers of the Grand Pyramid—called by the Egyptians of old The “Khut,” or “Lights”—and the various stages traversed, according to the creed of that ancient nation, by the holy dead in passing from the light of earth to the light of eternal day, was first pointed out by me last year in the pages of the *New Review*. Previously to publication the article was submitted in substance to M. Maspéro and Professor Sayce; and I desire to express my sincere thanks to those eminent authorities for the recognition and encouragement which they afforded me, as well as to Mr. Mengedoht, the hieroglyphic scholar, for his revision of my work. In the present book the same analogy is worked out in much fuller detail—not completely indeed, for that may well need the labour of years; but sufficiently, I would hope, to present a clear basis for further investigation in either direction. In the case of the Ritual, we obtain what appears to me to be a consistent and intelligible analysis of that hitherto impenetrable creed, through the gradual transformation of the faculties in successive stages of illumination. With regard to the Pyramid, we are led to suggest a spiritual and most far-sighted purpose for its construction. For in that marvellous edifice, the very stones of which in their silent harmony seem to rebuke the idle charges of folly and pride heaped by ignorance upon the architect, we have nothing less than an indestructible and immutable symbol of the national religion.

The value of the general theory here proposed depends therefore, it is evident, upon the accuracy of the correspondence established, or sought to be established, between the path so jealously concealed within the interior of the Pyramid of Light and the path described textually in the well-known collection of sacred Egyptian writings, which is called by us the “Book of the Dead,” but which claims for its own title the “Book of the Master of the Hidden Places.” But those points of correspondence are so numerous in themselves, and form so severe, a system of checks upon each other, as to reduce almost to nothing the chance of their arising from mere coincidence; while no amount of ingenuity—the deadliest perhaps of all opponents to truth—could suffice to satisfy the innumerable conditions connected with the worship, the kalendar, and the civil constitution of the country which such a correspondence must fulfil.

Nor let it be supposed that an inquiry of this kind is merely of archæological interest, or that a determination of that early creed can have no greater value than to satisfy an idle curiosity. Very far from it. If there be a fact in the general development of nations which historical research has clearly demonstrated, it is the extreme tenacity of antique belief, and its enduring influence on the organization of society; since religion, far more than convention, appears to have been the basis of ancient law. Each generation, as it passes, modifies no doubt, but only to a very slight extent, the form of the social bond; and that not for itself, but for the generation which succeeds. If therefore we would trace more clearly the relation of man in his complex individuality to the yet more complex organism of human society, wherein each individual has his particular function, we cannot do better than examine thoroughly the creed of the earliest civilization on record. And the side-lights which such an investigation will be found to throw on the political and social constitution of that remarkable nation, illustrating, in point after point, peculiarities which hitherto have appeared to be anomalies, appear to me to be strong confirmation of the principle I have set forth. More striking still, the religions of other nations of the ancient world become suddenly luminous when held up to the Light of Egypt. And as chord after chord is struck, the full diapason of the creeds responds.

A singular circumstance, which may illustrate this remark, arises from the necessity of expressing the secret analogies between the references to the Light, which abound in the Ritual, and the Hidden Places of the Grand Pyramid, the "Light" of the Egyptian world. For in dealing with the ideas thus masonified, so to speak, in that mysterious structure, I have been led, or rather compelled, to employ phrases and symbols current among the Masonic brotherhood of the present day, such as Grand Arch, Purple Arch, Royal Arch, the Star, the Open Angle (the princes of which as well as the princes of the Circle, are mentioned in the Papyrus of Sinait, of very high antiquity), and other insignia of the craft. Whenever therefore such expressions occur—and they run necessarily through the entire work—it should be remembered that they are here designed to refer to the actual masonry of the Grand Pyramid, and the analogous features in the Ritual of ancient Egypt. At the same time, whether any vestige of this secret doctrine of the Light may survive in the esoteric doctrine of which those subject to Masonic rules are not permitted to speak, is an interesting question which naturally suggests itself, though it evidently cannot be established by open discussion.

The consideration however, which to my own mind tends most strongly to confirm the evidence of a connection between Pyramid and Ritual is, I confess, of a somewhat personal character. For in order to detect such an analogy, if it be real, the chief qualification requisite is a certain patience in collating and analyzing the results which others have obtained in their respective departments of knowledge. But to call it into existence if not already latent; to construct in imagination the path of the just, and to express it in terms of the motions of light; to portray the mystery of the depths unseen by the mystery of the visible heavens, to shadow forth the features of light in the passages of profoundest darkness, and its motions in a building which for ages has remained immutable, that were an intellectual masterpiece which surely demands nothing less than a creative genius of the very loftiest order. So majestic is the outline of the conception as it rises solemnly on the view, so sublime is every feature of the prospect, now defining, now transcending, the utmost limits of space and time; with such graduated measure, yet such overwhelming splendour, does it illuminate mystery after mystery of the invisible world, that I cannot for a moment believe it to be the offspring of my own imagination. Far more probable does it seem that, though much of the moral and spiritual imagery still remain obscure, yet we have here a genuine clue to the most profound and fascinating enigma of the ancient world; and that the more closely we study the Path of Light in its Masonic form, the more deeply shall we penetrate the earliest wisdom of which man has left record, and understand the Egyptian belief concerning the dark passage of death and the Entrance on Eternal Day.

I. The Pyramid Of Light

CLOSE to the verge of the immense desert which stretches its arid wastes across the whole breadth of the continent to the shore of the Western Ocean, just at the apex of the famous delta which marks the meeting point of Upper and Lower Egypt, at the very spot where the busy life of the earliest civilization on record was bordered by the vast and barren solitude, stands the most majestic and most mysterious monument ever erected by the hand of man. Of all the other structures which made the marvels of the ancient world, scarcely a vestige is left. Where are the hanging gardens, the boast of the monarch of Babylon? Where is the far-famed Pharos of Alexandria? Centuries have passed since earthquake laid low the Colossus which bestrode the harbour of Rhodes; and a madman's hand reduced to ashes the temple of Artemis, the pride of Ephesus. But the Grand Pyramid of Ghizeh still remains undestroyed and indestructible, ages after the lesser marvels have passed away, as it stood ages before ever they came into being. Certainly more than fifty, it may be more than sixty, centuries have gone by since that building, which never since has needed the care of man, first concealed from view its hidden places, those secret chambers of which no other building on the globe contains the like. Upwards of two million times has the sun risen and set upon its mighty walls, since first the pure and unbroken surface of polished casing-stones flashed back the rays like a veil of dazzling lustre, and vindicated its ancient title of The Light.

What the concealed significance may be of that secret masonry; by whom, and for what purpose, the complex plan was designed; at what epoch the huge structure was erected, are questions which have perplexed many minds in many lands, and have resulted in a discord more akin to Babel, than to the grandeur of its silent majesty. It was built by the Jews in the days of their captivity, says, or rather said, one school of theorists. It was built by Chemmis, but attributed by Egyptians in hatred of him to the Shepherd Philiton, is the account given by Herodotus. It was built by Ibn Salluk, say the Arabs, just before the Flood, to preserve the royal treasures from the predicted inundation. It was built by Melchisedec—or somebody—vehemently asserts the Scottish professor of astronomy, who seems always to write in a whirlwind of miscellaneous indignation. It was indisputably intended by the founder for his tomb, one party stoutly maintains,—a tomb in which he left especial instructions that he should not be buried, and in which nobody could possibly have been buried, replies another. It was an observatory, maintains a third,—where every place for observation was carefully closed up, retorts a fourth. It is the “prophetic floor-roll of human history,” screams Professor Smyth,—with all the dates gone wrong, softly sneers Mr. Flinders Petrie.

Side by side with that masonic mystery, well nigh as impenetrable at the present moment as when the Hir Sheshta, or “Master of the Secret,” was an officer of Pharaoh's household, has come down to us another enigma, the strange collections of sacred writings, or Ritual¹ of Ancient Egypt, which modern writers have called the “Book of the Dead,” but which claims for itself the title of the “Book of the Master of the Hidden Places.” Vivid as is the interest

¹ This title, which was conferred by Champollion, is vehemently repudiated by Mr. Budge, though without any particular reason assigned. But it appears to me to be as good a word as any which can be used as a popular expression; though doubtless the Catholic term, “Office of the Dead,” would be preferable if it were sufficiently familiar to our ears. The title “Book of the Dead,” devised by Lepsius, appears to me, I own, singularly unfortunate. For in the first place the Papyrus is not a book, but a collection of sacred writings; and in the second, that title appears to refer to the practice of burying copies or parts of the copy with the mummy; so that it gives the idea of regarding the holy departed as dead; whereas the whole conception of the doctrine was the entrance of the departed on life and light.

now awakened in those writings, little progress has been made in elucidating their meaning. The doctrines inculcated by their religion, the relations of the worshipper to the object or objects worshipped, the signification of the particular symbol under which those relations were at once veiled and expressed, are but little better understood at the present time, notwithstanding our greatly increased knowledge of the sacred writings, than when the hieroglyphs themselves were undeciphered. Yet, strange to say, prominently as these mysteries stand out in every matter that relates to ancient Egypt, no one has hitherto thought of collating the masonic secret of the monument with the doctrinal secret contained in the mysterious books of Thoth, to whom the origin of Egyptian wisdom is attributed.² Such an omission is the more singular, because indications are not wanting on either side to hint at the connection. That Khufu (miscalled by the Greeks, Cheops) should have adopted the pyramidal form in the hieroglyph of his name is not surprising, as he was the monarch under whom the building was erected. But it is not perhaps unworthy of notice, that the form of the Pyramid enters into the hieroglyph of the star Sothis, or Sirius.³ For the Grand Orient, or position of that star when its rising forms the immediate harbinger of dawn on midsummer morning, was, as is well known, the great starting-point for the age-long cycles of the Egyptian reckoning. And whereas the figure usually employed to denote the Pyramid embraces both the edifice and the rocky platform on which it is built, the form used in the hieroglyph of Sothis consists of the masonic portion alone, that is to say, the structure which represented to the Egyptian mind the Eternal Light, apart from its earthly support; while a Papyrus dating from the time of Khufu, the founder of the building, speaks of Isis as the ruler of the Pyramid; and a later inscription, that of Syene, calls her also the “Mother of God,” and identifies her with “The Divine Sothis, the Star, the Queen of the Heaven.”

On the other hand, the sacred writings, or Ritual of ancient Egypt, are full of allusions which become vocal only when applied to the Pyramid of Light. Such are the festivals of the “Northern Passage” and of the “Southern Passage,” that of the “Hidden Lintel,” that of “Osiris, who dwells in the roofed house” and in the “Pool of the Great House.” So in the Kalendar of Esne, we read of the “Festival of the Sockets,” and again of the “Opening of the Doors,” which is closely connected in the Ritual with the “Chapter of the Orientation,” and the raising of Osiris from the Open Tomb. The whole progress of the Departed seems, in fact, to take place in some kind of building. The Ritual is full of references to his “Going in” and “Coming out,” to “Going in after coming out,” to passing gates and gateways, and doors and staircases. Nay, the very titles employed, whether in the written or the masonic record, point directly, though secretly, to each other. Where else, if not in these chambers, so jealously concealed, the like of which not even the later pyramids contain, shall we look for the Hidden Places, the master of which is claimed for its own master by the “Book of the Dead”? Again, hundreds of years before the date of the principal papyrus containing those writings, as early as the twelfth dynasty, the inscription on the coffin of Amamu, buried in the sacred city of Abydos, makes a similar allusion, and shows that the secret places determine the order of the Ritual. “Thou hast not gone dying, thou hast gone living to Osiris.⁴ Now thou hast found the *words of order, the mystery of the secret places.*”

² M. Maspéro courteously informs me that the same idea has occupied himself, but that he has not published.

³ When a star rises, not simultaneously with the sun (in which case the star would be invisible), but just so long before dawn as to appear for a few moments on the horizon before it is swallowed up in the growing light, it is said to rise “heliacally,” and “the heliacal rising of Sothis” on the day of the summer solstice, or midsummer—an event which occurs every 1461 years (viz. four times 365¼)—was the epoch of the Egyptian secular cycle.

⁴ More correctly written Ausar; but in this and other sacred names I have kept the older spelling, not as being in any way preferable in itself (which it certainly is not), but in order to avoid introducing a fresh and not absolutely necessary element of unfamiliarity.

What a sudden significance, then, attaches to the title “Ta Khut,” “The Light,” whereby the Grand Pyramid, that monument of flame, was known to the Pharaohs, when, turning to the sacred papyri, we find the title of the opening chapter to be the Pir M Hru, or Entrance on Light—that is, not the light of common day, which the deceased was quitting, but, as is shown by the image of the setting sun, wherewith the descent of the tomb was always associated, of the invisible Light of the Unseen World, renewed for ever in the splendour of Osiris. For the doctrine contained in those mystic writings was nothing else than an account of the path pursued by the just, when the bonds of the flesh being loosed, he passed through stage after stage of spiritual growth, until initiated in the new birth and illumined in the hidden life, he became indissolubly united with him whose name, says the Egyptian Ritual, “is Light, Great Creator.” And that path which the Ritual gives in writing, the grand Pyramid of Light materializes in the masonry.

In the double symbolism of Pyramid and Ritual lie both the chief difficulties of decipherment and the strongest evidence of their correspondence. For as the departed in his progress was to become united in the fulness of intimacy with his Creator, so it was necessary that he should progress in the knowledge of the mysteries which envelop alike the spiritual and the material creation. To know Osiris in his forms of manifestation was the secret of power, to “understand Osiris in all his names, Osiris in all his places,” conferred the crown of illumination. But in the attainment of that infinite knowledge there were many stages which must be traversed by the finite mortal, many grades which must be achieved by the holy departed, when the mouth of the tomb, the portal of Eternal Day, had been opened for him, and the Catechumen of the Divine Wisdom had been admitted as the Postulant of Immortality. The “inner man” or “person” of the deceased, the “Ka” (or postulant with the upraised arms,) must be re-created in incorruption, the soul must be born anew, before that postulant could be initiated into things divine; the Initiate must pass the fiery ordeal, and become approved as Adept; the Adept must be justified in the Tribunal of Truth, before he could emerge from the shadow of the Halls of Death into the immediate presence of the Source of Light. The Justified must become the Illuminate, the Illuminate must be consummated as Master, before he could attain the innermost mansion in the divine house of Osiris. For each of such grades, according to the creed of Egypt, the Creator has assigned a distinct locality in the great exterior manifestation of Himself, the universe of space; and each of these localities is described symbolically in the books of the mystical Ritual, and inscribed masonically in the features and the dimensions of the Hidden Places of the Pyramid.

Not to every one therefore did that house lie open, nor could there be a more unpardonable offence than the profanation of its secrets. “This Book,” says the final chapter of the Ritual, “is the greatest of mysteries. Do not let the eye of any one see it; that were abomination.” So, too, the secrecy enjoined by the Ritual was enforced by the structure of the building; nor was it ever violated so long as Egypt remained Egyptian. And as it was the characteristic of that religion to be concealed, and as the manifestation of the Creator is deeper and more secret yet than the knowledge of His works, so it was essential that the symbols relating to Him, and to the connection of man with Him, should not betray their deepest mysteries even to the Initiate; but should reserve their more secret meaning for the Illuminate after full probation. Here, then, was the problem which lay before the first Hir Shesta, the “Master of the Secret,” the originator of the “wisdom of the Egyptians;” to express, but in expressing to conceal, to veil, but with a veil of light, the mysteries of the Deity; to choose such symbols as would without betraying their nature convey their living energy, their illuminative power, and, above all, their illimitable endurance. No ordinary image, it is clear, no mineral, no animal, no plant, no man, could suffice for an expression such as this. Only the orbs of heaven, obeying in their lustrous course the laws that know no change, could fulfil the required

conditions. Alike in the pictured and the masonic record the path of the just is traced amid the shining worlds, and his progress measured in the terms of celestial motion.

A remarkable instance is that of the orbit of the earth, involving a knowledge of the rotation of the earth on its axis, and its revolution around the sun, on which rested the ancient kalendar of Egypt. The “Lord of the Orbit” (Neb Sennen) was a title of the Egyptian monarch. And in the Pyramid we find the orbit, together with many other phenomena masonically expressed on the walls of the magnificent and unique upper Chamber of Ascent. Similarly, another great astronomical conception, viz. the horizon, runs not only through the “Book of the Dead,” but through all the funereal imagery of the country, as in the “Sai-an-Sinsin,” or “Book of the Migration of the Soul;” and in that of Queen Anchnes-ra-neferab and other papyri. What horizon then is the “horizon of heaven,” to which such mystery attaches, and what is its apex, the Grand Zenith of the celestial dome? We have no such general conception, and consequently our ideas of the celestial mechanism lack something of simplicity. But suppose that on the day of Equinox, the equal division of light and darkness, we are standing on the Equator, the equal divider of the earth into the hemispheres of North and South, and that we take up our position, say at the point where it is cut by the meridian of Memphis, close to the lake from whence flow the waters of the life-giving river. At our feet is spread the great plane, passing through the celestial poles, and bounded by the Purple Arch which encircles the floor of the starry dome. From the midst of our Horizon on that day rises the sun right upwards,⁵ and at the summit of his course, where day by day he equally divides the heaven East and West, on that day alone he equally divides also the Grand Arch, or Grand Meridian, which rises transverse from the same horizon, and stretches from pole to pole of the azure depths.

Then we shall have marked out the four Cardinal Points of the universal sphere—the four points whereby the sides of the Pyramid of Light were defined; the fiery seats, according to the Egyptian theosophy, of the four “Sons of Light,” whereof the most famous was Hapi, the presiding Spirit of the Nile. Into that Grand Horizon too, when the equal day is done, the sun passes beneath the Western waters. And out of it, the whole host of stars, from pole to pole, in serried array, each preserving his appointed distance from the solar path, follow him through the silent night—the “night of reckoning the spirits;” one-half springing into light as their leader disappears, the rest completing their numbers, just in time to herald his return from the Eastern point of the same Grand Horizon. “The road is of fire,” says the Ritual; “they whirl in fire behind him.”

Now this horizon seems strikingly indicated by the entrance passage of the Grand Pyramid, which, as is well known, may be defined by reference to the position of the pole-star. For, taking as the date of the IVth dynasty that given by Dr. Brugsch (about B.C. 3700),⁶ we find that about two hundred and sixty years later (B.C. 3440), the pole-star of the period (Alpha-Draconis) occupied, as Professor Smyth has pointed out, just that position; so that it would shine right down the passage. And thus the disciples of the Master of the Secret, who in successive generations must have watched for more than two centuries the approach of the star, would receive in its final co-ordination the most convincing proof of the truth of those

⁵ The conception here described, though not explicitly defined by our astronomers, is implicitly contained in the terms Right (or direct) Ascension, the mounting straight upwards of the stars; and Declination, or the falling off on either side from the equinoctial plane.

⁶ In deference to the very high authority of Dr. Brugsch, on all matters connected with Egyptian history, I have adopted, and still adhere to the date which he estimated for the Grand Pyramid. The recent discoveries of Mr. F. Petrie may perhaps point to an earlier date; and the question cannot be considered as settled; but on such a point the general harmony with other historical records is the supreme test: and of that knowledge none was more skilled than the great master whom we have recently lost.

astronomical relations, wherein their mystical religion was embodied. Hence when we read in the Ritual, of the “Good Paddle of the North the Opener of the Disc,” we recall at once the narrow paddle-shaped passage widened at the entrance towards the North, which opens the sacred interior to the outer universe; the pointer of the dial which sweeps through space, indicating perennially the position occupied by each successive star, which for a brief period of centuries keeps watch before the pole.

Taking in our hands now, the sacred writings of the Pir M Hru, let us approach the masonic Light; and opening the book at the first chapter, where Thoth the Eternal Wisdom commences to instruct the catechumen freed from the corruption of the body, let us with him penetrate the interior of the building, and take such a preliminary view of its secret places and their analogues in the Ritual, as may enable us to study more deeply the twofold expression of that masonic mystery. Reciting chapter by chapter as we mount, grade by grade along with the Catechumen of Light, we approach at the fifteenth step a gateway two courses yet above us, just as the catechumen in the fifteenth chapter approaches the “double gate of the horizon,” the double-arched gate which points towards the pole-star; when he invokes “Haroeris the great guide of the world, the guide of the souls in their secret places, the light dwelling in the horizon.” From this point the first veil of secrecy begins. For so effectually was the opening concealed from the uninstructed eyes by a revolving stone, that the position, once lost, was impossible to recover; and for two hundred years after passing under the barbarous Omar, the building remained impenetrable, until Caliph Al Mamoon, in the ninth century of our era, forced an opening at random through the solid masonry, and hit accidentally upon the entrance passage. Entering by the low gateway, thus built in the Northern side, at a considerable height above the ground, we have before us the passage of the horizon of the point of Equinox, which, while descending Southwards into the depths of darkness, points Northwards towards the star of the Purple Arch.

As we cross the gate on the seventeenth course we recognize the point where, in the seventeenth chapter, the catechumen is admitted as a postulant, and exclaims, “I go from the Gate of Taser (the Ascent). What is the gate of Taser? It is the gate where the god Shu (the Light) lifts the disc of heaven. The Gate of the North is the Gate of the Great God: “he continues, speaking evidently of the same gate; exactly as in the Pyramid the only entrance is the Gate of the Ascent in the seventeenth course of Northern face. Bidding now with him farewell to the light of earthly day, and treading the descending passage, we pass, some little way down, a very fine and beautifully ruled double line,⁷ scored perpendicularly on the slanting wall so as to point downwards to the foundation, and separating the upper section of the passage where the Departed in the Ritual is bereft of every faculty except that of motion, from the more advanced portion where his mental faculties are gradually restored to him. Continuing the long descent, we arrive at an aperture in the western wall, and passing through the opening thus disclosed mount gently into a kind of grotto at the bottom of the Well, a square perpendicular shaft, with footholds cut in the precipitous sides. Into that chamber of the Deep Waters the postulant descends on the Western side, as the sun at the close of day goes down into the Western waters, and bursts forth in splendour on the hidden world. From the top of the shaft a level passage runs to the place of the divine birth mentioned in the

⁷ The detection of this line is connected with a circumstance of a highly singular character, which seemed at one time to lend some appearance of support to the historic theories of Professor Smyth. It was due not to any measurer or observer of the Pyramid, but to a student who had never seen the building, but believed that if the professor’s theories were correct, some such special mark would point out that particular spot. Examination being made—for the professor had never noticed it—the prediction proved to be true; an act of divination which would have been remarkable enough if those theories had been true, but which seems strange indeed when one considers their palpable error.

Ritual, the Chamber of the Moon, where, according to Egyptian teaching, Osiris each month renewed his birth. In that chamber, once rigidly blocked up, the liberated soul was born anew; and thence it came forth to descend the ladder of the shaft, as we see in the papyrus of Ani,⁸ and to become re-united with the postulant awaiting it in the Well of Life. Then, when the soul is restored, initiation takes place and strength is given to endure the ordeal.

Returning from the bottom of the well to the Passage of the Horizon, and pursuing our course still further downwards, we come, after a short level continuation, to the subterranean chamber or the Place of the Central Fire, where the initiate undergoes his ordeal; a chamber hewn out of the solid rock, and having an inaccessible floor covered with huge blocks of varying height resembling a pool of petrified flame, or the masses of the mountain chains formed by the action of the earth's central fire; while beyond that terrible chamber a small passage leads to nothingness. Resuming our exploration of the edifice, and coming forth from the place of ordeal, as the Initiate, now become the Adept, turns back and avoids the place of annihilation; we remount the Passage of the Horizon until, at a little distance below the scored line, we come to a granite gate, or portcullis, built in the roof. This great gate, which originally was totally hidden by masonry and was only discovered by the falling of a stone when Al Mamoon was forcing his entrance into the pyramid, stands at the threshold of the Secret Places. Not only was the whole gate carefully hidden, but the lower portion of the passage within was blocked with enormous stones, still unremoved, and perhaps irremovable. So even now the Lintel is still hidden, and admission is only effected through a hole forced by violence in the wall of the passage above the blocks; while a precisely similar difficulty is experienced by the adept in passing the Lintel of Justice before entering the Double Hall of Truth. Creeping with difficulty through the hole, we find ourselves in a small low corridor about one hundred and twenty-nine feet long, inclined upwards at an elevation slightly less than that of the depression of the Entrance Passage, and corresponding to the lower portion of the Hall of Truth where the adept justifies himself before the forty-two judges of the unseen world, "The Gods of the Horizon, and the Gods of the Orbit." Then, stooping beneath the low gateway, by which it is terminated (but not obstructed) at the top, "The Gateway of the Festival," we stand upon a kind of landing-place, from which the whole system of the interior passages opens out. On every side, is "the crossing of the pure roads of life" of which the coffin of Amamu speaks. On the Western side, is the mouth of the well, "The gate of Anruhf" leading down to the "roads of darkness." Before us lie the fields of Aahlu, the blessed country where the justified executes the works, which he is privileged to perform for Osiris. "I have digged in Anruhf," he says later on, "I have drilled the holes," the holes, that is, for the good seed, the corn which grew seven cubits high, the holes which are drilled in the ramps of the Southern Ascending Passage, but to which no signification has yet been attached.

Beyond the fields, the road leads direct to the Queen's Chamber, the Place of the New Birth, where the soul received her second life; and here on the Eastern wall, within a staircase of five ascents, is a kind of niche or image, the "type," to use the expression of the Ritual, into which the soul is new born with the fivefold dominion of the regenerate senses. From the same point also, at the head of the well, diverge the interior ladders on the coffin already spoken of. Sheer down, "the ladder which has been made for Osiris," descends into the well. Northwards, "the ladder of Earth," slopes downward to the Hidden Lintel, the entrance of the upward path. Upwards to the South, but with a very slightly different inclination, runs the ascending passage, called by some writers "the Grand Gallery," forming the upper portion of the Hall of Truth, the Grand Lodge, or Luminous Chamber of the Orbit. This remarkable

⁸ I am indebted for this illustration to Mr. F. Compton Price, the well-known expert in ancient characters, who has just completed the splendid facsimile of that papyrus for the Trustees of the British Museum.

structure, consists of a corridor, about one hundred and fifty-seven feet long, and twenty feet high, built entirely on a slope, floor, walls, and roof, except a small portion at the Southern or upper end. On either side of the sloping floor, are twenty-eight ramps, each with a hole in it, a reference to which in the Ritual has been already noticed. And at the upper end the slope of the floor-line is closed abruptly, just above the Queen's Chamber by a block three feet high, forming a dais, or throne of judgment. From hence along the top of the block, or seat of the throne, the passage runs level for about sixty-one inches, the wall at the side being not quite vertical, but impending very slightly towards the slope. At the back of the throne the gallery is brought to a termination, by the Southern wall closing down in seven over-lappings within forty-two inches of the seat and leaving as an exit further South, a narrow and grave-like tunnel. In the sloping roof of the gallery, running downwards from South to North at a somewhat greater inclination than the floor, are thirty-six overlappings, like the waves of a river of light, and corresponding to the number of decades in the orbit of the Egyptian year. And on the side wall of the dais at the upper end of the gallery are also seven overlappings, one above another, arching over to the summit; while in the position corresponding to that occupied by our own globe among the planets, runs a deep groove or orbit along its entire length. Thus we are confronted with a vivid connection between the Orbit and "the Passage of the Sun" in the Double Hall of Truth, the Lower Hall of Truth in Darkness, and the Upper Hall of Truth in Splendour, with the Throne of Radiance at the higher end. And above that throne rises the habitation of the seven great spirits in the service of their Lord, the Creator, who, the Sacred Books tell us, "protect the coffin of Osiris."

Now comes the most mysterious portion of the building. Stripped of its noble proportions, and reduced to an altitude so low, that a man must creep on hand and knee to pass, the passage pierces the southern wall of the Grand Gallery, and runs straight on, first into the Ante-chamber, or "Place of Preparation," and then into the splendid hall called the King's Chamber, in the most secluded portion of the building. In each of these halls is one and only one object. In the antechamber is a kind of masonic veil, which no one can pass without bowing the head. In the King's Chamber is a sarkophagus, not closed, but open; while the air channels wherewith this deeply buried room is amply ventilated proclaim that it is not a chamber of the dead, but of the living, the place of "the Orient," where, in the Ritual, Osiris is awakened from his slumbers. In this portion of the building the structure changes its material for granite, forming, as it were, a house by itself within the Pyramid, an inner House yet within the House of Osiris, entered by the low and grave-like passage leading from behind the throne. This is the House of Glory described on the coffin of Amamu already quoted, the house to which the Illuminate approaches after passing the tribunal of Osiris. Here is the "Gate of the pure spirits," which they alone can enter who are washed in the waters of Life and radiant with the splendours of the Orbit. And here, too, it would seem, takes place the solemn address described in the Sai-an-Sinsin, "of the Gods in the House of Osiris," followed by the response of the "Gods in the House of Glory;" the joyous song of the holy departed who stand victorious before the judgment seat, echoed triumphantly by the inner chorus of their beloved who have gone before them into the fulness of light. Above is the "Empyrean Gate" ("the opening of Athor," as the Ritual calls it), which leads to the "Secret Places of Heaven;" the ascending spaces above the King's chamber, once completely closed, and constituting the innermost, the loftiest, and the most secret of the Hidden Places. And the whole is dominated and crowned by a gigantic triangle of granite, masonically expressing the divine Trinity of Egypt.

Such is the complex and hitherto unexplained system of gateways and passages, shafts, channels, and chambers; some leading upwards, some downwards, some level; some rough in the last degree, others exquisitely polished; some magnificent in their proportions, some so

low that a man must creep, so narrow that he can with difficulty pass, to be found within the Pyramid of Light. It is absolutely unique; no other building, it may be safely averred (not even the later Pyramids), having contained any structure bearing the least resemblance to the higher chambers. Striking as it is in every feature, the most remarkable circumstance of all is the evident intention of the architect to preserve that secrecy which lends a majesty to the strange theosophy of Egypt. What then was the design, the secret and jealously guarded design, with which this wondrous edifice was constructed? That its various features are meaningless, or the mere result of caprice, is a suggestion to which the forethought and lavishness of calculation displayed in every detail unmistakably give the lie. Nor again can we maintain that they are necessary for the purposes of an ordinary tomb. For, in the first place, they are not to be found in the other Pyramids, which were used for that purpose; and, secondly, if there be any intention which the architect has openly manifested, it is to create such a series of obstructions, that no human body could be buried therein.

In truth, the Grand Pyramid is the House of a Tomb; but it is not a closed, but an open tomb. It is the tomb not of a man, but a god; not of the dead, but of the risen. It is the tomb of the divine Osiris, whose birth on earth, descent into the under-world, victory over the serpent Apep, resurrection and judgment of the dead, were the most prominent features in the creed of Egypt, and in union with whom the holy departed achieved the path of illumination, and passed in safety the divine tribunal.

Viewed in this light, the practical value of the structure begins to become clear. On that doctrine rested the whole organization of social life amongst the ancient Egyptians. The kalendar, the festivals, the duties of the monarch, the rights of the priesthood, the relations of the provinces to their paramount temples, all were illustrated in the Path of Light. Endless confusion therefore in the State would result, no less than injury to the religion, from any misconstruction, or misrepresentation of doctrine (such as seems to have taken place under Khu en Aten); a circumstance all the more likely to occur, on account of the obscurity of the symbols employed.

Now the masonic symbolism of the Grand Pyramid affords a simple and practically indestructible means for perpetuating without betraying the doctrine of Egyptian wisdom. That expression, once formulated, was never repeated; the other tombs and Pyramids of Egypt claiming kinship only by subordinate and particular features with the work of the Grand Master. While then the written records of the Ritual, none of which now extant probably possess a higher date than that of Khufu, were liable to change and error, no lapse of time could impair, no variation could affect in the secret places, the masonry of the Pyramid of Light. This embodiment, at once secret and unalterable, forming literally a Masonic Ritual of the whole doctrine of Light, accounts for the singularly piecemeal fashion in which the sacred words were committed to writing. During the first three dynasties one chapter alone has a dim traditional claim to have been written, while one other is said to have been revealed to Men Kau Ra, the grandson of the builder of the Grand Pyramid. And though on the later Pyramids sacred inscriptions begin to appear, it is not until the XIth dynasty that they become at all common. Of the various chapters so published (that is, used as inscriptions or written on papyri) at different times, there have been, as Mr. Budge mentions in his "Treatise on the Mummy," four principal recensions. The first is that of the Ancient Empire, written in hieroglyphics, to which the important inscription on the coffin of Amamu belongs. Then comes the Theban recension, also in hieroglyphics, of which the papyri have been with great labour collated and published by M. Naville; followed during the succeeding dynasty (XXth) by another written in the Hieratic (or priestly) characters. And last of all, we have the

recension of the XXVIth or Saite dynasty, to which is due the great papyrus⁹ now preserved at Turin, of which Lepsius published a facsimile in 1846, consisting of upwards of one hundred and sixty original, with three supplementary chapters. Now it was during that recension that the order of the chapters is said to have been fixed for the first time. What canon then, or standard of order, did the revisers employ? It certainly was not the relative antiquity of the chapters, for the only one which claims to remount to the Ist dynasty stands one hundred and thirtieth in the papyrus, while that which is attributed in it to the IVth dynasty—and which is entitled “The Entrance on Light in one Chapter,” as though it had once been the single chapter in use—comes sixty-fourth. But the answer to the question appears to be contained in the last of the supplementary chapters; for the papyrus proclaims the key to be within the reach of all who understand in full the masonic secrets. “This Book,” it says, “is the Book of the Master of the Hidden Places.” And in those Hidden Places therefore the Secret of the Master of the Hidden Places, the “Mystery of the words of order,” as the coffin of Amamu says, is to be found. This is the version, therefore, which we shall compare with the Ritual in stone, its predecessor by more than three thousand years; the very magnitude of the intervening period serving to exhibit in a more striking light the closeness of the correspondence. Nobly indeed does that stupendous monument respond to the mystic title which it bore. Surrounded by darkness as profound as that which the Almighty has made His secret place; in the midst of scenery invisible to the eye, but faithfully portraying the glories of the celestial expanse, the Grand Architect has set up the throne which the lapse of ages has had no power to impair, and has immutably inscribed in its secret places the immutable path of the just in characters of light, embodied in the immutable motions of the heavenly orbs.

⁹ An English translation has been published by Mr. Birch, in Bunsen’s “Place of Egypt;” and one in French has been produced by M. Pierret. While speaking on this subject, it is impossible to refrain from a regret at the almost incredible carelessness with which the papyri, relating to every kind of topic, have been scattered loose-cast over half the museums of Europe, without the preservation of any general account of their contents, or even of their existence. Some are to be found at the Bodleian; others at the Louvre; others, again, in the museums of Bologna, of Naples, of Turin, of Leipsic, of Berlin, of Copenhagen, of Stockholm, and of Rome; while our insatiable sarkophagus, the British Museum, entombs them by the thousand. If France, the country to which belongs so distinguished a record in these matters, could be induced to join with us in urging the Government of Egypt to issue a Commission for the purpose of requesting from the various European Governments the fullest possible information with regard to the papyri and other relics of ancient Egypt, which they may happen respectively to possess, a favourable answer would doubtless be returned; so that a mass of invaluable evidence would be opened up, wherein we might not unreasonably hope to trace the action and inter-action of the religious, political, and economical factors in that complex constitution. And thus material might be collected for commencing a general Encyclopædia of Archaic Sociology; and possibly for founding a science of organic society in its concrete development.

II. The House Of Osiris

AMONG the innumerable transformations witnessed by the present century of revolution, none has a more startling character than that of the resurrection of primæval Egypt. For more than a thousand years from the day when the barbarous Omar celebrated the funeral rites of the ancient learning in the flames of the great Library at Alexandria, to the day when Champollion, like another Sothis, heralded the dawn of a new era of Egyptian brilliance, an ever-growing obscurity buried the entire land. Less than a century has elapsed since the most appalling penalties, in this world and the next, were fulminated by the Sultan against the official who should dare to allow a Christian "to approach the sacred port of Suez, the starting-point of the holy Haj." To-day that port is the crowded entrance of the most cosmopolitan highway of the globe. For centuries Egypt, as it was the earliest, so it was the most jealously guarded seat of Moslem law. To-day its courts recognize a multiplex jurisdiction of alien nations, for which no precedent exists in the history of any other state.¹ Within living memory its hieroglyphs were an enigma hopelessly abandoned; its temples hidden beneath the accumulated filth of generations of Arabs; the very age of its ruins unguessed within thousands of years. To-day the mighty buildings stand clearly forth to attest their pristine majesty; the canons of the kings may be consulted in their original records; and the errors made by careless scribes, who thought no mortal eye would ever look upon the papyri concealed within the breast of the mummy, stand detected by the hieroglyphic scholarship of Europe.

A peculiar fascination surrounds every detail of life in early Egypt. For all other empires can be assigned with more or less certainty some point of historic origin. For China, for Assyria, for even Babylonia, we can dimly discern the traces of rude beginnings. The days of Romulus or of Kekrops are but the Middle Ages of history when compared with the days of Khufu or of Mena. India does not claim for her earliest Vedas an antiquity exceeding four thousand years. The sacred writings of China count less than a thousand more; the beginning of Babylonia about a thousand still beyond. On the banks of the Nile alone do we find, centuries before the date of the Accadian Sargon, a settled monarchy and a constituted state, an elaborate Ritual and organic hierarchy, a specific architecture and a copious alphabet. Hence it is that the principal anomaly which usually blurs our conception of antiquity, namely, the interference of an element alien to the environment in the formation of the customs of a race, more particularly when that race has been transplanted from some wholly diverse soil, is absent from the horizon of Egypt; and the picture which we may draw of Egyptian civilization has its source, its development, and its consummation in the conditions of Egypt alone. No feature of attraction is wanting in that remarkable scene. The stately river, the source of perennial life and freshness to the entire land, the long line of majestic temples crowning the banks, the laughing population crowding its waters, the dances, the games, the songs, the wrestlings, the perpetual feasts, the boats of pleasure jostling with the sacred boats of the dead, all these things make up a picture, which set in the dazzling clearness of the cloudless sky leaves a charm that can neither be rivalled nor forgotten.

That picture, too, demands no painful effort of the imagination to fill up for ourselves from broken and disjointed details. We are not called upon to piece out, into such consistency as

¹ The case of the Holy Roman Empire may perhaps suggest itself as a precedent; for foreign princes undoubtedly sat in the Diet. But those princes had jurisdiction not by virtue of treaties or in right of their foreign kingdoms, but of the Imperial principalities of which they happened to be possessed.

we may, the fragmentary hints of social life laboriously gathered from chance allusions hidden in a score of different writers. Nor need we content ourselves with descriptions of events written centuries after their occurrence. We can go straight to the fountainhead, and consult the original records. On the huge propylæa of the temples, on the walls, on the enormous sarkophagi, on the architraves, on the pillars of the immense buildings, we find the deeds of the princes set out in the sacred hieroglyphs. For the battle of Lake Regillus we must trust to the traditions preserved by Livy; for that first great battle of Megiddo, which took place hundreds of years before Josiah lost his life upon the same plain, long before ever Regillus was fought, we have the cotemporaneous account of the conqueror Thothmes, and the lists of the spoils drawn up by royal officers. Nay more, the monuments of Egypt give us not descriptions alone, but actual representations of the scenes. Of the triumphs celebrated by the renowned Julius, what trace is left for posterity to gaze upon? But the triumphs of Rameses, and of Seti, which took place well-nigh as long before the time of Cæsar as Cæsar's day was before our own, live yet in every detail. The garments, the ornaments, the countenances, even the colour of the hair of the different races which took part in those processions, all may be seen to-day upon the walls of the palaces which witnessed them. Of Moses and of Solomon, of the founder of Rome, nay, of the great apostle of the Gentiles, we possess not even a traditional likeness. But the features of Pharaoh may be as familiar to us as they were to his adoring subjects. A triple enclosure formed by massive columns, of infinite pathos in their lonely grandeur, is all that is left to tell us how the earth-shaking Poseidon was worshipped in his home at Pæstum. But every feature of the procession which trod the long aisles of Karnak, the vessel of purification, the wings on the sacred scribe, the company of the singers, the quadruple ranks of priests, the sacred ark borne upon their shoulders, the cherubim with outstretched wings shadowing the Deity enthroned between, have all been preserved for our inspection, no less than the words of the solemn litany which the worshippers addressed to Ra, the unseen Light.

Two marked peculiarities characterize the records of the earliest times. Nothing is more striking than the knowledge of science which the priests of Egypt are more and more generally admitted to have possessed, in proportion as the facts are more carefully investigated. What architect of the present day would undertake to erect a building, more than four hundred feet high, full of chambers of the most elaborate description, which should never need repair for five thousand years? What other nation not only discovered the transcendental relation between radius and circumference—the foundation of all curvilinear measurement—but utilized it as a principle of architectural construction? What other building is oriented with such perfect accuracy that, if Mr. Flinders Petrie be correct, the minute displacement wrought in the course of ages represents (and consequently measures) the secular variation due to a recondite cosmical force? Where else shall we find expressed in masonic form the different proportions of the surface of the earth, given according to the various methods of calculation, as, according to the same authority, the architect of the Grand Pyramid has expressed them in the area of its pavement at the different levels? Where else shall we find an antique kalendar based on the periodic motion of the earth? What other people knew, as Dr. Brugsch and M. Maspéro aver, the proper motion of the sun in space; or who possessed the lovely Sothiac cycle, the Cycle of Grand Orient, which measured whole ages by the herald star, as it dawned for a moment on the eastern horizon.

Equally striking, and even more distinct perhaps, is the perpetual presence of the life-giving river. From end to end of its territory, from age to age of its history, in the religion, in the commerce, in the honours of the dead, wherever we may turn, and on whatsoever object we may fix our eyes, we never for a moment lose sight of the blue waters of the Nile. That beautiful stream, flowing tranquilly for hundreds of miles beneath the serene sky, alone gave

verdure and plenty to the long and narrow strip of fertile soil which lines its borders, cut off by deserts on either hand, and alone permits the very existence of an Egyptian people.

According to ancient tradition, and agreeably also to the records, the ancestors of the race in very remote times were not of Northern but of Southern² extraction, being originally natives of Poont, situated near the Equatorial sources of the Nile. In harmony with this tradition, we find that the central point of the Egyptian universe, the horizon of which traces out, as we saw, the sacred Horizon of the Ritual, determined by the pole-star and defined by the Pyramid, was the Aputu, or Southern "Apex of the Earth," mentioned by Dr. Brugsch in "The Holy Land of Khent," situated in that immediate neighbourhood. For our point of reference was demarcated by the intersection of the Equator with the grand meridian of Memphis; and that intersection takes place just by the Western shore of the great Equatorial lake from which the famous river derives its life-giving streams: hence on the day of Equinox, an observer standing at the fount of the river in the patriarchal land of Egyptian tradition, would witness that grand "Passage of the Sun," and march of the universal hosts of space, which solemnizes the day of the "Reckoning of the Spirits." From that point of origin, we marked out the four Cardinal Points of the universal sphere the thrones of the four Egyptian spirits of the Light, with Hapi in their midst, protecting the Southern fountains of the Nile. These four bright spirits, the guardians of the heavenly dome, were imaged to the Egyptians under the form of the cynocephalous ape, the creature which bears the closest resemblance to humanity; and from them, as the four living creatures before the throne of Ra, assistance was invoked by the Justified in the Ritual at the moment when the full splendour of the Orbit was bursting upon his illumined sight. Thus the whole system of Egyptian astronomy, in its scientific delineation no less than its mystical significance, would seem to have been devised originally, not with any reference to the later settlement of the race upon the lower streams of the Nile, but to their original dwelling-place among the sunny fountains of the South; while the Grand Meridian appears to have been defined, not by its local relation to Memphis, but from its passing through the apex of the earth, beneath the Grand Arch of the universe and the apex of the celestial dome over the point of origination.

Yet, remarkable as is this primæval locality when viewed in the light of Egyptian tradition, its interest is increased tenfold when we regard it in combination with the other features of the great watershed of which it forms an essential part, and which reminds us irresistibly of the famous watershed described in our own Scriptures as forming the primæval dwelling-place of man. There are—not the full streams but—as in Genesis, the "heads" of the four rivers, which go "forth to water the whole country." There, beyond the Zambesi, lies the land of gold, with its mines of unknown antiquity: while the odorous herb of which the hieroglyphic name is Betru (or Bedru, the L being in Egyptian identical with R) suggests the original of the Hebrew Betelu, converted by the Greeks into Bdelium. There is the fountain of the Niger, which encompasses in its windings the whole land of the Blacks. There is the source of the inundating Nei-los, in Egyptian "the Boundary Burster;" of which the Hebrew word Hiddekel, signifying "Violent," is but a pale reflection. And there is the Congo, the river of "Life," corresponding precisely with the Hebrew Perith (fruitful), transformed by the Greeks into the Euphrates. More striking still, in the eastward portion of the great basin lies the

² As a contrary opinion is still held by some Egyptologists, and was sanctioned by Dr. Brugsch himself, I may be permitted to quote the opinion of a very distinguished authority in support. M. Maspéro, when I put the question to him, most courteously informed me that though years ago he had held the opinion then prevalent of a Northern origin, he had changed his views on further research, and now believes the Egyptians to have come from the South. If this view be correct—and many facts seem to support it—endless difficulties are resolved, or rather do not arise to require solution, which have resulted from a belief in the famous "prehistoric Asiatic family;" that is to say, in a family of the existence of which no record can be produced.

wonderful garden, or Paradise, three thousand square miles in extent, so glowingly described by Stanley, and full of animal life, the sceptre of which was one of the insignia (the “Tad”) borne by the great deity Amen; while from that garden flows the single river, the Shari, exactly as in our scriptural account the single river flowed in the midst to water the garden which was placed in the eastward³ part of the immense watershed of Eden. And as, according to the same account, the first traces of the never-ceasing current of human wandering commenced on the Eastward of the garden, so does the stream of the infant Nile, which takes its rise near this point, tend Eastward of the grand meridian before bending Southward towards the lake which still bears the patriarchal name of the Egyptian Nou;⁴ and below it, to the ruins of Assur, discovered by Caillaud on the banks of hoary Meroe.

From that country their course appears to have been effected by a twofold route. In part, according to a very ancient tradition, mentioned by Dr. Brugsch, they proceeded along the banks of the river, sojourning for a while, it would seem, in the island of Meroe, where the hoary temple of Amen and the ruins of Assur, mentioned above, mark their ancient presence; while others appear to have come down by the Red Sea, as Mr. Petrie’s discoveries indicate, and thence to have crossed the desert to Coptos. From this most important circumstance, it is essential to bear in mind that to the Egyptian the South was the “Great Quarter,” to which especial reverence was due. Hence it was that every year the sacred images were carried into the ancestral country; an echo of which tradition is found in the visits of the gods of Homer to the “blameless Ethiopians.” Hence, in the ancient inscription on the coffin of Amamu, we are told how the holy dead, “after flying over the whole face of heaven,” is “established among the blessed company in the south.” And in that same archaic papyrus we read of the celestial land of Khent, or Khent-Amenti, the habitation of the Hidden God, imaged on earth by the “Holy Land of Khent” at the Apatu or Southern apex of the earth. Hence also the most sacred portion of the temple was placed towards the same quarter; and the Grand Pyramid, from the entrance to the innermost chamber, was oriented North and South.

In truth, to the mind of the Egyptian, the whole bed of the immense river was but the sacred image of the unseen land watered by the “celestial Nile” of which the Ritual speaks; “The Nuter Khart,” or Holy Land of the Dead, with its triple division into Rusta, the territory of Initiation; Aahlu, the district of Illumination; and Amenti, the secret home of the hidden God.

³ In the innumerable attempts at the identification of the birthplace of man, as recorded in Scripture—attempts which may be counted literally by the hundred, and which have gone far towards rendering any true exposition of human development an almost hopeless achievement—the garden is constantly confused with the watershed, and the “heads” of the rivers with their full courses, while the single river is omitted altogether.

⁴ From the same source a good deal of light may, I think, be thrown upon the scriptural account of the Deluge, regarded as a phenomenal inundation of the Nile valley, the dwelling-place of the primæval family, as I have endeavoured to show elsewhere; and this, again, will be found to react upon various questions connected with the early settlement of Egypt; the worship of Nou, the deity of the water; the sacred ark of Amen, the prototype of the ark of Moses; the especial reverence paid to the Nilometer, or “Tat,” the symbol of the divine Nou, with its threefold measure of the inundation; the sudden immergence of that lonely yet majestic civilization; the dim tradition of bygone generations; the intense reverence paid to the patriarchal monarchs; the universal jurisdiction claimed by the divine royalty of Egypt; and, above all, the serene contemplation of death as the luminous entrance to the fields of light. The Babylonian tradition also given in the Deluge tablet, translated in “Records of the Past,” is in agreement of the same view; for, according to that tradition, the theatre of the cataclysm was certainly not Babylonia, since the hero declares positively that he crossed the sea. In fact, so far as I have been able to trace, there is no nation, from India and China in the East, to Mexico and Peru in the furthest West, whose native traditions and archæological relics are in discord either with the Egyptian tradition of the primæval land of Poont, or with the scriptural description of the primæval watershed, if we are content to read, by the light of Egyptian tradition, the account handed down to us by Moses, whom those Scriptures expressly characterize as pre-eminent in Egyptian knowledge.

Far towards the South, beyond the alternate reaches of stream and desert, lay the patriarchal land of Poont, like Amenti, the distant home of the unseen Father. At the tropical extremity of Egypt, immediately below the celestial or tropical arch traversed by the sun at the summer solstice (at that epoch about 24° N. the inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit, being at that time about half a degree greater than at present), was the cataract or "Gate of the Nile," through which the ancestors of the race entered the country. That cataract or throne of the life-giving waters, situated beneath the Royal Arch of the solstitial throne, marks the point attained by the Illuminate in the Ritual, when he has achieved, in Aahlu, the "passage of the sun," and "opens the gate of the Nile," the cataract of heavenly light.

As the deceased, in making that ascent, entered into the presence of the forty-two judges of the dead (the Gods of the Horizon and the Gods of the Orbit), each judge supreme in his particular province; so also was all the land of Egypt parcelled out into forty-two nomes or districts, twenty nomes in the Lower, and twenty-two nomes of the Upper country. To each nome was assigned a great temple as capital, with a specific function and priesthood. And as the temple formed the vast enclosure of the shrine, so also did the district become the vast enclosure of the temple. Nor were the temples alone dedicated to sacred things, but the structures of daily life shared the divine significance. And for every division of the country, as De Rougé has shown, the palace and the canal, no less than the temple and the district, bore a name of mystery and reflected the region of the holy dead.

All along the valley of the river, as it descends Northwards; at Thebes, at Abydos, at Tentera, were the great shrines sanctified by manifestations of the Deity. At the Northern extremity, where the ocean formed the boundary of the country, was the mouth of Rosetta, or Rusta, imaging, as we learn from the Papyrus of Khufu, the mouth of the tomb, and looking towards the pole-star, the never-failing light of the depths, that pointed for the Egyptians the path to the hidden life. In the midst of the land where the Nile branched out into the great angle of the delta, the dominating angle in the conformation of the valley, stood Memphis (or Mennofer), the "Holy Place;" the seat of the double government of Egypt, with its palace dedicated to the Creator-spirit Ptah, its cemetery bearing the title of "Blessed Immortality," like our own "God's Acre," and its canal called after the Voyage of the Unseen Waters. There, too, was the territory of "Sochet Ra," the Fields of the Sun. And close to the sacred city, on the western bank of the river, rose the "Pyramid of Light," built upon a lonely rock, which faces the great quarter of the South, the house of Osiris, to which, says the papyrus of Amen Hotep, "Thoth," the Eternal Wisdom, "conducts the Illuminate."

A degree of sanctity, peculiar even in that land of reverence, enveloped the mysterious building. "A sense of enchantment," we read in another papyrus, pervaded the whole territory surrounding the Great House; and even the hurried traveller to-day can with difficulty resist the spell, as he gazes on the solemn walls. But for the initiated of old, the supreme end of their existence, the order of their festivals, the purity of their religion, the stability of their monarchy were concentrated in the awful masonry. As the territorial constitution of the country, with its forty-two provinces of the Lower and Upper kingdoms, corresponded interiorly with the forty-two provinces of the Judges of the Dead, the Upper Gods of the Orbit and the Lower Gods of the Horizon, the political framework being the envelope of the spiritual theosophy; so was it with the exterior and interior of the Great House. For from the point where the adept appears before the forty-two judges in the Double Hall of Truth, on surmounting the blocks at the lower end of the Chamber of the Shadow, to the throne at the upper end of the Chamber of the Splendour, where he received the crown of illumination, there are exteriorly forty-two courses; so that they form the envelope of that Double Hall of inner Truth. And as the lucid river itself imaged the stream of the "celestial Nile," so also was the course of that river imaged masonically in the hidden places in the House of Osiris. Upon

the walls of the Chamber of the Splendour was sculptured the orbit of our planet among the sevenfold company around the solar throne, the orbit which measures the rise and fall of the life-giving waters of the Nile. Along the roof descends the stream of sculptured rays, thirty-six in number, corresponding to the thirty-six decades of days in the orbit of the Egyptian year. At the upper or Southern end of the chamber, as at the upper or Southern end of the kingdom, beneath the Royal Arch of the Sevenfold Ascent, or "Burning Crown," as the Ritual calls it, is the Throne of the Cataract. Behind it, the low gate leads through the narrow channels to the chambers of the South with the hidden chambers in the height, crowned by the Grand Arch which dominates the whole interior of the building; as the gate of the Nile leads beyond the cataract to the Southern land of Poont and the long-hidden source of the river, where the land of Khent, beneath the Southern apex, imaged the celestial land of Khent, or Khent-Amenti, mentioned in the Papyrus of Amamu, the Interior Habitation of God in the supreme heaven. At the junction of the upper and lower chambers is the upper mouth of the Well, forming a key to the secret interior, just as the city of Memphis with the house of Osiris itself was the secret key to the constitution of the double kingdom. There too the lesser passage from the secret Chamber of Divine Birth, the "Chamber of Isis," "the Light of the Hidden Nile," unites with the main current of the masonic river; just as in the vignette of the celestial Nile, a branch of the stream pours into the main current, from "Annu (or On) the secret birthplace of the gods." From that point the masonic stream, like the Nile at the same point, forks out into a delta, one branch leading down to the Hidden Lintel, the other forming the Well of Life, in the territory of Rusta, wherein, as we learn from another papyrus, was the tree of immortality. And in the rock which bounds the Chamber of the Horizon, and upon which the house of Osiris is built, we recognize the "Rock of the Horizon of Heaven," of which the Ritual speaks.

Again, the very form of some of the hieroglyphs betrays a pyramidal origin. Thus if we outline the junction of the upper and lower chamber, by tracing the roof-line of the Well, below the roof-line of the gallery, with the three rampstones in front, and the projections of the upper and lower galleries at the place, we shall have the hieroglyph pronounced "Tau," which is well known to mean Upper and Lower Egypt, though no explanation of the form has hitherto been suggested. Similarly, suppose that we delineate the Double Hall of Truth (from the Hidden Lintel to the Empyrean Gate at the southern end of the roof above the throne), together with the Chamber of New Birth and the Head of the Well, we shall have the portion of the structure more particularly subject to the dominion of Thoth: the divine person, by whom the initiation is effected.

Then if we form a cypher of that region, by tracing a line-plan indicating only the direction of those parts in relation to the Head of the Well, where, as we shall presently see, the rite of initiation is accomplished, we shall have the sacred symbol reserved to that deity alone.

And as by the power of Thoth the adept, after passing his ordeal, is introduced into the presence of the forty-two judges in the Double Hall, corresponding to the forty-two nomes or provinces of Egypt, so also does that symbol of Thoth enter into the hieroglyphic names of every one of the nomes with but a single exception.

Upon the same harmony between the celestial and the terrestrial country embodied in the masonry of the Pyramid of Light, depended also the order of the princes of Egypt. For as the Great House itself, the Place of Osiris, the universal God, was represented in its totality in the person of the supreme Monarch; so also the two great divisions of that House, the territory of initiation with its directing angle at the Hidden Lintel, and the territory of illumination with its Sculptured Orbit in the Grand Gallery, the places respectively of the Gods of the Horizon and the Gods of the Orbit, were represented in the two great divisions of the Egyptian Court,

the princes of the Angle and the princes of the Circle. And so also was that seven-fold celestial company, the ranks of which were sculptured above the throne in the Chamber of the Splendour, represented in the seven-fold ranks of the "Companions of the King," which immediately surrounded the person of Pharaoh. Thus the Great House with the Double Hall of Truth within, formed a masonic organization not only of the religious but of the political constitution of the kingdom; with ascending grades from the Purple Arch of the Star defining the Sacred Horizon of Rusta (or Rosetta) to the Royal Arch of the solstice or limit of the solar seat above the water throne of the cataract, and beyond again along the Grand Arch of the Celestial Meridian to the culminating point of the sun at Equinox above the source of the river, in the primæval land of Poont.

As we stand before the portal of that "Great House," the "Pir Aa," while we recall the familiar title which the Pharaohs thence derived, and as we contemplate the heaven reflected in the blue waters of the river as it flows without, and its image masonically expressed in the path within, "the disc" seems lifted "from the tomb," and we gaze upon the unseen world. Egypt, for so many centuries the land of the buried, has suddenly become the land of the risen dead. And the message which the long-silenced voice proclaims as with a tongue of fire, is the primitive belief in the divine origin and end of man. It is not the Ritual nor the Pyramid of Light alone, which speak to us of the eternal day. Everywhere and always throughout ancient Egypt the same doctrine is proclaimed. From the orbit of the earth, from the pole-star of the heavens, from the dawning of Sothis, from the radiance of the sun, from the waters of the river, from the palaces, from the temples, from the tombs, from the very bowels of the rifled dead, comes forth a voice which for ages has been hushed in the grave; and that voice with startling clearness bears testimony to a judgment beyond the tomb, and the fatherhood of the unseen God.

NOTE ON THE SACRED ANGLE.

AMONG the jewels placed as the last ornaments upon the sacred mummy, was sometimes included the Golden Angle; one of the most obscure, but at the same time most interesting symbols employed by the Egyptians. The Angle is found, not held in the hand, but borne aloft upon the arm of the great Deity, "Amen, the Eternal Father," and is also one of the sceptres carried by Ptah, the Creator-Spirit. What is more singular, the well-known image called the Pataikos which was carried by the ships of Phœnicia, has been identified very clearly by Champollion with the same god Ptah; and the meaning of Pat-Aik in Egyptian is the Dedication of the Angle.

The same figure is also found among the rock-sculptures on the coast of Asia Minor.

While the sacred symbol of the Angle was thus widely diffused, the name itself (disguised to us in various languages) seems to have been borne by several races of the Levant. About the central or narrower part of the Mediterranean, just where the Italian peninsula juts out towards the projecting promontory of Africa, we meet the name of Angle in the important island of Sikelia or Sicily, a country which from its position has caught the current of many migrations and supplied the arena of many collisions. That island took its appellation not from the Romans—for they, as Ovid tells us, called it Trinacris, from its three-cornered shape—but from the Sikeli, a tribe who, according to Thucydides, immigrated into it from the Southern part of Italy, with which territory the island was for centuries intimately associated. Now the Sikeli bear a name which is meaningless in Greek or Latin, but in Egyptian signifies, without change or modification of any kind, "Sons of the Angle;" while the similar but more suggestive title of "Pirates of the Angle" is found in the Greek name Laestrygones, another race who dwelt there, of such high antiquity that Thucydides confesses his ignorance of their origin. From hence, too, we may not improbably derive our own word "sickle," or "sikel," as

it used to be spelt. For the sickle-sword (of which an Angle was a symbol in the priestly alphabet of Egypt) was, as may still be seen upon the monuments, the sacred weapon with which the Egyptian monarch slew the captives; and as Captain Burton has shown in his well-known treatise on the sword, it is the instrument from which both the Eastern scimitar and the cutlass of our own sailors take shape.

Again, at the Eastern extremity of the Levant, the name of Angle once more appears in a double form, and a still more marked and suggestive connection. Right opposite the mouths of the Nile, just in the locality where sea-immigrants from Egypt would probably land after passing the almost harbourless coasts of Palestine, lie the countries of Kilikia and Phœnicia, each expressing that idea of Angle (in Egyptian Kilik, in Hebrew Phœne); while the two together form the Angle of the bight through which runs the great dividing line of East and West.

Yet once more in Egypt itself, according to the account contained in Genesis—and Moses, it must be remembered, was at least an expert in Egyptian tradition—we find among the descendants of Ham the tribe of the Patroosim, which in that language means the Frontiers of the Angle (Pat-Rois), and connects them with those princes of the Angle who formed, as we have seen, an integral portion of the court of Pharaoh.

What angle then is this of such supreme importance that it should be the symbol of the great Deity, and should give a name to the princely races of the earth? Of the highly important part played by the relation between Angle and Circle in the structure of the Grand Pyramid we have already spoken; but there is another Angle which still remains for consideration, namely, that between the two branches of the Delta into which the river forks at Memphis below the Great House. Now this Angle supplies a simple key to a very curious problem in cosmography.

Upon examining the well-known triple division of the ancient world, it is somewhat difficult to perceive upon what principle it was effected. Russia can even now be scarcely considered as forming, either by race or by conformation, a portion of Europe proper; while, as Scythia, it seems to have been regarded as entirely separate. Asia Minor, on the other hand, possesses a shore line almost continuous with that of Greece; and her population, at least upon the coasts, seem to have been derived in great measure from kindred sources. Nor is it easy to find the central point from which the three dividing lines branch out. It cannot, for instance, be situated in Babylonia, where some might be inclined to place it, because Syria lies to the west; neither again can it be in Armenia, where others might look for it, since a considerable space divides that country from Africa. If, however, we take up our stand in front of the Great House at Memphis, the masonic record of primæval science, the entrance to which indicates the principal division of the universal sphere, and look abroad upon the great river which we have seen represented within, we shall find that the form which that river assumes at the spot suggests three divisions of the entire hemisphere. Behind us, towards the South, stretches the long valley leading up to the hidden sources of the far-distant primæval land; indicating the huge peninsula of Africa enclosed between the seas, and constituting also the southern boundary of the vast Mediterranean basin. And right along that valley, above the Great House, through the whole kingdom of Upper Egypt, stretches the Grand Meridian, tracing out upon the earth the Grand Arch of the Universe, and traversing their ancient home beneath the supreme dome of highest heaven. Next, if the lines of the northern fork be prolonged indefinitely, then Eastward of the most Eastern branch lies the continent of Asia; Westward of the most Western is Europe proper. Finally, between the legs of that earth-dominating Angle, lies the famous kingdom of Lower Egypt, with the princes of the Angle; while on the coast beyond is Kilikia, the land of the Angle; and further again, but still within the legs of

the same Angle, stretches the immense plain of Scythia, separating and yet uniting East and West. Upon the Southern borders of that plain, on the coast of the Black Sea, according to the ancient traditions of our Sagas, the ancestors of Odin and of the sea-going race, which still bears the proud name of Angles, had their pirate home. And it is not a little remarkable that the same Saga refers more than once to the boundary line of East and West as passing close by their ancient city upon the Black Sea, and mentions as their neighbours the tribe of the Vans, whose name appears frequently upon the ancient monuments, and is still preserved in the Armenian lake which lies by that boundary line.

It is strange too, to observe that no sooner are the records of our ancestors permitted to speak as to their own history, records incidentally confirmed both by classic historians, such as Florus, and by the ancient monuments, than a glimpse of still higher antiquity opens out through the title of our nation, connecting itself with the widespread symbol of the Egyptian Angle; and a flood of light is poured upon our words and customs by reference to Egyptian sources. Thus the familiar name of Viking, for which no meaning has been assigned, signifies in Egyptian an Angle-dweller, that is, an Englishman; and the two words composing it are still preserved in English as “wick,” a place, and “kink,” an indentation. Berserk again, another well-known but unintelligible appellation, means in that ancient tongue “foam-plough;” a striking and most natural image for those ploughers of the ocean to employ, and one which harmonizes exactly with the numerous poetic titles given by the Vikings to their true home, the ship. Odin himself, though the descendant of ancestors who had been settled for generations upon the Euxine, bore an Egyptian name—the significant name of Destroyer; and his standard, the raven, was the Egyptian symbol of destruction. Nor was it only in his character of pirate⁵ (itself an Egyptian word), but as teacher also, that his associations connect themselves with the same source. According to tradition, he was acquainted in some measure with the process of embalmment, and he claimed to know the secret of the sacred writing, while his followers were distinguished by the winged headdress which was borne by the sacred scribe of Egypt, as representing the dominion of east and west bestowed by Ra upon Thoth, the Lord of Wisdom. So with the funeral feasts, the elaborate ceremonies and the intercourse with the dead which had so rooted a hold in the hearts of our Scandinavian forefathers. The Asars, or holy ancestors whom they worshipped, were the very counterpart both in name and in attributes with the holy souls of Egypt who had become united with Osiris (more properly Uasar), and were themselves described by his name. The title of Hersir, or Leader of the Host, which, as Du Chaillu has pointed out in his valuable work, was older than that of the king, bears in the hieroglyphic (Her-ser) the identical signification of Chief Organizer. The land of Kent (Khent)⁶ was a territory of the holy dead, and its hieroglyph was a sail. Nay, there is scarcely a feature in the strange mythology of Scandinavia which does not reflect an image more or less distorted of some portion of the Egyptian Ritual. Or, to give but one more illustration of a different but equally curious character, our national shout, “Hip, Hip, Hurra!” which rises spontaneously though unmeaningly to our lips, and which is said to be the shout also of the Cossack dwellers by our ancient home upon the Black Sea, conveys in the hieroglyphic (Hep, Hep, Hura), “On, on, to plunder,” the significant cry of our pirate ancestors at the moment of accomplishment. Strangest of all it is to think that the last of the Hidden Places of the earth to be opened to civilized man should have been the traditional scene of his earliest dwelling-place; that the source of the historic river which, by

⁵ Some etymologists strangely derive this word from the Greek *πειράω*, “to attempt;” as though a pirate, of all people in the world, were a man to leave his work half finished.

⁶ Pierret, in his Hieroglyphic Lexicon, states that Khent means always to ascend the Nile towards the south, and that the sail is always deployed; thus answering, in the Path of Light, to the ascent of the Orbit by the illuminate beneath the open sail of the firmament.

its mighty Angle, traces out the lines of the first settlement of the globe, should to-day be the centre of its latest division by the world-dividing nation of Angles; and that while the vast lake which marks the ancient "apex of the earth" bears the name of the monarch of that race, the Egyptian kingdom itself should be ruled at the dictation of her ministers.

It is true that these traditions, like those of other nations also, are entirely at variance with the remarkable adventures of the famous "Aryan race," that marvellous creature of modern myth-making which flits with all the brilliance of a will of the wisp over the most impossible morasses of Imaginative History. Happily however, its illustrious creator, Professor Max Müller, has himself given what we may hope will prove the death-blow to his scarcely less celebrated offspring, by utterly denying before the British Association any reality to its existence; by laughing to scorn the idea of any such thing as an Aryan skull, and by stating plainly that the Aryan race is nothing more or less than a figment of philological convenience. For not until the last glimmer of that alluring but most misleading meteor has disappeared, will the ancient records of nations be permitted to throw their true light upon the past. Nor until then shall we understand our own laws and language, our customs and constitution, or trace the history of that Imperial nation of the waters which perpetuates the name of the sacred Angle. And surely no kingdom ever yet possessed a more romantic story in the past, or attained a position of more absorbing interest or more perilous pre-eminence than that occupied by England to-day, as she stands in the central land of highest antiquity, with hands stretching to every quarter of the globe—a solitary figure of commanding majesty, but uncertain in policy, unguarded in frontier, and almost unarmed in defence; while surrounded by the seething nations which count their hosts by the million, and listening with a careless ear to the muttered breathings of universal war.

III. The Hidden God

DEEPLY embedded in the heart of some ancient forest, we find here and there a massive and hoary boulder, its antiquity far exceeding that of the venerable trees, and its whole appearance telling of a distant soil and a by-gone day. As we sit upon the granite block, with the branches waving high above our heads, our wonder at its presence is deepened by the quiet scene. For countless ages that great stone has lain motionless, lifeless, changeless, amid all the infinite movement of changing life around it. No human power brought that huge mass where it lies; no eye can trace the path along which it was driven by the forces of nature. And not until we have traced the mighty variations and convulsions which in the recesses of time our whole globe has undergone, not until we have looked back far beyond the earliest seed-time of the forest, to the days when the surrounding country for hundreds of miles formed the bottom of an immense ocean, through which the icebergs bore the huge rocks torn from its frozen shores, can we understand the position of that primeval stone.

Something of a similar character may not unfrequently be discerned in regard to the religious belief and worship of a nation, when a tradition or custom survives the convulsions and changes of the centuries, and remains firmly embedded in the national life, though every trace of significance is long buried in the past. Most superstitions, it is probable, had once an intelligible meaning, even if that meaning were founded on a mistaken belief; but such survivals are by no means due to superstition alone. Who, for instance, can explain the Latin titles used for the psalms in the Prayer-book of the Church of England, without going back more than three hundred and fifty years to the time when England used the same language in her public worship as the rest of Christendom? So in the Latin Mass the Kyrie Eleison betrays its connection with the Greek; and the word Hosanna in the office for Palm Sunday carries us back to the Hebrew.

But there is one word in particular which is employed not on any special occasion but in every service, not once or twice but after every petition, not as a portion of the prayer but as its summary and its seal. If a stranger stand outside the closed doors of a church while service is going on, there is one word, and probably but one which he would hear distinctly repeated again and again. "Amen," "Amen," "Amen," that is the aspiration which time after time comes rolling forth with the full strength of choir and congregation. That is the word by which the apostle denotes the absolute nature of the Deity as compared with created matter. "In Him all things are Amen." That is the title with which the seer of the apocalypse invokes the advent of his Divine Master at the conclusion of the vision: "Amen, Veni Domine Jesu." That is the title which the Master assumed to Himself, "Amen, I say to you." And that is the title by which the Egyptian priests of old addressed the secret Deity—Amen, that is to say, in Egyptian, "The Hidden One."

That the existence of the one God was widely known by some classes of men at least among the nations of antiquity there can be little doubt. Among the Chinese, according to the most eminent authority, Dr. Legge, the word *Ti* represented the same idea as we express by the word God; and its assumption as a title by the earliest dynasty of the Emperors of China would be quite in accordance with the ancient belief that the monarch ruled as the divine representative. When the disciples of Manu approached that sage to beg for instruction in the wisdom which afterwards formed the foundation of Indian law, they addressed him as follows: "For thou, O lord, alone knowest the purport (or rites) and the knowledge taught in the whole ordinance of the Self-Existent (*Svayam bhu*), which is unknowable and unfathomable." And their master, in his reply, laid down the principle of the One Uncreated

God, the Giver of Light. “The Divine Self-Existent,” he said, “indiscernible, making the elements and the rest discernible, appeared with creative force, dispelling the darkness.”

Again, in the Mahabharata, the earliest production of post-Vedic literature, a translation of which, as well as of the laws of Manu, is given in the magnificent series of the Sacred Books of the East, the most enduring monument to its illustrious editor, a similar doctrine is ascribed to Vyasa. “In the commencement was Brahman, without beginning or end, unborn, luminous, free from decay, immutable, eternal, unfathomable, not to be fully known.”

Equally explicit are the utterances of some of the Greek poets.

“One Self-begotten, from whom all things sprang;” is one of the lines attributed to the famous Orpheus.

“To God all things are easy, nought impossible;” so sang Linus, a brother of the same bright band. A fuller but not less accurate description is given by Xenophanes—

“One God there is, greatest ‘mongst gods and men;
Not like to mortals, or in form or thought.
In full he sees, he hears, in full he knows,
And without labour doth his mind move all.”

Another poet, Cleanthes, whom St. Paul quotes in his famous speech to the Athenians, strikes at the root of the exclusiveness arising from the characteristic principle of ancient idolatry, that a deity listens to no prayers except from his own descendants, by proclaiming that all men are the offspring of God, and that consequently the right of prayer to Him is universal—

“O thou most glorious and immortal One,
O many-titled, O Omnipotent,
Zeus, Lord of Nature, ruling all by Law,
Hail! whom to worship is the right of all;
Since all of us are of Thee.”

Even the Roman mind, dim-eyed as it was for the invisible world, was not altogether without a glimpse of this truth, to which Horace has given expression when speaking of the supreme deity—

“From whom none greater than himself is born;
Nor doth his equal, or his second, live.”

But the truths which sparkle here and there in the teachings of India, China, or of Greece, fade and vanish before the blaze of Egyptian theosophy. Take, for example, the following extract given by Mr. Budge from the hymn to Amen-Ra, the hidden deity, the Self-Existent Light: “Hail to thee, Ra, Lord of Law, whose shrine is hidden; Master of the gods, the god Chepera (Self-Existent Light) in his boat; by the sending forth of (his) Word the gods sprang into existence. Hail, god Atmu (Light), Maker of mortals. However many are their forms, he causes them to live, he makes different the colour of one man from another. He *hears the prayers* of him that is oppressed; he is kind of heart to him that calls unto him; he delivers him that is afraid from him that is strong of heart; he judges between the mighty and the weak.

“O Form, One, Creator of all things. O One, Only Maker of existences. Men came forth from his two eyes, the gods sprang into existence at the utterance of his mouth. He maketh the green herb to make the cattle live, and the staff of life for the (use of) man. He maketh the fish to live in the rivers, the winged fowl in the sky; he giveth the breath of life to the germ in the egg, he maketh birds of all kinds to live, and likewise the reptiles that creep and fly, he

causeth the rats to live in their holes, and the birds that are on every green twig. Hail to thee, O maker of all these things, thou Only One.”

Nor was the unity the only truth concerning the Godhead known to the priesthood of Egypt. Throughout the extent of the kingdom, at Thebes, at Ombos, at Tentera, at Memphis, at Annu (or On) a Triune God—of whom some knowledge seems to have been attained by Greece—invoked by many names, but everywhere consisting of three persons, consubstantial and co-eternal, was worshipped as supreme. “I am Tmu in the morning,” says the Creator, in a well-known passage, “Ra at noon, and Harmachi in the evening;” that is to say, as the dawn, the noon, and the sunset (which these names denote) are three several forms co-existing perpetually and coequally in the substance of the sun, so also did the three divine persons co-exist perpetually and co-equally in the substance of the Uncreated Light. Thus, after declaring the sacred Unity in the most emphatic and explicit terms, the hymn already quoted proceeds to invoke the three persons by name, using, nevertheless, the singular pronoun for the collective Three. “He is of many forms;” so the hymn proceeds, “O Amen, establisher of all things, Atmu and Harmachi, all people adore thee, saying, Praise to thee because of thy resting among us, homage to thee because thou hast created us. All creatures say Hail to thee, and all lands praise thee. From the height of the sky, to the breadth of the earth, and to the depths of the sea art thou praised.”

If the Divine Trinity however were the only secret of the Ritual, there would not be so great a difficulty in following its symbols. But there is a depth of mystery beyond, a mystery the greater because manifested in a visible form. We read in the Ritual of an incarnate, and not only of an incarnate, but of a suffering and a dying God. We are confronted with the tears of Isis, and with the agony of Osiris—an agony so overwhelming that gods and men and the very devils, says the Ritual, are aghast. Moreover, not only is the twofold action of the same sacred person as man and as God recognized, but it is embodied in an animal symbolism; just as, amongst Christians, the symbol of the Lamb is used for the Divine Person, the calf and the eagle for the Evangelists. Take, for example, the vignette of the Ritual representing the resurrection of Osiris as taking place in the presence of the Egyptian Trinity. The human form, being the highest available, is required by the supreme Three; and in order to represent the lower nature, or divine humanity, it is necessary to take a lower creature whose characteristic should indicate that of the Divine Person represented. Of such a form was the cat, whose eyes, varying in form like the sun with the period of the day, imaged to the Egyptian the splendour of the light. And thus we have the cat cutting off the head of the serpent of darkness in the presence of the sacred Three. And that symbolism, when its original meaning was lost, that is, when the knowledge of God was no longer retained in their science, would naturally give rise to the foolishness of animal worship.

No less profound was the relation between the Creator and His works, as intimated in their well-known symbol for created life, called the Ank¹ or Sacred Mirror, wherein every great deity contemplates perpetually his own image; but which is rarely grasped in the hand of any except Amen. But how should the universe be represented by a mirror, and, if it be, why should the heavenly powers behold themselves reflected in it? Since Egypt gives only the symbol, but betrays no clue to the secret, the great Master of mediæval philosophy shall declare to us that profound relation, which alters not with the passing of ages. According to the teaching of Aquinas, the universe exists in a twofold manner, first ideally in the mind of God, and secondly materially externally to him, so that in creation the Almighty contemplates

¹ Another signification, that of a fisherman’s knot, has of late been adopted by some authorities; but the shape of the knot differs essentially from that of the Ank, the head of the latter being upright upon the stem. And again, how should a fisherman’s knot stand upright on the knees of the gods? and, if it could, why should it?

His own mind as in a mirror. As a dramatist before he gives living expression to his characters conceives in his own mind their forms, their countenances, their actions, passions, and conditions of life, with all the details of their environment; and as his work reflects the image of the author's mind, so in the theosophy of Egypt did the entire cosmos, embracing all space, all time, and all orders of created being, reflect a single thought in the mind of the Creator.

Man himself therefore had a "double" or counterpart in the Divine Idea, a sacred "type" of which the festival is celebrated in the Ritual, and which is masonically expressed within the niche of the Chamber of New Birth. Hence it was that the ideal counterpart possessed such divine sanctity, and the monarch offered sacrifice to his own double. For in the intelligible, no less than in the mechanical world, the expressed form is ever the counterpart of the impressed force; while conversely, in the mechanical world, the material form is due to an immaterial motive-power. For can any mathematician define the very nature of force, otherwise than as that which sets matter in motion? But if force be that which sets matter in motion, it cannot itself be material, if the fundamental law of motion be true that matter at rest remains at rest. Unless, therefore, the motions of the material universe—and it is of the motions of the heavenly bodies, and not merely of their existence that the Ritual continually speaks—be the result of an immaterial force impressing itself upon matter, our whole conception of dynamical science is wrong from the beginning. And reason itself becomes the mockery of reason; for there is not an achievement of the engineer, not a prediction of the astronomer, not an application of the mathematician, which does not prove the truth of a principle radically false. So, on the other hand, no philosopher can long maintain any substantiality as underlying the phenomena around him, who does not recognize them as the expression of creative thought impressing itself upon created matter; nor can poet or artist present new types of character unless he is gifted with the supreme power of the imagination, the faculty of perceiving and defining the unexhausted forms of human personality potentially existing in the sole creative mind. For genius is the power of giving form to potentialities.

Pursue Egyptian theosophy in which direction we may, the things of time speak ever of eternity, the self-existent Deity is always secretly reflected in his creatures. Accordingly each phenomenon of nature conveyed to them a corresponding manifestation of the divine personality, and according to the Ritual it was the Deity indwelling in the soul, which confers upon the man the power of perceiving these relations. "I am perception," we read, "the imperishable soul." In the noonday glow of the sun they beheld the splendour of Ra; in his setting the death of Osiris; in the new dawn his resurrection as the incarnate Horus; in the glowing fire the creator-spirit, Ptah; in the harmonious proportions of the universe the Eternal Wisdom, Thoth, "the mind and will of God;" in the starry firmament crowned by Alcyone and the Pleiades (the sacred bull and attendant cows) the ineffable beauty of Athor,² the living tabernacle of the sacred Light.

Bearing now carefully in mind the extreme complexity of this secret parallelism, and the strict analogy between the visible and invisible worlds which constitutes the basis of the political organism, we have little difficulty in perceiving the importance of the function in regard to the Hidden God, discharged by the House of Osiris. Viewed independently, the great temples of Egypt present to us a heterogeneous collection of miscellaneous deities, amongst whom now the sun, now the moon, now the earth, now the river, now the orbit, now the horizon, is predominant without any apparent reason or purpose; while the Ritual breaks up into a chaos of broken images and grotesque distortions of astronomical conceptions. Seen

² Properly Hat-hor, The House of Horus, the Risen God of Light.

by the inner light of the great house, where the Path of the Hidden Places reflects the river of celestial light, the great temple system of Egypt reveals itself as an organic whole with a simple majesty not unworthy of its unrivalled shrines. For since the chief localities on the material Nile represented the different stages on the Path of Light, so do the various worships naturally arise of the spirits exercising the corresponding functions—somewhat as among ourselves the water of the Jordan is peculiarly consecrated to the rite of baptism. Thus with regard to Annu, the divine birthplace, reference is constantly made to the new birth; Thebes is peculiarly connected with Amen, the Hidden God; while at Memphis, the key of the organism was the House of Osiris itself. And a knowledge of the spirits exercising special powers in these places, formed a conspicuous portion of the Ritual in the preparation of the Initiate for enduring the ordeal.

Had the case been otherwise, indeed; had the real objects of Egyptian worship been a mass of deities local and unrelated; then inasmuch as the form of government was well nigh a pure theocracy, the authority of the monarch being derived not merely from his descent but from his personal union with Ra, and inasmuch as heresy was punished with excommunication and even, as M. Maspéro states, with death by fire, it would have been inevitable that each successive dynasty, as it proceeded now from This, now from Memphis, now from Thebes, now from Sais, should have torn up by the roots the religion established by its predecessors; and the annals of Egypt would have been as full of religious discord and confusion as those of our own Tudor princes. History however has produced, so far, but one instance of an endeavour on the part of the king to introduce novelty into the religion. Amenoph IV., who married a foreign princess, adopted the title of Khu-en-Aten,³ or “Illuminate of the Disc”—a title which, as we may see, clearly outrages the Ritual which we have seen embodied in the masonry. For as the disc of the sun is but its visible surface, so the “disc” of the tomb was but its entrance gate which was lifted by Shu (the Light) “when the sun sets from the world of life;” and to place the illumination therefore at that point was to ignore all the grades of the Postulant, the Initiate, and the Adept, and to destroy the most essential conditions of illumination. In the same way the expression “Living in Truth,” which, as Mr. Petrie points out, was constantly employed by Khuenaten, indicates, when applied to the disc, the same degraded and idolatrous conception, since it substitutes a material and visible object for that Truth which in the older worship was spiritual, interior, and unseen. And thus, under the succeeding monarch, while the word Aten was preserved, the offending title, Khu, was sedulously obliterated.

In the masonic record therefore, the House of Osiris, we have a key to the whole politico-religious constitution of the country—a key which none could imitate, none could alter, none destroy; which no man could comprehend unless initiated, nor any forget or mistake, who had once received illumination. Accordingly, in that masonry we find the originals of many of the mystic symbols, whereby the priests so expressed the divine and the royal authority as to be intelligible to those and those alone who had been initiated masonically. Thus, if we draw the

³ I have adopted the translation of the word Khou, given by M. Deveria in the passage above quoted, the hieroglyphs being identical; but the name, according to Mr. Flinders Petrie, is more correctly pronounced Akhenaten. That diligent explorer, in his interesting work on Tel-el-Amarna, the site of the palace built by Khuenaten, on the borders of Middle and Upper Egypt, has abundantly illustrated the theory that the monarch’s object was to substitute the solar disc (Aten) as an object of worship for the personal Deity—Ra, the Hidden God and Untreated Light, Amen—previously worshipped under various symbols. This attempt, as well as the distinction between the disc and the rays—which he also considers Khuenaten to have introduced—Mr. Petrie characterizes as a striking advance in philosophical truth: though it is difficult to understand in what way the adoration of a material object in place of a Personal and Unseen God can be philosophically regarded as an advance.

groove of the orbit in the Chamber of the Splendour, with “The Wall of Earth” at the Northern end separating the Orbit from the Shadow, we shall have the hieroglyph for the orbit “Sennen,” which is identical with the cartouche, surrounding the titles of the monarch. That familiar symbol, by aid of which Champollion first divined the secret of the writing, is therefore nothing else than a masonic sign, signifying that not the circumference, but the immensely more extensive orbit of the earth is the limit of the royal authority; and indicating thereby (since the orbit implies renewal from age to age) its endurance no less than its universality. Again, if we represent the course of the celestial Nile by the rays traced in the roof of the same chamber, we have the hieroglyph of the river, while the straight floor-line descending from the throne gives its hieratic equivalent.

So if we draw the great throne in the Hall of Truth with the central line of the light, running down to depths of the rock on which it is built, we obtain the hieroglyph denoting holiness; and if we add to this the lower portion of the building, the territory of initiation, there results the hieroglyph for the territory of the holy dead.

Again, suppose that we represent the same place interiorly by drawing the Well, where the re-born soul is reunited to the postulant, together with the line where the interior masonry is bounded by the natural rock through which entrance or initiation into the interior masonry is obtained from below—the entrance impassable by the postulant until the soul is restored to him.

Then, if we indicate the image of the Well itself, shining in its own living but invisible waters, as seen by the soul from above, just as the Creator looks down on His own image in the universe, we obtain the symbol of the “Ank,” or mirror of life.

So, if we represent the descent traversed by the Initiate from the Head of the Well to the Opening into the Chamber of the Fiery Ordeal, we have the Sceptre of Ptah, the Spirit of Divine Fire.

And, if we represent the passage of the horizon together with the masonry of the entrance, we have the sceptre of Anup, the guide of the soul.

Sometimes the whole hieroglyphic name receives illustration at least, if not origination, from the same pyramidal source; as, for instance, in the name of Hapi, the radiant guardian of the Nile. For if we draw the Grand Arch of the highest chamber, imaging the Grand Arch of the universe, the seat of that luminous spirit, we shall produce the initial of that word. And if we add the Entrance Gate (itself surmounted by the Double Arch), together with the scored line in the Passage of the Horizon, pointing downward to the foundation of the rock, we shall have the complete set of hieroglyphs which compose his name, and thus masonically indicate his office as protector of the rock, the mouth, and the fount of the River of Light.

But by far the most important expression of these truths is contained in the kalendar, or recurrent series of festivals, which reflected on earth the rejoicings of heaven; and a full understanding of which was one of the glories reserved in the Ritual for the Illuminate. By means of that kalendar the “Mystery-Teachers of the Heavens” co-ordinated not only the political but the social life of the nation with the theosophy of The Light, while through its masonic expression the divine manifestations and the personal attributes of the Hidden Deity were at once communicated to the instructed and protected from the profane. To their sense indeed of the divine personality, far more probably than to any artificial pretension to a supposed exclusiveness which does not seem to have had any real existence, may be ascribed the mystery enshrouding their religion. For mystery is to God only what privacy is to man, our sense of which deepens with deepening intimacy. And though three hundred years of continuous wrangling over the secret truths which most profoundly affect the heart and mind

have gone far to coarsen and deaden our spiritual sense, the soul still resents, as the most unpardonable offence, the profanation of a vulgar touch. For whether we acknowledge it or not, the springs of our entire existence are hidden. From the darkness of the womb to the darkness of the tomb, the source of our every action is veiled from us. Mystery is the beginning; mystery is the ending; mystery is the whole body of our life. We cannot breathe, nor sleep, nor eat, nor move, far less think or speak, without exercising powers which to us are inconceivable, by means of processes which to us are inscrutable. Who is so ignorant as not to know these things; who so learned as to make them clear?

Most powerful and most hidden of all is the passion which grows the more reticent in proportion as it is more enduring, the passion which dominates at once the senses and the spirit; the master-mystery of Love. But Love himself was none other than the hidden God. In Greece, where some rays of Egyptian wisdom penetrated with a brightness denied to more distant lands, this truth was not unknown. Love was the third in the Trinity of Hesiod. And in Parmenides we read how "strife has entered into the deepest places; but in the centre Love stands calm." But in the teaching of Egypt, the Creator's love so conspicuous in the sublime hymn already quoted, is the motive power of the universe, the secret energy of the Light. "I am the Inundation," says the Creator in the Ritual—the fulness of the Torrent of Life. And again, "I am the Fount of Joy," the inexhaustible source of happiness to the soul.

Most striking too is the allusion which occurs in another hymn to Amen, where it speaks of the crown of illumination, or "Atf" crown of the monarchs, fashioned after the form of the light which sometimes crowns the Zodiac, the Burning Circle of supreme heaven, before the summer dawn.

That crown, we learn from the Ritual, was placed upon the head of the illuminate on his accomplishing the "passage of the sun," in the ascent of "the orbit," and the hymn proclaims that "North and South of that crown is Love." So when the Illuminate in the masonic Light after ascending the Chamber of the Orbit stood before the throne at its higher end, Northward and Southward of him was Love—to the Northward, the Love manifested in the starry guide which led him to the knowledge of truth in its splendour, and before him the Love concealed in the heights of heaven, the Secret Places of the Hidden God.

IV. The Mystery Of The Heavens

OF all the natural images familiar to the mind none is more radiant, and none more tranquil, than that of the rolling year as it circles perpetually about the feet of God. Even in the midst of cloud and fog, the mere striking of a clock, that record of planetary motion, serves to remind us how circumscribed is the surrounding gloom, and how the dull earth beneath our feet is, even as we gaze upon it, shining to its far companions in the fields of light. As that lustrous orbit is woven, revolution after revolution, with never-failing beauty, cycle after cycle of age-long periods, like golden serpents, twine themselves around it, and span the gulfs of time with the years of the Most High.

Such a system of harmonious periods and of measured intervals, corresponding to universal, not arbitrary, standards, was a natural, and indeed an essential, element in the theosophy of a priesthood whose religious teaching was intentionally veiled under the analogies of astronomy. In examining therefore the astronomical science of the "Mystery-Teachers of the Heavens,"¹ to use the official title employed in the Court of Pharaoh, we may not unreasonably expect to trace the origin and signification of various familiar measures, of which the use is widely diffused, but the fundamental conception unknown. Nor shall we be altogether disappointed in this respect; while a sudden and vivid interest will be found to attach to the common units of time and space, when we perceive that they are not the fruit of any arbitrary arrangement, however ingenious, but are the products of universal concords, and represent, so to speak, the beats and bars of the music of the spheres.

That the moon was the sacred and, at least in early times, the secret standard of Egyptian science, there seems little doubt. Thoth, the Great Lord of Wisdom and of Measure, the divine recorder, before whom stood the Balance of Justice, wherein the light and darkness of man's moral life were weighed, was lord, not of the sun, but of the moon; and to that latter orb we are indebted for our fundamental standards both of space and time, as we may easily see, remembering always that we are dealing with approximate measures, and "mean," or average motions. For the position of a heavenly body is, in general, not the same to an observer on the earth's surface as it would be if he were stationed at its centre, which is the chief point of astronomical reference. This difference, or parallax, must therefore be always taken into consideration; and in the case of the moon, when on the horizon, it is found to be about² the three hundred and sixtieth part of the circle of the heavens—that is, a degree; and conversely therefore the fundamental measure of the circle is given by the difference between the moon's apparent position on rising at any place as seen by an observer at the earth's surface, and the position in which it would appear at the same moment if viewed by an observer at the centre of the earth. Equally simple is the fundamental measure of time, viz. the hour or period required by the moon in her orbit, relatively to the sun, to traverse a space equal to her own disc; and this measure was peculiarly sacred in Egypt, each hour of the twenty-four which elapse during a single rotation³ of the earth being consecrated to its own particular deity, twelve of light and twelve of darkness. "Explain the God in the Hour" is the

¹ For most of the facts here stated with regard to Egyptian astronomy I am indebted to the invaluable researches of the late lamented Dr. Brugsch upon the kalendar, as I am also to his history for quotations from the papyri, and allusions to the customs of the country.

² It falls short by not quite three (circular) minutes, or rather less than a seven-thousandth part of the circumference.

³ The word "rotation" is always applied in this work to the motion of a body about its own axis; "revolution," to its motion around another body.

demand made of the adept in the Hall of Justification. And that God in the Hour, we learn, was Thoth, the Lord of the Moon, and “the Reckoner of the Earth.”

A singular relation of a similar kind exists between the lunar period and the risings of the stars, which was also utilized by the Egyptian astronomers. For whereas in regard to the apparent position of the sun, relatively to the rest of the heavens, the motion of the earth in her orbit has a perceptible effect; in regard to the stars, the distances are so enormous that the orbit of the earth shrinks into insignificance. The time therefore which elapses between any two successive risings of the same star at any given place will, on the average, be a little less than that between any two successive risings of the sun at that place; since in the first case the time depends only upon the complete rotation of the place round the centre of the earth, whereas in the latter, the motion of the earth’s centre during the interval must be taken into account. This difference is, on the average, about four minutes in every twenty-four hours, and will, therefore, in fifteen days, amount to an hour. Accordingly, as we learn from a most interesting paper published by Professor Renouf on a kalendar of the XIXth dynasty, the observations of the stars were taken every fifteenth day, thus correlating the sidereal period with the lunar period of the hour.

Again, the interval which on the average elapses between the moments in which the moon successively comes to the full (always in relation to a given place such as Memphis), that is to say a lunar month or “lunation” is about 29½ solar days. Suppose now we take as an unit of time thirty such solar days; then each lunar month would fall short of that period by half a day or one-sixtieth part, and the lunar year, consisting of twelve such periods, would fall short by six days, so that all the measures would be proportionate. Here, then, we possess the key to a most singular correlation between the lunar motions and the solar months (consisting always of thirty solar days), which Dr. Brugsch has pointed out in the Table of Edfu; which was published in the days of the Ptolemies, but never, apparently, while a native monarch reigned. On the first day was celebrated the “conception of the moon,” when that orb was on the meridian at noon (while still invisible to the observer)—a refinement unknown to our kalendar; on the second day its birth, or first appearance, and so on throughout the month of thirty days. During the first month, therefore, the lunar intervals would of course correspond more or less precisely with the solar days. But whereas the two sets would grow progressively asunder, the lunar names remained affixed to the same solar days. Thus the first day of each solar month was called the conception of the moon, and the second new moon, although neither phenomenon might have taken place anywhere near the time—a method of expression necessitating, it would seem, a double form of register, and simple enough to those who held the clue, but to a stranger hopelessly misleading.

Turning now to the motions of our own planet we find, as Dr. Brugsch has shown, that the Egyptian division of the solar, or to speak more correctly, of the terrestrial year, depended upon a knowledge of the 365¼ rotations performed by the earth while completing (approximately) one revolution, around the sun—an extra day being intercalated every fourth or “grand” year. But this method of regarding the matter arises out of our own slovenly method of expressing astronomical ideas, and our habitual employment of language embodying the confused and confusing conceptions of the Greeks; and it by no means does justice to the Egyptian exactness. The truth is that a single year or revolution of the earth is marked by no cosmic or universal correspondence. Only in the fourth or “grand” year, as it was termed, is a harmony established by the simultaneous (or nearly simultaneous) completion of the rotary and revolutionary motions; while at the same time the sun himself, drawing with him the whole planetary system, completes an arc of his own mighty orbit, about equal to the whole circuit of the course of the earth. Accordingly, every year appears to have included (as it does in reality) the three hundred and sixty-sixth day. But adhering

strictly to the fact, the last solar day of the old year was identical with the first of the new, the day of “completion-beginning;” except in every fourth or grand year, when the earth’s revolution being completed simultaneously, or very nearly simultaneously, with a rotation, the two festivals became distinct. Moreover, since four minutes (of time) a day, amounts in the course of a year to the time occupied by a complete rotation of the earth, it follows that the number of such rotations or sidereal days in each year exceeds by one the solar days; the difference being due to the fact that the change in the earth’s position every twenty-four hours, owing to its orbital motion, must be taken into consideration in regard to the sun, but is imperceptible when compared with the distance of the stars. By the method of reckoning therefore, above described, the solar or apparent days are harmonized with the number of earth’s true rotations. This being the principle, every year admitted of division into two portions, one consisting of an orbit of three hundred and sixty days, of which the lunar year fell short by the same number of days as the solar year exceeded it; the other, that of the sacred interval or “panegyric,” as Dr. Brugsch applies the term, consisting of six days, each being a festival of special sanctity.

That orbit again of three hundred and sixty days, was itself divided not only into twelve equal solar months, but also into three equal seasons (each of one hundred and twenty days), corresponding, as Dr. Brugsch has shown, to the three great physical divisions of the Egyptian year—the season of the inundation (“Se”), commencing with the rise of the Nile, about the time of the new moon nearest the summer solstice; the season of winter (“Pir”), and the season of heat (“Semou”) answering more or less to our spring. Hence in every year the period of three hundred and sixty days was divided either into three equal seasons, each containing twelve decades of days, or into twelve equal months, each containing three decades of days; while the sacred interval bore the same ratio to that whole period (one-sixtieth) as a minute (of circular arc) bears to a degree; and the excess quarter of a day upon which the whole arrangement depended bore the same ratio to the sacred interval (one twenty-fourth) as the solar hour to the complete day. It is not unworthy of remark also, that whereas in the order of the seasons, as corrected by Dr. Brugsch, their hieroglyphs have no correspondence with the physical year (as Champollion believed to be the case), and appear therefore to be arbitrary and unmeaning; yet when we refer to the course of the soul in the Ritual, we find them to symbolize three successive stages of its progress; the fields, of Aahlu, into which it comes forth from the Chamber of New Birth; the Enclosure, of the Hidden Lintel of Justice, the beginning of Justification; and the source of the Celestial Nile, where it receives the crown of Illumination.

For ordinary purposes and comparatively short periods the reckoning of the Grand Cycle suffices; but for long intervals the correspondence is not sufficiently exact; the real difference each year falling short of a quarter of a day by nearly twelve minutes, or the fifth part of an hour (less a certain number of seconds). But the fifth part of an hour will, it is obvious, in thirty years, itself amount to six hours, that is, to a quarter of a day; and accordingly, every thirty years we find a special festival or Jubilee celebrated in the Kalendar of Egypt: thus commemorating the period said to have been occupied in building the Pyramid of Light. And in five hundred years, or the Egyptian Cycle of the Phoenix, the same difference will amount to between four and five days, that is, very nearly to the sacred interval; so that if that interval be omitted, the orbit of the coming year joins the orbit of the departing, and every five hundred years the Phoenix renews itself. All these cycles therefore centre round the adjustment of the quarter of a day; and so essential an element was that quarter in all calculations relating to the kalendar, that every fourth year, if we may trust Horapollo, the festival was celebrated by the addition of a quarter of an acre to the land belonging to the temples.

Of the three seasons, that of the inundation was the first and principal; and the flood of the Nile ran like a sparkling current through the religion of the country. "I am the Inundation," says the Creator in the sixty-fourth chapter, said to be the oldest of the Ritual, "the Light of the Second Birth." Every stage in the annual flood of the life-giving river was the subject of a special festival. Some little time before the summer solstice, the first symptom of the coming rise was given by the waters in Upper Egypt becoming suffused with a crimson colour. Of this singular phenomenon, which goes by the name of "Red Nile," Herodotus has left a very fine account; and it is curious to note, as an instance of strong accord between ancient and modern travellers, that his description is quoted at great length by the eminent living Egyptologist, Professor Maspéro. The Red Nile is remarkable in every way; but in none perhaps more than in the fact that the waters are at that time peculiarly sweet, while at "Green Nile," as another period is called, the reverse is the case. To the former condition, in connection with the midsummer sun, allusion seems to be made in the "Eye filled with blood," mentioned in the Ritual; and to the latter in the "intolerable stench" made by Osiris in the river. About the period corresponding to our month of July, the waters begin to rise; and the "Sailing of the Bark of Ra" was celebrated, together with the birthday of Osiris. A few days later was held the great Assembly at the Nilometer, or sacred "Tat," the most venerated symbol known to their worship; and the first proclamation of the rise was made. Towards the middle of August took place the cutting of the Grand Dyke, whereby the risen stream was permitted to overflow into private channels; a ceremony celebrated in more modern times as the "Marriage of the Nile," but known to the ancient world as the festival of the "Digging of the Earth." No less a sanctity, in short, attached to every phase of that stream of life than to the "Celestial Nile" itself, of which the earthly river was the image and counterpart.

It may now be not uninteresting or unimportant to compare for a moment the system of Egypt with our own Leap Year, for which we are, in fact, indebted to that country, through the astronomer Sosigenes, who was imported by Julius Cæsar from Alexandria, to remedy in some degree the confusion of the Roman Kalendar. That famous Greek appears to have performed his task very much after a fashion not unknown to adapters. He cared—perhaps he knew—very little about the astronomical principle involved in the Egyptian reckoning, and nothing at all about the niceties of further adjustment which it demanded; indeed, before half a century was passed, his own corrections required to be corrected. He took no heed of standard or of measure, of orbit or of sacred interval. But first he cut up the year into twelve unequal and unmeaning bits—to say he divided it into portions is far too scientific an expression—which rags bore indeed the name of the insulted moon, but of which that mighty measurer condescended to make no sort of recognition. And then he threw the "odd day" in along with the "odd month"; much as a child, who has broken his toy-horse, glues a bit of tail to the shortest of the legs, and calls aloud on creation to admire his handiwork.

Nor is the difference between the Egyptian and the alien treatment of the kalendar accidental or unimportant. On the contrary, it suggests the key to its use in the ancient country, as the great politico-religious instrument whereby the social economy of the nation was coordinated with theosophy of the priesthood. Among modern nations monotony of recurrence seems to be the single object desired, so as to offer every facility for the arrangements of business or pleasure, and to confine within the strictest limits the diminutive period allotted to the life to come. Any system therefore which breaks the regular routine, more particularly if it be connected, as in ancient Egypt, with the commemoration of sacred events, provokes impatience much more than admiration. And the various adjustments of the kalendar appear to be regarded as if they were odds and ends of time left littering about the heavens by the sun and moon, and requiring an ingenious astronomer—like Sosigenes—to fold together and put away tidily.

Very different from this narrow and ungracious spirit was the joyous temper wherewith the Egyptian “Mystery-Teachers of the Heavens” regarded those sacred intervals. Throughout the symbology of that country, life was the centre, the circumference, the totality of good. Life was the sceptre in the hand of Amen; life was the richest “gift of Osiris.” “Be not ungrateful to thy Creator,” says the sage Ptah-Hotep, in what is perhaps the oldest document in existence; “for he has given thee life.” “I am the Fount of Light,” says the Creator in the Ritual. “I pierce the darkness. I make clear the path for all; the Lord of Joy.” By them therefore the intervals were gratefully accepted as a kind of breathing-space, wherein time, like the sun at the solstice, appears for a while to rest, and man, like the immortals, might enjoy, without impairing, the treasure of life. Accordingly the panegyric, or time of praise, separating, or rather uniting year with year, took place not in the gloom of winter as with us, but in the full height and glow of summer; at the period at once of accomplishment and renovation, when the sun was in his fullest strength, and the rising of the waters of the Nile began to renew their life-giving floods. On the first day of the sacred interval of continuous praise was celebrated the birth of Osiris, the Lord of Light, Prime Mover of Creation. On the second, Horus; God, of God; Light, of Light; the eldest of creation, to use the expression of the Egyptian Ritual. On the third, Seb, Creator-Spirit of earth. On the fourth, Isis, with her double relation of human and divine motherhood. On the fifth, Neith, from whose divine personality gushed the stream of life eternal, who “gave to every mummy the draught for which he thirsted, that his soul might be separated from him no more for ever.” And on the sixth day was celebrated the feast of “Hep-Tep,” the crowning festival of Completion-Beginning.

Such was the symphony of light and joy which, for the Egyptian, precluded the glowing year; and such also was its masonic expression, wherein was struck the full diapason of lunar and solar, of terrestrial and celestial, of temporal and of spiritual harmony. As the lunar Chamber of New Birth, the Habitation of Isis, “the Mother of God” and the “Queen of the Pyramid,” was originally closed up, thus forming the trebly veiled and most secret portion of the Hidden Places, so in the eastern staircase of that chamber we seem to discover the most secret masonic key, both to the astronomical form and the spiritual signification—the exterior and the interior light. For in its fivefold gradation we have the correlation of the lunar motion with the sun, in the five degrees of the moon’s ascent and descent each month from the ecliptic. Again, since the sacred quarter of a day whereby the earth’s rotation was harmonized with its revolution exceeds the true period by (very nearly) twelve minutes; so in five years does that annual excess make up ($5 \times 12 =$) 60 minutes, the lunar measure of the hour. And thus we read in the Ritual of the “Chamber of the Hour in Rusta,” the territory both of death and birth.

In the same staircase, around the niche or “type,” wherein the regenerate soul is formed—the image of the Queen of the Pyramid—we have the fivefold regeneration of the senses; and in it too we may recognize, in such a form as to preserve but not to betray this trebly hidden masonic key, the double throne of Isis and Osiris, pointing not improbably to a yet more secret staircase within.

Even this does not exhaust the fulness of this prolific symbol; but it gives a clue beyond its own immediate recess, and connects the Chamber of New Birth with the luni-solar Chamber of the Orbit, just as the New Birth itself connects Rusta with Aahlu; the place of Initiation with that of Illumination. For in the same ascent in the Chamber of Divine Birth, we have the five divine birthdays, which make up the sacred interval of the solar year. Immediately above is the great throne, crowning the lunar chamber, and masonically expressing the Egyptian “Hep-Tep,” or crowning festival of completion-beginning; as the chamber which it surmounts represents the territory of both Death and Birth—the “Completion-Beginning” of mortal

Immortality. By the over-lappings of the roof are formed thirty-six rays or indentations, marking the thirty-six decades of the luni-solar orbit. The Southern wall, impending about one degree North, points to the Northern boundary of the zodiacal belt; the lower line of overlapping wall to its Southern boundary, and between are the seven planetary spaces, with the groove of the luni-solar orbit running down the space corresponding to that of the earth.

Still further illustrations of the relations between our planet and her luminous assistant, as together they describe the doubly-ruled Orbit of Light, are to be found in this extraordinary Chamber of the Splendour. As the wall points secretly to the Northern, and the inclined floor to the Southern boundary of the Burning Circle of the Zodiac (about 89° and 152° of North Polar Distance) respectively; so does the inclination of the roof to the level passage (about $28^\circ 30'$) secretly define the limiting inclination of the lunar orbit (about $28^\circ 30'$) to the sacred plane of equinox. And the fifty-six ramp-stones, twenty-eight on either side of the gallery, give masonic expression to the fifty-six alternations of light and darkness which take place approximately in the period of the moon's rotation, twenty-eight of the ascent and twenty-eight of descent; the double position of the stones, partly horizontal, partly sloping, corresponding with the double attraction of the moon to the earth and the sun; and the holes in their centres, with the crosses marked above them, indicating the lunar transits over the Grand Meridian of the House of Osiris.

Recurring once more to the Kalendar, it is evident that a system combining so wonderful a harmony with such perfect simplicity could never have been constructed without some definite starting-point in time, a Grand Epoch absolutely defined by some singular conjunction of the heavenly bodies, and occurring only after long and clearly measured intervals. Such an interval is afforded by the famous Cycle of Sothis, of high antiquity in Egypt, and peculiar to that country, the principle of which, being dependent upon the relative rates of the earth's rotation and revolution respectively, has by no means been always thoroughly understood.⁴

Since the average interval between two successive risings of a given star at a particular place is determined only by the period of the earth's rotation, whereas in the case of the sun a period of about four minutes must be added, on account of the motion of revolution in her orbit during that period, it follows, as we have seen, that the star will on the average rise at that place about four minutes earlier every day, making the round of the twenty-four hours every year. Consequently there will be in each year one day when that star will rise at that place "heliacally," that is to say, just so long before the dawn as to be visible for a few moments on the horizon before vanishing in the increasing splendour. The position of the star relatively to the earth and sun at the moment of heliacal rising we may call its orient; and when the position is such as to coincide with the summer solstice, we may express that position as the Grand Orient of the star. Now the number of degrees by which the sun is below the horizon when the heliacal rising of a star takes place, is not fully determined, and varies to some extent with the locality; but ten degrees below is usually taken as the sun's position when the star is lost in dawn, so that the time would be about forty minutes before full sunrise. Let us consider now the interval between two such risings of some particular star; and for that purpose let us choose, like the Egyptians, Sirius or Sothis, the most brilliant of the distant suns, the flaming sentinel to us of the fiery hosts of space. Suppose, then, that on some particular day (such as that of summer solstice) Sothis is on the horizon of Memphis when the sun is eleven degrees below it, that is, one degree below the point of dawn. On that day Sothis will rise heliacally, and will remain visible on the horizon for about four minutes

⁴ As, for instance, by the famous scholar Scaliger, whose misunderstanding was exposed by Professor Greaves, the Oxford astronomer, in A.D. 1640.

(while the earth rotates through one degree), after which it will be lost in the break of dawn. On the anniversary of that day it will again be on the horizon, when the earth completes her 365th rotation; that is, when our planet is a quarter of a degree less advanced in the orbit, since the full revolution takes $365\frac{1}{4}$ rotations. Hence, since the earth *rotates* through a quarter of a degree in a minute (of time), there will be the difference of a minute in the corresponding rising each year, and therefore of four minutes each grand cycle. But since four minutes makes the difference of a day in the star's first appearance, there will for every grand cycle be a difference of a day in the heliacal rising of the star: and consequently in $4 \times 365\frac{1}{4}$ (or 1461) years the whole orbit will be traversed. That lovely cycle, with its tetrachord of starry light just gleaming on the horizon and then vanishing, lost in the growing splendour, appears from the allusions to the dawn to have had its spiritual analogue in the festival of the "Shapes," or divine forms of beauty; when the departed re-created in the divine image rose gloriously from the grave, and shone for a while amid the company of starry spirits, before merging his lustre, though not his existence, in the splendour of the manifested Godhead.

From this highly important cycle we may draw some conclusion as to the grand epoch of the Egyptian Kalendar; the date, that is to say, when mere tradition came to an end, and systematic records, organized upon astronomical principles, began to be preserved. Since in the course of the cycle, the heliacal risings take place on each day of the entire year, they will run during the first half of the cycle in one direction (relatively to the earth's orbit) and in the latter half in the opposite. And since there is also a corresponding series of settings, subject to a similar change of direction, the two series would in each cycle make up a double reversal, interchanging positions not once but twice. When therefore Herodotus tells us in a well-known passage (Euterp. 143), how, according to the Egyptian records, the risings and settings had been out of their orders four times since their reckoning commenced; "the risings twice taking the place of the settings, and the settings twice taking the place of the risings," the meaning becomes perfectly clear if referred (as Rawlinson suggests) to the heliacal risings and settings of Sothis, the determinator of the Kalendar. And the very circumstance that Herodotus himself in all probability did not understand—and was not intended to understand—the drift of the extract, strongly favours its authenticity; since it is very difficult to conceive that a person, ignorant of astronomy, should so misrepresent a statement made to him by astronomers, as to blunder by accident into the correct exposition of a different astronomical relation. We learn therefore that two Sothiac cycles (four reversals) had been completed since the institution of the scientific Kalendar; so that the cycle then current would be the third. And as there is evidence that that cycle was completed in A.D. 139, and therefore commenced in B.C. 1322, we conclude that the commencement of the first Sothiac cycle and the institution of the scientific Kalendar took place (2×1461 years previously, *i.e.*) at the summer solstice of B.C. 4244; the moment of commencement being marked by the heliacal rising of Sothis. In chapter lxiv., which describes the new birth of the soul, and thus supplies the key to the whole creed, or in its own words gives "The Entrance on Light in one Chapter," a passage occurs which appears to refer to this dawning of another age. "The twenty-four are passing," it says, "until the sixth. He remains in the Gate." In the sixth hour that is to say, reckoning from midnight (as Professor Renouf has shown to have been the custom), the march of the stars is stayed, and the sun enters the Gate of a new cycle; in the same way as for the regenerate soul the night is past, and he enters the Gate of Everlasting Day.

That the date in question was the true epoch of the institution of the Kalendar, to which all astronomical allusions are to be primarily referred whether in the Ritual or in the Pyramid of Light, is confirmed by a simple explanation which is thus afforded of a very marked peculiarity (and apparent anomaly) in its use. As is well known, the "node" or point where

the earth at Equinox cuts the plane of the Equator, and consequently the point of solstice (which is always 90° from that of Equinox), is not invariable, but year after year falls a little short of (or precedes) its previous position, so as to shift round in a direction opposite to the earth's revolution. And the rate at which that precession takes place (about $50''$ per annum) is such as to carry the node, or point of crossing, round the entire orbit in about twenty-six thousand years. Now attention has been drawn by Dr. Brugsch, who has so admirably illustrated the ancient kalendar, to the circumstance that during the later dynasties, a double series of months was employed, wherein, for instance, "The First of Thoth," that is, the first day of the first month, is given in the time of Thothmes III. (about B.C. 1600) both on the day corresponding to our 20th of July, and on the 27th of August, and similarly with the rest; but he has not offered any solution. Suppose now that in addition to the current date of the solstice the archaic date was also preserved—a suggestion entirely in agreement with Egyptian custom and mode of thought—that is to say, that a record was kept of the day of the Grand Epoch on which the earth arrived at the point in her orbit which she had reached when the kalendar was defined, then the peculiarity could be explained. For since the date of Equinox, and therefore of course of solstice, falls a little earlier relatively to the orbit every year, the archaic date will fall a little later. And as in twenty-six thousand years it traverses the circle of the year, and falls again on the anniversary; in two thousand six hundred and fifty years the archaic date would be thirty-seven or thirty-eight days later; so that if the kalendar were founded at the epoch assigned, the difference between the current and the archaic date in the days of Thothmes III. would just correspond to the difference which we find. Again, at the commencement of the third Sothiac cycle, in B.C. 1322, the archaic date would be later still, on the 29th or 30th of August. And this appears to have been adopted in the later times as the fixed archaic date, without further variation in the Alexandrine Kalendar.

By a similar reference to the archaic date, we may throw some light on the peculiar sanctity attaching to certain days of the month, for which it is otherwise difficult to account. For instance, in the Kalendars of the third Sothiac cycle, the fifteenth and the sixth of the month appear to be particularly sacred; and in the Turin papyrus of the "Book of the Dead" (the allusions in which would probably not go back so far as the first cycle, but might refer either to the second or third), command is given no less than three times that the most important festival of the year, the Birthday of Osiris, should be celebrated on the fifteenth of the month. But the Birthday of Osiris was, as we have seen, the first festival of the New Year, and what connection could such a day have with any particular day of any month whatever? A very close connection if the archaic date is to be taken into consideration. At the commencement of the second Sothiac cycle the archaic date of Osiris's Birthday would fall twenty or twenty-one days later than at the foundation of the kalendar; and, remembering the five days for the sacred interval, we reach the fifteenth day of the first month; while a similar calculation, allowing in all forty-one days, brings us in the third Sothiac cycle to the sixth of the succeeding month. For a similar reason another great festival, that of the Bark of Ra, is ordered to be celebrated on the Birthday of Osiris, since at the foundation of the Kalendar that day coincided with the rising of the sacred Nile, the waters of which represent new life.

Hence, in order to preserve a true record of time, it is necessary to note the motion of the earth with reference to four, and only four, different standards; that is to say, in regard to the stars, to the moon, to the sun, and to the Equinox, the other relative motions of the earth having no perceptible effect upon our reckoning of time. All these standards, with their respective measures and harmonies, were known, as we have seen, to the Egyptians; and this accounts for the circumstance which Dr. Brugsch has remarked, that at a very early date the Kalendar of Egypt was kept upon four different reckonings. All these standards also, each

with its spiritual signification corresponding with the Ritual, we have seen expressed in the masonry of the Grand Pyramid. For to the architect of the Egyptian Light, there was no celestial truth which was not manifested in the motions of the celestial orbs; nor was there any chamber among the Hidden Places of the Great House which did not secretly reflect the path of the just in the mystery of the heavens.

V. The Mystery Of The Depths

LIGHT is the first principle of created life. There is no life without growth; there is no growth without light. Colour, perfume, savour, every varied object of sense vanishes if light be absent. Each beam is a separate celestial gift, direct from the hand of the Creator; as in the bas-relief on the tomb at Thebes, discovered by Mr. Stuart, where the diverging rays form a pyramid of light, and to each ray is attached a hand of blessing.

Universal too, as is the necessity for light in living nature, equally extended is its manifestation in the form of motion. Wherever life exists, in man or bird, or beast or fish, there also is that power which is denied to inanimate matter—the power to originate motion. To live and move and have our being are three states inseparably connected with each other. Mathematician and poet alike acknowledge the universality of motion in living form. “Motion, fount of beauty,” exclaims Pindar in one of his loftiest odes. “All nature is in motion,” says Professor Price in his lucid treatise on infinitesimals. So too, the unfailing harmonies of the heavenly bodies express themselves in the periods of their orbits. And through the correlations of those luminous circuits, as through a veil of glory, the correlations of interior truth were shadowed forth by the Egyptian “Mystery-Teachers of the Depths.” Depth beyond depth, space beyond space, height beyond height, from the company of planets around our sun, to where the “clusters of countless stars are but a faint nebulous gleam,” Light is everywhere the Omnipotent Creator, the laws of Light the expression of infallible truth.¹

But how to seize with material grasp the intellectual relations of the most ethereal element known to man? How imprison in stable form the flashes of the fiery spark as it darts with inconceivable speed from space to furthest space? How render palpable to the direct touch the distant courses of those flying orbs? In a word, how shall we build up the manifestation of Light, and find masonic expressions for the Mystery of the Depths? Light itself gives us a reply. For if, as in the bas-relief at Thebes, the diverging flood of rays be represented as it pours down at noon on the day of summer solstice, the opening day of the Egyptian year, we shall have one face of the Pyramid of Light. Suppose now that a quadrangular pyramid be erected with four such sides facing respectively the cardinal points of the heavens. Then since each revolution of the earth is completed by one quarter of a rotation later than the preceding, it follows that every fourth or grand year the same face will be turned towards the sun when the revolution of the earth is accomplished; and thus the Egyptian Grand Cycle (of four years) will be masonically expressed. Just such a form is found in the quadrangular Pyramid of Light, its sides so oriented as to have originally faced the cardinal points, and its summit so truncated as to permit the sun on one day in the year to rest upon it “with all its rays,” so that the building “devours its own shadow.”

The general form determined, what proportions shall the dimensions assume, or in other words, at what angle shall the sides converge towards the invisible vertex? The earth in her orbit gives reply. For as that planet moves around the sun in an (approximately) circular path, while each ray travels towards it in a direct line, the relation between the illuminating force

¹ In the same way Moses, who never claims for himself direct revelation in regard to any matter contained in Genesis (though in subsequent books that claim is repeated again and again), and whose fame as an expert in Egyptian science was quoted hundreds of years after his death by St. Stephen in his address to his countrymen, commences his exposition of the Mystery of the Depths by the initiation, of Light and Motion. “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep. And God said, Let there be light: and there was Light.”

and the illuminated body may be expressed by the relation between the radius and the circumference of a circle. But this relation is such that the altitude of a pyramid when bearing the same ratio to its base-circuit subtends an angle of about $51^{\circ} 50'$. And that is the Angle of Elevation of the Grand Pyramid. Nor is this most important, and indeed dominating, measure due to accident; since the angle in question is the most marked, and almost the only feature, which the lesser and later Pyramids share with the Pyramid of Light, so that it forms the masonic sign whereby the inferior buildings tacitly asserted their kinship with the Great House.

Although however, these general aspects of the radiance suffice to determine the general aspect of the building, yet a closer investigation of the light will disclose a more intimate relation. For since our atmosphere may be conceived as divided into successive layers of air, increasing in density as they approach the earth, each ray as it travels will be slightly deflected, or refracted, as it passes from a finer to a denser ring, the refraction being greatest when the body is on the horizon, and imperceptible when it is near the zenith.

Conversely, if on any given day the position of the sun be observed at equal intervals from rising to noon, and from noon to sunset, the apparent place of the sun will, owing to refraction, be slightly different from its true position at any observation; and a diagram representing their mutual relations will offer the appearance of a house having many stories, with a small platform at the summit, since near the zenith the true and apparent positions are identical (and the only motion is that of transit)—that is to say, we shall have the appearance of the Grand Pyramid when the casing-stones are removed.

If then, on the first day of the (Egyptian) new year—when the sun is about fourteen hours visible above the horizon at Memphis—an observation be taken every two minutes (four observations for the period occupied by any ray in reaching the earth from the sun) there will be altogether about four hundred and forty observations, making two hundred and twenty courses of ascent and descent, of which a certain number will be wanting at the top since at the zenith there is no refraction. But this is precisely the case in the Pyramid of Light; the number of existing courses being about two hundred, and the number required to complete it reckoned at about twenty more. Further, since the moon in every two minutes of time completes a (circular) minute of her circuit relatively to the sun, and since at the commencement of every Sothiac cycle she commences a new lunation and comes (invisibly) to the meridian at the same time with the sun at noon, it follows that these unit-intervals of observation correspond with the minute-intervals of her motion; and each course of the Grand Pyramid corresponds to the change in the altitude of the sun for one circular minute of the moon's motion relatively to that body.

The true and apparent forms of the Grand Pyramid being thus determined by the true and apparent motions of light, we have now to inquire with what scale we are to build up the chambers of the house. The rolling earth once more suggests the standard. The cosmic unit of space—the Sceptre of Anup, the Guide of the Horizon of Heaven—must be clearly defined, and incapable of confusion; it must be self-evolved, and yet immutable; it must be within man's power to compass, but not within his grasp to alter. Now these conditions are fulfilled by one line, and one only known to man, the polar axis of the earth—the line, that is to say, about which takes place the earth's daily rotation, while itself performs the annual circuit around the sun. Let that line be carried far as the eye can follow or thought can reach, the depths through which it pierces remain for us for ever at rest. That is the line which directs the axis of the Sacred Horizon of the Point of Equinox, and which indicated to the mind of Egypt the entrance path for the holy departed as they passed from the created to the Uncreated Light. A beautiful allusion is made in the Ritual to the illuminative action of the

sun in reference to this double motion of the axis, as the earth, the vessel of God, performs her daily and annual course in the heavens. For we read there how the holy departed “has appeared in the Bark of Ra in the course of every day;” and how Thoth, the Divine Wisdom, “clothes the spirits of the justified a million times in a garment of true linen;” of that substance, that is to say, which by its purity and brilliancy reminds us of the mantle woven out of rays of light wherewith the sun enwraps the earth afresh each day she rotates before him, just as the soul of man is invested with new radiance each time that he turns to the presence of his Creator.

How then shall we avail ourselves of this mighty measure, this rule of light and standard of space? This time the building itself answers through its familiar title. According to Dr. Brugsch, the term Pir-am-us in Egyptian signifies the EDGE; and on examining the base-circuit of the building, we find it to be composed of casing-stones with a bevelled horizontal edge, so exquisitely finished that according to Mr. Flinders Petrie, it is equal “to the finest work of the optician.” On the occasion of the visit of the Empress Eugénie to Egypt, in 1869, one of these casing-stones was measured *in situ* by Mr. W. Dixon, and found to contain just 25.025 British inches. But the relation of this length to the polar radius (or semi-axis) of the earth is of the very last importance in universal measurement. Several years ago Sir John Herschel pointed out that our inch is contained in the earth’s polar radius just 250,250,000 times; so that if that unit be increased by its thousandth part (less than the fineness of the finest hair) it will be contained in the polar radius just two hundred and fifty million times. Since therefore this stone contains twenty-five inches so increased, it measures the earth’s polar radius exactly ten million times; and as the Egyptians were certainly familiar with the decimal system, expressing units, tens, hundreds, thousands, and millions by distinct hieroglyphs, this stone in the base circuit of the Great House supplies a simple masonic unit of cosmic length, a standard of universal measurement.

Were this ratio an isolated instance, some question might not unnaturally arise as to the accidental nature of the connection; but the intention of the architect is strongly confirmed by the kindred discovery due to Mr. Flinders Petrie. That acute observer has pointed out that the length of the raised pavement was a simple measure (one-twentieth) of a geographical mile. And since a geographical mile is a measure of the earth’s circumference at the Equator, a knowledge of it implies a knowledge of the measurement of the polar radius.

Striking however as is the ratio which this stone bears to the cosmic standard, its relation to the Pyramidal Edge, of which it forms a part, is no less prolific of universal results. For, taking as the length of that base-line, the average of the results obtained by the principal surveys executed since the great Napoleon opened the dull eyes of Europe to the inexhaustible treasures of ancient Egypt, we find that the casing-stone is contained in the line so measured just 365.25 times, and consequently in the entire circuit ($4 \times 365\frac{1}{4}$) 1461 times. Hence, as the form suggests the Grand Cycle, so also does the measure of the base-circuit; the number of times the cosmic unit is repeated in that circuit, defining the number of solar days in the Grand Cycle, and consequently also the number of the solar years in the cycle of Sothis.

It seems, therefore, not unreasonable to conceive that before the casing-stones finally shut up the secret, the relations of the sun and moon to the position of Sothis and of the pole-star should have been correlated with the courses of the Pyramid in the manner above described; and thus a starting-point for all the motions of the earth, whether in relation to the moon, the sun, the equinox, or the stars, have been registered unalterably in the masonic light.

To measure the motions of the earth however is the commencement, but only the commencement, of the universal scale. That which we need for the Mystery of the Depths is

nothing less than the span of solar or measurable space. In other words, we require to define the extreme limits on either hand within which no fount of original light is found except our own sun, since the distances of the stars are beyond accurate measurement. But the distance of the limiting point of solar or measurable space, or rather the radius of the limiting horizon (since the distance will be the same in every direction) is about twenty-five hundred million times the length of the earth's polar axis; so that that axis is contained in the radius of measurable space two hundred and fifty times as often as itself contains the edge of the casing-stone. Now, if that casing-stone be divided into twenty-five equal parts, each of such parts will, as we have seen, contain our own inch increased by its thousandth part. This unit, therefore, which we may call the polar inch, measures not only the axis of the earth, but of the depths of solar or measurable space, being contained in the former two hundred and fifty million times, and in the latter two hundred and fifty thousand billion times. But in that ancient chapter of the Ritual (lxiv.) which claims to have been revealed in the days of the IVth dynasty, we read that the Creator, when revealing Himself to the new-born soul as the Measurer of space, employs this very ratio as standard. ““I who know the Depths’ is my Name,” so runs the text of this sublime chapter;” I make the cycles of the shining millions of years; and billions are My measurement.”²

The mention of these cycles of the shining years suggests a principle of singular beauty, as the key to the architectural measures of ancient Egypt. Among the many valuable results due to the industry of Mr. Flinders Petrie is a collection of cubits of various lengths, employed by the architects of the IVth and XIth dynasties. These architectural units are very numerous, and, unless referred to cosmic principles, quite miscellaneous, having no apparent co-ordination either among themselves or with anything else. When however taking as our unit the polar inch,³ we compare them with the measures of light, as expressed in the shining circuits and radii of the celestial periods—remembering always that the radii and semi-radii of the cycles of years are both consonant with the angular construction of the Pyramid and are secretly involved in the analogy of Illumination—we find a most remarkable correspondence in measure after measure, not absolute indeed, but different only by decimals of an inch.

Take for example, the number of polar inches into which the casing-stone is divided, when considered as a measure of space, viz. twenty-five; a close approximation to which is found in two specimens⁴ belonging to the IVth dynasty, which were discovered at Ghizeh—that is to say, which were employed in the neighbourhood of the Grand Pyramid about the time of its erection. Again, taking as unit the semi-radius of the cycle of Equinox, the radius of which cycle is about 4122 years, and expressing an inch to a century, the half of it gives us the cubit of 20.6 inches; and this measure is the more common form of the Egyptian cubit, the standard employed for the sacred “Tat,” or Nilometer, which measured the waters of life, the symbol regarded as the highest expression of sanctity, and the final ornament placed upon the holy dead. From the moon also we (approximately) obtain two standards of Egyptian measure. For the number of days in a lunar month gives closely, at an inch for a day, the 29.3 inch cubit of the IVth dynasty. And, at an inch for a year, the number of years (about 18.6) in the cycle of

² In the original: “Ari Kherti Khuu aha pu tefnut pu krastuf.” The translation above given differs slightly both from the version of Dr. Birch and that of M. Pierret.

³ This inch is of course the same as that adopted by Professor Smyth, and called by him the “Pyramid Inch;” but he has so inextricably associated that name with views directly opposed to Egyptological research, that I prefer to use an expression which denotes an undoubted relation, first pointed out by Sir John Herschel.

⁴ Mr. Petrie maintains this cubit to be “evidently an Egyptian edition of the royal twenty-five inch cubit of Persia;” but why a Persian cubit should be employed at Ghizeh, or what we know of Persia some thousands of years before the time of Darius, he does not tell us. It is difficult to see why he might not with equal reason pronounce the Capitol of Romulus to be “evidently an Italian edition of the Capitol at Washington.”

the lunar nodes—(that is, the interval which elapses between two successive crossings of the equinoctial plane by the moon at precisely the same point of her orbit)—yields (very nearly) the 18.7 inch cubit of the XIIth dynasty. And, once more, since the orbit of the earth is not strictly a circle, but an ellipse with the sun in one focus, there will always be one point in the orbit which will be in “perihelion,” that is, nearer the sun than any other. And this point is not stationary, but makes a circuit of the earth’s orbit in about 114,000 years; whereof the half-circuit gives us the fifty-seven inch cubit of the XIth dynasty (at an inch to ten thousand years), and the quarter radius the forty-five inch cubit of the IVth dynasty (at an inch to a thousand years). It would seem therefore, that a table of the cubits employed by the architects of those early times would represent a general system of cosmic measures, the scale being marked off upon the axis of the earth, the sole standard of immutable space, and the ratios of the different cubits being proportional to the immutable time-periods of the heavenly bodies. And thus, when the film is brushed away which the dust of ages has cast over these relics of antique science, their aspect remains no longer lifeless and repulsive; but we recognize in them the glowing insignia of universal truth, the gems from the azure depths, sparkling with the lustre of intrinsic light.

No sooner do we apply this key to the Book of the Master, than a series of concealed significations begins to unclose. The famous Urœus, or symbol of the snake—connected in some not very definite manner with solar phenomena—has always been intimately associated with the royalty of Egypt. But it appears to have escaped attention that in the Ritual are to be found several serpentine forms of various lengths, and—what is most striking in itself but easily explained by the results already attained,—that when those several lengths are expressed in inches, they prove to be proportional to the measures of the various serpentine curves traced by the motions of the earth and moon. For instance, in chapter cxxx., we read of “a snake seventy cubits in his coil.” But taking the well-known cubit of 20.6 inches and repeating it seventy times, we obtain one thousand four hundred and forty-two inches; which is proportional (within the seven hundredth part) to the number of minutes of time (24×60) in the average daily rotation of the Equator or coil of the snake; so that it expresses our own division of the heavens into twenty-four hour-circles, each divided again into sixty equal parts or minutes of time; both which measures, we have already seen, were familiar to the Egyptians. Moreover the number of the sun’s rotations about his own axis is, approximately, one hundred and forty-four in a period of ten years, so that the snake expresses an axial motion common both to the sun and its satellite: and appears therefore to be “the chief Urœus, gleaming and guiding millions of years,” of which we read in chapter xxxiv. On the other hand, in another passage of the chapter previously mentioned, an extent of seven cubits gives the length—not of the snake’s coil but—of his back: and this length (one hundred and forty-four inches) just gives the back of the tropical snake, or spiral, that is, the distance of the sun at solstice from the Equator, at that epoch about twenty-four degrees, or one hundred and forty-four decades of circular minutes. Other examples of a more complex character might be adduced; but these may be sufficient to show that in the inch we possess a clue to the secret significance of numerous symbols; and that for very reason it was not openly set forth as the standard, but its place was supplied by the cubit, which betrays no meaning except to one already so far initiated in the Mysteries of the Depths.

Turning now to the Pyramid of Light, we find the same principle conspicuous throughout the building; the lengths of its various passages and chambers, when expressed in polar inches, being apparently proportional to the radii (or semi-radii) of the celestial periods corresponding respectively to the stages in the progress of the departed. And so strongly marked is the prevalence of this principle, that while a mere knowledge of the measures, however exact, suggests nothing of the spiritual meaning, the insight which we have already

attained into the co-ordination of the building with the Ritual enables us to determine for ourselves the dimensions of many of the parts. For throughout the teaching of Egypt progress in Light is affected by increased instruction and experience in Truth; and in the Wisdom of that ancient country, the measures of Truth were the years of the Most High.

At the very point of entrance, indicating the sacred horizon of the pole-star (as the hieroglyph of the star signifies the invisible world), we find that a consideration of the particular position occupied by the star, when in conjunction, so to speak, with the Pyramid, widens and elevates our view from an earthly to a celestial plane. For though to a dweller on our globe the great plane of reference is the plane passing through the celestial poles and containing the horizon of the point of Equinox; yet when we proceed to regard our companion orbs, circling around the same parent luminary, and when we take into account the influence which those members of the same luminous family exert upon each other, we are compelled to recognize what is called the Invariable Plane of the Planetary System, the plane, that is to say, about which, as La Place demonstrates, certain highly important relations between the masses and the motions of the planets are always fulfilled. Now this plane has never a greater inclination than about $3^{\circ} 6'$ to the apparent ecliptic, that is, the plane of the orbit of the earth. But that arc ($3^{\circ} 6'$) measures within a few minutes the distance of the pole from the pole-star when in conjunction, so to speak, with the Grand Pyramid. When therefore the pole-star shines down the entrance passage, its position in regard to the pole (due allowance being made for corrections), defines the limiting position of the invariable plane to the plane of the orbit.

Similarly in regard to the inconceivably slow variation⁵ in the inclination of the axis to the ecliptic, a variation which, while never exceeding $2\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ on either side, requires no less than thirty thousand years to accomplish. And from this majestic depression and elevation of the polar axis in its course around the sun—the inexpressibly stately obeisance made by the sceptre of Anup before the throne of Ra—we may determine relatively to each other the inclinations of the interior passages. The difference between the limits of the solstices (calculated at about $2^{\circ} 22'$) gives the difference between the inclination of the roof and of the floor-line of the Grand Gallery, or Chamber of the Orbit, while the inclination of that roof to the level passage leading to the Lunar Chamber of New Birth ($28^{\circ} 30'$) defines, as we have already seen, the limiting inclination of the moon to the Equator. The variation during one Sothic cycle corresponds with the difference between the floor-lines of the upper and lower galleries. And if we may place the completion of the building at B.C. 3732 (only a generation earlier than the estimate of Dr. Brugsch, which is not designed to be exact), then, since it occupied thirty years building, the number of years from the foundation of the Kalendar to foundation of Pyramid will be about four hundred and eighty-two; that is, will correspond with the number of inches between the entrance and the scored line which points to the foundation; while the interval between the foundation of the Kalendar and the co-ordination of the Pyramid with the pole-star (viz. about eight hundred years), the difference during the inclination (about $4'$), corresponds closely with the difference between the inclinations of the Lower Ascending Gallery and the Passage of the Pole-star: so that to such as understood the meaning of that inclination, the periods of the star's co-ordination with the entrance would be foreknown. If this were the principle employed—and considering the difficulty of obtaining exact measures, the points of correspondence are surprisingly close—none could understand the relation of the star to the building without first understanding the masonic relation embodied in the edifice, between the standard of space, as represented in the entrance passage, and the solar throne at the head of the Grand Gallery or Chamber of the Orbit. Nor could any one be instructed in that secret by the Master without acquiring masonic evidence

⁵ See the table and memoir published by the Smithsonian Institute of Washington.

of its truth, in the Path of the Horizon of Heaven, and its orientation with the hidden interior—the beginning and the ending of the Ritual of Light.

Penetrating now to the innermost recesses of the Hidden Places, let us review the celestial significance which we have attached to the various chambers, and (remembering always that we are dealing with approximations) let us note the proportion of their measures to the corresponding celestial periods; the celestial unit varying in each case according to the nature of the celestial cycle (and demanding in each case therefore a knowledge of the connection of the Ritual with the particular chamber); while the masonic unit throughout is the polar inch, the twenty-fifth part of the Pir-am-us, or edge of the base-circuit casing-stone, the twenty-fifth ten-millionth part of the polar radius of the earth, and the twenty-fifth thousand-billionth part of the radius of solar space. For “millions and billions are the measure of things.”

Commencing with the highest and most secret source of life and light, the Eternal and Self-Begotten Energy of the Hidden God, we find it illustrated in the never-ceasing rotation of the sun about its own axis, the energy of which we know not the origin, and to which we attribute the birth of the planets. Of such rotations about two thousand five hundred and twenty-five are performed by the sun, while the earth is performing one hundred thousand similar rotations, and that number gives the number of polar inches in the height of the extreme point of the huge granite triangle.⁶ which dominates the secret places of the interior. Descending thence to the King’s Chamber, where the birth of the Eternal Day is celebrated in the open tomb of Osiris, we have recourse to the measure of light, not in its interior energy, but in its emission; and find that the cubit proportional to the radius of the cycle of equal Light and Darkness (20.6 inches) is a measure of that chamber, as it is also of the Chamber of the New Birth of the Soul.

As we proceed towards the outer portion, the manifestation of the splendour defines the proportions of the Chamber of the Orbit, the Upper Hall of Truth, where so many lunar and solar phenomena have already been noticed. At the head of that chamber is the great throne, “the stone of God,” to use the expression of the Ritual, surrounded on every hand by masonified radiance. The seat of that throne (about 61.3 inches) measures the number of times the radius of the earth is contained in the radius of the orbit of the moon; while its height is proportioned to the number of decades in the orbit of the Egyptian year, the five divine birthdays being expressed in the Chamber of New Birth immediately beneath. Above that throne at the higher end of the chamber rises the seven-pointed arch of the planetary heavens, its boundary lines defining the flaming belt of the zodiac. And from its foot runs downward the floor-line ascended by the Illuminate, and measured by the radius of the cycle of perihelion, or Circle of Nearest Approach, formed by “the Assembly of Ministers of Truth,” but along the midst of which none might pass save the Illuminate alone. And if we may estimate the distance of Sothis (whose chamber lies beyond) to be 1,374,000 instead of 1,375,000 times the distance of the sun, the number of thousands of hours occupied by light in reaching us from that star (between 1881 and 1882), will be defined by the number of polar inches in the continuous floor-line of the Grand Gallery (1881-2) ascended by the Illuminate before passing to Sothis; while the integral years (21) in the same period gives the number of the Gates of Aahlu corresponding to the (21) Stages of Judgment traversed by him in ascending the same Chamber of the Splendour.

As we descend yet further towards the outer world, the Chamber of the Shadow, where Truth is manifested in darkness, with its Seven Halls of Death leading upwards from the Hidden

⁶ This is the number given of British inches; and the correction for their conversion into polar inches will about be counter-balanced by the thickness of the granite apex.

Lintel, and its final projection into the Place of Light (1561 inches), is measured by the number of lunations in seven cycles of eclipse ($7 \times 223=1561$). And finally, as the Horizon of the Point of Equinox determines the entrance for the departed to the path of light; so does the radius of the equinoctial cycle (about 4122 years) determine the descent of the entrance passage (about 4122 polar inches) on the side of the west, where “the sun sets from the land of life.”

With this brief survey of the celestial periods and their masonic analogues, we take up once more the Book of the Master, and approach the House of the Hidden Places, wherein are concealed the Mystery of the Heavens and the Mystery of the Depths. In every standard, every unit, angle, ratio and multiple employed by the great Architect of the Masonic Light, we have seen reflected the proportions of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, the house which the divine Horus built for his father Osiris; the “House of the Great God,” to which, as the papyrus of Amen-Hotep tells us, Thoth, the Eternal Wisdom, conducts the Illuminate. And as we gaze around in silent contemplation, from every corner of the universe the profound words of the Ritual come echoing back to us: “Millions and billions are my measurements. ‘I who know the Depths’ is my name.”

NOTE ON CERTAIN MEASURES AT BABYLONIA AND EARLY CHINA.

Since, supposing the views put forward in the foregoing chapters to be correct, the Egyptian measures of time and space are certainly the oldest on record, it may not be amiss if, before passing to the inner mysteries, we compare with them two other famous systems of antiquity, and observe how certain anomalies which have hitherto been incapable of explanation, become simple and intelligible when regarded as misconceptions of the Egyptian reckoning. Take, for example, that of Chaldæa. That the Babylonian astronomers measured their time by periods of 60, of 600, and of 3600 years (the *soos*, the *ner*, and the *sar*) is well known, and that they also divided the circle into degrees, and again into sixty and sixty times sixty measures. But upon what principle they chose the sexagesimal measure, and whether they regarded the two sets of multiples as possessing any connection with each other, is not so clear. According to Lenormant, they calculated their periods “on the great astronomical cycle of 43,200 solar years, representing, according to their calculation, the total period of the precession of the Equinoxes” (!)—a theory which, if true, does not say much for their astronomical skill.

Now, as the cycles of precession and perihelion are involved in the construction of the Egyptian measures, so also would this cycle (which is a mere deduction from the other two) also be known; and, in fact, we find standards of lengths in Egypt corresponding to this cycle as to the others. Suppose then, that some visitor or half-educated native should acquire a smattering of the astronomy, so far as to obtain the measure of one cycle and the name of another; then we should have the confusion between Anomaly and Equinox contained in the Babylonian measures. And suppose again, that the same ingenious inquirer should hear, without understanding, of the double reckoning involved in the Sothic cycle; and in order to make things quite correct, should apply it to the period he had devised for precession; then we should have the 43,200 years ($2 \times 21,600$) above described. Whether or not this be the explanation, a remarkable example of a very similar misconception is supplied by the orientation of their buildings. For, as the late Professor De Lacouperie pointed out, their cardinal points, though relatively correct, are all shifted through one-eighth of a circle, their South really being South-West. And this, it will be easily seen, is precisely what would be done by any one who, having obtained his notion of the cardinal points in Egypt without understanding the principle, should imagine them to be fixed, and should use the Egyptian points while dwelling in Babylonia.

Such an origin is quite in agreement with other points connected with Babylonian civilization. That certain of their principal measures, such as the standard of Telloh, were derived from Egypt is undoubted. And their tradition that the elements of their civilization were imparted by Oannes, half man and half fish, who retired every night into the sea, just answers the description of an immigrant sailing up the Persian Gulf from the Eastern coast of Egypt, and retiring to his ship each night; while such a course itself would be a natural continuation of the course pursued by the ancestors of the Egyptians in their emigration from Poont in the South.

Far to the Eastward again, a problem, or rather a whole set of problems, given up for many centuries by the native archæologists, receive simple solution when we apply the same principle to the ancient Kalendar of China. From a highly interesting paper read in the Victoria Institute by the Rev. Dr. Legge, University Professor of Chinese at Oxford, and prince of Sinologists, we find that after the ninth century before the Christian era, the Chinese year was divided into periods of sixty days. These days were expressed in writing by means of two classes of characters, called respectively the ten heavenly stems and the twelve earthly branches, which were taken together in pairs, each branch being taken with each stem, but the stem always preceding, never following, the branch; whereby each day of the cycle was represented by a different pair. And he observes that the sexagesimal cycle was of extreme antiquity, and that "how it arose is a mystery; but that he would make little account of that if he could tell from whence the inventors got the component parts, the ten stems and the twelve branches." But a reference to the far more ancient Egyptian Kalendar naturally suggests the sexagesimal measure; while the sixty alternations of light and darkness which constituted the Egyptian month easily resolve themselves in foreign hands into a period of sixty days. Again, the two hieroglyphs which express the year, the stem ("Se") for its totality, and the branch (Apu-ter) for its commencement, supply the titles of the characters; while the number of days in the sacred decade give the ten heavenly stems, and the number of months in the civil year the twelve earthly branches. There seems therefore little difficulty in conceiving that the elements of the Eastern calculations may have been obtained from that more central and far more ancient civilization, particularly if we consider, as many now admit, that the elements of religion and of science were first imported into China from the head of the Persian Gulf (the direct route from Egypt).⁷ by the famous tribe which bore the name of Bak; which in the hieroglyphic signifies the land of Egypt.

Turning now for a while from Professor Legge's valuable paper to the oldest of the religious books of China, the Shu King, of which he has himself given a translation to the world, we are met by more than one passage referring unmistakably to a superior condition of culture formerly enjoyed and irrecoverably lost. At the end of the third Book the chiefs lament the loss of the "Standard Stone and the Equalizing Quarter,"⁸ formerly preserved in the treasury."

⁷ The late Professor De Lacouperie, to whose labours is chiefly due the tracing of a connection between the civilization of China and the Bak tribe (proceeding, not from Babylonia itself, but from the country immediately to the Eastward of it), has detected a certain resemblance, in a considerable number of instances, between the archaic characters employed by the two countries. But if a further comparison be made with the corresponding characters of Egypt, the Chinese will be found to resemble the latter with at least equal, if not greater closeness, a circumstance which seems to point to a common origin from the source more ancient than either. And an immigration, it is to be observed, from the country East of Babylonia into China would be a natural continuation of an emigration to the head of the Persian Gulf; just as the latter course would be a natural continuation of the original migration from Poont.

⁸ Professor De Lacouperie, who favoured me with a discussion on this subject, pointed out that Middleton translates this expression simply by the general word "measure." To this I have no reply to make, except that Professor Legge is a very high authority, and that he can scarcely have been unacquainted with that translation.

A standard stone kept in the royal treasury as a reference for weights and measures is intelligible enough, and reminds us of the allusion in the Egyptian Ritual to “the Stone from the building of those who possess the Ark of Osiris.” But an “Equalizing Quarter!” A quarter of what? And what did it equalize? We know indeed of one quarter—a quarter of a day by which in the older country the rotations of the earth were equalized or harmonized with its revolutions, and which served as a standard for all manner of periods and measures. And this very quarter suggests at once a connection with the Standard Stone, since that stone itself, the throne of Ra in the House of Osiris, crowning the Chamber of the five Divine Birthdays, and containing the measure of the thirty-six sacred decades, represented the “Hep-Tep” or sacred Festival of Completion-Beginning, involving the secret of the Grand Cycle, and the equalizing quarter of a day.

That such a quarter had been lost we have proof from another part of the same sacred books of China. About twenty-two or twenty-three centuries before the Christian era, and some fourteen or fifteen hundred years before the earliest extant trace of the Chinese Kalendar, the Emperor of China was seized with a fit of archæological fervour, and instituted the first historical records of that country of which any traces remain. One result of his researches had an unfortunate effect upon certain of his subjects. Filled as he felt himself to be with the ancient wisdom, he summoned his astronomers and laid down to them the broad and simple principle that every year consists of three hundred and sixty-six days—a statement which is, as we have seen, more strictly correct than three hundred and sixty-five days if understood properly and as the Egyptians understood it; but which, without the secret either of the sidereal day or of the Grand Cycle, inevitably leads to calculations which events would refuse to verify. Accordingly it is not surprising that the unlucky astronomers when next engaged in predicting an eclipse went altogether wide of the mark. But the Emperor rose to the occasion. He had been, he said, “searching into antiquity,” and had no doubt what was due to so gross an ignorance of their office. Everything, he observed severely, “had been done which ought to have been done. The tom-toms were beaten; the petty officers galloped; the inhabitants ran about the streets.” And yet when the sun took no notice of these proceedings, the astronomers sat like a log and did nothing! It was disgraceful. However, the law was clear on the matter. If the astronomers predicted the eclipse too soon, off with their heads; if too late, off with their heads. And as in this case it must have been either too soon or too late, their heads went off accordingly. No wonder the Chinese men of science lamented the loss of the Equalizing Quarter.

In these cases however, the suggestion of an Egyptian origin is only indirect, through that country supplying the clue which the later nation apparently lost. But there is another problem to which Professor Legge invites particular attention, observing that he looks forward to its solution with no slight interest; and that is the origin of certain “dissyllables and trissyllables,” introduced in the place of the days of the month by the illustrious archæologist and reviser of the Chinese Kalendar, Szemâ Ch’ien, descended of a long line of imperial historiographers, who wrote towards the close of the second century B.C. Although all the terms which Ch’ien uses appear in a rudimentary dictionary of the time of the Han Dynasty, Professor Legge is strongly of opinion, or rather entertains no manner of doubt, that they are of foreign extraction; and he states that a famous Taoistic scholar, Kwo P’o, who died A.D. 324, put the terms on one side as incapable of explanation. “A discovery,” the eminent scholar goes on to say, “may be in store for the explorers in Sanskrit or Assyriology, or some other Eastern mine. But let it be borne in mind that the use of the cycle of sixty for

The expression, moreover, seems to speak for itself, for it is just of that peculiar character which no translator would be likely to assign gratuitously, while a very able scholar might fail to render it with precision.

the measurement of days, and possibly for other periods, was long—very long—anterior to Szemâ Ch'ien.” Now it is a most singular circumstance, and one which testifies strongly to the penetration of that eminent scholar, that these same names when referred to the Coptic or vulgar tongue of Egypt, not only possess an intelligible meaning, but that in almost every case they signify an Egyptian festival, as follows:—

Titles employed by Szemâ Ch'ien.	Egyptian Phonetic Equivalent.	Signification of Egyptian Equivalent.	Corresponding Egyptian Festival or Doctrine.
Yu Chao	Ioh-Khaou	Moon-Day	Birth of Moon.
Chiang Wu	Chinka-Oue	Separation	Separation (celebrated twice a month).
Chû-Li	Khouo-Lai	Abundant Rejoicing	Great Festival (Kalendar).
Shun-Hang	Sheu-N-Ankh	Altar of Life	Fire Altar (Ritual).
Sheh-ti-Ko	Sheu-Ti-Koi	Altar of the Fields of God	Fields of Aahlu (Paradise).
Chao Yang	Khao-Ch'ink'	Separation of Day	Burial of Osiris.
Tan-eh	Tanghe	Preservation	One of the stages in the Path of Light.
Chih-Hsu	Khi-Shu	Dart of Shu	Dart of Shu (turn of the year).
Ta Mang-Lo	Taia-Maein-Laou	Panegyric of the Sail	Sail of the Bark of Ra (Ritual).
Ch'ih-Fun-Jo	Khi-Foon-Ioh	Dart of Hairs of Moon	Locks of Athor.
Kwan-tu	Koun-Tou	Within the Wall	Festival of “Hidden Lintel” (Ritual).
Hsieh Hsiah	Hsiohe Hssa	Measure the Fields and Regions	Fields and Paths of the Dead.

The expression "Within the wall" is particularly notable, for its accordance with an Egyptian festival is in itself so extraordinary as to render it very difficult to regard it as a mere coincidence. Although therefore it is far from probable that a Chinese scholar should deliberately adopt foreign, in the place of native titles, yet, on the other hand, if the elements of the kalendar were imported into China by its first civilizers from the more primæval country, nothing is more likely than that a man so devoted to archæology as Professor Legge describes Szemâ Ch'ien to have been, should have hunted out these archaic titles from the earliest records of China, and should have endeavoured to bring them into use as more correct terms, although possibly he himself may have been unable to understand their meaning. In any case the table, wherein the strange titles employed by Ch'ien are paralleled with their phonetic equivalent in the Egyptian tongue, and the translation of those equivalents in the festival to which they seem to correspond, will enable the reader to judge for himself how far the Egyptian key avails to open the Chinese lock which for fifteen hundred years has been given up by the Chinese experts.

VI. The Initiation Of The Postulant

As the created light is the primary force manifested in the system of creation, so also is the Uncreate, or Self-Begotten Light (Kheper-Ra), the prime mover and creator whether of the visible or of the unseen universe. "Light Great Creator is his Name;" we read in one of the chapters added to the Egyptian Ritual at the Saite recension. And again in another ancient papyrus: "The God of the Universe is in the light above the firmament; and His symbols are upon the earth." Now it was with that divine Light, immortal, invisible, intolerable to mortal eye, the Light which none may look upon in the flesh and live, that in the ancient creed of Egypt, as in that of Christendom, the holy dead was to be at last united, person with person, and indissoluble bond. No language less universal than that of faith can enable us to express this sublime belief. For in no other creed do we find that man never loses his individuality which is yet united personally with the Deity in so intimate an unity, that in the Ritual the Osiris-soul can with difficulty be distinguished from the Osiris-Godhead. "The sun is worshipping thy face;" says Osiris in the Ritual, to the soul new born into the divine existence; that is to say, the very splendour of creation, the source of light and life to the visible world, bows down in worship before him who has become a participator in the divinity of its creator. "He is I, I am he;" the soul responds, almost in the actual words of the Gospel.

Long and manifold was the process whereby, in the teaching of Egypt, the human nature became united with the divine—an union effected, through the God-Man Osiris, not as in the gross and distorted myths of the classic nations, by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by the interior taking of the manhood into God. Without and within, the transfiguration was complete. The soul, instantly illumined by the fulness of the Godhead, became forthwith capable of corresponding with the divine Energy. The senses, restored to incorruption, were gradually fashioned into instruments capable of expressing the soul's assimilation to that infinite power, for which the bounds of space and time exist not, but past and future alike stand open in an endless present; that transcendent freedom, wherein Act is coincident with Will, and Will commensurate with Thought. In order then that the senses may be so quickened and irradiated as to perceive the action of the Creative Mind in the exterior universe, that progress must be made by the departed in person, which, while still unreleased from subjection to the senses, the student of science makes dimly through the intellect. For whoever would understand the framework of the heavens, the structure of man's sacred dwelling place, must commence with the polestar, and tracing out the horizon of the point of Equinox, which equally divides the light from the darkness, must apprehend how the axis of the earth is for man the prime measure of space, and the standard rule of the Depths. If he would learn the secret of living form, the ocean will be his teacher, as he passes from shore to profoundest depths and fathoms the secret places of the teeming waters. The measure of the celestial orbits will be revealed to him by the moon, as from that companion orb he watches the rotation and the revolution of our planet. To understand not merely the motion but the evolution of our globe, he must dare the place of the earth's central fire, undismayed by the cavernous glooms of the lurid abysses. And there, gazing backwards for uncounted ages, he will trace amid convulsions and cataclysms inconceivable the "Lord of Law" and the "Words of Order;" as the huge mountain chains rise higher and higher from the chaos, to prepare the surface of the globe for the dwelling-place of man. Before him next stretches the shadow of the earth, that dim and vast expanse; where the majesty of the open heaven is enshrouded in night; and he perceives how the conjunctions of eclipse are due to the same power as the orbits of illumination, and the hour of darkness is measured by the Giver of Light. That

shadow traversed, a yet more awful vision, the terrible splendour of the solar fount in all its fulness, bursts upon his sight; and as he mounts the sevenfold ascent of the planetary spheres, he gazes undazzled on the stupendous jets and sprays of flame that dart on a sudden thousands and myriads of miles on high. Then far beyond in the infinite depths of space, his eyes, now radiant “as the eyes of Athor,” seek out the well-loved Sothis, the harbinger of the new dawn, the portal of the illimitable heavens, “that land of a million fortresses.” And in anticipation of each successive stage of this amazing progress, this reconquest of the senses to the dominion of the reason, we may watch the course of the masonic postulant accepted by the “Master of the Secret,” as he is inducted, chamber by chamber, into the Hidden Places in the Pyramid of Light.

Yet though a man understand the material forces of the universe, though he know all the phenomena of the heavens, and the composition of the most distant suns; nay, though he wield with so masterly a grasp the wand of science as to evolve at will an organic world from the atoms of the abysmal depths, all this, in the mind of Egypt, was not sufficient, even for initiation into the inner mysteries of divine realities. No mere expansion of the intellect, however pure and lofty; not even the scientific definition of absolute truth, could suffice to open the secret things of God, any more than the most exact acquaintance with the features and the proportions of the Pyramid would disclose their interior signification without the teaching of the hidden Wisdom. And hence, at the commencement of the Ritual, in the heading of the first chapter, before a word of doctrine has been revealed, we are told how it proceeds from Thoth, “The Mind and Will of God,” as the inscription of Hermopolis entitles him.

Now there are three modes in which such knowledge may be communicated to those prepared to receive it; namely, by simple instruction, by distant vision, or by personal participation. Each of these modes is, it is evident, an advance upon that which precedes, a preparation for that which follows it. No man can become a participator in the Divine Nature who has never been illuminated by its contemplation. No man can contemplate the Deity who has not been instructed in Truth; nor can any receive that initiation until he be dead to the flesh. As, therefore, in the masonic induction the catechumen could ascend but a few steps in the light of common day, and passed, when the disc of the starry heaven was opened by the Master of the Secret, into the profound darkness of the Descending Passage; so too, when the great preparation of Death had been accomplished, when soul and spirit had been released from the dominion of the senses, when, by the sacred purification of embalmment, the corruptible body had put on incorruption, then “On the day of the funeral,” we read, the Unseen Master commenced to instruct the catechumen in the stages which must be undergone preparatory to his initiation. And so closely does the masonic path in the Pyramid correspond with the path of the departed in the Ritual, that the traveller to-day who penetrates the recesses of the mysterious building may follow, well-nigh step by step, the mystical progress of the departed through the unseen world. For to the Egyptian of old, to have mastered the secret of the House of the Hidden Places was to have mastered the secret of the tomb. For him the grave had no darkness, death held no terror; for he knew beforehand the starry path, wherein each step brought him nearer to the Creator-Light.

Ritual in hand, let us now take up our position once more at the foot of the exterior ascent, beneath the entrance of the star, along with the catechumen of the Secret; and with him let us forecast the time when, bereft of sense, of will, of life, he will go forth, dumb and helpless, to the mouth of the tomb, and commence “The entrance on Light” (chap. i.) while “borne to the land of the holy dead.” Then, reciting chapter by chapter, as we mount step by step, we become informed, in the course of that brief but steep ascent, of the preparation which awaits him when the last glimpse of earth is hidden from his sight. Thus we learn how (ii.,

iii.)¹ after death, the departed comes forth into the light of immortality, even as the sun when he sets, bursts forth in radiance on the world which is hidden from our view. Then, since the departed cannot yet bear the judgment of interior justice, he is warned beforehand (iv.) that when he has commenced the descent, he must “pass the Road above the Earth,” the ascending passage concealed by the Hidden Portcullis behind the fourth exterior course. And behind that secret portal in the vignette illustrating the chapter, we descry the face of the Unseen Teacher, that countenance of which the holy dead, when initiation has begun, shall presently be strengthened to bear the distant but unveiled vision. Before that lintel can be passed, and the road above the earth be traversed, many trials, he now learns, are waiting for him. There are tasks of justice to be fulfilled, if he omitted those good works on earth, the memorials of which may be his sponsors (“Ushabti”) (v., vi.). Apep, too, the dark serpent that devours the hidden Light, as the winding darkness of the autumnal equinox devours the light of the year, lies in wait (vii.) to crush him in its multitudinous folds, while he treads the path where Light and Darkness balance. Still mounting upward, and at each step approaching nearer the grave, the catechumen is instructed how, when that serpent shall be passed, the Gate of the West (viii., ix.), the aperture of the western wall, will conduct him into the Well, or Chamber of the deep Waters, as the setting sun goes down into the deep waters of the western ocean and comes forth thence in triumph (x., xi.). Passing in silence over that which shall happen to him in the Well, since that knowledge cannot yet be imparted, the Divine Teacher directs him, when the mystery of new life is accomplished, to retrace his steps to the Passage of the Heavenly Horizon; and, after entering and coming forth from (xii., xiii.) the Chamber of Ordeal, to approach once more the Lintel of Justice. For then, and then only, can he set foot upon the threshold of justification, when “the stains have been burnt from his heart” by the raging fire (xiv.).

On the fifteenth course now high above the horizon of the earth, our eyes (two courses higher than our feet) already face the double-arched gateway defined by the pole-star, the outer entrance of the secret places revealing the path of the Horizon of Heaven. And similarly in chapter xv. the departed comes towards the land of Eternity. “May I proceed,” he continues, “as thou dost, without halt, like thy holiness, Ra, thou who hast no master, great traverser of waters, with whom millions of years are but a moment.” Then, as he bends his head towards the entrance of the Pyramid and gazes on the dark passage now open within, “I proceed to heaven,” he says; “I kneel among the stars.” And at the conclusion of the chapter he learns the words to recite when his sun is setting, and he kneels with his hands towards the land (of the unseen), “O height of Love, thou openest the double Gate of the Horizon.”

With these sublime words of thanksgiving, the instruction of the catechumen comes to a close; sufficient knowledge having been imparted to direct his course as postulant to the places of Initiation and Ordeal, until which point be passed he can look no further into the mysteries. In the following chapter (xvi.), as we ascend the last course before quitting the outer light, the divine voice is for a season hushed; and the Ritual silently offers three pictures for our contemplation. On one of these the sole object presented is the sacred Scarab, a symbol of the Eternal One, the Self-Created Being who knows no beginning and no end. On the second is the figure of the departed standing before Amen, the Hidden Deity. The third contains simply a blank stele or Egyptian form of tombstone. And that stele, as we learn from the very ancient papyrus of Unas, the “prophet of the Pyramid,” was fashioned in the form of a false door for the pyramidal entrance, the entrance, that is to say, which lies on the seventeenth course of the northward face, and which is oriented by the northern star.

¹ If these numbers be placed on a print of the interior of the Pyramid, in the order here indicated, they will show how the titles here assigned to the different parts are obtained from the Ritual.

In that moment of silence, the departed is alone. The friends have left him. The sun of earth, which from his earliest years has greeted him, is for ever hidden. The “Gate of the Earth” is passed (xvii.); and the Catechumen of Wisdom has been accepted as the Postulant of Immortality. Dense, utter darkness is before him; but under the direction of Anup, the guide of souls, he passes on beyond that Gate of the Ascent, where the divine Light lifts the disc of the tomb. “It is the region of his father Shu” (the Light), the Ritual continues: “he effaces his sins, he destroys his stains.” Then as the departed advances through the darkness, and fearlessly commences the Descending Path, the inner Light, unseen by mortal eye, reveals itself in vision. He beholds the lower world (xvii.), the territory of Initiation, the entry of the Hidden Places, concerning which the divine Wisdom has instructed him, the place “wherein he must enter and from whence he must come forth,” the transformations which he must desire to make, that he may be transformed into the likeness of God, the good works which he must do, the “throne” of the regenerate soul, and the blessed company of Osiris after the body has been laid to rest. In that same vision too he sees the whole lower world, the “Angle of Fire;” and “the Pool” or Well of Life, with its summit opening into the Double Hall of Truth (xvii.).

With the eighteenth chapter begins the “Book of Performing the Days,” that is, the period of preparation for Initiation and Ordeal, the due performance of which entitles him to pass “the road above the earth” (xviii.), there to receive the Crown of Justification (xix., xx.), when his victory is assured. As he pursues the descending Passage of the Heavenly Horizon, the reconstruction of the inner man, the new creation to life immortal, slowly commences (xxi.). One by one his faculties are reawakened to spiritual life; his mouth (xxii.) is opened, that he may respond to the teaching of the divine voice; his mind and his name are restored (xxiv., xxv.); his heart (xxvi.) is given back to him, and he knows no more the icy numbness of the paralyzed affections. Gradually the new-formed body gathers force and substance; that is to say, not the natural body, which never bursts its sacred swaddling-bands till wakened in the last chapter of the Ritual and the last chamber of the building by the Grand Orient of the open tomb, but the spiritual or astral body wherewith the man, already raised in incorruption yet still awaiting the open manifestation of Osiris’s resurrection, converses with the “Starry Spirits,” the intelligences of the transcendent spheres. With the new life commences the attack of his spiritual enemies, now rendered palpable to his sight (xxvii.–xxxii.), the dread inhabitants of the under world, that wage in man the great battle of contending light and darkness. Sloth, the tortoise, strives to delay his steps; the asps put forth their venom; crawling reptiles infest his path. From every side the raging passions, the devouring crocodiles which inhabit the waters of life, rush furiously to the attack; but he repels all those creatures of darkness by the astral brightness of his starry nature. “Back, Crocodile of the South,” he exclaims; “I am Sothis”—the star of the Eternal Dawn. His foes, defeated by the divine protection (xxxiii.–xli.), the body raised in in-corruption (xlii.) acquires in every limb and every feature the seal of God. His hair, from which the light glows forth in streams, is as “the hair of Nu,” the sacred Nile glowing with the streams of life; his countenance, shining as the sun, is radiant as the face of Ra; his eyes, glorious as are eyes of Athor, gleaming with immortal beauty; his fingers are as the Uri, the insignia of the royal power; his feet burn with the fire of the Creator-Spirit Ptah; his humanity is as the humanity of Osiris, the incarnate God. “There is not a member of him,” says the Ritual, “which is not divine.”

Resplendently beautiful as is the astral body assumed by the new being, he is not yet prepared for initiation; but fresh trials still await him as he approaches the granite block which obstructs the descending passage. His self-dominion, the head of his glory, may be taken from him; he may incur the second death of defilement from the creatures of darkness (xliii.–li.). But still, by the same guidance avoiding all these dangers, he comes forth as the day

through the Gate of the West, to the passage which conducts him to the Well of Life; and as he passes that threshold, he is fed with the celestial food which they may not eat who are partakers of defilement (li.–lii.). “The enemies do not eat of my body,” says Osiris, in another part of the Ritual. Avoiding defilement through the strength of that food (lii., liii.) he receives the breath of Ptah (liv.–lviii.), and drawing near to the Well of Life, is granted a first draught of its refreshing streams (lix.–lxiii.). In the depths of that well, wherein, as the Sai-an-Sinsin tells us, approach is made to Osiris, shall presently take place the regeneration of the renewed man (or “Ka”), by reunion with the new-born soul amid the living waters. “I give the waters of life to every mummy,” says the Goddess Nout, who presides over the waters, in the inscription on the vase of Osur-Ur (given in “Records of the Past”), “to reunite it with the soul, that it may henceforth be separated from it no more for ever. The Resident of the West has established thy person amid the sages of the divine Lower Region. He giveth stability to thy body, and causeth thy soul not to distance itself from thee. He keepeth remembrance of thy person, and saveth thy body now and for ever.”

During this arduous preparation, while the departed passes from earth in absolute weakness to wage the prolonged conflict of light and darkness, the imperishable soul, restored to her native element, is born a second time in the Chamber of the Queen of the Pyramid, wherein was born the divine Osiris, at once her Son, her Maker, and her Spouse. “I am Yesterday,” says Osiris, in the sixty-fourth chapter, said to be almost coeval with the Pyramid of Light; that is, “I am He who was before time began,” since, however far back in time a day may be, yesterday was always before it. “I am the Dawn,” he continues, “the Light of the Second Birth, the Mystery of the Soul, Maker of the gods, by whom are fed the hidden ones of heaven.” So in the inscription on the coffin of Anches-Ra-Neferab—that is, of her “whose life was the Sacred Heart of Ra”—we read concerning Isis, that is, she “who opens for thee the secret places by those mighty names of thine. Thy name is Infant and Old Man, Germ and Growth, Son of Heaven, who makes the road for thee according to his word. Thy name is Everlasting, Self-Begotten, the Dawn, the Day, the Evening, the Night, the Darkness. Thy name is the Moon, the Heart of Silence, the Lord of the Unseen World.” And on another part of the coffin of the same holy queen, the spirits of Annu, called in the Ritual the “secret birthplace of the gods,” are invoked as those “who preside over the sacred birth.”

With the new birth of the soul comes also the restoration of power in its original divine image. For as in the condition which is subject to decay the corruptible senses dominate and inform the soul, so according to the theosophy of Egypt, in the condition of immortality, does the illuminate spirit inform and dominate the regenerate senses. While we are subject to the flesh, the external universe impresses itself continually upon the mind, dimming and imprisoning the original “type” or image of the Deity, which feebly struggles to express itself in the masterpieces of poet or artist. But when the soul is born into new life, it remains that Creative Image, and is endowed with the power of co-operating with the divine Energy. For, as we learn from an exquisite chapter in the Ritual, it is the fragrance of Innocence, which perfumes the breath of the Creative Beauty. Hence, in the masonry on the eastern wall of that most secret Chamber of New Birth, we find expressed the fivefold dominion informed by the soul, new-born in the sacred type of the image of the Queen. Now thus the senses themselves become so essentially divine, that the departed pays worship to his own faculties. “I have adored Touch and Taste,” he says later on; for touch and taste are the channels whereby is communicated to man the food of immortality. From that Secret Chamber, the regenerate soul comes forth glorious as the day (lxv., lxvi.), and “opening the door” (lxvii.), once so carefully concealed, comes forth in full radiance to the fields of Aahlu (lxviii.–lxxii.), the territory of illumination: to take its seat (lxxv.) upon the lower throne above the head of the

Well, between the Chamber of the Orbit and the Chamber of the Shadow. “The gates of heaven open to me,” he says;” the gates of earth open to me.”

That solemn enthronization being witnessed by the postulant in the depths below; he remembers that the time of ordeal draws near, and after praying, as instructed beforehand, that his sin may be rubbed out, he celebrates the “festival of the soul passing to his body.” But not immediately may that passage be accomplished. Raised though he be in incorruption, glowing as he is in every member with the immortal light, he cannot yet bear unveiled the overwhelming glory of the soul. Therefore, in the teaching of Egypt, around the radiant being which in its regenerate life could assimilate itself to the glory of the Godhead, was formed the “Khaibit” or luminous atmosphere, consisting of a series of ethereal envelopes, at once shading and diffusing its flaming lustre, as the earth’s atmosphere shades and diffuses the solar rays. And at each successive transformation (lxxvii.–lxxxvii.) it descended nearer to the moral conditions of humanity. From the form of the golden hawk, the semblance of the absolute divine substance, the One Eternal, Self-Existent Being, it passes to the “Lord of Time,” the image of the Creator, since with the Creation time began. Presently it assumes the form of a lily, the vignette in the Ritual representing the head of Osiris enshrined in that flower; the Godhead manifested in the flesh, coming forth from immaculate purity. “I am the pure lily,” we read, “coming forth from the lily of light. I am the source of illumination (the nostril of the sun) and the channel of the breath of immortal beauty (Athor). I bring the messages (of heaven), Horus (the Eternal Son) accomplishes them.” Later the soul passes into the form of the Urœus, “the soul of the earth;” the serpentine path traced upon the earth irradiated by the vertical sun, as the senses are irradiated by the supreme illumination of the soul.

And finally it assumes the semblance of a crocodile; becoming subject, that is, to the passions of humanity. For the human passions, being part of the nature wherein man was originally created, are not intrinsically evil, but only become evil when insubordinate to the soul. And thus the crocodile, which attacked the departed before new birth, is rendered divine in the regenerate form.. Therefore it was that the crocodile was held in high reverence by the Egyptians, for it spoke to them of the time when man should regain the mastery of his passions, and when the last barrier between himself and his glorious soul should be removed for ever.

Immeasurable as is the distance which thus separates the two beings which make up the perfect manhood, there is no hesitation or delay on the part of the soul. That radiant creature in its glory has not forgotten the frail companion in union with whom it dwelt during the days of its humiliation. Restored to its native purity, welcomed by the Almighty to a participation in his own energy, throned on its seat of absolute dominion, yet such is the ardour with which that soul returns the love of man, that like the Creator Himself it cannot rest satisfied with its own inexhaustible bliss; but hastens to come down from its seat of power, that it may raise and glorify expectant humanity. And thus the vignette shows us the winged creature flying towards the postulant. Meanwhile the latter, from below watching its flight, prays in an ecstasy for the reunion. “O bringer,” he cries, “O runner in his hall!”—the Hall of Truth, where the throne of the soul is erected. “Great God, let my soul go where it desires (lxxxix.). O conductors of the bark of millions of years, led through the gateway, clearing the path of heaven and earth, accompany ye the souls to the holy dead.”

The prayer is granted. Leaving its throne on high, and passing through its various transformations, the soul descends the ladder of the well, as in the papyrus of Ani. Then the divine protection is obtained (xci.); and, amid the living waters in the pool of the Persea, the Tree of Immortality (as the Ritual elsewhere calls it), the earnest desire of the postulant is

fulfilled, and he is re-united with his living soul (xciii.); “My soul is front the beginning,” he says, “from the commencement of time (reckoning of years). The eye of Horus “(the Divine Son) made for me my soul, preparing its substance. The darkness is before them; the arms of Osiris hold them. Open the path to my soul and my shadow (Khaibit) and my spirit, to see the great God within his sepulchre the day of making up the souls.” If that knowledge is possessed, the Ritual adds, he enters on Light; he is not detained in the lower world.

That priceless gift conceded, the postulant, though he cannot yet participate in the divine splendour until his ordeal be passed, yet can he behold it openly from afar, and enter on his initiation into the sacred mysteries. Ascending, in the strength imparted to him by his soul, the ladder of the well, he offers a prayer to the Divine Teacher (xciv.), and, “holding in his hand the Sacred Mysteries,” he turns his opened eyes successively in the three directions which we saw indicated by the hieroglyph of the divine Initiator Thoth. First he gazes down “the opening where Thoth is,” the Chamber of the Shadow, now no longer closed to his view, though not yet accessible to his person; and he beholds the secret Wisdom which gives to Truth its splendour (xcv., xcvi.), the countenance of the Divine Teacher, whose voice instructed the catechumen, and whose power protected the postulant. Then, as his eyes grow clearer, he offers a prayer to Anup (xcvii.), the starry guide, who has led him thus far towards his heart’s desire; and, turning towards the Chamber of the New Birth, he discerns the Bark of Ra (xcviii.–cii.), the vessel of God, foretold to him before his entry on the path by the Divine Teacher—the vessel which shall bear him safely across the Deep Waters. Even while he looks, the whole interior of the building is lit with a sudden glow; and the masonry, portraying each portion of the sacred vessel, reveals their mystical significance, which the Initiate must know before permission can be granted to embark. Within the Inner House the vast granite Triangle dominating the secret heights assumes for him the form of an “Anchor,” with its central axis indicated, but not delineated, by the equality of the members: as we saw the central mystery of the Supreme Secret, the Unity of the divine Substance to be indicated but not defined by the equality of the Persons in the Egyptian Trinity. And that “anchor” firmly fixed, not in the depths below, but in the heights above the open sarkophagus, speaks to him of Osiris, “the Lord of the earth in his coffin;” the vision which awhile ago he prayed that he might behold on the Great Day of Reckoning.

At the head of the Grand Gallery is the “seat” of the “Dweller in Space:” the radiant throne at the top of the long incline to which the Initiate now lifts his eyes. Right through the midst of the throne rises unseen the Axis of the Great House, the Central Ray of the Grand Light of Egypt, like a huge but impalpable mast towering from foundation to summit of the vessel of Light. That axis passes through the Chamber of New Birth below, and separates the Outer from the Inner House which lies beyond the throne, as the central but impalpable truth of Death separates the glory which now is from the glory which lies beyond. And in the truth of Death, to the Egyptian the “Completion-Beginning” of the New Birth, the Initiate discerns “the great bringer and taker away,” as the Ritual calls the mast of the vessel of Ra. Aloft upon the same axis, above the solar throne, the roof of the lustrous chamber, with its starry rays, images to him whose eyes are opened, the “Sail of the Firmament,” which, by its starry grandeur, draws the soul irresistibly to God.

The Well reflects to him the “Paddle” shining in the invisible waters, as the image of the Creator shines invisibly in the Waters of Life: the “Planks,” the rungs of the ladder whereby the soul came down to visit him, each guarded by a spirit of celestial intelligence. In the subterranean chamber he discerns the “hold” of “darkness,” and in the Chamber of New Birth the Cabin, or Secret Place of the Divine Vessel. A remarkable instance of pyramidal allusion is supplied by the form of the cabin. For the roof proper was surmounted by another roof of the singular and apparently unmeaning shape given in the text. But if above the Chamber of

New Birth we indicate the throne of Ra, which immediately surmounts it, we shall have the shape in question; so that the form implies the enthronization of the Uncreated Light upon the Mystery of the Divine Mother, Isis.

Upon that bark of safety take place both his present Initiation and the Illumination which is to come; and each of these ascents finds its appropriate expression in the masonry, the one in the place of New Birth, the other in the Chamber of the Splendour. And in the vignettes of the Ritual, we see the vessel bearing upon it at one time a fivefold, at another a sevenfold staircase; the fivefold dominion of the regenerate senses, and the sevenfold elevation of the illuminate intellect.

Yet one more vision opens out to the Initiate. As he raises his eyes more upward yet to the extreme height of the Chamber of the Splendour, far removed from the head of the well, yet forming part of the same divine structure, he discerns the “opening where Athor is” (ciii.), the azure depths of ethereal loveliness leading to the secret heights above the Chamber of Grand Orient. For a moment he gazes in silent rapture on the far-off opening of the unimaginable vision, and then calls to his aid “the Opener of the Great Sanctuary” (cv., cvi.). “Oh, assistant—oh, assistant!” he exclaims; “I am among the servants of Immortal Beauty!”

Fortified then by that enduring remembrance, he turns from the scene of future illumination, and descends towards the place of impending trial. Around him stand revealed the “Gods of the Western Gate” (cvii.), the Western opening to the Well of Life, where dwell the spirits who came unseen to his assistance at the hour when the sun of earthly life went down into the West. From the “Chamber of the Waters of Heaven” flows down the torrent of the “Celestial Nile” (cx.), and mingles at his side with the stream from the “Chamber of the Birthplace of the Gods”—that stream which waters the fields of Aahlu, the home of the regenerate. And high above, far as his quickened eyes can pierce, are assembled the bright companies of starry spirits from every quarter (cxi.–cxiv.) to assist at his victory, his judgment, and his coronation. In the memory of that unfading vision, and the strength of those protecting spirits, the Initiate enters and comes forth (cxvi.) from the subterranean Chamber of the Fiery Ordeal.

VII. The Illumination Of The Adept

INITIATION achieved, and Ordeal undergone, the character both of building and of Ritual seem to undergo a transformation. Not that the air of mystery is in any way lessened, rather it deepens if possible, as we penetrate into the more secret parts. But the period of weakness and of expectancy once passed, a sense of power and triumph grows more and more distinctly perceptible as we enter the secret places of absolute "Truth." Turning back with the Initiate, now become the Adept from the "Meskwa" or Place of Ordeal, we retrace our steps upwards, under the direction of the celestial guide, who conducts us to the "Gate on the Hill" (cxvii.); the lintel hidden in the roof far up along the Passage of the Star. In remounting the ascent the adept once more "enters and comes forth" (cxx.) from the Gateway of the Well, that he may again receive strength for the coming judgment. And as he approaches the hidden portcullis, which now he is called upon to pass, where sits in person the Eternal Wisdom, he recites for himself (cxxi.) the unforgotten words wherein the Divine Teacher warned him of the hour now drawing near of entering into (xiii.) judgment and of issuing from thence. Arrived at the hidden portcullis (cxxii., cxxiii.), carefully concealed within the roof, that arduous "Gateway reserved for the Gods," the divine Osiris-souls, the gateway which none can enter, except "after coming out" from the place of initiation, obstruction meets him at every step. Alike in the Ritual, and in the building, each portion of that most mysterious gateway, the secret of whose masonry still remains undisclosed, refuses entrance to the upward path except to the adept. "I will not let thee go over me," says the sill, "unless you tell me my name." "The weight in the right place is thy name," is the profound reply of the adept. For, as the raising of the portcullis depends upon the true adjustment of the weight, so also is justice the virtue without which the path on high remains for ever closed. "I will not let thee pass me," says the Left Lintel—so continues this strange dialogue—"unless you tell me my name." "Return of the true is thy name." "I will not let thee pass me," says the Right Lintel, "unless you tell me my name." "Return of judged hearts is thy name." For without truth, and without self-judgment, no step can be taken of progress in the Path of Truth (cxxv.). With that doctrine we may compare the "Golden Words" of Pythagoras, himself a pupil of the priests of Egypt—

"Do innocence; take heed before thou act;
 Nor let soft sleep upon thy eyelids fall,
 E'er the day's actions thou hast three times scanned,
 What have I done, where erred, what left unwrought?
 Go through the whole account, and if the sum
 Be evil, chide thee; but if good, rejoice.
 This do, this meditate, this ever love,
 And it shall guide thee into virtue's path."

But to him who has learned of wisdom, however long, however arduous the search, the entrance into Truth cannot finally be denied. The Hidden Lintel is crossed; and the memory of that passage is for ever kept sacred by the grateful departed. "I have come through the Hidden Lintel," he cries triumphantly, later on, "I have come like the sun through the gate of the festival." The lintel crossed, the Person of the Divine Teacher is disclosed, having before him the true Balance of Light and Darkness (cxxv.). The "secret faces at the gate" unveil themselves; and the adept stands within the Double Hall of Truth—of Truth in Death and Truth in Life, of Truth in Justice and Truth in Mercy, of Truth in Darkness and Truth in Splendour. Then, as he surmounts each obstacle besetting the entrance to the path which leads on high, and achieves the triumph over Death, he beholds the long array of the Judges

of the Dead, the celestial powers who take account of the moral actions of mankind, each supreme in his own province of the holy land; and to each in turn the adept, whose stains have been washed from his heart in the furnace of the ordeal, pleads his innocence of the sin of which that power is the special avenger. Very terrible are the images under which those heart-searching spirits are presented—terrible as the moral effects of our own transgression, when viewed by the inner light of Truth. “The Eyes of Fire,” the passion which shrivels the intellect; the “Face of Smoke,” the pride that clouds the judgment; the “Crackler of Bones,” the sin which corrodes the entire manhood, these and such as these are the fearful insignia of the supernal powers. Most terrible of all is the spirit “whose mouth is twisted when he speaks, because his face is behind him,” the spirit of conscience, which keeps its dread eyes inexorably on our past, and speaks to us with mouth contorted in the agony of self-condemnation—like the cry of the penitent, which echoes as bitterly now as when uttered three thousand years ago, “My sin is ever before me.”

Undeterred by that august tribunal, which as we learn at the threshold, none can endure but he who has truly judged himself, the departed, protected by the Divine Guardian, ascends the Passage of the Shadow where the light is eclipsed, and achieves through Truth his victory over Death. Gradually, as he draws near the low but unobstructed gateway, the glow of the splendour begins to appear; and he sees before him the Sacred Orbit of the circling earth defined by the four burning points of Solstice and Equinox, like a basin of fire surrounded by four jets of flame (cxxxvi.). In front of each of those cardinal points of the heaven, are seated four divine spirits having the assemblance of an ape, the form nearest akin to humanity. To those four universal guardians and heralds of truth, the justified prays, that he may be purified yet further from his transgressions. “O ye,” he says, “who send forth truth to the universal Lord, nurtured without fraud, who abominate wickedness, extract all the evil from me. Obliterate my faults and annihilate my sins.” “Thou mayest go,” is the gracious reply of the four heavenly teachers; “we obliterate all thy faults, we annihilate all thy sins.” In this manner, as the Ritual declares, is separation of his sins effected “after he has seen the faces of the Gods.” From henceforth death has no more power over him, and in rapture he returns thanksgiving to the supreme judges, the Gods of the Orbit, towards whom he now advances, and to Osiris on his throne (cxxxvii., cxxxviii.).

As he stands at the entrance of the upper chamber, where the slight projection of the lower floor bears witness to the passage from death to life, the divine voice, which has been silent till its first lesson is exhausted, recommences his illumination, and he is “instructed” (cxxxix.) how “to stand at the Bark of Ra”—no longer in the lower portion of the vessel, but free of every part. Obedient to the divine command, he passes the “Gate of the Gateway” (cxxx.), and celebrates the Birthday of Osiris, the Opening of the Eternal Year. Then, as he advances a step and stands within the hall upon the slight projection, he beholds the whole building before him, the vast universe of space, in its immeasurable grandeur, now free to his immaculate spirit. And as at the Lintel of Justice all is barred, so here every part lies open. “The heaven opens,” we read (cxxx.)—the Chamber of the Splendour with its seven-fold rays around the solar throne; “the earth opens,” the Chamber of the Shadow; “the North opens” to the Chamber of the Pole-star; “the South opens” to the Chamber of Grand Orient; “the West opens” to the Entrance of the Well; “the East opens” to the Chamber of New Birth, with its Eastern ascent of the regenerate senses; “the Northern and Southern Chapels open,” the Antechamber and the Place of Grand Orient, the Northern and Southern chapels of the inner house. Here, too, is the “crossing of the pure roads of life,” of which the coffin of Amamu speaks. Behind are “the roads of darkness,” which the departed in the Ritual once prayed so earnestly that he might pass. In front lie the fields of Aahlu, the blessed country where the justified executes the works which he is privileged to do for Osiris.

A burst of triumph greets the justified, when having accomplished the Passage of the Sun, he enters the Chamber of the Orbit, the Hall of Illumination. “The deceased,” we read, “passes through the Gate of the Gateway. Prepare ye his hall when he comes. Justify his words against the accusers. There is given to him the food of the gods of the Gate. There has been made for him the crown which belongs to him as the dweller in the Secret Place.” In another place the justified himself exclaims, “I have opened the gate of heaven and earth” (at the junction of the Halls of the Orbit and of the Shadow). “The soul of Osiris rests there. I cross through the halls. No defect or evil is found in me.” And once more the deceased prays that he may pass this hall. “Place me before thee, O Lord of Eternity. Hail, Dweller of the West, good Being, Lord of Abydos. Let me pass the roads of darkness; let me follow thy servants in the gate.”

A similar note of exultation marks the passage in the Sai-an-Sinsin, where we read of the great tribunal and the House of Light. “Thou comest into the House of God with much purity,” exclaim the mourners, addressing the departed. “The gods have abundantly purified thee in the great tribunal. Thou art not shut out of heaven; thy body is renewed in the presence of Osiris. Thou hast not been shut out from the House of Glory. Thou seest the Path of Beauty, completing every transformation which thou desirest.” And the ancient coffin of Amamu bore on the outside this inscription, full of desire and hope: “An act of homage to Anup, who passes the deceased over the distant paths, the fairest of the Karneter”—that is, the land of the holy dead. “Thine eyes,” say our own sacred writings, “shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.”

The gateway passed (cxxx.), the divine voice resumes its instruction; and teaches him of “going to the heaven where Osiris is;” of being “received into the Sacred Heart of Ra,” the fount of life (cxxxii.–cxxxiii.), of “the adoration which he must render,” of the vessel of eternity in which the holy souls for ever move, of the rejoicings of heaven (cxxxiv.–cxxxvi.) in the manifestations of the Godhead to man, and of the names and places wherein those manifestations are made (cxli.–cxliii.).

And now the justified stands within the full glory of the orbit, and looks forth, not with the vision of mortal seer, but as the deathless spirits who encircle the throne. While he stands gazing, splendour after splendour, revelation beyond revelation, bursts upon his sight. Down from the radiant throne, along the floor, along the walls, along the roof, streams, floods, rivers of light come sweeping on like the torrent of the summer rays, like the inundation of the overwhelming Nile. But the justified breathes freely the air of opened heaven.

His senses “for ever vivified,” pierce through the utmost bounds of space; his quickened intellect grasps each starry law and harmony; his purified spirit, undazzled by the blinding radiance, discerns the Hidden Love that occupies the throne. No longer as a stranger, or at a distance, but as a prince admitted to the highest honour of the court, the justified takes his place in the very line of direct approach; while around and above him, the measureless expanse is filled with rank beyond rank of spirit-ministers.

“He has passed his billions,” we read, “the circle of flaming ministers is around him. His blessings follow him. ‘Come,’ says Truth; and he approaches her Lord.”

At that gracious word of Truth, the abysses of mystery reveal their most secret depths. First, the Chamber of the Shadow is lit by the irradiating brightness; and the Illuminate discerns the nature of sin viewed in the light of truth. The Seven Halls of Death (cxliv.), each measured by its cycle of eclipse, lie open to him who has looked upon the face of God; and each name of mystery betrays the form of darkness. “Babbling” Malice, that delights in “overthrow;” “Fire-faced” Anger, “leaping on a sudden to the front;” Envy, the “Eater of Dirt;” Hatred, silent and

“vigilant;” Lust, “the consumer, the overthrower in a moment,” that “lives off reptiles;” Pride, with its “face of stone;” Sloth, that hardens irretrievably the heart, the “final stopper of the rejected;” all these betray their nature to him over whom death has power no longer. And he discerns (as in the vignette) the seven avenging spirits, each armed with the two swords of physical and spiritual destruction.

Mounting then the steep ascent, he beholds the mystery of judgment disclose itself in successive stages as the twenty-one Gates of Aahlu—their spaces measured by the years of Light, as it speeds from Sothis, the gates which open only to “the meek-hearted” (cxlvi.) unfold before him. At each of the first ten portals flows a celestial stream of sparkling waters, which shed their undying lustre over the person of the Illuminate. Ascending still towards the throne of Ra, at the nineteenth portal he is clothed with robes of power; and at “the Gate of the Burning Crown,” he stands beneath the Royal Arch of the Planetary Spheres. Immediately beyond is the “Stone of God,” where he receives from the Divine Occupant a “Crown of Illumination,” the “Atf”-crown of Egypt, fashioned after the zodiacal light of highest heaven. And behind the throne rises the final “Gate of Peace” with its seven crowns of joy.

But not as yet can the Illuminate attain the infinite serenity which lies beyond that gate. Death and judgment are not the only secrets to be disclosed when the eye of faith becomes the eye of sight. The place of the divine birth, the chamber in the “Fields of Aahlu,” must be visited before the Illuminate become the Master of the secret. And as he passes portal after portal of the fields (cxlvii.), he recites the titles of her whose habitation he now approaches: the “Mistress of Holy Awe,” the “Mistress of Heaven,” the “Regent of the Earth,” the “Help of the Meek-hearted,” the “Mistress of Prayer,” the “Light of the Secret River.” Then, having learnt the majesty of its queen, he scans the sevenfold arch, the Mystery of the Transcendent Heaven (cxlviii.); to hold converse with the seven Supreme Intelligences who overarch the Splendour of Creation.

Yet once again must the Depths be sounded, and the Secret Places be traversed, before the Illuminate can pass as master through the Gate of Peace. One secret of death still remains, most terrible and most inscrutable of all. While we are yet imperfect, we can gain some knowledge of the effect of moral death upon ourselves, and even form a faint adumbration of its nature when viewed in the light of absolute truth. But the mystery of its divine permission who can penetrate? If the Omnipotent be all good, why did He ever allow of evil? If He be all-merciful, why does He permit His creatures to suffer? How can our actions be justly “balanced” (cli.) when the forces which produced them were not of our own creation? Why are we to be made parties to the battle of light and darkness, when no choice was given whether we would exist or not? Why are the souls of just men secretly snared and overthrown? Whence comes the “foul flux” which is purged from man, and which causes all living creatures to shudder? Such questions as these we ask, and ask in vain. Yet if that darkest shadow, that horror which forms the depth of human agony, the enshrouding of the Eternal Justice in the blackness of utter eclipse, is still liable to arise and overpower the soul, how can man ever repose in safety; and what revelation or degree of glory will suffice to bring him peace? But that it too is destined to pass away in light, when the secrets are revealed, and illumination is transformed into union, who can doubt? So at least we read in the creed of Ancient Egypt; where, when the other mysteries of death and of judgment have been disclosed to the Illuminate; when he has entered into the secrets of the new birth, and conversed with the Supreme Intelligences who “watch before the tomb of Osiris;” when time exists for him no more, and he understands the design of the Eternal House, from foundation to consummation, he makes a final circuit of its Secret Places. Clothed in power, and crowned with light, he traverses the “Abodes” (cli.) or scenes of his former weakness; there

to discern, by his own enlightened perception, how it is “Osiris who satisfies the balance of him who rules the heavens;” to exert in its supernal freedom his creative will, now the lord, not the slave, of the senses; and to rejoice in the just suffering which wrought his illumination and emancipation.

Finally, when that grand progress through the Habitations of Humanity has been completed, the Master returns in majesty to the celestial company assembled in the Grand Lodge of the solar throne. Mounting beneath the Royal Arch of the Burning Crown, he treads the Stone of God itself, and passes through the Gate of Peace, with its seven crowns and titles of Victory. Then, outstripping in his flight the power of mortal thought, he passes beyond the shining orbit of the earth, beyond the vast expanse of solar glory, across the awful chasms of the unfathomable depths, to far-off Sothis, the land of Eternal Dawn, the ante-chamber of the infinite morning. He “has his star established to him in Sothis,” says the Ritual. And here the Illuminate, now become a Master, is instructed in the last mysteries which precede the universal glory; the mysteries of the divine sorrow, the “tears of Isis” (clii.), whence comes the source of the celestial Nile, the fount of illumination to man. Here he passes within the triple veil, and is invested with the imperishable jewels of supernal lustre (cliii.–clxi.).

One chapter and one chamber yet remain—the chapter of Orientation, and the Chamber of Grand Orient beneath the Secret Places of the Most High. “Awake, awake, Osiris?” so sing the mourners to the beloved departed, now glorious in the House of Light, and united indissolubly with the divine Being; “awake? see what thy son Horus hath done for thee. See what thy father Seb hath done for thee. Raised is the Osiris.” “I have opened the doors,” replies the Osiris-soul, “I have opened the doors. . . . Well is the Great One who is in the Coffin. For all the dead shall have passages made to him through their embalming,” when their body in the flesh shall be raised in incorruption. Again and again is celebrated the Mystery of the Open Tomb. As the eclipsing planet which moves nearest to the sun crawls like a tortoise across the face of that orb, defacing it for a moment by its own darkness, and then is swallowed in the radiance, so also death, that dark spot which crawls across the vision of the eternal splendour, is swallowed in the resurrection of Osiris-Ra, the Uncreated Light. Four times is that Gospel of ancient Egypt proclaimed in the chapter which bears the title of the Orient. “The tortoise dies; Ra lives!” Death is swallowed in Light; God lives for evermore. “O Amen, Amen,” so continues that chapter of mystery, “Amen, who art in heaven, give thy face to the body of thy Son. Make him well in Hades. It is finished.”

Thus ends the strange and solemn dirge of ancient Egypt. Once perceived, the intimate connection between the secret doctrine of Egypt’s most venerated books and the secret significance of her most venerable monument seems impossible to dis sever, and each form illustrates and interpenetrates the other.

As we peruse the dark utterances and recognize the mystic allusions of the Book, we seem to stand amid the profound darkness enwrapping the whole interior of the building. All around are assembled the spirits and the powers that make the mystery of the unseen world: the “Secret Faces at the Gate,” the “Gods of the Horizon and of the Orbit.”

And dimly before our eyes, age after age, the sacred procession of the Egyptian dead moves silently along, as they pass through the “Gate of the Hill” to the tribunal of Osiris. In vain do we attempt to trace their footsteps till we enter with them into the Hidden Places, and penetrate the secret of the House of Light. But no sooner do we approach the passage and tread the chambers of the mysterious Pyramid, than the teaching of the Sacred Books seems lit up as with a tongue of flame.

The luminous veil itself melts slowly away, disclosing the Path of Illumination and the Splendours of the Orbit; the celestial Powers and Intelligences shine forth from beneath their enshrouding symbols; the spirits of the just grow lustrous with the rays that proceed from the tribunal. For though none may look upon these things unveiled till the Guardian of the Starry Gate has opened for him the Portal of the Light, yet for the adept, who has been mystically initiated in the deep waters, and illuminated by the sevenfold Beauty, the invisible things become manifest by the visible creation.

And a Light which is not of earth reveals in its divine unity the full secret of the Hidden Places; the Entrance to the Path of Heaven; the Well of Life, the Place of New Birth, the Ordeal of Fire, the Lintel of Justice, the Victory over Death, the Judgment of Truth, the Splendour of Illumination, the Throne of Radiance, the Veil of Perfection, and the Grand Orient of the Open Tomb, beneath secret chambers of the Height, crowned by the Grand Arch of the Supreme Trinity.

Thus only according to that primeval creed could man fulfil his marvellous destiny; and thus only can that destiny accomplish his heart's desire. No skill in the secrets of the material universe, no dominion over the forces of life and death, no power to pierce the veil which hangs before the unseen world and to hold communion with the spiritual intelligences, will satisfy his secret aspirations. For the soul of man—so every form of creed declares—can know no rest, nor can his spirit ever be satisfied, so long as the thinnest film remains to interrupt the unclouded vision of the Hidden Love; until he stand face to face, and eye to eye with "Him who knows the Depths."

We quit that solemn monument of primeval mystery; and as we turn a farewell glance upon the Gate of Heaven, the veil of the majestic masonry once more hides from view the interior splendour, and enwraps the Secret Places of the Hidden God.

THE END

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