EGYPT

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XVI. Menephthah I, the Pharaoh of the Exodus

Menephthah, the thirteenth son and immediate successor of Ramesses II., came to the throne under circumstances which might at first sight have seemed favourable. Egypt was on every side at peace with her neighbours. The wail of Ramesses, and his treaty with the Hittites, cemented as it had been by a marriage, secured the eastern frontier. No formidable attack had ever yet fallen upon Egypt from the west or from the south, and so no danger could well be apprehended from those quarters. Internal tranquillity might not be altogether assured, so long as there was within the limits of Egypt a large subject population, suffering oppression and bitterly discontented with its lot. But this population was quite unwarlike, and had hitherto passively submitted itself to the will of its rulers, without giving any indication that it might become actively hostile. Menephthah, who was perhaps not more than five and twenty, may have been justified in looking forward to a long, quiet, and uneventful reign, during which he might indulge the natural apathy of his temper, or dream away life, like his fabled neighbours, the Lotus-Eaters.

Menephthah's features were soft and womanly. He had a full but sleepy eye, a slightly aquiline nose an extremely short upper-lip, a broad cheek, and a rounded chin. In character he was weak, irresolute, wanting in physical courage, yet, as so often happens with weak characters, harsh, oppressive, and treacherous. The monuments depict him as neither a soldier nor an administrator, but as "one whose mind was turned almost exclusively towards the chimeras of sorcery and magic," which he regarded as of the utmost importance. Still, had the times been quiet, had the prospect of tranquillity which seemed to lie before him on his accession been realized, he might perhaps have so conducted affairs as to bring neither discredit nor injury upon his country. But the circumstances of the period were against him. The unclouded prospect of his early years gave place, after a brief interval, to storm and tempest of the most fearful kind; a terrible invasion carried fire and sword into the heart of his dominions; and he had scarcely escaped this danger by meeting it in a way not very honourable to himself, when internal troubles broke out: a subject race, highly valued for services which it was compelled to render, insisted on quitting the land; a great loss was incurred in an attempt to compel it to remain; then open rebellion broke out in the weakened state; and the reign, which had commenced under such fair auspices, terminated in calamity and confusion. Menephthah was quite incompetent to deal with the difficulties and complications wherewith he found himself surrounded; he hesitated, temporized, made concessions, retracted them, and finally conducted Egypt to a catastrophe from which she did not recover for a generation.

The first great trouble which disturbed the tranquillity of his reign was an invasion of his territories from the north-west. Hitherto, though no serious danger had ever threatened from this quarter, there had been frequent raids into Egypt on the part of the native Africans, and most of the more warlike of the Egyptian monarchs had regarded it as incumbent on them to lead from time to time expeditions into the region, for the purpose of weakening the wild tribes, Tahennu, Maxyes,

and others, and inspiring them with a wholesome dread of the Egyptian power. Ramesses II. had on one occasion warred in this quarter, as already related, and had met with a certain amount of success. But since that time many years had passed. A new generation had grown up, which the Egyptians had allowed to remain unmolested, and which felt no fear of its quiet, peaceful, and industrious neighbours. Population had probably multiplied in the region, and the tribes began to feel stinted for room. Above all, new relations had been contracted between the old inhabitants of the tract and some other races, now for the first time heard of in authentic history, who had been brought into contact with them. A league of nations had become possible; and the force of the united league must have been considerable. Might not an actual conquest be effected, and the half-starved nomads of Marmarica and the Cyrenaica become the lords and masters of the rich plain, so long coveted, which adjoined upon their eastern frontier?

The leading spirit of the combination was a native African prince, Marmaiu, the son of Deid. Having determined on a serious invasion of Egypt, for the purpose of conquest, not of plunder, he first of all collected his native forces, Lubu, Tahennu, Mashuash, Kahaka, to the number of twenty-five or thirty thousand, and then purchased the services of a number of auxiliaries, who raised his force probably to a total of thirty-five or forty thousand men. A peculiar interest attaches to these auxiliaries. They consisted of contingents from five nations, whose names are read as Akausha, Luku, Tursha, Shartana or Shardana, and Sheklusha, and whom most modern historians of Egypt identify with the Achaeans Laconians, Tyrsenians, Sardinians, and Sicilians. If these identifications are accepted--- and they are at least plausible--we shall have to suppose that, as early as the fourteenth century B.C., the nations of Southern Europe were so far advanced as to launch fleets upon the Mediterranean, to enter into a regular league with an African prince, and in conjunction with him to make an attack on one of the chief civilized monarchies of the world, the old kingdom of the Pharaohs. We shall have to imagine the Achaeans of the Peloponnese, a century before the time of Agamemnon, braving the perils of the Levant in their cockle-shells of ships, and not merely plundering the coasts, but landing large bodies of men on the North African shore to take part in a regular campaign. We shall have to picture to ourselves the Laconians--the people of Menelaues--about the time of his grandfather, Atreus, or his great-grandfather, Pelops, similarly employed, and contending with the Pharaoh of the Exodus on the soil of the Delta. Nay, we shall have to antedate the rise of the Tyrsenians to naval greatness by about seven hundred years, and to suppose that the Sicels and Sardi, whom the Greeks and Romans found living the life of savages in Sicily and Sardinia, when they first visited their shores, about B.C. 750-600, were flourishing peoples and skilful navigators half a millennium earlier. The picture which we thus obtain of the ancient world is very surprising, and quite unlike anything that could be gathered from the literature of the Greeks; but it is not to be regarded as beyond the range of possibility, since nations are quite as apt to lapse from civilization into barbarism as to emerge out of barbarism into civilization. It is quite conceivable that the nations of South-Eastern Europe were more advanced in civilization and the arts of life about B.C. 1400-1300 than they are found to have been six centuries later, the false dawn having been succeeded by a time of darkness before the true dawn came.

However this may have been, it is certain that Menephthah, in the fifth year of his reign, had to meet a formidable, and apparently unprovoked, attack from a combination of nations, the like of which we do not again meet with in Egyptian history, either earlier or later. Marmaiu, son of Deid, led against him a confederate army, consisting of three principal tribes of the Tahennu--- the Lubu

(Libyans), the Mashuash (Maxyes), and the Kahaka--together with auxiliaries from five other tribes or peoples, the Akausha, the Luku, the Tursha, the Shartana, and the Sheklusha. The entire number of the army, as already stated, was probably not less than forty thousand; they had numerous chariots, and were armed with bows and arrows, cuirasses, and bronze or copper swords. They had skin tents, and brought with them their wives and children, with the intention of settling in Egypt, as the Hyksos had done five hundred years earlier. They had also with them a considerable number of cattle, as bulls, oxen, and goats. The chiefs came provided with thrones, and both they and their officers had numerous drinking vessels of bronze, of silver, and of gold.

The attack was made on the western side of Egypt, towards the apex of the Delta. It was at first completely successful. The small frontier towns were taken by assault, and "turned Into heaps of rubbish;" the Delta was entered upon, and a position taken up In the nome of Paari-sheps, or Prosopis, which lay between the Canobic and Sebennytic branches of the Nile, commencing at the point of their separation. From this position Memphis and Heliopolis were alike menaced. Menephthah hastily fortified these cities, or rather, we must suppose, strengthened their existing defences. Meanwhile the Libyans and their allies ravaged the open country. "The like had not been seen," as the native scribe observes, "even in the times of the kings of Lower Egypt, when the plague (_i.e._ the Hyksos power) was in the land, and the kings of Upper Egypt were unable to drive it out." Egypt was desolated; its people "trembled like geese;" the fertile lands were overrun and wasted; the cities were pillaged; even the harbours were in some cases ruined and destroyed. Menephthah for a time remained on the defensive, shut up within the walls of Memphis, whose god Phthah he viewed as his special protector. He made, however, strenuous efforts to gather together a powerful force; his captains collected the native troops from the various provinces of Egypt, while he sent a number of emissaries Into Asia, who were instructed to raise a large body of mercenaries in that quarter. At last all was ready, and Menephthah appointed the fourteenth day as that on which he would place himself at the head of his army and lead them in person against the enemy; but, before the day came, his courage failed him. He "saw in a dream"--at least so he himself declares--"as it were a figure of the god Phthah, standing so as to prevent his advance;" and the figure said to him, "Stay where thou art, and let thy troops proceed against the enemy." So the pious king, in obedience to this convenient vision, remained secure behind the walls of Memphis, and sent his forces, native and mercenary, into the nome of Prosopis against the Libyans. The two armies joined battle on the 3rd of Epiphi (May 18), and a desperate engagement took place, in which, after six hours of hard fighting, the Egyptians were victorious, and the confederates suffered a severe defeat. Menephthah charges the Libyan chief with cowardice, but only because, after the battle was lost, he precipitately quitted the field, leaving behind him, not only his camp-equipage, but his throne, the ornaments of his wives, his bow, his quiver, and his sandals. The reproaches uttered recoil upon himself. Whose conduct is the more cowardly, that of the man who fights at the head of his troops for six hours against an enemy, probably more numerous, certainly better armed and better disciplined, and only quits the field when his forces are utterly overthrown and put to flight; or that of one who avoids exposing himself to danger, and lurks behind the walls of a fortress while his soldiers are affronting wounds and death in the battlefield? There is no evidence that Marmaiu, son of Deid, in the battle of Prosopis, conducted himself otherwise than as became a prince and a general; there is abundant evidence that Menephthah, son of Ramesses, who declined to be present at the engagement, showed the white feather.

The defeat of Prosopis was decisive. Marmaiu lost in slain between eight thousand and nine thousand of his troops, or, according to another estimate, between twelve thousand and thirteen thousand. Above nine thousand were made prisoners. The tents, camp-equipage, and cattle, fell into the hands of the enemy. The expedition at once broke up and dispersed. Marmaiu returned into his own land with a shattered remnant of his grand army, and devoted himself to peaceful pursuits, or at any rate abstained from any further collision with the Egyptians. The mercenaries, whatever the races to which they in reality belonged, learned by experience the wisdom of leaving the Libyans to fight their own battles, and are not again found in alliance with them. The Akaiusha and Luku appear in Egyptian history no more. The Tursha and Sheklusha do not wholly disappear, but receive occasional mention among the races hostile to Egypt As for the Shartana or Shardana, they were struck with so much admiration of the Egyptian courage and conduct, that they shortly afterwards entered the Egyptian service, and came to hold a place among the most trusted of the Egyptian troops.

Despite his cowardice in absenting himself from the battle of Prosopis under the transparent device of a divine vision, Menephthah took to himself the whole credit of the victory, and gloried in it as much as if he had really had a hand in bringing about the result. "The Lubu," he says, "were meditating to do evil in Egypt; they were as grasshoppers; every road was blocked by their hosts. Then I vowed to lead them captive. Lo, I vanquished them; I slaughtered them, making a spoil of their country. I made the land of Egypt traversable once more; I gave breath to those who were in the cities." Egyptian generals, like Roman poets, had to content themselves with complaining secretly, "Sic vos non vobis."

So far as we can tell, no long period elapsed between the expedition of Marmaiu, son of Deid, and the second great trouble in which Menephthah was involved. Moses must have returned to Egypt from his sojourn in Midian within a year or two of the death of Ramesses II., and cannot have allowed any very long time to elapse before he proffered the demand which he was divinely commissioned to make. Still, as he was timid, and a somewhat unwilling messenger, he may have delayed both his return and his first address to Pharaoh as long as he dared (Ex. iv. 19); and if the invasion of Marmaiu had begun before he had summoned courage to address Pharaoh a second time, he would then naturally wait until the danger was past, and the king could again be approached without manifest impropriety. In this case, the severe oppression of the Israelites, which followed the first application of Moses (Ex. v. 5-23) may have lasted longer than has generally been supposed; and it may not have been till Menephthah's sixth or seventh year that the divine messenger became urgent, and began to press his request, and to show the signs and wonders which alone, as he had been told (Ex. vii. 2-4), would break the spirit of the king. The signs then followed each other at moderately short intervals, the entire series of the plagues not covering a longer space than about six months, from October till April. None of the plagues affected the king greatly except the last, through which he lost his own eldest son, a bereavement mentioned in an inscription. This loss, combined with the dread power shown in the infliction during one night of not less than a million of deaths, produced a complete revolution in the mind of the king, and made him as anxious at the moment to get rid of the Israelites out of his country as he had previously been anxious to retain them. So he called for Moses and Aaron by night and said. "Rise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel, and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also" (Ex. xii. 31, 32). Moses was prepared for the event, and had prepared his people. All were

ready, with their loins girded, their sandals on their feet, and their staves in their hands; the word was given, and the exodus began. "The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children; and a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle."

Hereupon the king's mind underwent another change. "Unstable as water," he was certain not to "excel." Learning that the Israelites, instead of marching away into the desert, had after reaching its edge turned southward, and were "entangled" in a corner of his territory, between high mountains on the one hand, and on the other the Red Sea, which then stretched far further to the north than at present, perhaps to Lake Timseh, at any rate as far as the "Bitter Lakes," he thought he saw an opportunity of following and recovering the fugitives, whose services as bondsmen he highly valued. Rapidly calling together such troops as were tolerably near at hand, he collected a considerable force of infantry and chariots--of the latter more than six hundred--and following upon the steps of the Hebrews, he caught them on the western shore of the Red Sea, encamped "between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-Zephon." The exact spot cannot be fixed, on account of the alterations in the bed of the Red Sea, and the uncertainty of the ancient geography of Egypt, in which names so often repeat themselves; but it was probably some part of the region that is now dry land, between Suez and the southern extremity of the Bitter Lakes. Here in high tides the sea and the lakes communicated; but on the evening of Menephthah's arrival, an unusual ebb of the tide, cooperating with a "strong east wind" which held back the water of the Bitter Lakes, left the bed of the sea bare for a certain space; and the Israelites were thus able to cross during the night from one side of the sea to the other. As morning dawned, Menephthah, once more carefully guarding his own person, sent his chariots in pursuit. The force entered on the slippery and dangerous ground, and advanced half-way; but its progress was slow; the chariot-wheels sank into the soft ooze, the horses slipped and floundered; all was disorder and confusion. Before the troops could extricate themselves, the waters returned on either hand; a high flow of the tide, the necessary consequence of a low ebb, brought In the whelming flood from the south-east; a strong wind from the Mediterranean, drove down upon them the pent up waters of the Bitter Lakes from the north-west. The channel, which had lately been dry land, became once more sea, and the entire force that had entered it in pursuit of the Israelites perished. Safe on the opposite shore, the Israelites saw the utter destruction of their adversaries, whose dead bodies, driven before the gale, were cast up in hundreds upon the coast where they sate encamped (Ex. xiv. 30).

The disaster paralyzed the monarch, and he made no further effort. If the loss was not great numerically, it affected the most important arm of the service, and it was the destruction of the very _elite_ of the Egyptian troops. It was a blow in which the anger of the Egyptian gods may well have been seen by some, while others may have regarded it as a revelation of the incompetence of the monarch. The blow seems to have been followed, within a short time, by revolt. Menephthah's last monumental year is his eighth. A pretender to the crown arose in a certain Amon-mes, or Amon-meses, who contested the throne with Seti II., Menephthah's son, and succeeded in establishing himself as king; but for many years there raged in Egypt, as so often happens when a state is suddenly weakened, civil war, bloodshed, and confusion.

The two dynasties that have last occupied us constitute the most brilliant period of Egyptian architecture; for, as Fergusson, the latest historian of architecture, has said, the hall of Seti at Karnak is "the greatest of man's architectural works," the building to which it

belongs is "the noblest effort of architectural magnificence ever produced by the hand of man," and the rock-cut temple of Ipsambul is "the finest of its class known to exist anywhere." These works combine enormous mass and size with a profusion of elaborate ornamentation. Covering nearly as much ground as the greatest of the pyramids, and containing equally enormous blocks of stone, the Theban palace-temples unite a wealth of varied ornamentation almost unparalleled among the edifices erected by man. Here are long avenues of sphinxes and colossi, leading to tall, tapering obelisks which shoot upwards like the pinnacles, towers, and spires of a modern cathedral, while beyond the obelisks are vistas of gateways and courts, of colonnades and pillared halls, that impress the beholder with a deep sense of the constructive imagination of the architect who could design them, no less than with admiration of the ruler whose resources were sufficient to make them realities.

Truly the Egyptians were, as Mr. Fergusson enthusiastically asserts, "the most essentially a building people of all those we are acquainted with, and the most generally successful in all that they attempted in this way. The Greeks, it is true, surpassed them in refinement and beauty of detail, and in the class of sculpture with which they ornamented their buildings, while the Gothic architects far excelled them in constructive cleverness; but with these exceptions, no other styles can be put into competition with them. At the same time, neither Grecian nor Gothic architects understood more perfectly all the gradations of art, and the exact character that should be given to every form and every detail.... They understood also better than any other nation, how to use sculpture In combination with architecture, and to make their colossi and avenues of sphinxes group themselves into parts of one great design, and at the same time to use historical paintings, fading by insensible degrees into hieroglyphics on the one hand, and into sculpture on the other, linking the whole together with the highest class of phonetic utterance. With the most brilliant colouring, they thus harmonized all these arts Into one great whole, unsurpassed by anything the world has seen during the thirty centuries of struggle and aspiration that have elapsed since the brilliant days of the great kingdom of the Pharaohs."

Not only did architecture and the glyphic art reach such perfection during this period, but the arts of life made considerable progress. The royal costumes became suddenly most elaborate; brilliant colours, costly armlets and bracelets, many-hued collars, complicated head-dresses, elegant sandals, jewels of price, gay sashes, and wigs with conventional adornment, came into vogue. Luxury was exhibited in the designs of the dwellings of the wealthy; the grounds were laid out with formal courts and alleys, palms and vines adorned them, ponds and reservoirs gave freshness to the summer temperature, irrigation clothed the lawns with verdure. Inside, there was richly carved furniture covered with cushions of delicate stuffs, and adding the harmony of colour to the luxurious scene.

The horse, which had been introduced from Asia, helped in the march of extravagance and refinement; the chariot took the place of the palanquin, and there was a new opportunity for adornment in the trappings, as well as in the construction of light or heavy vehicles.

At the same time, letters made equal progress; men of wisdom devoted themselves to the preservation of the knowledge of the past, and to the composition of original works in history, divinity, poetry, correspondence, and practical philosophy, for the preservation of which a public library was established at Thebes under a competent director. The highest perfection thus reached in the arts of peace seems to have been coincident with an advance in sensualism; indecency in apparel was common, polygamy increased, woman lost her former degree of purity; cruelty and barbarism were more and more common in

war; taxation bore heavily and without pity upon the lower orders, and the wretched fellahin were beaten by the severest of tyrants, the irresponsible tax-gatherer; women as well as men were stripped for the indignity and pain of the terrible bastinado; and even dead enemies were mutilated for the purpose of preserving evidence of their numbers.

XVII. The Decline of Egypt under the Later Ramessides

The troublous period which followed the death of Menephthah issued finally in complete anarchy, Egypt broke up into nomes, or cantons, the chiefs of which acknowledged no superior. It was as though in England, after centuries of centralized rule, the Heptarchy had suddenly returned and re-established itself. But even this was not the worst. The suicidal folly of internal division naturally provokes foreign attack; and it was not long before Aarsu, a Syrian chieftain, took advantage of the state of affairs in Egypt to extend his own dominion over one nome after another, until he had made almost the whole country subject to him. Then, at last, the spirit of patriotism awoke. Egypt felt the shame of being ruled by a foreigner of a race that she despised; and a prince was found after a time, a descendant of the Ramesside line, who unfurled the national banner, and commenced a war of independence. This prince, who bore the name of Set-nekht, or "Set the victorious," is thought by some to have been a son of Seti II., and so a grandson of Menephthah; but the evidence is insufficient to establish any such relationship. There is reason to believe that the blood of the nineteenth dynasty, of Seti I. and Ramesses II., ran in his veins; but no particular relationship to any former monarch can be made out. And certainly he owed his crown less to his descent than to his strong arm and his stout heart. It was by dint of severe fighting that he forced his way to the throne, defeating Aarsu, and gradually reducing all Egypt under his power.

Set-nekht's reign must have been short He set himself to "put the whole land in order, to execute the abominables, to set up the temples, and re-establish the divine offerings for the service of the gods, as their statutes prescribed," But he was unable to effect very much. He could not even discharge properly the main duty of a king towards himself, which was to prepare a fitting receptacle for his remains when he should quit the earth. To excavate a rock-tomb in the style fashionable at the day was a task requiring several years for its due accomplishment; Set-nekht felt that he could not look forward to many years--perhaps not even to many months--of life. In this difficulty, he felt no shame in appropriating to himself a royal tomb recently constructed by a king, named Siphthah, whom he looked upon as a usurper, and therefore as unworthy of consideration. In this sepulchre we see the names of Siphthah and his queen, Taouris, erased by the chisel from their cartouches, and the name of Set-nekht substituted in their place. By one and the same act the king punished an unworthy predecessor, and provided himself with a ready--made tomb befitting his dignity.

It was also, probably, on account of his advanced age at his accession, that he almost immediately associated in the kingdom his son Ramesses, a prince of much promise, whom he made "Chief of On," and viceroy over Lower Egypt, with Heliopolis (On) for his residence and capital. Ramesses the Third, as he is commonly called, was one of the most distinguished of Egyptian monarchs, and the last who acquired any great glory until we come down to the time of the Ethiopians, Shabak and Tirhakah. He reigned as sole monarch for thirty-one years, during the earlier portion of which period he carried on a number of important wars, while during the later portion he employed himself in the construction of those magnificent buildings, which have been chiefly instrumental in carrying his name down to posterity, and in other works of utility. Lenormant calls him "the last of the great sovereigns of Egypt," and

observes with reason, that though he never ceased, during the whole time that he occupied the throne, to labour hard to re-establish the integrity of the empire abroad, and the prosperity of the country at home, yet his wars and his conquests had a character essentially defensive; his efforts, like those of the Trajans, the Marcus Aurelius's and the Septimius Severus's of history, were directed to making head against the ever rising flood of barbarians, which had already before his time burst the dykes that restrained it, and though once driven back, continued to dash itself on every side against the outer borders of the empire, and to presage its speedy overthrow. His efforts were, on the whole, successful; he was able to uphold and preserve for some considerable time longer the territorial greatness which the nineteenth dynasty had built up a second time. The monumental temple of Medinet-Abou, near Thebes, is the Pantheon erected to the glory of this great Pharaoh. Every pylon, every gateway, every chamber, relates to us the exploits which he accomplished. Sculptured compositions of large dimensions represent his principal battles.

There are times in the world's history when a restless spirit appears to seize on the populations of large tracts of country, and, without any clear cause that can be alleged, uneasy movements begin. Subdued mutterings are heard; a tremor goes through the nations, expectation of coming change stalks abroad; the air is rife with rumours; at last there bursts out an eruption of greater or less violence--the destructive flood overleaps its barriers, and flows forth, carrying devastation and ruin in one direction of another, until its energies are exhausted, or its progress stopped by some obstacle that it cannot overcome, and it subsides reluctantly and perforce. Such a time was that on which Ramesses III. was cast. Wars threatened him on every side. On his north-eastern frontier the Shasu or Bedouins of the desert ravaged and plundered, at once harrying the Egyptian territory and threatening the mining establishments of the Sinaitic region. To the north-west the Libyan tribes, Maxyes, Asbystae, Auseis, and others, were exercising a continuous pressure, to which the Egyptians were forced to yield, and gradually a foreign population was "squatting" on the fertile lands, and driving the former possessors of the soil back upon the more eastern portion-of the Delta. "The Lubu and Mashuash," says Ramesses, "were _seated_ in Egypt; they took the cities on the western side from Memphis as far as Karbana, reaching the Great River along its entire course (from Memphis northwards), and capturing the city of Kaukut For many years had they been in Egypt" Ramesses began his warlike operations by a campaign against the Shasu, whose country he invaded and overran, spoiling and destroying their cabins, capturing their cattle, slaying all who resisted him, and carrying back into Egypt a vast number of prisoners, whom he attached to the various temples as "sacred slaves." He then turned against the Libyans, and coming upon them unexpectedly in the tract between the Sebennytic branch of the Nile and the Canopic, he defeated in a great battle the seven tribes of the Mashuash, Lubu, Merbasat, Kaikasha, Shai, Hasa, and Bakana, slaughtering them with the utmost fury, and driving them before him across the western branch of the river. "They trembled before him," says the native historian, "as the mountain goats tremble before a bull, who stamps with his foot, strikes with his horns, and makes the mountains shake as he rushes on whoever opposes him." The Egyptians gave no quarter that memorable day. Vengeance had free course: the slain Libyans lay in heaps upon heaps--the chariot wheels passed over them--the horses trampled them in the mire. Hundreds were pushed and forced into the marshes and into the river itself, and, if they escaped the flight of missiles which followed, found for the most part a watery grave in the strong current. Ramesses portrays this flight and carnage in the most graphic way. The slain enemy strew the ground, as he advances over them with

his prancing steeds and in his rattling war-car, plying them moreover with his arrows as they vainly seek to escape. His chariot force and his infantry have their share in the pursuit, and with sword, or spear, or javelin, strike down alike the resisting and the unresisting. No one seeks to take a prisoner. It is a day of vengeance and of down-treading, of fury allowed to do its worst, of a people drunk with passion that has cast off all self-restraint.

Even passion exhausts itself at last, and the arm grows weary of slaughtering. Having sufficiently revenged themselves in the great battle, and the pursuit that followed it, the Egyptians relaxed somewhat from their policy of extreme hostility. They made a large number of the Libyans prisoners, branded them with a hot iron, as the Persians often did their prisoners, and forced them to join the naval service and serve as mariners on board the Egyptian fleet. The chiefs of greater importance they confined in fortresses. The women and children became the slaves of the conquerors; the cattle, "too numerous to count," was presented by Ramesses to the Priest-College of Ammon at Thebes.

So far success had crowned his arms; and it may well be that Ramesses would have been content with the military glory thus acquired, and have abstained from further expeditions, had not he been forced within a few years to take the field against a powerful combination of new and partly unheard-of enemies. The uneasy movement among the nations, which has been already noticed, had spread further afield, and now agitated at once the coasts and islands of South-Eastern Europe, and the more western portion of Asia Minor. Seven nations banded themselves together, and resolved to unite their forces, both naval and military, against Egypt, and to attack her both by land and sea, not now on the north-western frontier, where some of them had experienced defeat before, but in exactly the opposite quarter, by way of Syria and Palestine. Of the seven, three had been among her former adversaries in the time of Menephthah, namely, the Sheklusha, the Shartana, and the Tursha; while four were new antagonists, unknown at any former period. There were, first, the Tanauna, in whom it is usual to see either the Danai of the Peloponnese, so celebrated in Homer, or the Daunii of south-eastern Italy, who bordered on the Iapyges; secondly, the Tekaru, or Teucrians, a well-known people of the Troad; thirdly, the Uashasha, who are identified with the Oscans or Ausones, neighbours of the Daunians; and fourthly, the Purusata, whom some explain as the Pelasgi, and others as the Philistines. The lead in the expedition was taken by these last. At their summons the islands and shores of the Mediterranean gave forth their piratical hordes--the sea was covered by their light galleys and swept by their strong pars--Tanauna, Shartana, Sheklusha, Tursha, and Uashasha combined their squadrons into a powerful fleet, while Purusata and Tekaru advanced in countless numbers along the land. The Purusata were especially bent on effecting a settlement; they marched into Northern Syria from Asia Minor accompanied by their wives and children, who were mounted upon carts drawn by oxen, and formed a vast unwieldy crowd. The other nations sent their sailors and their warriors without any such encumbrances. Bursting through the passes of Taurus, the combined Purusata and Tekaru spread themselves over Northern Syria, wasting and plundering the entire country of the Khita, and proceeding eastward as far as Carchemish "by Euphrates," while the ships of the remaining confederates coasted along the Syrian shore. Such resistance as the Hittites and Syrians made was wholly ineffectual. "No people stood before their arms." Aradus and Kadesh fell. The conquerors pushed on towards Egypt, anticipating an easy victory. But their fond hopes were doomed to disappointment.

Ramesses had been informed of the designs and approach of the enemy, and had had ample time to make all needful preparations.

He had strengthened his frontier, called out all his best-disciplined troops, and placed the mouths of the Nile in a state of defence by means of forts, strong garrisons, and flotillas upon the stream and upon the lakes adjacent. He had selected an eligible position for encountering the advancing hordes on the coast route from Gaza to Egypt, about half-way between Raphia and Pelusium, where a new fort had been built by his orders. At this point he took his stand, and calmly awaited his enemies, not having neglected the precaution to set an ambush or two in convenient places. Here, as he kept his watch, the first enemy to arrive was the land host of the Purusata, encumbered with its long train of slowly moving bullock-carts, heavily laden with women and children. Ramesses instantly attacked them--his ambushes rose up out of their places of concealment--and the enemy was beset on every side. They made no prolonged resistance. Assaulted by the disciplined and seasoned troops of the Egyptians, the entire confused mass was easily defeated. Twelve thousand five hundred men were slain in the fight; the camp was taken; the army shattered to pieces. Nothing was open to the survivors but an absolute surrender, by which life was saved at the cost of perpetual servitude.

The danger, however, was as yet but half overcome--the snake was scotched but not killed. For as yet the fleet remained intact, and might land its thousands on the Egyptian coasts and carry fire and sword over the broad region of the Delta. The Tanauna and their confederates--Sheklusha, Shartana, and Tursha--made rapidly for the nearest mouth of the Nile, which was the Pelusiac, and did their best to effect a landing. But the precautions taken by Ramesses, before he set forth on his march, proved sufficient to frustrate their efforts. The Egyptian fleet met the combined squadrons of the enemy in the shallow waters of the Pelusiac lagoon, and contended with them in a fierce battle, which Ramesses caused to be represented in his sculptures--the earliest representation of a sea-fight that has come down to us. Both sides have ships propelled at once by sails and oars, but furl their sails before engaging. Each ship has a single yard, constructed to carry a single large square-sail, and hung across the vessel's single mast at a short distance below the top. The mast is crowned by a bell-shaped receptacle, large enough to contain a man, who is generally a slinger or an archer, placed there to gall the enemy with stones or arrows, and so to play the part of our own sharpshooters in the main-tops. The rowers are from sixteen to twenty-two in number, besides whom each vessel carries a number of fighting men, armed with shields, spears, swords, and bows. The fight is a promiscuous _melee_, the two fleets being intermixed, and each ship engaging that next to it, without a thought of combined action or of manoeuvres. One of the enemy's vessels is represented as capsized and sinking; the rest continue the engagement. Several are pressing towards the shore of the lagoon, and the men-at-arms on board them are endeavouring to effect a landing; but they are met by the land-force under Ramesses himself, who greet them with such a hail of arrows as renders it impossible for them to carry out their purpose.

It would seem that Ramesses had no sooner defeated and destroyed the army of the Purusata and Tekaru than he set off in haste for Pelusium, and marched with such speed as to arrive in time to witness the naval engagement, and even to take a certain part in it. The invading fleet was so far successful as to force its way through the opposing vessels of the Egyptians, and to press forward towards the shore; but here its further progress was arrested. "A wall of iron," says Ramesses, "shut them in upon the lake," The best troops of Egypt lined the banks of the lagoon, and wherever the invaders attempted to land they were foiled. Repulsed, dashed to the ground, hewn down or shot down at the edge of the water, they were slain "by hundreds of heaps of corpses." "The infantry," says the monarch in his vainglorious

inscription, set up in memory of the event, "all the choicest troops of the army of Egypt, stood upon the bank, furious as roaring lions; the chariot force, selected from among the heroes that were quickest in battle, was led by officers confident in themselves. The war-steeds quivered in all their limbs, and burned to trample the nations under their feet. I myself was like the god Mentu, the warlike; I placed myself at their head, and they saw the achievements of my hands. I, Ramesses the king, behaved as a hero who knows his worth, and who stretches out his arm over his people in the day of combat. The invaders of my territory will gather no more harvests upon the earth, their life is counted to them as eternity. Those that gained the shore, I caused to fall at the water's edge, they lay slain in heaps; I overturned their vessels; all their goods sank In the waves." After a brief combat, all resistance ceased. The empty ships, floating at random upon the still waters of the lagoon, or stuck fast in the Nile mud, became the prize of the victors, and were found to contain a rich booty. Thus ended this remarkable struggle, in which nations widely severed and of various bloods--scarcely, as one would have thought, known to each other, and separated by a diversity of interests--united in an attack upon the foremost power of the known world, traversed several hundreds of miles of land or sea successfully, neither quarrelling among themselves nor meeting with disaster from without, and reached the country which they had hoped to conquer, but were there completely defeated and repulsed in two engagements--one by land, the other partly by land and partly by sea--so that "their spirit was annihilated, their soul was taken from them." Henceforth no one of the nations which took part in the combined attack is found in arms against the power that had read them so severe a lesson.

It was not long after repulsing this attack upon the independence of Egypt that Ramesses undertook his "campaign of revenge." Starting with a fleet and army along the line that his assailants had followed, he traversed Palestine and Syria, hunting the lion in the outskirts of Lebanon, and re-establishing for a time the Egyptian dominion over much of the region which had been formerly held in subjection by the great monarchs of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties. He claims to have carried his arms to Aleppo and Carchemish, in which case we must suppose that he defeated the Hittites, or else that they declined to meet him in the field; and he gives a list of thirty-eight conquered countries or tribes, which are thought to belong to Upper Syria, Southern Asia Minor, and Cyprus. In some of his inscriptions he even speaks of having recovered Naharaina, Kush, and Punt; but there is no evidence that he really visited--much less conquered--these remote regions.

The later life of Ramesses III. was, on the whole a time of tranquillity and repose. The wild tribes of North Africa, after one further attempt to establish themselves in the western Delta, which wholly failed, acquiesced in the lot which nature seemed to have assigned them, and, leaving the Egyptians in peace, contented themselves with the broad tract over which they were free to rove between the Mediterranean and the Sahara Desert. On the south Ethiopia made no sign. In the east the Hittites had enough to do to rebuild the power which had been greatly shattered by the passage of the hordes of Asia Minor through their territory, on their way to Egypt and on their return from it. The Assyrians had not yet commenced their aggressive wars towards the north and west, having probably still a difficulty in maintaining their independence against the attacks of Babylon. Egypt was left undisturbed by her neighbours for the space of several generations, and herself refrained from disturbing the peace of the world by foreign expeditions. Ramesses turned his attention to building, commerce, and the planting of Egypt with trees. He constructed and ornamented the beautiful temple of Ammon at Medinet-Abou, built a fleet on the

Red Sea and engaged in trade with Punt, dug a great reservoir in the country of Aina (Southern Palestine), and "over the whole land of Egypt planted trees and shrubs, to give the inhabitants rest under their cool shade."

The general decline of Egypt must, however, be regarded as having commenced in his reign. His Eastern conquests were more specious than solid, resulting in a nominal rather than a real subjection of Palestine and Syria to his yoke. His subjects grew unaccustomed to the use of arms during the last twenty, or five and twenty, years of his life. Above all, luxury, intrigue, and superstition invaded the court, where the eunuchs and concubines exercised a pernicious influence. Magic was practised by some of the chief men in the State, and the belief was widely spread that it was possible by charms, incantations, and the use of waxen images, to bewitch men, or paralyse their limbs, or even to cause their deaths. Hags were to be found about the court as wicked as Canidia, who were willing to sell their skill in the black art to the highest bidder. The actual person of the monarch was not sacred from the plottings of this nefarious crew, who planned assassinations and hatched conspiracies in the very purlieus of the royal palace. Ramesses himself would, apparently, have fallen a victim to a plot of the kind, had not the parties to it been discovered, arrested, tried by a Royal Commission, and promptly executed.

The descendants of Ramesses III. occupied the throne from his death (about B.C. 1280) to B.C. 1100. Ten princes of the name of Ramesses, and one called Meri-Tum, bore sway during this interval, each of them showing, if possible, greater weakness than the last, and all of them sunk in luxury, idle, effeminate, sensual. Ramesses III. provoked caricature by his open exhibition of harem-scenes on the walls of his Medinet-Abou palace. His descendants, content with harem life, scarcely cared to quit the precincts of the royal abode, desisted from all war, and even devolved the task of government on other shoulders. The Pharaohs of the twentieth dynasty became absolute _faineants_, and devolved their duties on the high-priests of the great temple of Ammon at Thebes, who "set themselves to play the same part which at a distant period was played by the Mayors of the Palace under the later French kings of the Merovingian line."

In an absolute monarchy, the royal authority is the mainspring which controls all movements and all actions in every part of the State. Let this source of energy grow weak, and decline at once shows itself throughout the entire body politic. It is as when a fatal malady seizes on the seat of life in an individual--instantly every member, every tissue, falls away, suffers, shrinks, decays, perishes. Egyptian architecture is simply non-existent from the death of Ramesses III. to the age of Sheshonk; the "grand style" of pictorial art disappears; sculpture in relief becomes a wearisome repetition of the same stereotyped religious groups; statuary deteriorates and is rare; above all, literature declines, undergoing an almost complete eclipse. A galaxy of literary talent had, as we have seen, clustered about the reigns of Ramesses II. and Menephthah, under whose encouragement authors had devoted themselves to history, divinity, practical philosophy, poetry, epistolary correspondence, novels, travels, legend. From the time of Ramesses III.--nay, from the time of Seti II.--all is a blank: "the true poetic inspiration appears to have vanished," literature is almost dumb; instead of the masterpieces of Pentaour, Kakabu, Nebsenen, Enna, and others, which even moderns can peruse with pleasure, we have only documents in which "the dry official tone" prevails--abstracts of trials, lists of functionaries, tiresome enumerations in the greatest detail of gifts made to the gods, together with fulsome praises of the kings, written either by themselves or by others, which we are half inclined to regret the lapse

of ages has spared from destruction. At the same time morals fall off. Sensuality displays itself in high places. Intrigue enters the charmed circle of the palace. The monarch himself is satirized in indecent drawings. Presently, the whole idea of a divinity hedging in the king departs; and a "thieves' society" is formed for rifling the royal tombs, and tearing the jewels, with which they have been buried, from the monarchs' persons. The king's life is aimed at by conspirators, who do not scruple to use magical arts; priests and high judicial functionaries are implicated in the proceedings. Altogether, the old order seems to be changed, the old ideas to be upset; and no new principles, possessing any vital efficacy, are introduced. Society gradually settles upon its lees; and without some violent application of force from without, or some strange upheaval from within, the nation seems doomed to fall rapidly into decay and dissolution.

XVIII. The Priest Kings – Pinetem and Solomon

The position of the priests in Egypt was, from the first, one of high dignity and influence. Though not, strictly speaking, a caste, they formed a very distinct order or class, separated by important privileges, and by their habits of life, from the rest of the community, and recruited mainly from among their own sons, and other near relatives. Their independence and freedom was secured by a system of endowments. From a remote antiquity a considerable portion of the land of Egypt--perhaps as much as one-third--was made over to the priestly class, large estates being attached to each temple, and held as common property by the "colleges," which, like the chapters of our cathedrals, directed the worship of each sacred edifice. These priestly estates were, we are told, exempt from taxation of any kind; and they appear to have received continual augmentation from the piety or superstition of the kings, who constantly made over to their favourite deities fresh "gardens, orchards, vineyards, fields," and even "cities."

The kings lived always in a considerable amount of awe of the priests. Though claiming a certain qualified divinity themselves, they yet could not but be aware that there were divers flaws and Imperfections in their own divinity--"little rifts within the lute"--which made it not quite a safe support to trust to, or lean upon, entirely. There were other greater gods than themselves--gods from whom their own divinity was derived; and they could not be certain what power or influence the priests might not have with these superior beings, in whose existence and ability to benefit and injure men they had the fullest belief. Consequently, the kings are found to occupy a respectful attitude towards the priests throughout the whole course of Egyptian history, from first to last; and this respectful attitude Is especially maintained towards the great personages in whom the hierarchy culminates, the head officials, or chief priests, of the temples which are the principal centres of the national worship--the temple of Ra, or Tum, at Heliopolis, that of Phthah at Memphis, and that of Ammon at Thebes. According to the place where the capital was fixed for the time being, one or other of these three high-priests had the pre-eminence; and, in the later period of the Ramessides, Thebes having enjoyed metropolitan dignity for between five and six centuries, the Theban High-Priest of Ammon was recognized as beyond dispute the chief of the sacerdotal order, and the next person in the kingdom after the king.

It had naturally resulted from this high position, and the weight of influence which it enabled its possessor to exercise, that the office had become hereditary. As far back as the reign of Ramesses IX., we find that the holder of the position has succeeded his father in it, and regards himself as high-priest rather by natural right than by the will of the king. The priest of that time, Amenhotep by

name, the son of Ramesses-nekht, undertakes the restoration of the Temple of Ammon at Thebes of his own proper motion, "strengthens its walls, builds it anew, makes its columns, inserts in its gates the great folding-doors of acacia wood." Formerly, the kings were the builders, and the high-priests carried out their directions and then in the name of the gods gave thanks to the kings for their pious munificence. Under the ninth Ramesses the order was reversed--"now it is the king who testifies his gratitude to the High-Priest of Ammon for the care bestowed on his temple by the erection of new buildings and the improvement and maintenance of the older ones." The initiative has passed out of the king's hands into those of his subject; he is active, the king is passive; all the glory is Amenhotep's; the king merely comes in at the close of all, as an ornamental person, whose presence adds a certain dignity to the final ceremony.

Under the last of the Ramessides the High-Priest of Ammon at Thebes was a certain Her-hor. He was a man of a pleasing countenance, with features that were delicate and good, and an expression that was mild and agreeable. He had the art so to ingratiate himself with his sovereign as to obtain at his hands at least five distinct offices of state besides his sacred dignity. He was "Chief of Upper and Lower Egypt," "Royal son of Gush," "Fanbearer on the right hand of the King," "Principal Architect," and "Administrator of the Granaries," Some of these offices may have been honorary; but the duties of others must have been important, and their proper discharge would have required a vast amount of varied ability. It is not likely that Herhor possessed all the needful qualifications; rather we must presume that he grasped at the multiplicity of appointments in order to accumulate power, so far as was possible, in his own hands, and thereby to be in a better position to seize the royal authority on the monarch's demise. If Ramesses III. died without issue, his task must have been facilitated; at any rate, he seems to have had the skill to accomplish it without struggle or disturbance; and if, as some suppose, he banished the remaining descendants of Ramesses III. to the Great Oasis, at any rate he did not stain his priestly hands with bloodshed, or force his way to the throne through scenes of riot and confusion. Egypt, so far as appears, quietly acquiesced in his rule, and perhaps rejoiced to find herself once more governed by a prince of a strong and energetic nature.

For some time after he had mounted the throne, Herhor did not abandon his priestly functions. He bore the title of High-Priest of Ammon regularly on one of his royal escutcheons, while on the other he called himself "Her-Hor Si-Ammon," or "Her-Hor, son of Ammon," following the example of former kings, who gave themselves out for sons of Ra, or Phthah, or Mentu, or Horus. But ultimately he surrendered the priestly title to his eldest son, Piankh, and no doubt at the same time devolved upon him the duties which attached to the high-priestly office. There was something unseemly in a priest being a soldier, and Herhor was smitten with the ambition of putting himself at the head of an army, and reasserting the claim of Egypt to a supremacy over Syria. He calls himself "the conqueror of the Ruten," and there is no reason to doubt that he was successful in a Syrian campaign, though to what distance he penetrated must remain uncertain. The Egyptian monarchs are not very exact in their geographical nomenclature, and Herhor may have spoken of Ruten, when his adversaries were really the Bedouins of the desert between Egypt and Palestine. The fact that his expedition is unnoticed in the Hebrew Scriptures renders it tolerably certain that he did not effect any permanent conquest, even of Palestine.

Herhor's son, Piankh, who became High-Priest of Ammon on his father's abdication of the office, does not appear to have succeeded him in the kingdom. Perhaps he did not outlive his father. At any rate, the kingly office

seems to have passed from Herhor to his grandson, Pinetem, who was a monarch of some distinction, and had a reign of at least twenty-five years. Pinetem's right to the crown was disputed by descendants of the Ramesside line of kings; and he thought it worth while to strengthen his title by contracting a marriage with a princess of that royal stock, a certain Ramaka, or Rakama, whose name appears on his monuments. But compromise with treason has rarely a tranquillizing effect; and Pinetem's concession to the prejudices which formed the stock-in-trade of his opponents only exasperated them and urged them to greater efforts. The focus of the conspiracy passed from the Oasis to Thebes, which had grown disaffected because Pinetem had removed the seat of government to Tanis in the Delta, which was the birthplace of his grandfather, Herhor. So threatening had become the general aspect of affairs, that the king thought it prudent to send his son, Ra-men-khepr or Men-khepr-ra, the existing high-priest of the Temple of Ammon at Thebes, from Tanis to the southern capital, in order that he should make himself acquainted with the secret strength, and with the designs of the disaffected, and see whether he could not either persuade or coerce them. It was a curious part for the Priest of Ammon to play. Ordinarily an absentee from Thebes and from the duties of his office, he visits the place as Royal Commissioner, entrusted with plenary powers to punish or forgive offenders at his pleasure. His fellow-townsmen are in the main hostile to him; but the terror of the king's name is such that they do not dare to offer him any resistance, and he singles out those who appear to him most guilty for punishment, and has them executed, while he grants the royal pardon to others without any let or hindrance on the part of the civic authorities. Finally, having removed all those whom he regarded as really dangerous, he ventured to conclude his commission by granting a general amnesty to all persons implicated in the conspiracy, and allowing the political refugees to return from the Oasis to Thebes and to live there unmolested.

Men-khepr-ra soon afterwards became king. He married a wife named Hesi-em-Kheb, who is thought to have been a descendant of Seti I, and thus gave an additional legitimacy to the dynasty of Priest-Kings. He also adorned the city of Kheb, the native place of his wife, with public buildings; but otherwise nothing is known of the events of his reign. As a general rule, the priest-kings were no more active or enterprizing than their predecessors, the Ramessides of the twentieth dynasty. They were content to rule Egypt in peace, and enjoy the delights of sovereignty, without fatiguing themselves either with the construction of great works or the conduct of military expeditions. If the people that has no history is rightly pronounced happy, Egypt may have prospered under their rule; but the historian can scarcely be expected to appreciate a period which supplies him with no materials to work upon.

The inaction of Egypt was favourable to the growth and spread of other kingdoms and empires. Towards the close of the Ramesside period Assyria had greatly increased in power, and extended her authority beyond the Euphrates as far as the Mediterranean. After this, causes that are still obscure had caused her to decline, and, Syria being left to itself, a new power grew up in it. In the later half of the eleventh century, probably during the reign of Men-khepr-ra in Egypt, David began that series of conquests by which he gradually built up an empire, uniting in one all the countries and tribes between the river of Egypt (Wady-el-Arish) and the Euphrates. Egypt made no attempt to interfere with his proceedings; and Assyria, after one defeat (1 Chron. xix. 16-19), withdrew from the contest. David's empire was inherited by Solomon (1 Kings iv. 21-24); and Solomon's position was such as naturally brought him into communication with the great powers beyond his borders, among others with Egypt. A brisk trade was carried on between his

subjects and the Egyptians, especially in horses and chariots (ib. x. 28, 29): and diplomatic intercourse was no doubt established between the courts of Tanis and Jerusalem. It Is a little uncertain which Egyptian prince was now upon the throne; but Egyptologers incline to Pinetem II., the second in succession after Men-khepr-ra, and the last king but one of the dynasty. The Hebrew monarch having made overtures through his ambassador, this prince, it would seem, received them favourably; and, soon after his accession (1 Kings iii. 1), Solomon took to wife his daughter, an Egyptian princess, receiving with her as a dowry the city and territory of Gezer, which Pinetem had recently taken from its independent Canaanite inhabitants (ib. ix. 16). The new connection had advantages and disadvantages. The excessive polygamy, which had been affected by the Egyptian monarchs ever since the time of Ramesses II., naturally spread into Judea, and "King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites ... and he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart" (ib. xi. 1, 3). On the other hand, commerce was no doubt promoted by the step taken, and much was learnt in the way of art from the Egyptian sculptors and architects. The burst of architectural vigour which distinguishes Solomon's reign among those of other Hebrew kings, is manifestly the direct result of ideas brought to Jerusalem from the capital of the Pharaohs. The plan of the Temple, with its open court in front, its porch, its Holy Place, its Holy of Holies, and its chambers, was modelled after the Egyptian pattern. The two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, which stood in front of the porch, took the place of the twin obelisks, which in every finished example of an Egyptian temple stood just in front of the principal entrance. The lions on the steps of the royal throne (ib. x. 20) were imitations of those which in Egypt often supported the seat of the monarch on either side; and "the house of the forest of Lebanon" was an attempt to reproduce the effect of one of Egypt's "pillared halls." Something in the architecture of Solomon was clearly learnt from Phoenicia, and a little--a very little--may perhaps have been derived from Assyria; but Egypt gave at once the impulse and the main bulk of the ideas and forms.

The line of priest-kings terminated with Hor-pa-seb-en-sha, the successor of Pinetem II. They held the throne for about a century and a quarter; and if they cannot be said to have played a very important part in the "story of Egypt," or in any way to have increased Egyptian greatness, yet at least they escape the reproach, which rests upon most of the more distinguished dynasties, of seeking their own glory in modes which caused their subjects untold suffering.

XIX. Shishak and His Dynasty

The rise of the twenty-second resembles in many respects that of the twenty-first dynasty. In both cases the cause of the revolution Is to be found in the weakness of the royal house, which rapidly loses its pristine vigour, and is impotent to resist the first assault made upon it by a bold aggressor. Perhaps the wonder is rather that Egyptian dynasties continued so long as they did, than that they were not longer-lived, since there was in almost every instance a rapid decline, alike in the _physique_ and in the mental calibre of the holders of sovereignty; so that nothing but a little combined strength and audacity was requisite in order to push them from their pedestals. Shishak was an official of a Semitic family long settled in Egypt, which had made the town of Bubastis its residence. We may suspect, if we like, that the family had noble--shall we say royal?--blood in its veins, and could trace its descent to dynasties which had ruled at Nineveh or Babylon. The connexion is possible, though scarcely probable, since no _eclat_ attended the first arrival of the Shishak family In Egypt,

and the family names, though Semitic, are decidedly neither Babylonian nor Assyrian. It is tempting to adopt the sensational views of writers, who, out of half a dozen names, manufacture an Assyrian conquest of Egypt, and the establishment on the throne of the Pharaohs of a branch derived from one or other of the royal Mesopotamian houses; but "facts are stubborn things," and the imagination is scarcely entitled to mould them at its will. It is necessary to face the two certain facts--(1) that no one of the dynastic names is the natural representative of any name known to have been borne by any Assyrian or Babylonian; and (2) that neither Assyria nor Babylonia was at the time in such a position as to effect, or even to contemplate, distant enterprizes. Babylonia did not attain such a position till the time of Nabopolassar; Assyria had enjoyed it about B.C. 1150-1100, but had lost it, and did not recover it till B.C. 890. Moreover, Solomon's empire blocked the way to Egypt against both countries, and required to be shattered in pieces before either of the great Mesopotamian powers could have sent a _corps d'armee_ into the land of the Pharaohs.

Sober students of history will therefore regard Shishak (Sheshonk) simply as a member of a family which, though of foreign extraction, had been long settled in Egypt, and had worked its way into a high position under the priest-kings of Herhor's line, retaining a special connection with Bubastis, the place which it had from the first made its home. Sheshonk's grandfather, who bore the same name; had had the honour of intermarrying into the royal house, having taken to wife Meht-en-hont, a princess of the blood whose exact parentage is unknown to us. His father Namrut, had held a high military office, being commander of the Libyan mercenaries, who at this time formed the most important part of the standing army. Sheshonk himself, thus descended, was naturally in the front rank of Egyptian court-officials. When we first hear of him he is called "His Highness," and given the title of "Prince of the princes," which is thought to imply that he enjoyed the first rank among all the chiefs of mercenaries, of whom there were many. Thus he held a position only second to that occupied by the king, and when his son became a suitor for the hand of a daughter of the reigning sovereign, no one could say that etiquette was infringed, or an ambition displayed that was excessive and unsuitable. The match was consequently allowed to come off, and Sheshonk became doubly connected with the royal house, through his daughter-in-law and through his grandmother. When, therefore, on the death of Hor-pa-seb-en-sha, he assumed the title and functions of king, no opposition was offered: the crown seemed to have passed simply from one member of the royal family to another.

In monarchies like the Egyptian, it is not very difficult for an ambitious subject, occupying a certain position, to seize the throne; but it is far from easy for him to retain it Unless there is a general impression of the usurper's activity, energy, and vigour, his authority is liable to be soon disputed, or even set at nought It behoves him to give indications of strength and breadth of character, or of a wise, far-seeing policy, in order to deter rivals from attempting to undermine his power. Sheshonk early let it be seen that he possessed both caution and far-reaching views by his treatment of a refugee who, shortly after his accession, sought his court. This was Jeroboam, one of the highest officials in the neighbouring kingdom of Israel, whom Solomon, the great Israelite monarch, regarded with suspicion and hostility, on account of a declaration made by a prophet that he was at some future time to be king of Ten Tribes out of the Twelve. To receive Jeroboam with favour was necessarily to offend Solomon, and thus to reverse the policy of the preceding dynasty, and pave the way for a rupture with the State which was at this time Egypt's most important neighbour. Sheshonk, nevertheless, accorded a gracious reception to Jeroboam; and the favour in

which he remained at the Egyptian court was an encouragement to the disaffected among the Israelites, and distinctly foreshadowed a time when an even bolder policy would be adopted, and a strike made for imperial power. The time came at Solomon's demise. Jeroboam was at once allowed to return to Palestine, and to foment the discontent which it was foreseen would terminate in separation. The two kings had, no doubt, laid their plans. Jeroboam was first to see what he could effect unaided, and then, if difficulty supervened, his powerful ally was to come to his assistance. For the Egyptian monarch to have appeared in the first instance would have roused Hebrew patriotism against him. Sheshonk waited till Jeroboam had, to a certain extent, established his kingdom, had set up a new worship blending Hebrew with Egyptian notions, and had sufficiently tested the affection or disaffection towards his rule of the various classes of his subjects. He then marched out to his assistance. Levying a force of twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horse (? six thousand), and footmen "without number" (2 Chron, xii. 3), chiefly from the Libyan and Ethiopian mercenaries which now formed the strength of the Egyptian armies, he proceeded into the Holy Land, entering it "in three columns," and so spreading his troops far and wide over the southern country. Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor, had made such preparation as was possible against the attack. He had anticipated it from the moment of Jeroboam's return, and he had carefully guarded the main routes whereby his country could be approached from the south, fortifying, among other cities, Shoco, Adullam, Azekah, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Tekoa, and Hebron (2 Chron. xi. 6-10). But the host of Sheshonk was irresistible. Never before had the Hebrews met in battle the forces of their powerful southern neighbour--never before had they been confronted with huge masses of disciplined troops, armed and trained alike, and soldiers by profession. The Jewish levies were a rude and untaught militia, little accustomed to warfare, or even to the use of arms, after forty years of peace, during which "every man had dwelt safely under the shade of his own vine and his own fig-tree" (1 Kings iv. 25). They must have trembled before the chariots, and cavalry, and trained footmen of Egypt. Accordingly, there seems to have been no battle, and no regularly organized resistance. As the host of Sheshonk advanced along the chief roads that led to the Jewish capital, the cities, fortified with so much care by Rehoboam, either opened their gates to him, or fell after brief sieges (2 Chron. xii. 4). Sheshonk's march was a triumphal progress, and in an incredibly short space of time he appeared before Jerusalem, where Rehoboam and "the princes of Judah" were tremblingly awaiting his arrival. The son of Solomon surrendered at discretion; and the Egyptian conqueror entered the Holy City, stripped the Temple of its most valuable treasures, including the shields of gold which Solomon had made for his body-guard, and plundered the royal palace (2 Chron, xii. 9). The city generally does not appear to have been sacked: nor was there any massacre. Rehoboam's submission was accepted; he was maintained in his kingdom; but he had to become Sheshonk's "servant" (2 Chron. xii. 8), _i.e.,_ he had to accept the position of a tributary prince, owing fealty and obedience to the Egyptian monarch.

The objects of Sheshonk's expedition were-not yet half accomplished. By the long inscription which he set up on his return to Egypt, we find that, after having made Judea subject to him, he proceeded with his army into the kingdom of Israel, and there also took a number of towns which were peculiarly circumstanced. The Levites of the northern kingdom had from the first disapproved of the religious changes effected by Jeroboam; and the Levitical cities within his dominions were regarded with an unfriendly eye by the Israelite monarch, who saw in them hotbeds of rebellion. He had not ventured to make a direct attack upon them himself, since he would thereby have lighted the torch of civil

war within his own borders; but, having now an Egyptian army at his beck and call, he used the foreigners as an instrument at once to free him from a danger and to execute his vengeance upon those whom he looked upon as traitors. Sheshonk was directed or encouraged to attack and take the Levitical cities of Rehob, Gibeon, Mahanaim, Beth-horon, Kedemoth, Bileam or Ibleam, Alemoth, Taanach, Golan, and Anem, to plunder them and carry off their inhabitants as slaves; while he was also persuaded to reduce a certain number of Canaanite towns, which did not yield Jeroboam a very willing obedience. We may trace the march of Sheshonk by Megiddo, Taanach, and Shunem, to Beth-shan, and thence across the Jordan to Mahanaim and Aroer; after which, having satisfied his vassal, Jeroboam, he proceeded to make war on his own account with the Arab tribes adjoining on Trans-Jordanic Israel, and subdued the Temanites, the Edomites, and various tribes of the Hagarenes. His dominion was thus established from the borders of Egypt to Galilee, and from the Mediterranean to the Great Syrian Desert.

On his return to Egypt from Asia, with his prisoners and his treasures, it seemed to the victorious monarch that he might fitly follow the example of the old Pharaohs who had made expeditions into Palestine and Syria, and commemorate his achievements by a sculptured record. So would he best impress the mass of the people with his merits, and induce them to put him on a par with the Thothmeses and the Amenhoteps of former ages. On the southern external wall of the great temple of Karnak, he caused himself to be represented twice--once as holding by the hair of their heads thirty-eight captive Asiatics, and threatening them with uplifted mace; and a second time as leading captive one hundred and thirty-three cities or tribes, each specified by name and personified in an individual form, the form, however, being incomplete. Among these representations is one which bears the inscription "Yuteh Malek," and which must be regarded as figuring the captive Judaean kingdom.

Thus, after nearly a century and a half of repose, Egypt appeared once more in Western Asia as a conquering power, desirious of establishing an empire. The political edifice raised with so much trouble by David, and watched over with such care by Solomon, had been shaken to its base by the rebellion of Jeroboam; it was shattered beyond all hope of recovery by Shishak. Never more would the fair fabric of an Israelite empire rear itself up before the eyes of men; never more would Jerusalem be the capital of a State as extensive as Assyria or Babylonia, and as populous as Egypt. After seventy years, or so, of union, Syria was broken up--the cohesion effected by the warlike might of David and the wisdom of Solomon ceased--the ill-assimilated parts fell asunder; and once more the broad and fertile tract intervening between Assyria and Egypt became divided among a score of petty States, whose weakness invited a conqueror.

Sheshonk did not live many years to enjoy the glory and honour brought him by his Asiatic successes. He died after a reign of twenty-one years, leaving his crown to his second son, Osorkon, who was married to the Princess Keramat, a daughter of Sheshonk's predecessor. The dynasty thus founded continued to occupy the Egyptian throne for the space of about two centuries, but produced no other monarch of any remarkable distinction. The Asiatic dominion, which Sheshonk had established, seems to have been maintained for about thirty years, during the reigns of Osorkon L, Sheshonk's son, and Takelut I., his grandson; but in the reign of Osorkon II., the son of Takelut, the Jewish monarch of the time, Asa, the grandson of Rehoboam, shook off the Egyptian yoke, re-established Judaean independence, and fortified himself against attack by restoring the defences of all those cities which Sheshonk had dismantled, and "making about them walls, and towers, gates,

and bars" (2 Chron. xiv. 7). At the same time he placed under arms the whole male population of his kingdom, which is reckoned by the Jewish historian at 580,000 men. The "men of Judah" bore spears and targets, or small round shields; the "men of Benjamin" had shields of a larger size, and were armed with the bow (ib. ver. 8). "All these," says the historian, "were mighty men of valour." It was not to be supposed that Egypt would bear tamely this defiance, or submit to the entire loss of her Asiatic dominion, which was necessarily involved in the revolt of Judaea, without an effort to retain it. Osorkon II., or whoever was king at the time, rose to the occasion. If it was to be a contest of numbers, Egypt should show that she was certainly not to be outdone numerically; so more mercenaries than ever before were taken into pay, and an army was levied, which is reckoned at "a thousand thousand" (ib. ver. 9), consisting of Cushites or Ethiopians, and of Lubim (ib. xvi. 8), or natives of the North African coast-tract, With these was sent a picked force of three hundred war-chariots, probably Egyptian; and the entire host was placed under the command of an Ethiopian general, who is called Zerah. The host set forth from Egypt, confident of victory, and proceeded as far as Mareshah in Southern Judaea, where they were met by the undaunted Jewish king. What force he had brought with him is uncertain, but the number cannot have been very great. Asa had recourse to prayer, and, in words echoed in later days by the great Maccabee (1 Mac. iii. 18, 19), besought Jehovah to help him against the Egyptian "multitude." Then the two armies joined battle; and, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, Zerah was defeated. "The Ethiopians and the Lubim, a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen" (2 Chron. xvi. 8) fled before Judah--they were "overthrown that they could not recover themselves, and were destroyed before Jehovah and before His host" (ib. xiv. 13). The Jewish troops pursued them as far as Gerar, smiting them with a great slaughter, taking their camp? and loading themselves with spoil. What became of Zerah we are not told. Perhaps he fell in the battle; perhaps he carried the news of his defeat to his Egyptian master, and warned him against any further efforts to subdue a people which could defend itself so effectually.

The direct effect of the victory of Asa was to put an end, for three centuries, to those dreams of Asiatic dominion which had so long floated before the eyes of Egyptian kings, and dazzled their imaginations. If a single one of the petty princes between whose rule Syria was divided could defeat and destroy the largest army that Egypt had ever brought into the field, what hope was there of victory over twenty or thirty of such chieftains? Henceforth, until the time of the great revolution brought about in Western Asia through the destruction of the Assyrian Empire by the Medes, the eyes of Egypt were averted from Asia, unless when attack threatened her. She shrank from provoking the repetition of such a defeat as Zerah had suffered, and was careful to abstain from all interference with the affairs of Palestine, except on invitation. She learnt to look upon the two Israelite kingdoms as her bulwarks against attack from the East, and it became an acknowledged part of her policy to support them against Assyrian aggression. If she did not succeed in rendering them any effective assistance, it was not for lack of good-will. She was indeed a "bruised reed" to lean upon, but it was because her strength was inferior to that of the great Mesopotamian power.

From the time of Osorkon II., the Sheshonk dynasty rapidly declined in power. A system of constituting appanages for the princes of the reigning house grew up, and in a short time conducted the country to the verge of dissolution. "For the purpose of avoiding usurpations analogous to that of the High-Priests of Ammon," says M. Maspero, "Sheshonk and his descendants made a rule to entrust all positions of importance, whether civil or military, to the princes of the

blood royal. A son of the reigning Pharaoh, most commonly his eldest son, held the office of High-Priest of Ammon and Governor of Thebes; another commanded at Sessoun (Hermopolis); another at Hakhensu, others in all the large towns of the Delta and of Upper Egypt. Each of them had with him several battalions of those Libyan soldiers--Matsiou and Mashuash--who formed at this time the strength of the Egyptian army, and on whose fidelity it was always safe to count. Ere long these commands became hereditary, and the feudal system, which had anciently prevailed among the chiefs of nomes or cantons, re-established itself for the advantage of the members of the reigning house. The Pharaoh of the time continued to reside at Memphis, or at Bubastis, to receive the taxes, to direct as far as was possible the central administration, and to preside at the grand ceremonies of religion, such as the enthronement or the burial of an Apis-Bull; but, in point of fact, Egypt found itself divided into a certain number of principalities, some of which comprised only a few towns, while others extended over several continuous cantons. After a time the chiefs of these principalities were emboldened to reject the sovereignty of the Pharaoh altogether; relying on their bands of Libyan mercenaries, they usurped, not only the functions of royalty, but even the title of king, while the legitimate dynasty, cooped up in a corner of the Delta, with difficulty preserved a certain remnant of authority."

Upon disintegration followed, as a natural consequence, quarrel and disturbance. In the reign of Takelut II., the grandson of Osorkon II., troubles broke out both in the north and in the south. Takelut's eldest son, Osorkon, who was High-Priest of Ammon, and held the government of Thebes and the other provinces of the south, was only able to maintain the integrity of the kingdom by means of perpetual civil wars. Under his successors, Sheshonk III., Pamai, and Sheshonk IV., the revolts became more and more serious. Rival dynasties established themselves at Thebes, Tanis, Memphis, and elsewhere. Ethiopia grew more powerful as Egypt declined, and threatened ere long to establish a preponderating influence over the entire Nile valley. But the Egyptian princes were too jealous of each other to appreciate the danger which threatened them. A very epidemic of decentralization set in; and by the middle of the eighth century, just at the time when Assyria was uniting together and blending into one all the long-divided tribes and nations of Western Asia, Egypt suicidally broke itself up into no fewer than twenty governments!

Such a condition of things was, of course, fatal to literature and art. Art, as has been said, "did not so much decline as disappear." After Sheshonk I. no monarch of the line left any building or sculpture of the slightest importance. The very tombs became unpretentious, and merely repeated antique forms without any of the antique spirit. Each Apis, indeed, had, in his turn, his arched tomb cut for him in the solid rock of the Serapeum at Memphis, and was laid to rest in a stone sarcophagus, formed of a single block. A stela, moreover, was in every case inscribed and set up to his memory: but the stelae were rude memorials, devoid of all artistic taste; the tombs were mere reproductions of old models; and the inscriptions were of the dullest and most prosaic kind. Here is one, as a specimen: "In the year 2, the month Mechir, on the first day of the month, under the reign of King Pimai, the god Apis was carried to his rest in the beautiful region of the west, and was laid in the grave, and deposited in his everlasting house and his eternal abode. He was born in the year 28, in the time of the deceased king, Sheshonk III. His glory was sought for in all places of Lower Egypt. He was found after some months in the city of Hashedabot. He was solemnly introduced into the temple of Phthah, beside his father--the Memphian god Phthah of the south wall--by the high-priest in the temple of Phthah, the great prince of the Mashuash, Petise, the son of the high-priest of Memphis and great

prince of the Mashuash, Takelut, and of the princess of royal race, Thes-bast-per, in the year 28, in the month of Paophi, on the first day of the month. The full lifetime of this god amounted to twenty-six years." Such is the historical literature of the period. The only other kind of literature belonging to it which has come down to us, consists of what are called "Magical Texts." These are to the following effect:--"When Horns weeps, the water that falls from his eyes grows into plants producing a sweet perfume. When Typhon lets fall blood from his nose, it grows into plants changing to cedars, and produces turpentine instead of the water. When Shu and Tefnut weep much, and water falls from their eyes, it changes into plants that produce incense. When the Sun weeps a second time, and lets water fall from his eyes, it is changed into working bees; they work in the flowers of each kind, and honey and wax are produced instead of the water. When the Sun becomes weak, he lets fall the perspiration of his members, and this changes to a liquid." Or again--"To make a magic mixture: Take two grains of incense, two fumigations, two jars of cedar-oil, two jars of _tas_, two jars of wine, two jars of spirits of wine. Apply it at the place of thy heart. Thou art protected against the accidents of life; thou art protected against a violent death; thou art protected against fire; thou art not ruined on earth, and thou escapest in heaven."

XX. Egypt Under the Ethiopians

The name of Ethiopia was applied in ancient times, much as the term Soudan is applied now, vaguely to the East African interior south of Egypt, from about lat. 24 deg. to about lat. 9 deg.. The tract was for the most part sandy or rocky desert, interspersed with oases, but contained along the course of the Nile a valuable strip of territory; while, south and south-east of the point where the Nile receives the Atbara, it spread out into a broad fertile region, watered by many streams, diversified by mountains and woodlands, rich in minerals, and of considerable fertility. At no time did the whole of this vast tract--a thousand miles long by eight or nine hundred broad--form a single state or monarchy. Rather, for the most part, was it divided up among an indefinite number of states, or rather of tribes, some of them herdsmen, others hunters or fishermen, very jealous of their independence, and frequently at war one with another. Among the various tribes there was a certain community of race, a resemblance of physical type, and a similarity of language. Their neighbours, the Egyptians, included them all under a single ethnic name, speaking of them as Kashi or Kushi--a term manifestly identical with the Cush or Cushi of the Hebrews. They were a race cognate with the Egyptians, but darker in complexion and coarser in feature--not by any means negroes, but still more nearly allied to the negro than the Egyptians were. Their best representatives in modern times are the pure-bred Abyssinian tribes, the Gallas, Wolaitzas, and the like, who are probably their descendants.

The portion of Ethiopia which lay nearest to Egypt had been from a very early date penetrated by Egyptian influence. Wars with "the miserable Kashi" began as far back as the time of Usurtasen I.; and Usurtasen III. carried his arms beyond the Second Cataract, and attached the northern portion of Ethiopia to Egypt. The great kings of the eighteenth dynasty, Thothmes III., Amenhotep II., and Amenhotep III., proceeded still further southward; and the last of these monarchs built a temple to Ammon at Napata, near the modern Gebel Berkal. The Ethiopians of this region, a plastic race, adopted to a considerable extent the Egyptian civilization, worshipped Egyptian gods in Egyptian shrines, and set up inscriptions in the hieroglyphic character and in the Egyptian tongue. Napata, and the Nile valley both below it and above it, was already half Egyptianized, when, on the establishment of the Sheshonk dynasty in Egypt, the descendants of Herhor resolved to quit their native country, and remove themselves into

Ethiopia, where they had reason to expect a welcome. They were probably already connected by marriage with some of the leading chiefs of Napata, and their sacerdotal character gave them a great hold on a peculiarly superstitious people. The "princes of Noph" received them with the greatest favour, and assigned them the highest position in the state. Retaining their priestly office, they became at once Ethiopian monarchs, and High-Priests of the Temple of Ammon which Amenhotep III. had erected at Napata. Napata, under their government, flourished greatly, and acquired a considerable architectural magnificence. Fresh temples were built, in which the worship of Egyptian was combined with that of Ethiopian deities; avenues of sphinxes adorned the approaches to these new shrines; the practice of burying the members of the royal house in pyramids was reverted to; and the necropolis of Napata recalled the glories of the old necropolis of Memphis.

Napata was also a place of much wealth. The kingdom, whereof it was the capital, reached southward as far as the modern Khartoum, and eastward stretched up to the Abyssinian highlands, including the valleys of the Atbara and its tributaries, together with most of the tract between the Atbara and the Blue Nile. This was a region of great natural wealth, containing many mines of gold, iron, copper, and salt, abundant woods of date-palm, almond-trees, and ilex, some excellent pasture-ground, and much rich meadow-land suitable for the growth of _doora_ and other sorts of grain. Fish of many kinds, and excellent turtle, abounded in the Atbara and the other streams; while the geographical position was favourable for commerce with the tribes of the interior, who were able to furnish an almost inexhaustible supply of ivory, skins, and ostrich feathers.

The first monarch of Napata, whose name has come down to us, is a certain Piankhi, who called himself Mi-Ammon, or Meri-Ammon--that is to say, "beloved of Ammon." He is thought to have been a descendant of Herhor, and to have begun to reign about B.C. 755. At this time Egypt had reached the state of extreme disintegration described in the last section. A prince named Tafnekht, probably of Libyan origin, ruled in the western Delta, and held Sais and Memphis; an Osorkon was king of the eastern Delta, and held his court at Bubastis; Petesis was king of Athribis, near the apex of the Delta; and a prince named Aupot, or Shupot, ruled in some portion of the same region. In Middle Egypt, the tract immediately above Memphis formed the kingdom of Pefaabast, who had his residence in Sutensenen, or Heracleopolis Magna, and held the Fayoum under his authority; while further south the Nile valley was in the possession of a certain Namrut, whose capital was Sesennu, or Hermopolis. Bek-en-nefi, and a Sheshonk, had also principalities, though in what exact position is uncertain; and various towns, including Mendes, were under the government of chiefs of mercenaries, of whom it is reckoned that there were more than a dozen. Thebes and Southern Egypt from about the latitude of Hermopolis had already been absorbed into the kingdom of Napata, and were ruled directly by Piankhi.

Such being the state of affairs when he came to the throne, Piankhi contrived between his first and his twenty-first year (about B.C. 755-734) gradually to extend his authority over the other kings, and to reduce them to the position of tributary princes or feudatories. It is uncertain whether he used force to effect his purpose. Perhaps the fear of the Assyrians, who, under Tiglath-pileser II., were about this time (B.C. 745-730) making great advances in Syria and Palestine, may have been sufficiently strong to induce the princes voluntarily to adopt the protection of Piankhi, whom they may have regarded as an Egyptian rather than a foreigner. At any rate, we do not hear of violence being used until revolt broke out. In the twenty-first year of Piankhi, news reached him that Tafnekht, king of Memphis and Sais, had rebelled, and, not content with throwing off his allegiance, had commenced a

series of attacks upon the princes that remained faithful to their suzerain, and was endeavouring to make himself master of the whole country. Already had he fallen upon Pafaabast, and forced him to surrender at discretion; he was advancing up the river; Namrut had joined him; and he would soon threaten Thebes, unless a strenuous resistance were offered. Piankhi seems at first to have despised his enemy. He thought it enough to send two generals, at the head of a strong body of troops, down the Nile, with orders to suppress the revolt, and bring the arch-rebel into his presence. The expedition left Thebes. On its way down the river, it fell in with the advancing fleet of the enemy, and completely defeated it. The rebel chiefs, who now included Petesis, Osorkon, and Aupot, as well as Tafnekht, Pefaabast, and Namrut, abandoning Hermopolis and the Middle Nile, fell back upon Sutensenen or Heracleopolis Magna, where they concentrated their forces, and awaited a second attack. This was not long delayed. Piankhi's fleet and army, having besieged and taken Hermopolis, descended the river to Sutensenen, gave the confederates a second naval defeat, and disembarking, followed up their success with another great victory on land, completely routing the rebels, and driving them to take refuge in Lower Egypt, or in the towns on the river bank below Heracleopolis. But now a strange reverse of fortune befell them. Namrut, the Hermopolitan monarch, hearing of the occupation of his capital by Piankhi's army, resolved on a bold attempt to retake it; and, having collected a number of ships and troops, quitted his confederates, sailed up the Nile, besieged the Ethiopian garrison which had been left to hold the place, overpowered them, and recovered his city.

This unexpected blow roused Piankhi from his inaction. Having collected a fresh army, he quitted Napata in the first month of the year, and reached Thebes in the second, where he stopped awhile to perform a number of religious ceremonies; at their close, he descended the Nile to Hermopolis, invested it, and commenced its siege. Moveable towers were brought up against the walls, from which machines threw stones and arrows into the city; the defenders suffered terribly, and after a short time insisted on a surrender. Namrut made his peace with his offended sovereign through the intercession of his wife with Piankhi's wives, sisters, and daughters, and was allowed once more to do homage to his lord in the temple of Thoth, leading his war-horse in one hand and holding a sistrum, the instrument wherewith it was usual to approach a god, in the other. Piankhi entered Hermopolis, and examined the treasury, store-houses, and stables, finding in the last a number of horses, which had been reduced almost to starvation by the siege. Either on this account, or for some other reason, Piankhi treated the Hermopolitan prince with coldness, and did not for some time reinstate him in his kingdom.

Continuing his triumphal march towards the north, Piankhi received the submission of Heracleopolis, the capital of Pefaabast, and of various other cities on either bank of the Nile, and in a short time appeared before Memphis and summoned it to surrender; but his summons was set at nought. Tafnekht had recently visited the city, had strengthened its defences, augmented its supplies, and reinforced its garrison with an addition of eight thousand men, thereby greatly inspiriting them. It was resolved to resist to the uttermost. So the gates were shut, the walls manned, and Piankhi challenged to do his worst. "Then was His Majesty furious against them, like a panther." Piankhi attacked the city fiercely, both by land and water. Taking the command of the fleet in person, he sailed down the Nile, and, bringing his vessels close up to the walls and towers on the riverside, made use of the masts and yards as ladders, and so scaled the fortifications; then after slaughtering thousands on the ramparts, he forced an entrance into the town. Memphis, upon this, surrendered. Piankhi entered the town, and sacrificed to the god Phthah. A number of the

princes, including Aupot and Merkaneshu, a leader of mercenaries, came in and made their submission; but two of the principal rebels still remained unsubdued--Tafnekht, the leader of the revolt, and Osorkon, king of Bubastis, Piankhi proceeded against the latter. Advancing first on Heliopolis, instead of resistance he was received with acclamations, the people, priests, and soldiery having gone over to his side. "Nothing succeeds like success." Egypt was as prone as other countries to "worship the rising sun;" and Piankhi's victories had by this time marked him out in the eyes of the Egyptians as the favourite of Heaven, their predestined monarch and ruler. Accordingly, Heliopolis received him gladly, hailing him as "the indestructible Horus"--he was allowed to bathe in the sacred lake within the precincts of the great temple, to offer sacrifice to Ra, and to enter through the folding-doors into the central shrine, where were laid up the sacred boats of Ra and Turn. After this surrender, Osorkon thought it vain to attempt further resistance. He quitted Bubastis, and, seeking the presence of the victorious Piankhi, submitted himself and renewed his homage. At the same time, Petisis, king of Athribis, made his submission.

The only prince who still remained unsubdued was Tafnekht, the original rebel. Tafnekht had fled after the fall of Memphis, and had taken refuge either in one of the islands of the Delta, or beyond the seas, in Aradus or Cyprus. But he saw that further resistance was vain; and that, if he was to rule an Egyptian principality, it must be as a secondary monarch. Accordingly he, too, submitted himself, and was restored to his former kingdom. Piankhi returned up the Nile to his own city of Napata amid songs and rejoicings--whether sincere or feigned, who shall say? His own account of the matter is the following: "When His Majesty sailed up the river, his heart was glad; all its banks resounded with music. The inhabitants of the west and of the east betook themselves to making melody at His Majesty's approach. To the notes of the music they sang, 'O king, thou conqueror! O Piankhi, thou conquering king! Thou hast come and smitten Lower Egypt; thou madest the men as women. The heart of the mother rejoices who bare such a son, for he who begat thee dwells in the vale of death. Happiness be to thee, O cow that hast borne the Bull! Thou shalt live for ever in after ages. Thy victory shall endure, O king and friend of Thebes!'"

This happy condition of things did not, however, continue long. Piankhi, soon after his return to his capital, died without leaving issue; and the race of Herhor being now extinct, the Ethiopians had to elect a king from the number of their own nobles. Their choice fell on a certain Kashta, a man of little energy, who allowed Egypt to throw off the Ethiopian sovereignty without making any effort to prevent it. Bek-en-ranf, the son of Tafnekht, was the leader of this successful rebellion, and is said to have reigned over all Egypt for six years. He got a name for wisdom and justice, but he could not alter that condition of affairs which had been gradually brought about by the slow working of various more or less occult causes, whereby Ethiopia had increased and Egypt diminished in power, their relative strength, as compared with former times, having become inverted. Ethiopia, being now the stronger, was sure to reassert herself, and did so in Bek-en-ranf's seventh year. Shabak, the son of Kashta, whose character was cast in a far stronger mould than that of his father, having mounted the Ethiopian throne, lost no time in swooping down upon Egypt from the upper region, and, carrying all before him, besieged and took Sais, made Bek-en-ranf a prisoner, and barbarously burnt him alive for his rebellion. His fierce and sensuous physiognomy is quite in keeping with this bloody deed, which was well calculated to strike terror into the Egyptian nation, and to ensure a general submission.

The rule of the Ethiopians was now for some fifty years firmly established. Shabak founded

a dynasty which the Egyptians themselves admitted to be legitimate, and which the historian Manetho declared to have consisted of three kings--Sabacos (or Shabak), Sevechus (or Shabatok), and Taracus (or Tehrak), the Hebrew Tirhakah. The extant monuments confirm the names, and order of succession, of these monarchs. They were of a coarser and ruder fibre than the native Egyptians, but they did not rule Egypt in any alien or hostile spirit. On the contrary, they were pious worshippers of the old Egyptian gods; they repaired and beautified the old Egyptian temples; and, instead of ruling Egypt, as a conquered province, from Napata, they resided permanently, or at any rate occasionally, at the Egyptian capitals, Thebes and Memphis. There are certain indications which make it probable that to some extent they pursued the policy of Piankhi, and governed Lower Egypt by means of tributary kings, who held their courts at Sais, Tanis, and perhaps Bubastis. But they kept a jealous watch over their subject princes, and allowed none of them to attain a dangerous pre-eminence.

By a curious coincidence the Ethiopic sway, or extension of influence over Egypt by the great monarchy of the south, exactly synchronized with the development of Assyrian power in south-western Asia, which bordered Egypt upon the north; and thus were brought into hostile collision, the two greatest military powers of the then known world who fought over the prostrate Egypt, like Achilles and Hector over the corpse of Patroclus. Shabak's conquest of the Lower Nile valley took place about B.C. 725 or 724. Exactly at that time Shalmaneser IV. was proceeding to extremities against the kingdom of Israel, and was thus threatening to sweep away one of the last two feeble barriers which had hitherto been interposed between the Assyrian territory and the Egyptian. Shabak, entreated by Hoshea, the last Israelite monarch, to lend him aid, consented to take the kingdom of Israel under his protection (2 Kings xvii. 4), actuated no doubt by an enlightened view of his own interest. But when Samaria was besieged (B.C. 723) and the danger became pressing, he had not the courage to act up to his engagements. The stout resistance offered by the Israelite capital for more than two years (2 Kings xvii. 5) drew forth no corresponding effort on the part of the Ethiopic king. Hoshea was left to his own resources, and in B.C. 722 was forced to succumb. His capital was taken by storm, its inhabitants seized and carried off by the conqueror, the whole territory absorbed into that of Assyria, and the cities occupied by Assyrian colonists (2 Kings xvii. 24). Assyria was brought one step nearer to Egypt, and it became more than ever evident that contact and collision could not be much longer deferred.

The collision came in B.C. 720. In that year Sargon, the founder of the last and greatest of the Assyrian dynasties, who had succeeded Shalmaneser IV. in B.C. 722, having arranged matters in Samaria and taken Hamath, pressed on against Philistia, the last inhabited country on the route which led to Egypt. Shabak, having made alliance with Hanun, king of Gaza, marched to his aid. The opposing hosts met at Ropeh, the Raphia of the Greeks, on the very borders of the desert. Sargon commanded in person on the one side, Shabak and Hanun on the other. A great battle was fought, which was for a long time stoutly contested; but the strong forms, the superior arms, and the better discipline of the Assyrians, prevailed. Asia proved herself, as she has generally done, stronger than Africa; the Egyptians and Philistines fled away in disorder; Hanun was made a prisoner; Shabak with difficulty escaped. Negotiations appear to have followed, and a convention to have been drawn up, to which the Ethiopian and Assyrian monarchs attached their seals. The lump of clay which received the impressions was found by Sir A. Layard at Nineveh, and is now in the British Museum.

Shortly afterwards, about B.C. 712, Shabak died, and was succeeded in Egypt by his son

Shabatok, in Ethiopia by a certain Tehrak, who appears to have been his nephew, Tehrak exercised the paramount authority over the whole realm, but resided at Napata, while Shabatok held his court at Memphis and ruled Lower Egypt as Tehrak's representative, Assyrian aggression still continued. In B.C. 711 Sargon took Ashdod, and threatened an invasion of Egypt, which Shabatok averted by sending a submissive embassy with presents.

Six years afterwards Sargon died, and his son, Sennacherib, mounted the Assyrian throne. At once south-western Asia was in a ferment. The Phoenician and Philistine kings recently subjected by Tiglath-Pileser and Sargon, broke out in open revolt. Hezekiah, king of Judah, joined the malcontents. The aid of Egypt was implored, and certain promises of support and assistance received, in part from Tehrak, in part from Shabatok and other native rulers of nomes and cities. Sennacherib, in B.C. 701, led his army into Syria to suppress the rebellion, reduced Phoenicia, received the submission of Ashdod, Ammon, Moab, and Edom; took Ascalon, Hazor, and Joppa, and was proceeding against Ekron, when for the first time he encountered an armed force in the field. A large Egyptian and Ethiopian contingent had at last reached Philistia, and, having united itself with the Ekronites, stood prepared to give the Assyrians battle near Eltekeh. The force consisted of chariots, horsemen, and footmen, and was so numerous that Sennacherib calls it "a multitude that no man could number." Once more, however, Africa had to succumb. Sennacherib at Eltekeh defeated the combined forces of Egypt and Ethiopia with as much ease and completeness as Sargon at Raphia; the multitudinous host was entirely routed, and fled from the field, leaving in the hands of the victors the greater portion of their war-chariots and several sons of one of their kings.

After this defeat, it is not surprising that Tehrak made no further effort. Hezekiah, the last rebel unsubdued, was left to defend himself as he best might. The Egyptians retreated to their own borders, and there awaited attack. It seemed as if the triumph of Assyria was assured, and as if her yoke must almost immediately be imposed alike upon Judea, upon Egypt, and upon the kingdom of Napata; but an extraordinary catastrophe averted the immediate danger, and gave to Egypt and Ethiopia a respite of thirty-four years. Sennacherib's army, of nearly two hundred thousand men, was almost totally destroyed in one night. "The angel of the Lord went forth," says the contemporary writer, Isaiah, "and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (Isa. xxxvii. 36). Whatever the agency employed in this remarkable destruction--whether it was caused by a simoon, or a pestilence, or by a direct visitation of the Almighty, as different writers have explained it--the event is certain. Its truth is written in the undeniable facts of later history, which show us a sudden cessation of Assyrian attack in this quarter, the kingdom of Judea saved from absorption, and the countries on the banks of the Nile left absolutely unobstructed by Assyria for the third part of a century. As the destruction happened on their borders, the Egyptians naturally enough ascribed it to their own gods, and made a boast of it centuries after. Everything marks, as one of the most noticeable facts in history, this annihilation of so great a portion of the army of the greatest of all the kings of Assyria.

The reign of Tirhakah (Tehrak) during this period appears to have been glorious. He was regarded by Judea as its protector, and exercised a certain influence over all Syria as far as Taurus, Amanus, and the Euphrates. In Africa, he brought into subjection the native tribes of the north coast, carrying his arms, according to some, as far as the Pillars of Hercules. He is exhibited at Medinet-Abou in

the dress of a warrior, smiting with a mace ten captive foreign princes. He erected monuments in the Egyptian style at Thebes, Memphis, and Napata. Of all the Ethiopian sovereigns of Egypt he was undoubtedly the greatest; but towards the close of his life reverses befell him, which require to be treated of in another section.