THE NATIVE PRESS.

EGYPT'S LOSS.

The "Mokattam" (from an article discussing the present state of affairs in Egypt—Inside time of the war we always thanked God, as days and nights rolled on, for having protected this country against its evils, and kept the calamities far from the population; and when the armistice was signed we gazed at the safety of Egypt which has emerged from the circumstances of the war with full pockets, light debts, and abundant resources, ready to vie with many nations in agriculture, economy, the revival of native industries, and the progressive of trade both internally and externally. We never imagined, as things developed so successfully, that before the banners of peace are hoisted over the world, Egypt would undergo a grave misfortune and receive a blow that would ruin its fortune and set it backward in the way of progress and prosperity. This is not the proper time for enumerating the losses that have had to be sustained by a large number of the most prosperous inhabitants of the country, though we may say that such losses cannot be less than many hundred thousands of pounds, if not millions; of course in due time all this will be made clear. Let us attract attention to some facts which have been realised by some of the leading officials of also Government Railways Administration in this respect. These officials have found, after the repairing of the two main railway lines in such a way as would make them usable, that the railways have been seriously damaged, the telegraph lines have been also destroyed, and a great number of railway stations have been demolished, and as a result of their destruction many instruments and tools specially used by the Service with the object of avoiding the troubles of collision and other dangers have been damaged. The telegraph and telephone lines connected with the stations have also gone. It is understood that Egypt, under the present circumstances is in need of timber and other materials necessary for the reconstruction of the said stations which cannot be renewed until the necessary materials are imported from them from abroad. To import such requirements at the present time calls for the use of steamers, and God knows when steamers will be found ready to transport such materials to Egypt.... The same remarks applies to the question of instruments and tools for safeguarding trains against collisions, balances for the weighing of goods and all other articles usually used in Railway stations. Every wise man can thus see that so long as the conditions of affairs in the world remain as they are expected to be, years must elapse before the Egyptian railways can regain their former strength and capacity to transport what they used to transport before these unfortunate events. About twenty years ago, when the Egyptian Railways Administration had no instruments with which to guard its lines against dangers, it could not do as much work as it subsequently became able to do when it introduced improvements into its working. The present state of things will take it back to the same position which it held at that time. It will not dare to run trains at the same rate of speed as it used to do recently, and will be unable to transport as many goods as before. Moreover it has become exposed to many dangers.

UNDREAMED OF RAPID TRANSIT.

The "Ahram."—Nouri Bey Said, head of the Staff of the Arab Army in the North and A.D.C. to Emir Feisal, who accompanied His Highness in France, left Cairo yesterday morning for Damascus by aeroplane. The distance between Damascus and the capital of Egypt is about 550 kilometres as the crow flies, and it has been already travelled by airmen in four hours and a half, at a moderate speed and without meeting with air difficulties, at a height of 1500 metres. Weather grows colder over the Palestine mountains, but in these days it is not very cold there. Railway trains can now travel the distance between Cairo and Damascus in 29 hours at the least, and if more powerful locomotives are used or if the lines are improved, the train may cross the same distance in 20 hours at the rate of 72 kilometres per hour as the Egyptian Express train does on our line. The actual time of the journey to this extent economised time, which may be more properly appreciated by those who remember that caravans formerly travelled the distance between Cairo and Damascus in from 15 to 18 days. Even after modern communications were established in the Near East, it became possible for passengers to go to Beyrout and from Egypt to Beyrout and thence to Damascus in three or four days; but Nouri Bey Said who started from Cairo at 8 a.m. is expected to arrive at Damascus at 10.30 o'clock. Did our forefathers ever dream of this?

TELEGRAPHIC DELAY.

The "Ahram" (commenting on the telegram announcing the departure of Lord Inchcape for Egypt). — Lord Inchcape arrived in Cairo on Saturday morning several hours before the arrival of the telegram announcing his departure from London!

WISDOM AT MAHMOUDIEH.

"Wadi el-Nil" (a telegram from its correspondent at Mahmoudieh). — All notables and merchants at the bandar of Mahmoudieh have managed to keep public security and restore tranquility. They have appointed ghaffirs to protect both natives and foreigners here, and formed a committee with the object of discussing the public interest with the help of the Government authorities. The same gentlemen are making efforts to keep people regularly supplied.

NEW MEDITERRANEAN FLEET.

Owing to the continuance of mobilisation of the battle-fleet detailed for service in the Mediterranean, it is not coming to Malta, as early as was expected. It is definitely decided that the squadron will consist of the Emperor of India, Benbow, Marlborough, Iron Duke, Centurion, and Ajax. It is anticipated that four light cruisers of the "C" class, which did splendid work in the war, and a destroyer flotilla will arrive before the battle-fleet in order to enable those at Malta to return home.

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ANCIENT EGYPT

A STATUE'S ORACULAR UTTERANCE.

HOW A LEGAL DECISION WAS GIVEN.

(By Johann Orrom).

In the "Annals" of the Cairo Department of Antiquities in 1917 a relief stele from Abydos was published by Mr. Legrain depicting the following scene, and also its accompanying hieroglyphic inscription. In the scene is shown the sacred procession, the barque of the good God, Lord of the two lands Nefertiru Ahmes (1) Conqueror of the Hykses invaders. The boat with its nave or chrine, and a statue of the Pharaoh God is borne by 8 priests upon a sort of shoulder litter. Upon the deck of the barque is a statue of Ahmes' queen shaking a sistrum. Walking beside the priestly bearers and at the right of them is the "prophet" priest Pairon who touches the barque to stop the cortège. There also stands a man without hat, and with naked feet, with raised hands as if adoring the deified king's statue.

This second personage proves to be priest of Osiris, Paser, who thus addresses Ahmes (2) figy "O judge (or vizir), who dispenses justice, the proprietor of thy home is vindicated, thanks to you." Near to the last is shown another priest of Osiris named Mesmen. Then comes a nine line inscription, the gist of which is as follows: "The year 14 the 2nd month, in the Akhet season, 25th day, under the majesty of the King both of the south and the north Ousermaa Ra son of Ramses-meriamon, was the day when the priest Paser with the priest Taj came set forth his plaint before the good god Nekpetaru. Came also the priest Paser and stated thus:—

"As for the field it belonged to Taj son of Sekenef, and the children of Hajuej." The god remained immobile. He (Paser) approached nearer to the god and said, "It belonged to the priest Paser, son of Mesmen." The god approved with his head vigorously, in presence of the priests of the great Nekpetaru, the prophet Pairon and the priests Idamoubu, Tanefer, Nekht, and Thotmes. Made by the designer who is of the temple of Ramses II. in the house of Osiris Nebmahara." The last sentence refers to the executant of the sculptured relief with its literary inscription.

This curious story of a miraculous decision of a legal suit by the monument of a deified king's statue gives rise to several interesting matters. Firstly it is the earliest instance of such an alleged occurrence yet found in Egyptian records. Oracular decision by statue motion is not referred to until Egypt accepted the priestly dynasty of Thebes, some two centuries later than the inscription now published, under the Pharaoh Pendjem II., about 1025 B.C. The arbitrator in this subsequent instance was the God Amon and he signified his adhesion to the application of the plaintiff by grasping his deed of claim. This decision was applied for and bestowed when the deity's statue was being carried in procession.

Another similar affair is reported during the reign of Shishak I. as occurring at Dafel. In this case also the arbitrator was a deity, the god Sutech and not a Pharaoh; the award being promulgated by speech; there may also have been some indicative bodily inclination. The decisive utterance was "The plot belongs to that person."

Probably in this other instance the successful litigant, or appellant, for these disputes appear only to have been carried up to a deity's tribunal in order to repeal the award of an ordinary tribunal, first enquired of the god, whereas in Paser's case that personage it appears primarily suggested his opponents' name. As far as we at present know the status of the judge in the case under discussion was unusual, if not somewhat irregular, because he was a deified monarch, and the member of the state pantheon, but we shall presently see the reason why he was applied to, and therefore the propriety of selecting Ahmes as assessor.

To understand what may be termed the Equitycity of the proceedings it must be born in mind that there may have been a cult of Ahmes elsewhere, but this is not very probable because it was at Abydos that his mummy was interred, so as to be near the burial place of Osiris, god of the beatified dead; for some reason had a processional barque, in which was his "divine statue."

It is to be noted that the witnesses were not dignitaries, but simple priests, mostly the bearers of the ark, or barque whose clerical position was explained in the "Egyptian Gazette" in the article describing the ceremonies attending on the reopening of the sacred barque of Amon at Thebes, a short time ago. The case was no longer one, for we shall see it had been the cause of anterior litigation, a matter for civil or lay administration. It is evident it was a question for ecclesiastical decision. Evidently the royal defunct deity's ruling possessed executive power, for Paser, the successful appellant, thanks him. Under Ramses II., therefore, in a certain class of case the authority of Ecclesiastical tribunals was equivalent to that of the state and could for such cases be deemed a Court of Appeal.

Fortunately we can now supply evidence from another part of Egypt which illustrates, in a most interesting manner, the Abydos inscription. The tombs of some of the members of Paser's family are at Sakkara. Paser, in his interrogatory appeal, explains that he was the son of Mesmen.

The hieroglyphic sepulchre autobiographies at Sakkara set forth that some 300 years anterior to Ramses II., under which king the Abydos award was given, in the reign of Ahmes the first whose statue decided Paser's claim, a Nesha ancestor of Mesmen had certain land assigned to him by King Ahmes, under a deed permitting it to be bequeathed only on inheritance to a single member of his family. In course of time relatives under successors of Nesha petitioned to have the domain subdivided, and under Pharaoh Horemheb, about 1320 B.C., it was cut up into six fiefs, which, by this deed of separative ownership were not to be further divided.

But Houj, father of Mesmen, rescinded the deed and succeeded in obtaining its repeal, getting all the land reconstituted as his single fief. It is not necessary to suppose the ground was of very large extent because in Egyptian deeds and decisions the sale and purchase of a moiety of the value of a small house or cottage, and even a back yard is frequent. Upon Houj's death the relatives under the auspices of a certain Khajeej, by the production of documents which Mesmen asserts were forgeries, induced the Vizir of Egypt in the 18th year of Ramses II., to again apportion out the land into six lots, which were assigned to Khajeej and his children.

The Sakkara information terminates at this point, but Mesmen appears to have had the Vizier's decision reversed and secured the whole of the land to himself. It is obvious that this Mesmen, at Sakkara, is the parent of Paser at Abydos, because the native name Hajuej at the latter place is evidently identical with Khajeej of the former.

Students familiar with the manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians who have so far perused this imperfect narrative will by this time be commencing to decry a good deal of the information as to the rise on scene of the affair between the priests.

Ahmes was selected as arbitrator at Abydos primarily because he was the Pharaoh who originally granted the fief to Mesmen and Paser's ancestors; secondly Abydos was the proper site at which to secure his decision, because it was the home of his statue as a deity. He was believed to be cognizant of all the facts and naturally to be apprehended of his intentions when founding the fief. Paser's appeal appears to have been made with some confusion, for he first appears to the god that the land belonged to the Taj and Hajuej (of Khajeej) branch of the family.

There may have been some technical reason for this mode of action, such as because the Taj family were in possession. If this was the Taj family were in possession. If this was the case, Mesmen and Paser's family had been forced at Sakkara (or Memphis, near by) or if Mesmen, as the text there appears to suggest, had secured possession, he refused to do this restitution of the property. We are told that Paser, the younger, had been reduced to retaining his livelihood as a shepherd. He and his worthy offspring finding justice unobtainable, or unofficial performance, as they undoubtless after careful thought or was deemed determined by their fortunes as the "spiritual home" of the new divine Ahmes I. at Abydos.

He was the original legator, he should be their legislative Lord of Appeal. So they made off for Abydos where was his effigy, which was certain to be the abode of his Ka spirit, just as the mediter, or stone erected by some of the earlier Old Testament patriarchs was, she say, to them a Beth El, or House (home) of Jehovah.

But either they had been defeated at law, or that law's decision had been defied, this was their final appeal and therefore it was simple prudence to improve their status. The judge was divine, and as previously pointed out, this made for the tribunal being ecclesiastical. But it into modern Egyptian parlance, it became a Waqf to east.

At Abydos there was a priestly fraternity appointed to the Ahmes cult, and certainly shrine at his tomb, or perhaps such a magnificent sepulchre as to act as a small temple. So to secure a satisfactory status the two affiliated themselves with these Ahmes clerics, maybe bakshesh promised in the event of success helped matters out, or perhaps the breaking of the true intention of their deity's old deed appealed to the priest. Anyhow, Paser and Mesmen achieved a strong position because they were intending suddenly to request the deity they served to be their arbitrator, and during the meaning of his own generous bequest of 300 years ago. So he signified his adhesion and judge in one. To a layman, or another deity's devotee the god might not have delivered a decision. To a member of his own temb worship hierophants he would surely answer and to one of his own servitors his award should be favourable.

There is no indication, in the scanty records we at present possess, that the Taj party were of the pious fraternity. It will be seen that we are assuming the miraculous to have taken place. The importance of the story lies in its revelation of the legal power and immunities from lay jurisdiction of members of the priesthood in Egypt under the Pharaohs. The Ptolemies had to come to terms with them, Alexander the Great went out of his way to placate them, the Cæsars in the end would have had to follow suit but not a new religion, whose priesthood ultimately occupied the seat of these Cæsars, and forced the Roman Emperors to a new domicile at the Bosporus, takes the place of the multiple deities of old Egypt.

HELIOPOLIS RACES.

The following entries have been received for the meeting at Heliopolis on the 3rd and 4th April:—

THE ALLEGRO CUP. (L.E.200) 1 1/4 miles: Bambach (Bold), Ibrahim, Hotchkiss, Fouad, Fayet, Queen, Passaniers, Pump of Dawn, Ginger, Gipsy.

CORONATION PLATE (L.E.200) 5 furlongs: Bold Baby, Nugget, Grinder, Touch the Bell, Coralina, King Victor, Alexandria.

HELIOPOLIS ST. LEGER (L.E.250) 1 1/4 miles: Bashbar, Sabrmann, Phlius, Jeffrey, Mahmoud, Rod de l'Air, Melnik, Sarbas.

MARCH HANDICAP (L.E.200) 1 mile: Kaha Shalaan, Assel Fouad, Aqaqi, Faddy, Abu Taman, Marsouk, Marouf, Bagnour.

ALLEN HANDICAP (L.E.150) 1 mile: Yankee, Gabr, Basra, Vigilance, Brin d'Or.

NEVILLE PLATE (L.E.100) 7 furlongs: Fayoum, Mehesu, The Marne, Sidi, Ahmas, Caelouche (late Agib).

OUR RACING COMPETITION.

The amount collected for this Competition on March 15 (the Fagguala Handicap) was P.T. 2360. Five competitors gave the correct solution and the amount mentioned (one tenth per cent) has been divided between the following:—

1018 Sgt. F. Bollen, B.W.I. Regt., Mex Camp, Alexandria.

Jacques Guar, 9 Rue Rassafa, Moharrem Bey, Alexandria.

Pte. J.E. Gittens, Graves. Regt., Unit, G.H.Q., 3rd Echelon, Alexandria.

F.B. Walsh, 10 Rue Nubar, Alexandria.

Mohammed Sidky, 5 Rue Bolonachi, Alexandria.

NEXT WEEK'S COMPETITION.

The competition next week will be the race for Allenby Cup, all horses at Heliopolis. Coupons should be posted as early as possible.

ALEXANDRIA UNITED SERVICES CHALLENGE CUP.

THIRD ROUND, REPLAYED TIE.

21st GEN. HOSP. v. R.A.O.C.

The above replayed tie was played on the Sporting Club Ground on Monday before several hundred spectators. The Ordnance eventually ran out winners by three goals to nil, and fully deserved their victory. The Ordnance won the toss and set the Hospital to face a strong sun. From the commencement play was generally uninteresting with occasional attacks from each set of forwards. Scott had one good opportunity but his shot struck Price and was eventually cleared. The Ordnance then became pressed and Hinton saved a good shot from Stott who was playing a forceful game at centre forward. The Hospital got going and Keenan tested Calthorpe with a drop shot. Play was quickly transferred Stott and Price were putting in some good work; Scovell ended the movement by shooting straight as Hinton. A good centre from Meekin was accepted by Stott, but he overbalanced at the moment of shooting. The Hospital then took up the attack and Walker tried a long shot without success. Continuing to attack the Hospital had a good chance when Lindley ballooned the ball over the bar. A centre would have been more useful. At the other end a pass by Sutherland gave a good opening but the ball was kicked high over the bar. The Hospital again got going and forced a corner, which proved abortive. A little later Catterson shot widely when well placed. Stott broke through just before the half time whistle. Hinton managed to get to his shot—a good save. Half time arrived with a good score nil.

The Hospital opened the second half with an attack, but Yorke and Tomblin were safe at back. The Ordnance then broke away and forced the Hospital were kept on the defensive for a period. Stott, who had changed places with Sutherland was putting in some nice centres, all wasted. On one occasion Scovell balloned the ball over the bar from four yards out. Following a well taken corner a scrimmage ensued in the Hospital goal, and was partially cleared when Sutherland passed to Stott who beat the defence and scored a good goal. The Ordnance kept up the pressure, offside against Sutherland relieved. Two corners fell to the Ordnance in quick succession but were useless. The Hospital eventually broke away and forced a corner off Tomblin. This was well taken but was shooting on the part of the forwards lost any chance of scoring. Walker transferred play and Price conceded a corner to clear. This also proved useless. A little later Price shot Scovell in the area and Stott had no difficulty in increasing the Ordnance lead from the resultant penalty. Play somewhat slackened towards the end of the game. Sutherland broke through and Price was forced to pull up for fouling receiving a caution from the referee. A minute from time Meekin scored from a scrimmage. The game on the whole was interesting but the shooting of both teams was weak especially the Hospital forwards. Lindley was a good goalkeeper. The teams:—

H.A.O.C.—Calthorpe, goal, Yorke and Tomblin, backs, Grey, Burgess and Smith, halves, Walker, Sutherland, Stott, Scovell and Meekin, forwards.

BOLSHEVISM EXPLAINED.

NO TAXES, RENT NOR INTEREST.

An English merchant from the Far East sends the following explanation of the success of Bolshevism to the "Westminster Gazette":

Before the British public arrive at any conclusion regarding the Russian situation, they should scrutinise it from every point of view. I have spent most of the past two years in the Far East, and in the Manchurian Province in particular. Men in my employ have travelled in other parts of the Empire. The conditions reported are as follows: At no time since the dawn of history have the peasantry, and labouring classes been so well off as at present. In the old days the Imperial Tax Collector or in every village would gather up all the corn, eggs, poultry, and other produce and ship it away leaving a slip of paper with a few characters on it as a satisfaction to the owner. Now this food is eaten by its producers. It is a fact that labouring property owners, and merchants are not having a particularly rosy time. Every city in the Far East is crowded with these well-to-do people, particularly in Japan and in Shanghai where the influx of fauts lies able and willing to pay high prices has created quite a housing problem. "Bolshevism" in actual practice really only means the non-payment of taxes, rent and interest and the outrages we hear of are usually the results of disputes over these highly controversial subjects. If the Russian people decide to do away with those time-honoured customs of civilisation, surely it is no concern of ours, anyhow, not so the extent of trying by force of arms to prevent them.

SMALLEST STATE BANKRUPT.

The "Epoca" of Rome states that the Republic of San Marino has from a financial point of view, closed its doors. The trouble has arisen with the famous twelve million lire lottery which was issued in order to restore the finances of the little Republic. For several years prizes were paid, but now the Republic pays no longer, as it is short of cash.

San Marino is the smallest independent State in Europe, and our smallest Ally in the war.

SWISS POPULATION STATIONARY.

Statistics show that the population of Switzerland remained stationary last year, and this is attributed mainly to the ravages of influenza. Deaths, which usually averaged 55,000 in 1913, rose to 74,000.

LAW TO NATIONALISE LITERATURE.

A Petrograd telegram reports that a new law is being prepared by the Bolshevik Government embodying a decree that all persons, exercising the professions of art must work for the Government. All "Specialists"—even authors, the telegram says—will be mobilised, their work being considered national property.

The Belgian Minister of Food Supplies has signed a contract for the immediate despatch to Belgium of 2,000 tons of butter from the Argentine.

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RACING ENTHUSIASTS.

Those who cannot attend the Races can yet have a big interest by taking chances in the "Gazette" weekly competition. All entrance fees less ten per cent given to the winner.

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SPATHIS MINERAL WATERS ARE THE BEST. (ADVT.)

The Indian Government is being urged to impose a further tax on Java sugar, which is arriving in India in increasing quantities. Those interested in the industry in India contend that such action would be both in the interests of the ryots and in those of the Indian Government.