

THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS OF TEL EL-AMARNA. By the REV. A. H. SAYCE, M.A., LL.D., Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology in the University of Oxford.

THE winter before last, one of the most extraordinary and unexpected archæological discoveries of modern times was made in Upper Egypt. Egypt has always been the land of archæological surprises, but its last surprise is, perhaps, the greatest that it has ever afforded us. About midway between Minieh and Assiout, but on the eastern bank of the Nile, are the extensive mounds of an ancient city, now known under the name of Tel el-Amarna. They cover the remains of the capital built by Amenophis IV. or Khu-en-Aten, "the heretic king," as he is familiarly called in the histories of monumental Egypt. Alone among the Pharaohs of his country he deserted the religion and traditions of his fathers, and endeavoured to impose upon his unwilling subjects a new form of faith. Forsaking the worship of Amen of Thebes, of Ra of Heliopolis, of Ptah of Memphis, he professed himself the devoted adorer of the radiant solar disk, in which he saw the image and symbol of the Supreme Deity.

The worship of the solar disk points unmistakably to Syria. It was here that the Sun-god was the central object of worship, adored, though he may have been, under various manifestations and forms. It was here, too, that his special symbol was the solar disk, with wings issuing from either side to denote his omnipresent energy. The winged solar disk may have been originally of Babylonian invention, but it passed at an early time to the other Semitic populations of the East. We find it above the figure of a king on a monolith from Birejik, now in the British Museum, and it is specially characteristic of the monuments of the Hittites. It is true that the same symbol is occasionally met with in Egypt;—Mr. Flinders Petrie has found it on a monument of the Fifth Dynasty, and it surmounts the inscription of a king of the Eleventh Dynasty which is preserved in the Boulaq Museum. But its rarity indicates that it was borrowed from abroad, and it is not until the epoch of the Hyksos invaders, and the age when

the Asiatic wars of the Eighteenth Dynasty brought the Egyptians into contact with Syria and Mesopotamia, that we find it occupying a recognised place in Egyptian art. Like the religious ideas with which it was associated, it was an importation from Semitic Asia.

We now know that the mother of Amenophis IV. was of Asiatic birth. The conquests of Amenophis III., one of the greatest of the great monarchs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, had extended the empire of Egypt as far as the banks of the Euphrates. Here his dominions bordered on those of Tuisratta, called in the cuneiform tablets King of Mitana, a district which is described by Tiglath-pileser I. as lying on the eastern shore of the Euphrates, opposite the Hittite fortress of Carchemish.* The Egyptians called it the land of Nahrina or the "Rivers," and included under the designation the country westward of the Euphrates as far as the streamland of the Orontes. It is the *Aram Naharaim*, or "Syria of the two rivers," of Scripture, and it was from thence that Chushan-rish-athaim came to oppress Israel in the days of Othniel (Judges iii. 8-10). Chushan-rish-athaim must have been a successor of the grandfather of Amenophis IV.

For awhile after his father's death, Amenophis IV. conformed outwardly to the State religion of Egypt, or, at all events, made no endeavour to suppress or supersede it. But a time came when the smouldering hostility of the king and the powerful priesthood of Thebes burst into a flame. Amenophis found it difficult, if not impossible, to remain in the capital of his fathers. Along with the other followers of the new creed, he left Thebes and built himself a new capital on the edge of the desert to the north. Here he assumed the name of *Khu-en-Aten*, "the glory of the solar disk," while his architects and sculptors consecrated a new and peculiar style of art to the new religion, and even the potters decorated the vases they modelled with new colours and patterns.

The archives of the empire were transferred from Thebes to the new residence of the king, and there stored in the royal palace, which stood among its gardens at the northern extremity of the city. But the existence and prosperity of *Khu-en-Aten's* capital were of short duration. When the king died, he left only daughters behind him, whose husbands assumed in succession the royal power. Their reigns lasted but a short time, and it is even possible that more than one of them had to share his power with another prince. At any rate, it was

* In one of the cuneiform tablets at Boulaq the name of the district is written *Mitana-nanu*.

not long before rulers and people alike returned to the old paths. The faith which Khu-en-Aten had endeavoured to introduce was left without worshippers, the Asiatic strangers whom he and his father had promoted to high offices of State were driven from power, and the new capital was deserted, never to be inhabited again. The great temple of the Solar Disk fell into decay like the royal palace, and the archives of Khu-en-Aten were buried under the ruins of the chamber wherein they had been kept. Here they remained, concealed by the friendly sand, until the *fellahin*, searching for *sebâhh*, or nitrous earth, with which to manure their fields, at last brought them to light.

I happened to arrive at Cairo shortly after the discovery was made, and as no cuneiform scholar had as yet seen the tablets, I was of course very anxious to examine them. A few had already been secured by the Boulaq Museum; the rest of those which had been brought to Cairo had passed into private hands, and had been carried away elsewhere. Owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding, I failed to see those which were in the Museum, and it was not until a little before my departure from Egypt, in April, 1888, that M. Bouriant, the Director of the French Archæological School, obtained possession of about a dozen, which he kindly allowed me to copy. M. Bouriant's tablets were all, unfortunately, more or less injured, and I sought in them in vain for an indication of date. One of them, however, contained a reference to "the conquest of Amasis" (*Kasad Amasi*), and as Egyptian history knows of only two kings of that name,—the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and the contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar,—I was bound to conclude that the latter was referred to. We already knew that Egypt had been invaded by the great Chaldæan monarch; and, since the forms of the characters found upon the tablets belonged to the Babylonian and not to the Assyrian variety of cuneiform script, it appeared necessary to see in M. Bouriant's tablets relics of Nebuchadnezzar's Egyptian campaign. The Boulaq Museum already possessed three cylinders, which came from the neighbourhood of the Suez Canal, probably from Tel Defenneh or Tahpanhes, and bore the name and titles of Nebuchadnezzar.

One difficulty, however, stood in the way of ascribing the tablets of Tel el-Amarna to so late a date. On one of those belonging to M. Bouriant, the name of Gimti or Gath occurs, and it is pretty certain that Gath had ceased to exist before the sixth century B.C.

After my departure from Egypt, the question was finally cleared up. More than 160 tablets had been offered for sale

at Vienna, and eventually bought by the Museum at Berlin. Here they were examined by two young Assyriologists, Drs. Winckler and Lehmann, who soon discovered that they consisted of letters and despatches sent to Amenophis III. and his son, Amenophis IV., thus explaining how it was that they had been disinterred at Tel el-Amarna. Another collection of 82 tablets was subsequently acquired by the British Museum, and, during the past winter, the courtesy of M. Grébaud and Dr. Brugsch-Bey has afforded me every facility for copying and examining the collection in the Boulaq Museum. This includes not only the tablets which I had failed to see the preceding spring, but others also which had been afterwards obtained by M. Grébaud.

My visit to Tel el-Amarna, in January, 1889, confirmed M. Grébaud's belief that no other tablets now remain there. The collection was found together in one place, which was pointed out to me, and the discoverers have been careful not to leave a fragment behind them. It is possible, however, that a few pieces may still be in the hands of native dealers; but, substantially, the whole body of tablets is now in European hands. We know, consequently, what they have to tell us.

And the tale is indeed a wonderful one. We learn that in the fifteenth century before our era,—a century before the Exodus—active literary intercourse was going on throughout the civilised world of Western Asia, between Babylonia and Egypt and the smaller states of Palestine, of Syria, of Mesopotamia, and even of Eastern Kappadokia. And this intercourse was carried on by means of the Babylonian language, and the complicated Babylonian script. It implies that, all over the civilised East, there were libraries and schools, where the Babylonian language and literature were taught and learned. Babylonian, in fact, was as much the language of diplomacy and cultivated society as French has been in modern times, with the difference that, whereas it does not take long to learn to read French, the cuneiform syllabary required years of hard labour and attention before it could be acquired. We can now understand the meaning of the name of the Canaanitish city which stood near Hebron, and which seems to have been one of the most important of the towns of Southern Palestine. Kirjath-Sepher, or "Book-town," must have been the seat of a famous library, consisting mainly, if not altogether, as the Tel el-Amarna tablets inform us, of clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform characters. As the city also bore the name of Debir, or "Sanctuary," we may conclude that the tablets were stored in its chief temple, like the libraries of Assyria and Babylonia. It may be that they are

still lying under the soil, awaiting the day when the spade of the excavator shall restore them to the light.

The literary influence of Babylonia in the age before the Israelitish conquest of Palestine explains the occurrence of the names of Babylonian deities among the inhabitants of the West. Moses died on the summit of Mount Nebo, which received its name from the Babylonian god of literature, to whom the great temple of Borsippa was dedicated; and Sinai itself, the mountain "of Sin," testifies to a worship of the Babylonian Moon-god, Sin, amid the solitudes of the desert. Moloch, or Malik, was a Babylonian divinity like Rimmon, the Air-god, after whom more than one locality in Palestine was named, and Anat, the wife of Anu the Sky-god, gave her name to the Palestinian Anah, as well as to Anathoth, the city of "the Anat-goddesses." The resemblances that have been observed between the cosmogonies of Babylonia and Phœnicia probably admit of a similar explanation. Here, too, the religious and philosophical ideas of the people of Canaan were moulded by their Babylonian instructors. Among the tablets from 'Tel el-Amarna, now in the Boulaq Museum, is a legend about Namtar, the Babylonian god of destiny and plague.

It was the southward march of the Hittites from the north, the destructive wars between them and Rameses II., which wasted Palestine with fire and sword, and, finally, the Israelitish conquest of Canaan, which appear to have put an end to the old literary intercourse among the populations of Western Asia, and to have caused the Babylonian language and script to be disused and forgotten. The Hittites forced themselves like a wedge between the Semites of the East and of the West, while the Israelites destroyed the cities and culture of the Canaanites, already exhausted, as they were, by the Hittite invasion and the campaigns of the Egyptian Pharaoh. We know from the Old Testament that Kirjath-Sepher, with its library, was one of the cities smitten by Othniel, never to rise again (Joshua xv.; Judges i.). A knowledge of cuneiform writing ceased to extend westward of the Euphrates, and for a while the inhabitants of Syria had to be content with the hieroglyphs of the Hittites. But it was not long before the practical traders of Phœnicia devised a better means of recording their thoughts or registering their cargoes than the cumbrous pictorial forms which the mountaineers of the Taurus had brought with them. The characters of the Egyptian alphabet were borrowed in their hieratic form, and adapted to the needs of the borrowers. In the tenth century before our era, the Phœnician alphabet comes before us already fully formed.

Among the Tel el-Amarna tablets now in Berlin and London are some from the Babylonian king Burna-buryas, the son of Kuri-galzu, who reigned about 1430 B.C. But the larger part of them are written by persons who were in no way connected with Babylonia, and to whom therefore Babylonian was a foreign language. A considerable number are despatches from Egyptian officers in Palestine and Syria, many of whom bear Semitic names. They throw a curious and unexpected light on the inner history of the country in the age when "the Canaanite was still in the land."

In the present paper, however, I intend to confine myself to the tablets belonging to M. Bouriant and to the Boulaq Museum which I have myself examined and copied. They include some of the most important contained in the whole collection.

Those relating to Palestine first claim our attention. They bear out the evidence of the Egyptian monuments, and indicate that the cities of Palestine acknowledged the suzerainty of the Egyptian sovereign. The affairs of Phœnicia were directed by an Egyptian governor, who bears the Semitic name of Rib-Addu or Rib-Hadad, and who was assisted by Yapa-Addu and Aziru.* Several of his despatches relate to the city of Tsumura or Simyra, the Zemar of Gen. x. 18, which he describes in one of them as "very strongly situated, like a bird whose nest is built on a precipice." At the end of the same despatch reference is made to "the King of Mitana," or Aram Naharaim, "the King of Tarkusi, and the King of the Hittites," as well as to a certain "Yankhan, the servant of the King of Yarimuta"; but the tablet is too much injured to enable us to say whether the relations of the Egyptian official to these personages were friendly or otherwise. Another letter from the same official mentions that two ships belonged to him, and adds that certain animals had been brought to him by Yapa-Addu. In a third tablet the city of Sidon seems to be named, while the tablets at Berlin speak of Tyre, Acre, and Megiddo.

The territory of the Philistines, commanding as it did the northern end of the road from Egypt into Palestine, naturally occupied the attention of the Egyptians a good deal. One of the tablets belonging to M. Bouriant, though broken at the end, is very interesting in this respect. It runs thus: "To the king my lord, speak thus: Thy servant Aruki (or Arudi)

* The name of Rib-Addu may also be read Rip-Dadu. Yapa-Addu, or Dadu, is probably "Hadad is beautiful" (from הפד); and Aziru seems to be the Biblical אַזְרָא .

says: (at the feet of the king) seven times seven do I prostrate myself. . . . When a raid was made, Milki (Melech) of the sea-coast (marched) against the country of the king my lord, commanding the forces of the city of Gedor (*Gaturri*), the forces of the city of Gath (*Gimti*), and the forces of the city of Keilah (*Kilti*). They seized the country of the city of Rabbah (*Rubute*) dependent on the country of the king, belonging to the 'Confederates' (*khabiri*). And again he destroyed entirely the city of the land of Ururusi, the city of the god Uras, whose name (there) is Marru (Marnas), the city of the king, dependent on the locality of the men of Keilah, and twelve cities of my king." Two small tablets in the Boulaq Museum, both unfortunately broken in half, give us further information about the affairs of Southern Palestine. One of them may be translated as follows: "To the king my lord, my gods, my Sun-god, by letter I speak, even Su-arda-ka, thy servant, the dust of thy feet. At the feet of the king my lord, my gods, my Sun-god, seven times seven do I prostrate myself. The king of . . . set himself to make war. In the city of Keilah (*Kelti*) he made war against thee for the third time; a complaint was brought to myself. My city that belongs to me adhered (?) to me. Ebed-tob sent to the men of Keilah. He sent fourteen pieces of silver, and they marched against my rear, and they overran the domains of the king my lord. Keilah, my city, did Ebed-dhabba remove from my jurisdiction. The pleasure-park (?) of the king my lord, and the fortress of Baal-nathan, and the fortress of Hamor (the Amorite) he removed from his presence and his justice. Lab-api, the halting in speech, occupied the fortress of . . . ninu, and when Lab-api, along with Ebed-dhabba and [his companions] occupied the fortress of . . . ninu, the king [sent] to his servant."

Lab-api is mentioned again in the other tablet to which I have referred. What remains of it runs thus: "And, again, the city of Pir(qar), the fortress which is in front of this country, belonging to the king, I made faithful. At that time the city of Gaza (*Khazati*), belonging to the king, which is on the shore of the sea, westward of the country of the cities of Gath and Carmel (?),* fell away to Urgi and the men of Gath. I rode in my chariot (?) for the second time, and we marched up (out of Egypt). Lab-api and the country which thou possessest [went over] for the second time to the men of Hebron, the Confederates (*khabiri*) of Milki-ar'il, and he took (their) sons as hostages (?). At the same time

* It is doubtful whether we are to read Irmila or Kirmila.

he uttered their requests to the men of the district of Kirjath (*Qartu*), and we defended the city of Ururusi. The men of the garrison whom thou hadst left in it were collected by Khapi (Apis), my messenger. Addasi-rakan in his house in the city of Gaza [sent messengers] to the land of Egypt."

The use of the word *khabori*, which occurs here and in the first text I have translated, seems to show that we must render it by "Hebronites" rather than as the common noun "confederates." The word may throw light on the origin of the city of Hebron, which grew up out of a confederacy of tribes worshipping at a common sanctuary, and may explain why the name is not met with on the Egyptian monuments. Kirjath is, perhaps, Kirjath-Sepher, though it may also denote Kirjath-Arba, the old name of Hebron. As for Milki-ar'il, it is formed like Melchizedek or Malchiel, and must be interpreted "Moloch is Ar'il." Ar'il, the Ariel of Isai. *xxix.* 1, and the "lion-like men" of the A. V. in 2 Sam. *xxiii.* 20, has been shown by a passage in an Egyptian papyrus to mean "hero," so that when King Mesha declares on the Moabite Stone that he carried away the אַלֹּים of יהוה and דוד, we must understand that he carried away the consecrated "heroes" who protected the Israelitish shrines of Yahveh and Dodah.

Dodah is the same name as that which we find in the varying forms of Dodo, Dod, and David, and up to now it has not been found outside the pages of the Old Testament, though the feminine Dido proves that it was known to the Phœnicians; and the Assyrian Dadu, corresponding to the Syrian Hadad, comes from the same root. But one of the Tel el-Amarna tablets in the Boulaq Museum now informs us that Dûdu or David was a name employed among the Semites long before the age of the founder of the Empire of Israel, or even of the Exodus. The tablet is a letter addressed by Aziru to his "lord" and "father" Dûdu. We have already made the acquaintance of Aziru, who was one of the lieutenants of Rib-Addu in Phœnicia; and it is possible that the letter to his father was written from that part of the world. The middle of the tablet is injured; what is left of it runs as follows: "To Dûdu, my lord (and) father, I speak, even Aziru, thy son, thy servant; at the feet of my father I prostrate myself; unto the feet of my father may there be peace! O Dûdu, now . . . the foundations of the palace of my lord have been laid, and I have founded (them) for a temple. . . . And now, O Dûdu, my father, plant the gardens, and I will look after the daughter (of the king). [Behold], O my father and my lord, I will look after the girl. . . . I have directed the

planting (of the gardens), and have planted the trees. . . . I am the servant of the king my lord [who comes] from executing the commands of the king my lord [and] the commands of Dâdu my father; (everything) do I observe until his return home . . . he has sent a soldier, and let me come unto thee."

It is clear from the letter that Dâdu, or David, occupied a high position in the court of the Pharaoh, and, like his son, appears to have been employed in laying out the gardens attached to the palace of the Egyptian king. It is even possible that he may have been a Hebrew; at all events, the name has never yet been found in a Phœnician inscription, while we know that it was borne by Israelites. Aziru, too, is probably the Biblical Ezer.

Phœnicia seems to have been the furthest point to the north to which the direct government of Egypt extended. At any rate, the letters which came to the Egyptian monarch from Syria and Mesopotamia were sent to him by princes who called themselves his "brothers," and not by officials who were the "servants" of the king. Doubtless, many of these princes were but semi-independent, and in case of war were required to assist the Egyptian Government. One of those in most frequent correspondence with the Pharaoh was the King of Alasiya, a country which lay to the east of Arvad, in the district afterwards occupied by Homs and Hamath, though it also seems to have possessed a port on the sea-coast. The name of the country has been read "Arosba" and "Arsa" by Egyptologists; but the cuneiform texts now furnish us with its true pronunciation. A very perfectly-preserved tablet at Boulaq, containing a letter from the King of Alasiya, has a docket attached to it in Egyptian hieratic characters, which reads: "The correspondence of the prince of the country of Alasha." The letter is as follows: "To the king of Mitsri (Egypt), my lord, I speak by letter, I, the king of the country of Alasiya, thy brother. I am at peace, and unto thee may there be peace! To thy house, thy daughters, thy son,* thy wives, thy multitudinous chariots, thy horses, and in thy land of Mitsri may there be peace! O my brother, my ambassador has carefully conveyed a costly gift for them, and has listened to thy salutation. This man is my minister, O my brother. Carefully has he conveyed to them the costly gift. My minister has not brought my ship along with them." There is another letter in the Boulaq Museum which is clearly

* Perhaps we may infer, from the mention of the Pharaoh's son, that the letter was addressed to Amenophis III., and not to Amenophis IV.

from the King of Alasiya, though the commencement of it is lost. Here we find: "Now I have sent [thee] as presents a sea (?) of bronze, three talents of hard bronze, the tusk of an elephant, a throne, and the hull (?) of a ship. These gifts, O my brother, this man [brings in] this ship of the king [my lord], and do thou in return send a costly gift to me carefully. [And] do thou, O my brother, [listen to] my request, and give to me the . . . which I have asked for. This man is the servant of the king [my] lord, but the carpenter with me has not finished (his work) in addition to the other presents; yet do thou, O brother, send the costly gift carefully."

The reference to the *sinnu sa biri*, or "elephant's tusk," is interesting. We know, from the Egyptian inscriptions, that Thothmes III. hunted wild elephants in the neighbourhood of Ni, near Aleppo; while, some four or five centuries later, Tiglath-pileser I. did the same in the neighbourhood of Carchemish.

The King of Alasiya was not the only foreign potentate whose letters are preserved in the Museum of Boulaq. One of the tablets in the collection begins in this way: "[To N]imutriya, the King of Egypt, [I speak] by letter, even I, [Ris-takn]la-Sin, the king of the country of Babylonia. My peace be [upon thee], and upon thy wife, thy children, [thy house], and thy chariots and horses; upon all thy [possessions] may there ever be peace!" The letter then goes on to state that the father of the writer had sent his daughter, Irtabi, to the Egyptian Pharaoh many years before, Nimutriya sending presents in return to his father. After his accession to the throne, the Babylonian prince "again sent an ambassador" to Egypt; and, six years later, the Pharaoh forwarded by his envoy Salnási, thirty manehs of gold, besides a certain amount of silver. The object of the letter is to inform the Egyptian monarch that other presents are now on their way from his brother-in-law.

Babylonia is here called Kara-Duniyas, the name by which it went in the age of the Kassite Dynasty. Another potentate who corresponded with the Egyptian kings ruled over a country the name of which is unfortunately lost, a fracture of the tablet having destroyed the characters which composed the name. The letter commences with the words: "[I am] Subbi-kuzki, the king of the country of . . . ma(?)-ti; to Khûri[ya], the [king of] Egypt, [I speak] by letter. [May] there be peace before thee, may there be peace [unto thy wife], thy children, thy house, thy soldiers, [thy] chariots, [and in] the midst of thy country may there ever be peace: O my brother, my ambassador whom I sent to thy father,

and the request which thy father made to the king, saying: "O prince, let us take counsel together," I did not countermand." The royal scribe then inquires why no acknowledgment has been made of the presents he has sent to Egypt, and adds that he is forwarding various other gifts, including a cup of silver five manehs in weight, and a second cup of silver three manehs in weight, as well as two other objects of silver ten manehs in weight.

The most interesting, however, of all the tablets at Boulaq is a long and well-preserved one, which is addressed by Tarkhundaras, king of the country of Arzapi, to Nimutriya, or Amenophis III., the Pharaoh of Egypt. The heading and one or two technical words are in Semitic Assyrian, but the rest of the letter is written in an unknown language. The ideographs employed in it show that the introductory greetings are the same as those found in other letters from foreign potentates to the Egyptian king, and we are thus enabled to determine the meaning of the phonetically-written words which occur in them. Thus the possessive pronoun "my" is expressed by the affix *mi*, and the pronoun "thy" by *ti*, *tim*, and perhaps *ta*, which become *tu* when suffixed to the word signifying "trees." These two pronouns offer a strange similarity to the corresponding pronouns in the Indo-European languages. *Bibbi* is "chariot," and *bibbid* "chariots," while *kalatta* seems to mean "brother." *Ganeda* is "exceedingly," and *khuman-sakh(?)*-in "may there be peace;" *sakh(?)*-an-ta being "thy peace-offering," and *khalu-garitsi* "a messenger." Now, Tarkhundaras is a Hittite name, like the names of Tarkhu-nazi and Tarkhu-lara found on the Assyrian monuments, or the name of Tarkondêmos on the now famous bilingual boss; and the name of the country over which he ruled reminds us of Rezep (2 Kings xix. 12), in North-western Mesopotamia. I am, therefore, tempted to see in the language of the letter one of the Hittite dialects which are concealed under the hieroglyphs of the Hittite texts. The purport of the letter is to describe the various presents sent by Tarkhundaras to the Pharaoh by the messenger, Irsappa, in return for the hand of the Pharaoh's daughter, who had been given to him as a wife. Among the presents sent were 20 manehs of gold and 100 shekels of lead. Mention is made in the letter of "the prince of the Hittites" (*Khatte*), who, it would appear, lived in the mountains of I-gaid.*

* According to the "Travels of the Mobar" (Brugsch's translation), the land of Igad'ai bordered on the country of the Hittites to the north of Aleppo.

The Hittites are alluded to in other tablets at Boulaq. I have already spoken of the despatch of Rib-Addu, in which reference is made to the kings of Tarkusi and the Hittites, as well as to the adjoining kingdom of Mitanna or Naharaim. Another tablet of black clay, unfortunately much worn and injured, tells us that "at that time the king of the Hittites was captured in the vicinity of the country of Kutiti (and) the kings of Mittanni and Nabuma" joined in the war. A despatch now at Berlin contains an urgent request from one of the cities of Syria for help against the Hittites, whose forces were advancing southwards.

One of the facts which result most clearly from a study of the tablets is that, not only was a Semitic language the medium of literary intercourse between the Pharaoh of Egypt and his officers abroad, but that Semites held high and responsible posts in the Egyptian Court itself. Thus we find Dudu, or David, addressed by his son as "my lord," and ranking, apparently, next to the monarch; and there are letters in the Boulaq Collection written not only by officials with an Egyptian name, like Khapi or Hapi (Apis), but with such Semitic names as Rib-Addu, Samu-Addu ("Shem is Hadad") of "the city of Samkhuna," Dasru, Bu-Dadu (the Biblical Bedad), and Milkili (the Biblical Malchiel). Even the Assyrian Su-arda-ka occurs in one of them. A flood of light is thus poured upon a period of Egyptian history which is of high interest for the student of the Old Testament. In spite of the reticence of the Egyptian monuments, we can now see what was the meaning of the attempt of Amenophis IV. to supersede the ancestral religion of Egypt. The king was in all respects an Asiatic. His mother, who seems to have been a woman of strong character,—able to govern not only her son, but even her less pliable husband,—came from the region of the Euphrates, and brought with her Asiatic followers, Asiatic ideas, and an Asiatic form of faith. The Court became Semitised. The favourites and officials of the Pharaoh, his officers in the field, his correspondents abroad, bore names which showed them to be of Canaanite and even of Israelitish origin. If Joseph and his brethren had found favour among the Hyksos princes of an earlier day, their descendants were likely to find equal favour at the Court of "the heretic king."

We need not wonder, therefore, if Amenophis IV. found himself compelled to quit Thebes. The old aristocracy might have condoned his religious heresy,—they could not condone his supplanting them with foreign favourites. The rise of the 19th Dynasty marks the successful reaction of the native Egyptian against the predominance of the Semite in the

closing days of the 18th Dynasty. It was not the founder of the 18th Dynasty, but the founder of the 19th Dynasty that was "the new king who knew not Joseph." Ever since the progress of Egyptology had made it clear that Rameses II. was the Pharaoh of the oppression, it was difficult to understand how so long an interval of time as the whole period of the 18th Dynasty could lie between him and that "new king" whose rise seems to have been followed almost immediately by the servitude and oppression of the Hebrews. The tablets of Tel el-Amarna now show that the difficulty does not exist. Up to the death of Khu-en-Aten, the Semite had greater influence than the native in the land of Mizraim.

The legend under which Manetho veiled the history of the Exodus now also receives its explanation.* Amenophis, the son of Rameses, we are told, desired to see the gods, like his predecessor, Oros, and accordingly, by the advice of the wise man Amenophis, the son of Paapis, he removed all the leprous people in Egypt, 80,000 in number, to the quarries on the east bank of the Nile. Among them was a priest of Heliopolis, Osarsiph, in whose name the sacred first syllable of *Joseph* has been replaced by the name of the Egyptian god Osiris. After a time, Amenophis retired to Ethiopia, the leprous people, who had meanwhile been transferred to the deserted city of Avaris, having revolted with the assistance of the descendants of the Hyksos, now settled in Jerusalem. For 13 years Egypt was wasted by them with fire and sword, its temples plundered, and the images of the gods destroyed; and it was not until the end of that fatal period, that Amenophis returned from Ethiopia with his son Sethos, and expelled the enemy under their leader Osarsiph, who had assumed the name of Moses. Sethos is plainly Seti II., Rameses being Rameses II., and Amenophis his son Meneptah, in whose reign, as we now know, the Exodus must have taken place. Oros, whose conduct Amenophis desired to imitate, was a king of the 18th Dynasty, and takes the place of Khu-en-Aten in the list of Manetho. In the tablets of Tel el-Amarna, Khu-en-Aten is usually called Nimkhururiya, corresponding to the prænomen hitherto read by Egyptologists, Nofer-kheperu-Ra; but, as we have seen, Subbi-kuzbi, in the letter mentioned above, gives him the abbreviated title of Khūriya, which is exactly the Oros of Manetho. It would appear, then, that the Egyptian legend has mixed together Amenophis IV., under whom the Semites and their religion became predominant in Egypt, with Meneptah, the Pharaoh of the Exodus. As Pro-

* Josephus, cont. Ap. i. 26-35.

fessor Erman has pointed out, Amenophis, the son of Pa-Apis, must be Amen-hotep, the son of Hapi, who erected the colossus of Memnon at Thebes during the reign of Amenophis III.

So far as the date of the Exodus is concerned, the newly-found tablets confirm the conclusions already arrived at by Egyptology, and so brilliantly verified by M. Naville's discovery of the site of Pithom. At the close of the 18th Dynasty, Palestine was still Canaanite; the Israelitish invasion had not as yet taken place, and the only foreign dominion acknowledged by its cities was that of Egypt. Between Canaan and Egypt, indeed, there was close and constant intercourse. The towns of Palestine were garrisoned by Egyptian troops, and, though its governors bore Semitic names, they were officials of the Egyptian king. Egyptian influence and supremacy extended through Syria as far as the banks of the Euphrates; the Hittite conquests in the north and the Israelitish conquests in the south had not as yet driven Egypt back into Africa, and separated the eastern and western portions of the educated world one from the other.

How highly educated this old world was we are but just beginning to learn. But we have already learnt enough to discover how important a bearing it has on the criticism of the Old Testament. It has long been tacitly assumed by the critical school that writing was not only a rare art in Palestine before the age of David, but was practically unknown. Little historical credence can be placed, it has been urged, in the earlier records of the Hebrew people, because they could not have been committed to writing until a period when the history of the past had become traditional and mythical. But this assumption can no longer be maintained. Long before the Exodus, Canaan had its libraries and its scribes, its schools and literary men. The annals of the country, it is true, were not inscribed in the letters of the Phœnician alphabet on perishable papyrus; the writing-material was the imperishable clay,—the characters those of the cuneiform syllabary. A new light is thus thrown on royal lists like that contained in Genesis xxxvi. Why should this not be an extract from the chronicles of Edom originally written in the cuneiform syllabary of Babylonia? A connexion with Babylonia is indicated by the statement that Saul came from "Rehoboth" or "the city-streets by the river" Euphrates, more especially when it is remembered that Saul, or Sawul, is the Babylonian name of the Sun-god. Though Kirjath-Sepher was destroyed by the Israelites, other cities mentioned in the Tel el-Amarna tablets, like Gaza, or Gath, or Tyre,

remained independent, and we cannot imagine that the old traditions of culture and writing were forgotten in any of them. In what is asserted by the critical school to be the oldest relic of Hebrew literature,—the Song of Deborah,—reference is made to the scribes of Zebulun “that handle the pen of the writer” (Judges v. 14), and we have now no longer any reason to interpret the words in a non-natural sense, and transform the scribe into a military commander. Only it is probable that the scribes still made use of the cuneiform syllabary, and not yet of the Phœnician alphabet.

In the hands of writers like Stade, criticism has reached the extreme point of scepticism; and, just as in early Greek history, the discoveries of Schliemann and others have obliged us to reconsider the negative judgments of twenty years ago, and to admit a substratum of truth in the old traditions, so, too, we may confidently hope that archæological discovery will, before long, enable us to reconstruct that history of Israel of which modern criticism would fain deprive us. At all events, the Tel el-Amarna tablets have overthrown the primary foundation on which much of this criticism was built, and have proved that the populations of Palestine among whom the Israelites settled, and whose culture they inherited, were as literary as the inhabitants of Egypt or Babylonia. If we are to doubt the statement that Othniel, the Kenizzite, took the city of Kirjath-Sepher and defeated the forces of the king of Aram-Naharaim, it must be for some better reason than the literary ignorance of the Hebrews and the neighbouring tribes.

It is impossible for me now to touch upon the many other points in which the tablets of Tel el-Amarna have come to the aid of the student of ancient history. Thus light is thrown upon the pronunciation of ancient Egyptian by such spellings as Nimnuriya and Nimmuriya for the prænomen of Amenophis III., hitherto read Ra-mât-neb and Ra-mâ-neb; and the etymology I proposed for the name of Moses, in my Hibbert Lectures,* has received a striking verification. I had there pointed out that the name is the exact equivalent of the Babylonian word, *Masu*, “a hero,” an epithet which I tried to show was applied to the Sun-god. Within a year after the publication of my Lectures, one of M. Bouriant’s tablets showed that my conclusions were right. In a despatch from Zinardi to the Egyptian king, the Pharaoh is called, as usual, “the Sun-god rising from the Divine Day”; and it is then added, in a parenthesis, “whose name is Masu.” This

* *On the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians.*

proves not only that the term "Masu" was applied to the Sun-god, but was actually used of the Egyptian Pharaoh in the century before Moses was born. It may be that later ages confounded the Semitic "Masu" with the Egyptian *mesu*, "a son," and the Hebrew "Mosheh," or Moses, with "Mes," "the Prince of Kush," in the reign of Rameses II., thus originating the legend, recorded by Josephus, of the campaign of Moses in Ethiopia; but it is impossible to believe that the great law-giver of the Hebrew nation could have continued to bear through life an Egyptian name.

But, apart from such side-lights as these upon ancient history,—apart also from the more important facts which have already resulted from an examination of the texts,—the discovery of the tablets of Tel el-Amarna has a lesson for us of momentous interest. The collection cannot be the only one of its kind. Elsewhere in Palestine and Syria, as well as in Egypt, similar collections must still be lying under the soil. Burnt clay is not injured by rain and moisture, and even the climate of Palestine will have preserved uninjured its libraries of clay. Such libraries must still be awaiting the spade of the excavator on the sites of places like Gaza or Kirjath-Sepher, or others whose remains are buried under the lofty mounds of Southern Judæa. Why should Palestine, the sacred land of our faith, remain unexcavated, while all over the rest of the ancient Oriental world the disinterrers of the past have been vieing with one another with feverish activity? Why should workmen and funds be found for exhuming the buried history of early Greece, while the religious public is content with surveying the surface of the soil of Palestine? There is not much to be discovered on that surface which has survived the wreck of centuries; it is only within the kindly bosom of the earth that we shall find, hidden and preserved, the precious relics of the past. The tablets of Tel el-Amarna are an earnest that they will yet be found, if they are properly searched for; and that our children, if not ourselves, will yet know how the people of Canaan lived in the days of the Patriarchs, and how their Hebrew conquerors established themselves among them in the days when, as yet, "there was no king in Israel."

The LORD CHANCELLOR.—Mr. President, ladies, and gentlemen : I have to perform a duty on your behalf in which I have no doubt I shall have the sympathy and the approval of you all, and that is to propose that our best thanks be presented to Professor Sayce for the Annual Address now delivered ; and I have an addition to make to that resolution, but for the moment I will pause at the first part of the resolution. I suppose there is nothing more interesting in an Institution of this character than the discovery of those relics of the past to which allusion has been made ; when we remember the darkness that has surrounded the ancient history of the Egyptians, and when we look back some seventy or eighty years ago and read the history of Renourd and such Essays we feel there was some excuse for not knowing the history of Egypt ; but now the darkness has rolled away, and the result of recent discoveries is to light up a period that has hitherto been lost in darkness : but I am afraid in the exultation one feels in looking at the discovery of these buried treasures, one is apt, sometimes, to forget the deep debt of gratitude which we owe to those who have brought these things to light (cheers). It is easy to listen with deep interest to such a narrative as we have had to-night, and to the indications of a civilisation almost earlier than we dreamt of ; but I fear we do not always remember the long study and the careful labour that has been required to put the disjointed pieces together, and to elucidate the history that there lies buried, and which is being brought to light by men like Professor Sayce, and, therefore, we should endeavour to recognise the deep debt of gratitude that we owe to such men (cheers). I think we should incompletely do our duty if we did not add our thanks to those who have read papers during the session, and to Dr. Wright for reading the paper we have just heard, and when we regard such an array of consonants from which humanity almost starts back, in reading a paper of this description, we cannot but feel admiration for the way in which Dr. Wright has performed his task. I beg, therefore, to move the resolution standing in my name (cheers).

Monsieur E. NAVILLE. — Mr. President, my lords, ladies, and gentlemen : I have great pleasure in seconding the admirable resolution put forward by the Lord Chancellor of England, and I will say very few words, as English is not my native tongue. Certainly the

discovery made in Tel-el-Amarna is one of the most remarkable that has been made in Egypt in this century. We should never have expected to find that the Babylonian language would become a diplomatic language, as Professor Sayce says it was at the time of the 18th dynasty. To us, as Egyptologists, this discovery is of the greatest importance, because it shows that the conquest of the Egyptian kings lasted and had more lasting influence over the countries conquered than we thought of. We generally supposed that after the death of a king who made great conquests, such as those of Thothmes III., everything found its level; but we see that the dominion of Egypt lasted over three, four, or even five reigns in succession: and a very curious point is this, that we see old Egyptian kings of conquered states treated the natives as the governors of those states, and those natives communicated with them in the Babylonian language, which was not well known to the Egyptian kings, for on one of those tablets of Boulaq, I think it is one of the foreign kings who writes to the king of Egypt saying that he sends to him an interpreter in order that he may understand his letter more completely. But what I would like to impress on your mind is this: That even now, at this time, Egypt is still the land of the unexpected,—the land of the marvellous. I have great faith in Egyptian soil, and I think, if properly worked, it might show us and give us treasures which would be of the greatest value in contributing to our knowledge of Egyptian ancient history. I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution.

The President having put the resolution to the meeting, it was duly carried.

Reverend W. WRIGHT, D.D.—Sir George Stokes, my lords, ladies, and gentlemen: I should like to say a few words of special interest in regard to Professor Sayce. We have his Address here to-night by what we may call a miracle. In fact, the life of Professor Sayce (one of the most precious lives in the world) has been preserved to us by what I may call a miracle. He landed one morning from his boat on the Nile, and went ashore and was bitten by the deadly asp; he hurried into his boat, and with his own hand burnt the bitten part down to the bone, he then turned to the table, wrote out his will, and prepared for the worst. His people waited to see what would happen, but finding no ill ensue, they said he was under the protection of *Allah*, and they were right, and they were thankful to *Allah*, whom we call God, for preserving the life of Professor Sayce.

It is a great pleasure to know that he has brought these things to light, and one great result is this: Our wise friends, the critics, knew well that it was impossible for Moses to write the Pentateuch, for there were no means of writing the Pentateuch at that time; so they used the *argumentum ad silentium* to show that Moses could not have written it, *i.e.*, the absence of evidence as evidence. Now this Address is very far-reaching, and has turned the flank of the whole of their position, and has struck the foundation from under all their theory. It may, of course, be possible that some of Professor Sayce's deductions may require to be modified under fuller light. A man who leads will sometimes have to retrace his steps. Now, if you should hear that Professor Sayce is mistaken about some little thing, remember what I have just said. As for myself, I deserve no thanks; but to Professor Sayce we cannot return too hearty acknowledgments for his splendid Address (cheers).

Sir J. RISDON BENNETT, M.D., F.R.S.—My lords, ladies, and gentlemen, I have had conferred on me the honour of asking you to express your thanks to our esteemed and honoured President for his protection and conduct of the Institute during the past year. I need not, I am sure, say how much this Society, and society at large, is indebted to one holding his position, for the kind attention and interest that he has given and manifested in such an Institute as this. We know well how valuable his time is; but we also know how valuable his aid is; and in regard to our proceedings, as you know, he has on many occasions expressed himself in terms of approval of the influence exercised by the Institute. I will not occupy your time more than by putting the resolution, which I am sure will be carried unanimously—that a hearty vote of thanks be presented to our President for his services to this Institute during the past year (cheers).

Admiral Sir ERASMUS OMMANNEY, R.N., C.B., F.R.S.—I can add nothing to the words which have been expressed by Sir Risdon Bennett in praise of our distinguished President who now occupies the chair—a man so eminent and distinguished in science, and so conspicuous before the world. As to the researches in Egypt and the revelation of the marvellous works discovered by Professor Sayce, I can only say that they will be of great advantage to the objects with which this Institute was founded. I must add that I, in common I doubt not with all present, have derived great pleasure from what we have heard this evening (cheers).

Staff-Commander **ETTRICK W. CREAK, R.N., F.R.S.**—Mr. President, my lords, ladies, and gentlemen: I rise to convey the vote of thanks to Sir George Stokes for his Presidency during the past year. I am sure the Institute has derived the most marked benefit from having as its President one who, like the late Sir Isaac Newton, occupies the unique position of President of the Royal Society, Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, and Member of Parliament (cheers).

The **PRESIDENT.**—I am much obliged to those who have so kindly proposed and seconded this vote of thanks, and to you all for receiving it in the way you have done. I feel, indeed, that I have by no means discharged the duties entrusted to me as I ought to have done. But I can only say that I have a great many different things to attend to, and I hope my shortcomings will be looked upon with leniency (cheers).

The members, associates, and their guests then adjourned to the Museum, where refreshments were served.
