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I. LITERARY.

OTHERWORLDLINESS IN ANCIENT EGYPT.

PROF. W. W. MOORE.

The land of Egypt is a picture of life in the midst of death. The narrow valley of the Nile teems with life from end to end, but it is shut in on both sides by the deadly desert. The people who of old occupied this rich green river bottom, a hundred times as long as it is wide, and flanked throughout its whole course by wastes of yellow sand, were observant, thoughtful, and in their way profoundly religious. This idea of life in the midst of death, of which their land itself was an ever present emblem, seems never to have been absent from their minds. No people perhaps in the history of this world ever lived so exclusively for another world; nor was this altogether to their credit, as we shall presently see. But the thought of death and a future life is a solemn thought, however much men may abuse it by making it the only incentive to righteousness. And therefore the overshadowing predominance of this thought in the minds of the ancient Egyptians gave to their civilization a grave and even sombre cast, and to their monuments that air of august solemnity, deepening even to gloom, which to this day distinguishes their melancholy magnificence from the ruins of any other civilization however stately.

THE SCARABAEUS.

Being sharp-sighted naturalists, the Egyptians seem to have been impressed at an early period of their history with the habits of a certain insect which is very common in their country, viz:—the beetle or scarab. They observed that the beetle deposited its eggs on the moist bank of the river, but instead of leaving them there to be swept away by the inundation or otherwise injuriously affected by the dampness, it enclosed

ROME.

MARY TUCKER MAGILL.

A traveller approaching Rome for the first time experiences a strange feeling of excitement and expectation. The past so much overshadows the present that he cannot divest himself of the idea that he is about to be transported one or two thousand years backward in the march of time. It seems out of place to be flying along on a railroad track; it destroys the congruity of his ideas. And when he is landed in a very modern depot lighted by brilliant electric lights instead of flaring Roman torches, he is fairly disgusted. At least I can give this as the experience of your correspondent. And the feeling of disappointment was not lessened when the morning light shining into the windows of the hotel on the old Esquilinal hill shone also in houses as modern as in the streets of London or New York. The Esquilinal! where old Servius Tullius had his palace, and Nero built a part of his celebrated golden house, of which Suetonius says: "the porch was so high that there stood in it a colossal statue of himself 120 feet in height, and the space included in it was so ample that it had triple porticoes a mile in length, and a lake like a sea, surrounded by buildings which had the appearance of a city. Within its area were corn-fields, vineyards, pastures, and woods, containing a vast number of animals of various kinds, both wild and tame. In other parts it was entirely overlaid with gold and adorned with jewels and mother of pearl. The supper rooms were vaulted and compartments of the ceilings inlaid with ivory were made to revolve and scatter flowers, while they contained pipes which shed scents upon the guests. The chief banquetting room was circular and revolved perpetually, night and day, in imitation of the heavenly bodies." And it was on a tower of this magnificent house that Nero sat dressed like a harper and played upon his harp while Rome was burning. But how impossible to realize all this as one stands looking upon the life of today. The truth is, that the classic old Esquiline has been burned over and over again and for centuries deserted for newer settlements, and is now occupied almost entirely by the new city. But a few blocks away, however, we find ourselves in the midst of the ruins of ancient Rome and drink in history at every step.

I had the good fortune to witness a magnificent illumination of the Coliseum and the Forum Romanum which was the

grandest thing of the kind I ever saw. The Coliseum glowed like a living coal of fire bringing out every arch and crevice with wonderful vividness, and firing the imagination with the thought of the honors which had made its history, the tens of thousands who had crowded its galleries to feast their eyes upon the tortures of their fellow beings, "butchered to make a Roman holiday."

The finest view of Rome, I think, is obtained from the summit of the Janiculum hill where Lars Porsena had his camp when he laid siege to Rome; where also is the tomb of Numa, and where centuries later Tasso was buried, and where tradition, says St. Peter, was executed. No ride can be more beautiful than the winding ascent of this hill at every turn awakening some classic memory, or feasting the eye with the sight of luxuriant gardens attached to beautiful villas. And when the highest point is reached and the Eternal City lies out-spread before us—sitting upon her seven hills—satisfaction for the moment, is complete. There are the Palatine and the Capitoline hills with the Forum Romanum between them. There is the hill Quirinalis, upon which stands the magnificent palace of the King of Italy. And there on another hill is the peerless dome of St. Peter. There is the Coliseum, the finest ruin in that city of ruins, a monument sacred to the memory of thousands of Christian heroes who met death at the hands of ruthless tyrants. But time and space would fail me should I attempt to give even a birds-eye view of this, the most wonderful city in the world, and I must confine myself to the religious aspect of Rome which must interest the readers of this MAGAZINE.

A stranger taking a walk through the streets of the Eternal City, and meeting, as he invariably does, the long processions of priests in their varying costumes, from the friar in his filthy dress of grey serge to the cardinal in his magnificent vestments and costly jewels, would judge that the Rome of the present day is as deeply dyed and as besotted in error as the Rome of centuries ago. But this is far from being the case. The struggle which deprived the Pope of his temporal power, and bestowed it upon a king chosen by the people, struck a blow at the foundations of the Roman church, which will end in its fall. It has shown to the thinking portion of the population that the dogma of infallibility, is an absurdity that the man, who against his will could be deprived of his most valued prerogatives, could

scarce be the vicegerent of God with the power of divinity behind him. I asked an Italian, a plain man, but educated and very intelligent, "What is your opinion of the present position of the Pope?" I shall never forget the fiery emphasis of his answer. It was, "I believe in God, our Creator, our Providence. I believe in Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. But I do not believe in that old man who sits up in the Vatican and claims a right to rule the consciences of the world. I am a member of the Catholic church, I was baptized in it, and I suppose I will never belong to any other, but I have seven sons, and I say to them, 'chose for yourselves, according to your consciences, not according to the traditions of your fathers; be Christians but not necessarily Roman Catholics.'" I asked him if he represented the opinions of any considerable portion of his people. He declared that he did and that liberty of thought was growing with the more liberal education of the people. When returning to America I was thrown into the company of a young American priest who had been educated in Rome and was returning to take up his work at home. I put to him the same question, "What is your opinion of the right of the Pope to temporal power." He answered:

"His right to it is unquestionable, and he will never give up the struggle for it; but how he is to regain it I cannot see."

These two men represent the extremes of opinion in Italy. The priesthood are bound by their vows to believe as they are told, there is no liberty of thought for them. Their vows prevent the possibility. The utterly ignorant are with them and are kept with them by the old absurd superstitions which the priests themselves can no longer believe, but of which they continue the religious observance, as a means of holding the masses of the people in the iron grasp of the Roman Catholic church.

How is it possible in this enlightened age for men of mind and education to believe in the childish superstitions which constitute, in so large a measure, the worship of that church. Let me mention a few.

Upon the top of the Capitoline Hill is the little church of Ara Coeli, which is approached by a flight of stone worn by the feet of weary pilgrims who for centuries have trodden them to worship at the shrine of the famous Santissimo Bambino, a wooden image of the Christ-child at about three years of age, which tradition declares was carved from a tree of the Mount of Olives, by St. Luke, and also painted by him. The story re-

lates, how ages ago this image was transferred from Jerusalem to Rome, and on the voyage the vessel was lost and the box containing this sacred relic was miraculously preserved and was found floating on the waters hundreds of miles from the place of wreckage. It is supposed to have especial care of children, and when a child is taken ill the parents send off in haste for the Bambino, which owns a carriage and horses by which it is immediately transported to the house of the sufferer, and if through its miraculous ministrations the child recovers, the parents in gratitude lavish, according to their ability, their treasures upon the benevolent log of wood. If the child fails to recover, the failure is due, not to want of power in the image but some sin in the parents which prevents its efficacy. The little figure is fantastically draped and literally loaded from the crown of its head to the sole of its feet with the most precious jewels. Bracelets, pins, ear-rings, necklaces, bear a pathetic witness to the gratitude of tender mothers rejoicing over the recovery of their children and esteeming nothing too precious to give in gratitude to the supposed benefactor. But think of the besotted condition of the poor creatures who can believe such folly, and the guilt of those who, not believing, lead others into such degrading error.

Next comes the church of St. Agostino, which contains a sitting statue of the virgin with the child. I stood before this statue for an hour perhaps, and in that time there was no break in the procession of men, women and children. Mothers with babies in their arms stooping to kiss the feet of the virgin and pressing the rosy lips of their unconscious babies into the same service; strong men of the lower classes generally, passed along observing with superstitious reverence the same absurd ceremony. And each in passing—however ragged their clothing and hunger-pallid their faces—dropped their pieces of money in the virgin's money-box. The two images were loaded with jewels, crown upon crown rested or hung above their heads sparkling with precious stones, and the entire breadth of the church, and a fourth of its length was hung with the bestowed wealth of the nation, lavished upon stocks and stones, while the nation without begs its bread and wallows in squalid poverty-stricken homes. Should the religious revolution which is predicted, really break out in this fair but storm-cursed land, a terrible retribution awaits the church of Rome, in the wresting of her hoarded wealth by the dispoiled people. In connection with the description of this church of St. Agostino it may be

of interest to tell the legend upon which it is said to be founded. A short distance away is a tower, called in Hawthorn's "Marble Faun", "Hilda's tower," but otherwise known as "The Monkey Tower." A monkey seized a baby and bore it to the top of this tower, the mother in agony knelt below and prayed to the virgin for the rescue of her child, and to propitiate the mother of Christ, promised that if her prayer was heard she would erect a shrine to her. At once—lo! the monkey, holding the baby securely, descends by means of a water pipe and lays it at the feet of its mother, who at once, placed a shrine with a lamp before it in the tower. Afterwards the church was erected and the statue of mother and child placed there in commemoration of the miracle.

I went one day to the Scala Santa, or sacred stairway, where I saw as many as fifty men and women crawling up on their knees, and I thought of Luther, who while thus ascending seemed to hear a voice whisper to him, "The just shall live by Faith," which struck sudden conviction to him and rising to his feet he turned about and walked down, there are twenty-eight marble steps which were brought, so tradition states, from Pilate's house in Jerusalem, by the mother of Constantine, and down which our Lord came from the hall of judgment. The blood from his bleeding brow dropped upon some of the steps, and left ineffaceable stains. These are kissed by the toilers up the ascent. The marble of the steps has been worn away by the knees of the poor deceived pilgrims, and they are covered with wood. As I stood and looked pityingly at an old woman who was trying to get to the top, a friar came up and tried to tempt me to the task by a promise of indulgences and a thousand years less in purgatory. But when my English tongue refused, he turned his back exclaiming with disgust, "Americano!"

This is bad enough, but the revelations in the cemetery under the church of Cappucini were a shade darker. Let me quote a fine description from Hawthorn. "A corridor runs beside the grated windows which give light to the cemetery, and gives access to three or four vaulted recesses or chapels, of considerable breadth and height, the floor of which consists of consecrated earth from Jerusalem, in which are laid the dead brethren of the convent. But as the cemetery is small, and it is a precious privilege to sleep in holy ground, the brotherhood are immemorably accustomed, when one of their number dies to take the longest buried skeleton out of the oldest grave and

lay the new slumberer there instead. Thus each of the friars in turn enjoys the luxury of a consecrated bed, with the slight drawback of having to get up and make room for another lodger. The arrangements of the unearthed skeletons is what makes the special interest of the cemetery. The arches and vaulted walls of the burial place are supported by massive pillars and pilasters made of the thigh bones and skulls, and the knobs and embossed ornaments of this strange structure are represented by the joints of the spine and the more delicate tracery by the smaller bones of the human frame. The summits of the arches are adorned with entire skeletons looking as if they were wrought most skilfully in bas-relief. There is no possibility of describing how ugly and grotesque is the effect combined with a certain artistic merit, nor what a multitude of monks, through how many hundred years, have contributed their long frame work to build up these great arches of mortality. On some of the skulls there are inscriptions stating that such a monk, who formerly made use of that head-piece died on such a day and year. But vastly the greater number are piled up undistinguishably into the architectural design, like the many deaths which make up the one glory of a victory. In the sides of the walls, in vaults and niches, skeletons of monks sit and stand, clad in the brown habits which they wore in life. Their skulls, some quite bare and others covered with yellow skin and the hair which has known the earth damp, looks out from beneath their hoods grinning, hideously repulsive. One reverend father has his mouth wide open as if he had died in the midst of a howl of terror and remorse, and is perhaps even now screeching through eternity. As a general thing, however, these frocked and hooded skeletons seem to take a more cheerful view of their position and try with ghastly smiles to turn it into a jest. There is no unpleasant scent which might be expected from the decay of so many holy persons. In whatever odor of sanctity they may have taken their departure, the same number of living monks would not smell half so unexceptionably."

To this very graphic description I will only add that one of the frocked and hooded skeletons was made more hideous by a full set of false teeth, with pink gums fitted into his long jaws. I asked the friar who acted as our guide if he expected to go through this process of dismemberment. He answered cheerfully, "Yes!" adding that it was sufficient privilege to lie in holy ground three weeks.

Such is Rome! the most interesting, the most historic city in the world. God grant that her future may be greater because purer than the past. The freedom to worship God as conscience dictates is open to all. Churches of all denominations are there and full congregations worship in them.

