

RECORDS OF THE PAST:

BRING

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

OF THE

ASSYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN MONUMENTS.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE SANCTION

OF

THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL ARCHÆOLOGY.

EGYPTIAN TEXTS.



Multæ terricolis linguæ, cœlestibus una.

LONDON:

SAMUEL BAGSTER AND SONS,

15, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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VOL. II.

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NOTE.

Every Text here given is either now translated for the *first time*, or has been specially revised by the Translator to the date of this publication.

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CONTENTS.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION	i
PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION	iii
Inscription of Una	I
By S. BIRCH, LL.D.				
Instructions of Amenemhat I	...	...	...	9
By G. MASPERO.				
ANNALS OF THOTHMES III :—				
Statistical Tablet	...	...	...	17
By S. BIRCH, LL.D.				
Tablet of Thothmes III	...	...	...	23
By S. BIRCH, LL.D.				
Battle of Megiddo	...	...	...	29
By S. BIRCH, LL.D.				
Inscription of Amen-Em-Heb	...	...	...	53
By S. BIRCH, LL.D.				
War of Rameses II with the Khita	...	...	...	59
By PROF. E. L. LUSHINGTON.				
Inscription of Pianchi Mer-Amon	...	...	...	73
By the REV. CANON COOK, M.A.				
Tablet of Nefer-Hotep	...	...	...	99
By PAUL PIERRET.				
Travels of an Egyptian	...	...	...	101
By FRANÇOIS CHABAS.				
Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys	...	...	...	111
By P. J. DE HERRACK.				

CONTENTS.

Hymn to Amen-Ra	... ..	121
	By C. W. GOODWIN, M.A.	
Tale of the Two Brothers	... ..	131
	By P. LE PAGE RENOUF.	
Tale of the Doomed Prince	... ..	147
	By C. W. GOODWIN, M.A.	
Calendar	... ..	155
Table of Dynasties	... ..	156
Measures and Weights	... ..	158
Lists of Further Texts	... ..	159
	Selected by GEO. SMITH, and P. LE PAGE RENOUF.	
Original Circular.		



P R E F A C E
T O
T H E S E C O N D E D I T I O N .



THE success which has attended the publication of the "RECORDS OF THE PAST," and the increasing interest taken in the translations has rendered a second edition of the second volume necessary. The observations already made in the preface to the first edition are equally applicable to the second, and it may be added that the different translations there given have been carefully revised and improved by amended versions, the introduction of more explanatory notes requisite to clear up the meaning of some of the unusual or doubtful expressions. The recent discovery of more complete texts in the excavations made by Mariette-Bey has enabled some of the

translations to be enlarged and completed. Altogether this edition will be found to have been brought up to the state of knowledge of the day, and the improvements rendered necessary by philological progress.



P R E F A C E
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T H E F I R S T E D I T I O N .

THE second volume of the "RECORDS OF THE PAST" contains a translation of some of the principal Egyptian texts in the hieroglyphic and hieratic character. Although the interpretation of the Egyptian has been pursued for nearly half a century, and the progress made has been quite satisfactory, so that the nature and tenor of all inscriptions and texts are made out, some difficulties still lie in the way about certain points, and some difference of opinion prevails about the meaning of a few words or their exact equivalents in transcribing them into modern letters. These however are comparatively few, and the different transcriptions are not greater than those found in the works of scholars who have translated or written works upon modern Oriental languages. It is indeed to be regretted that one uniform mode of spelling or transcribing the same word in Oriental languages, has not been adopted by scholars, but notwithstanding the proposal of different universal systems for this purpose, none has hitherto been adopted. The state in which all ancient documents have come down to the present day is that of mutilation, more or less severe, according to the dangers to which they have been

exposed. On monuments engraved on stone it is sometimes greater than on the more fragile materials, such as papyrus or leather used for the purposes of writing. Although it is possible to supply the smaller lacunæ by conjectures, more or less happy, of the obvious meaning, some monuments have lost so much of their text that the attempt to restore it would be misleading the general inquirer. Each translator uses his judgment in this respect, and restorations of texts like those of injured sculpture must be accepted for what they are worth. In the present work they are inserted between parentheses, to distinguish them from passages which exist in the originals the meaning of which is doubtful, the passages of which are given in italics. Besides the difficulties already mentioned there are others in Egyptian texts, such as an occasional and startling change of the personal pronoun, and an abrupt transition of tense. These were probably flights of fine writing, according to the Egyptian standard of taste, but have not the same merit at the present day. On the whole there is little idiom in the texts, especially the historical, for after the fulsome laudation of deified sovereigns, which encumbers with its luxuriance the commencement of historical documents, the narrative is clear, and the metaphors sparingly introduced are at once simple and intelligible; the text marches to the cadence of a harmonious syntax.

There are some points to be remembered about the transcription of proper names of kings and other persons which appear in this little volume. The Egyptian kings had generally five, sometimes as

many as six names and titles. Two of these only are of great importance for historical and chronological inquirers, those introduced into rings or so called cartouches. The first, the solar or divine name, is the premen; the second, the family or birth name. Some Egyptologists formerly translated the premen, but in consideration of the difficulty attending it, on account of the doubtful meaning of these premenes and their historical importance, they have been of late only transliterated, and will be so found in the volume, as Ra-ser-ka, Ra-men-kheper, Ra-user-ma, etc. Some differences of transcription also prevail in names; some such as Thothmes, having been transcribed Tet-mes, Tot-mes, and even Taaud-mes by different Egyptologists. In order to render the meaning still more perspicuous the Greek equivalent names have in a few cases been introduced and employed by different translators: thus the Egyptian word Un has been translated Heliopolis, the Greek equivalent or name of the same city, and Harpocrates has been in the same way introduced instead of its Egyptian form Har-pa-khrat. Nothing has more impeded the general diffusion of Oriental knowledge and interest than the strange and unknown names which the general inquirer finds on opening translations of ancient or modern Oriental texts, although by degrees they are filtering into the public mind through their better known, and more euphonious Greek equivalents.

Although there is no doubt that the notes appended to the translation might have been extended and made more numerous, it would have

been a great encumbrance to a work which is intended to popularise the translations of the texts themselves, and not to give dissertations on historical, chronological, or other points of interest. The notes however have been left to the discretion of each translator, who is alone, as in the case of the translation, responsible for them. The introductory prefaces have also, as far as possible, been restricted to the indications of the works when the text has been published and the locality where it has been found. The general or most salient points of interest which the inscription or text gives is also, when required, pointed out; as also the previous translations of which a translator may have in any way availed himself. Justice has therefore been rendered to former inquirers, whose labours have lighted the interpreter on his path through the gloom of centuries. Even when precise or general accounts of the contents have been published without a literal translation, they are noticed, so as not only to guide the public but also the student to the sources of information. In translations from prose compositions each line of the original text is indicated; and of poetical compositions, each verse. This renders the work a manual for students themselves, the more advanced can readily find and examine for themselves what they require, while beginners will have the advantages of translations at hand of a mass of texts, which, when studied, will render them masters of the Assyrian and Egyptian languages. Not only, therefore, it is hoped, will they offer to the public the principal results of these new branches of human learning, but they will

stimulate fresh inquirers to enrol themselves in the ranks of the corps of interpreters of the Past.

In Egypt, as in Babylonia and Assyria, these texts are of the highest antiquity; hieroglyphics are found as early as the second Egyptian dynasty, and documents in the cursive hand or demotic descend to the fifth century of the present era, while the spoken language, or Coptic, has not been extinct for more than two centuries. When it is considered that the texts are in most instances contemporaneous with the events they record, and written or executed under public control, it must be admitted that they are of the highest importance, both from their vast antiquity, and the seal of authority impressed upon them. They are very different from documents written by Greek and Roman historians, however conscientious or esteemed, who had to rely on the doubtful veracity of interpreters, and whose works only give a dim, shattered, or distorted reflection of the splendour of the ancient Eastern monarchies. It is from the new texts that the ancient history of Egypt and Central Asia has not only to be restored but absolutely reconstructed. Many of the inscriptions were not even accessible to Egyptians and Babylonians at a later period, for they have been exhumed from tombs hermetically sealed, or documents hopelessly buried; traditions only of their contents had been preserved, but the actual texts themselves have not escaped the eye of an age animated with the strongest thirst for historical knowledge. In these ancient nations a happy union of art and philology has reproduced a picture of the past of the most complete character. The texts, paintings, and sculptures

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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