

ARTICLE VI.

ANCIENT EGYPT AND SYRIA.

BY WALTER MELVILLE PATTON, B.D., PH.D.

THE view of scholars that Egypt's relation to the Semitic peoples of Syria and Palestine was not as close as that held by Babylonia and Assyria is without doubt correct. Gunkel, however, conveys too strong an impression when he says, having special regard to Israel, that "Egypt was already a decadent nation and had but slight influence upon Canaan."¹ Nowack is much nearer the mark: "In the time of the monarchy [in Israel], as also earlier, Egypt exerted a certain influence on the culture [of the Hebrews], though we cannot indeed trace in detail the particulars of its exercise."²

Our present desire is to obtain an idea of the mutual influence exerted by Egypt and Syria on each other from the earliest times down to the close of the ancient period. We shall seek to observe the order of chronological sequence in the sketch which follows.

Since the earliest age of the Semitic migrations from Arabia, the Sinai region has been inhabited by the Beduin tribes. Through these Arab tribesmen, possibly, the ancient Egyptians came to know of the existence of the mineral wealth of the Sinai country, and were thus enabled to open up those valuable quarries and copper mines traces of which are reported to this day by travelers. There was a land route to the mines, and also a route by sea across the Gulf of Suez. By either or both the Egyptians were from very early

¹ *The Legends of Genesis*, p. 91.

² *Hebräische Archäologie*, Vol. i. p. 105.

times brought into contact with Semitic tribes, some of whom became in later days part of the settled population of Syria. At no time has the population of Sinai been numerous, and it has always had, as we should expect, somewhat of a transient character; but, such as it was, the Egyptian kings found it necessary to keep the route to the mines open by military force, and to keep up a fortress and garrison at the mines themselves. The Beduins had, moreover, in their own native haunts, the opportunity to observe other than the military aspects of the civilization of the Nile Valley; for there was a fully organized village or town life at the Egyptian camps, provision being made even for the observance of worship 'with all due ceremony.'¹ The working of these mines can be traced back to King Zoser, of the third Egyptian dynasty,² whose name is found engraved on the rocks of the mining region. The first king of the fourth dynasty, Sneferu,³ it was who opened the most important of the Sinai mines, at Wâdi Maghâra. Operations were continued at the mines for many centuries, until they were worked out. Rameses III.⁴ has also left his name engraven on the Sinai rocks, but of the connection of later kings with the works we have no record.⁵

Egypt had experience of the Beduin in other ways as well. Tempted by the grazing lands east of the Delta, the Beduin had always sought for entrance into the country. To keep them out, the earliest Pharaohs had built on their northeastern frontier a fortification which was known as the 'wall of the Princes.' In the fourth dynasty, Sneferu had to repel an invasion of the desert tribes, who had succeeded in getting past this fortification.⁶ In the period of the sixth dynasty, under Pepy I.,⁷ Una, a high official, was despatched against these tribes with an army such as it

¹Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 468. ²*Circa 4212-3998 B. C.*, Petrie.

³*Ca. 3998-3969 B. C.*, Petrie. ⁴*Ca. 1204 B. C.* ⁵Erman, *loc. cit.*

⁶*Utaq. Biblica*, "Egypt," § 45. ⁷*Ca. 3469-3447 B. C.*, Petrie.

was not common to raise in Egypt at that day. This may afford us a slight idea of the strength of the enemy he had to meet.

During the period of the seventh and eighth dynasties, the seat of empire was moved from Memphis to Herakleopolis, south of the Fayûm. Petrie thinks that the move was one of necessity, as the making of it brought the court into threatened conflict with the rulers of Thebes, who were beginning to assert themselves in that region. The cause of the change was a large movement of nomadic peoples into the Delta district. These people were apparently North Arabian tribesmen who formed a portion of a widespread migration which at this time invaded not only Egypt, but probably the Euphrates Valley and all the northern Semitic lands as well. In Egypt these tribesmen gradually extended their power until the whole country was subject to them. Details of their occupation are not at hand; but, as they have left records in the Egyptian language, we may assume that they became naturalized, and were ultimately absorbed into the general population of the land. One of their kings, Khyan by name,¹ is called *Heq Setu*, 'prince of the hills' or desert, a title which is applied later to a Semitic chief, Absha, who visits Egypt. The *Ka*-name of Khyan was *Anq Adebu*, 'embracing territories,' a designation suggestive of an extended dominion.² Confirming this suggestion we have the discovery at Baghdad of a lion bearing the name of this king. The figure is of such a character as precludes the possibility of its being an importation from some other place. Khyan probably ruled over an empire which included Babylonia.

Hitherto we have had no occasion to consider the relations of Egypt and Syria directly. Trade between the two countries was carried on in the time of the Old Em-

¹Ca. 3100 B. C., Petrie. ²Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, Vol. i. p. 120.

pire.¹ In an ancient sacred document we read of *qamh*-bread which the gods eat.² This is sufficient to show that, at an age a full millennium in advance of the Hebrew settlement in Canaan, Egypt had been engaged in trade with that region. An interesting sidelight upon Egypt's relations to Syria in the earliest period is afforded by the narrative which has become known as the 'Travels of Sanehat.' Sanehat was a young member of an Egyptian princely house which became involved in political trouble, and in consequence of this he was compelled to flee from the country. He made Canaan his objective point, and on the way thither found his flight dangerous only while in Egyptian territory. Beyond the frontier he was kindly received by the Beduin tribes, and afforded all necessary protection until he reached the country of the great sheikh of Upper Retenu, Ammiansha. By him Sanehat was received with distinction becoming his rank, and was urged to remain permanently. He agreed, and we are told of his advancement among the Canaanite tribesmen, of his marriage to Ammiansha's daughter, of the promotion of his sons to be sheikhs, and of many other particulars. He found the manner of life rather trying after that to which he had been accustomed in Egypt, and longed for the time to come when he should be summoned to return home. The summons finally came when he had grown to be an old man, and he went back with joy to end his life in his native country. This account comes from the period of the twelfth dynasty and the reign of its first king, Amenemhat I., who flourished about the end of the third millennium B. C. It shows the tribes of the desert and of Canaan to have had, at that time, friendly feelings toward Egypt. They were accustomed to receive visits from Egyptian officials and men of rank who frequently journeyed through Syria. The civilization which

¹ Before 2100 B. C.

² Cf. Hebrew *קמח*, meal, flour. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

these travelers found in Canaan was in advance of what we might expect, though Egyptians of the better class did not see there what their special environment at home afforded.

From the reign of Usertesen II.,¹ of the same twelfth dynasty, we have the tomb of the official Khnumhotep at Beni Hassan. A scene which is figured on this tomb represents the Semitic chief Absha² at the head of a company of his tribesmen, who bring with them articles which they desire to trade or sell in Egypt. They may be assumed to be nomads, perhaps, as they bring with them their women and children. But if so, they are nomads of a superior culture, as is shown by their dress and weapons, which do not suffer in comparison with those of the Egyptians of this time.³

About a century after the events just related, the high-road to Syria ('the road of the Amu') was held by hostile tribes, and the king, Amenemhat III., had to employ military force to reopen it. This probably justifies us in supposing that the trade with Syria was an important factor at that day.⁴ From other sources we learn that Egyptian weapon smiths found a market for their manufactures in Syria,⁵ and that Syrian merchants sold goods in Egypt. Slaves were an important item of import into the latter country, and in the household establishments of the rich Egyptians Amu maidens from Syria were the favorite female slaves.

Somewhere about 2000 B. C., the Hyksôs came into Egypt, and, according to the most probable view, remained for a period of some five centuries.⁶ After a struggle for the ascendancy, they came to be the rulers of the country, and maintained their power for over two centuries.⁷ The native rulers of Thebes then

¹ Ca. 2000 B. C. ² Hebrew, Abishai. ³ Petrie, *op. cit.*, Vol. i. p. 172.

⁴ Petrie, *op. cit.*, Vol. i. p. 193. ⁵ Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

⁶ Manetho, as reported by Josephus, 511 years. ⁷ *Ibid.*, 260 years.

overthrew their dynasty, and, after a prolonged resistance on the part of the Hyksôs, succeeded in driving them out of the land. We have no direct testimony as to the origin of these invaders. They have left inscriptions on monuments, but the latter are probably remains of an older art, and the former are written in the Egyptian language and characters on these borrowed monuments. One inscription—and only one—differentiates them from the Amu (Asiatic Semites), and calls them 'foreigners who brought with them Amê' into Egypt.¹ Despite this evidence, we are disposed for good reasons to look upon them as Beduin tribesmen who came into the country by way of the Sinai region. The name Hyksôs, as explained by Manetho, was at first applied to their chiefs, and then passed from them to their people. Manetho declares it to be a compound of *heq*, 'chief,' and *shasu*, 'nomad desert-dwellers.' The names of their kings as given by Josephus, who quotes Manetho, are in several cases unmistakably Semitic.² When they were driven out of Egypt they found a refuge in the country about Hebron, in Southern Palestine, where they had a fortress called Sharuhén. This region had long been inhabited by Canaanites, but there is no record that the incoming Hyksôs differed markedly from them in race. They seem, in fact, to have soon become indistinguishable from the general Semitic population of the southern region of Canaan. If they were not Semites, this would be strange, as they must have entered the country in such numbers³ as to ensure their leaving a permanent mark upon its population. The expulsion of the Hyksôs from Egypt was accomplished by Ahmes, the first king of the eighteenth dynasty, and founder of

¹ Encyc. Biblica, "Egypt," § 52, note 1.

² E. g. Salatis, Beon (Bnôn), Apakhnas (Pa-khnan).

³ Manetho says that 250,000 Hyksôs left Egypt. This round number is, of course, only a guess.

the New Empire.¹ Not all of these Semites were driven out, however, for there were two attempts at revolt on the part of the Hyksôs who were left in Egypt. Each of these was put down by Ahmes, and no further trouble from the same quarter seems to have occurred. There can be no doubt that the Hyksôs tribes left their mark upon the Egyptian race to a great degree. They lost their own Semitic character largely, but in doing so made their impress upon the native environment. Petrie calls attention to the change in the physiognomy presented by the monuments of the eighteenth dynasty when compared with those of the older periods. The faces of the old Egyptians are bold and unattractive: those which now appear are mild and prepossessing. This change is in large part due to slave marriages and other marriages with Semites who had settled in Egypt, the two principal settlements being that of which King Khyan is the representative and that of the Hyksôs. Besides these larger invasions, individuals and small groups were continually making their way into the land over the northeastern border.

The expulsion of the Hyksôs occasioned the first invasion of Syria by an Egyptian army of which we have any record. Ahmes pursued the fleeing tribes, and engaged them in conflict in the region where they had settled. He not only defeated the Hyksôs on this expedition, but secured also the submission of the Palestinian tribes. Thus he inaugurated a period of Syrian conquest on the part of Egypt such as long continued to increase Egyptian prosperity and power. In leaving the subject of the Hyksôs we would make emphatic two points: they constituted a powerful Semitic influence in Egypt; they brought to Palestine a powerful Egyptian influence. They thus formed one bond linking the two countries together, and make it easier for us to understand the earlier and later relations of

¹Ca. 1587-1562, Petrie.

a friendly nature which the Old Testament ascribes to Israel and her neighbor on the Nile.

After Ahmes, his grandson, Thutmosis I.,¹ carried on a campaign in the north, and conquered the country as far as the district of Niy, in the vicinity of the modern Aleppo. He thus ruled the whole territory from the frontier of Egypt to the Euphrates. After him for about a generation Egypt let go her hold on Syria. Thutmosis II. and his sister, the great queen Hatshepsut, paid more attention to the internal development of their country; but, when their younger brother, Thutmosis III.,² came to the sole rule of Egypt, after the death of Hatshepsut, he reintroduced the policy of Syrian conquest and prosecuted it with phenomenal persistency and vigor. The repeated expeditions of Thutmosis III. were almost uniformly successful from the time that he fought his first great fight at Megiddo with an army of Palestinian allies under the Prince of Qadesh on the Orontes. But his frequent campaigns indicate an ever-present spirit of revolt among the northern tribes, and more especially an ever-present succession of raids on the part of new tribes or clans who were seeking entrance into Palestine and Syria. The activity of Egypt in the north indicates more than revolt and Beduin invasion, however. It shows Egypt as intensely interested in Syria at this time, because of the commercial value of its trade. Almost all kinds of articles used by the Egyptians were imported from the north, and the literature of the earliest dynasties of the New Empire is filled, we are told by Erman,³ with references to things which bear Semitic names. The Egyptian center of the Syrian trade was naturally the region east of the Delta, and, with the expansion of the relations with the northern country which the early kings of the New Empire brought about, a large prosperity came to

¹Ca. 1541-1516 B. C., Petrie. ²Ca. 1503-1449 B. C., Petrie.

³*Op. cit.*, p. 516 f.

this northeastern part of the land. It may have been at this time that Egyptian colonies were planted in Canaan, and Egyptian temples and worship introduced. Now, too, came the earliest conflict of Egypt with the Hittites, who, having before this come into Syria over the Taurus Mountains, were at this time pushing southward. Thutmosis III. fought with them and defeated them. The advance of this warlike race was probably the cause of the military organization introduced into Syria by the Pharaohs of the New Empire. Native governors were appointed; the tribal chiefs apparently being chosen as such, and the principle of hereditary rule being recognized. Strongholds were built, and garrisons of Egyptian, Beduin, or native Canaanite soldiers were established. The representatives of Egyptian authority were required to make report on the state of affairs in their respective districts; and, in the case of a ruler like Thutmosis III., with whom Syria was a highly valued province of his empire, if the local power were unable to cope with the difficulties of its situation, Egypt would quickly respond with sufficient help to restore order. In the end the situation in Syria became calmer, and from the forty-third to the fifty-fourth year of Thutmosis we find that the fruit of his earlier chastisements of the Semitic and Hittite tribes appeared in a more settled loyalty to Egyptian authority. A feature of Egyptian provincial policy was the retaining as hostages in Egypt of the sons of the Syrian chiefs. This secured a semblance of loyalty, but must have caused a great deal of irritation and humiliation in the minds of the northern leaders. As the youths were trained in Egyptian manners and learning before returning to take up their inherited position in the tribes, possibly the younger chiefs may, however, have had a kindlier feeling toward the Egyptian sovereigns. In their correspondence all the local chiefs of Syria without distinction—whether loyal or not—adopt the purely formal expressions

of devotion to the throne of Pharaoh. The reign of Thutmosis III. was the golden period of Egyptian rule among the northern Semites. His dominion was more loyally recognized than that of any other Pharaoh, and extended as far north as the mountains of the Taurus and as far east as the kingdoms of Mitâni and Assyria. Tribute was paid by the subject tribes and, as in the Amarna time, probably consisted largely in grain, cattle, sheep, and slaves (especially girls and young women).

The territory from the border of Egypt northeastward to the Euphrates was called by the Egyptians Kharu. Under this broad designation were included the following districts: Upper Retenu, which covered Palestine, and comprised Ken'ana (Canaan) to the south and 'Emur (Amor) to the north; the land of the Fenech (Phœnicians) called Keft; Lower Retenu, which applied to Syria proper as far as the Euphrates.¹

No marked change occurred in the relations of Egypt and Syria during the reign of the next two kings. Amenhotep II.² undertook one campaign in the north, and we have a general record of some expeditions undertaken by his successor, Thutmosis IV.³ Thus we may suppose that the habitual unrest of the nomads and other Palestinian and Syrian tribes was again asserting itself. The hold of Egypt on the north was still firm, nevertheless. In the reign of the next Pharaoh there was a change. Amenhotep III.⁴ did not give such serious attention to the disturbances in Syria as his predecessors had given. The Amarna correspondence, which begins in his reign, shows that Egypt still valued highly her possessions in Asia; but, for some reason,—probably the necessity to attend to affairs in other quarters,—the reports of the Syrian governors were not taken with due seriousness. The king insisted

¹ Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 515.

² 1449-1423 B. C., Petrie.

³ 1423-1414 B. C., Petrie.

⁴ *Ca.* 1414-1379 B. C., Petrie.

that the tribute should be regularly paid, and seemingly cared little about the troubles of his officers in the north so long as this was done. Revolt increased in Asia, and the raids of the Hittites and the Beduin became bolder and more frequent. The governors were almost at their wits' end how to meet the Pharaoh's insistence upon the payment of tribute, and began to complain that their position and authority could not much longer be maintained without help from Egypt. Such is the story that we gather from the Amarna letters. The reign of Amenhotep III. was one of prolonged peace for Egypt, as far as the country itself was concerned, but toward the close affairs must have been sadly disturbed in Syria. At the opening of the following reign, that of Amenhotep IV.,¹ the trade road to Egypt from Asia was still kept open, so that messengers and tribute could be sent regularly, and one of the monuments of this king shows Amorites and Semites of other Syrian tribes doing obeisance, together with peoples of a different type, before the Pharaoh. Still, it was felt necessary that the king should undertake an expedition into the north country about the beginning of his reign, but even this did not put an end to the troubles which prevailed. They rather kept on increasing, until, in his later years, Amenhotep IV. found himself no longer ruler over the possessions which had been so long held in Asia. During the whole Amarna period, Semitic influence must have been strong in Egypt, nevertheless, for it was probably the cause of the revival of the Syrian Adonis worship, which had been introduced into the country long before. Amenhotep IV. was a worshiper of Adonis under the Egyptian name Aten, 'the sun's disk,' and he adopted the name Khu-en-aten, 'Spirit of the Sun's Disk.' The first place was given to 'Aten,' and in consequence Amen, the god of Thebes, the capital, was set aside. This made it advis-

¹ 1383-1365 B. C., Petrie.

able to provide a new capital, and led to the founding of a new city called 'the horizon of the Sun's disk,' at Tell-el-Amarna.¹

The loss of the Asiatic provinces in the reign of Amenhotep IV. did not mean the loss of interest in Syria on the part of the Pharaohs. Until some other power was ready to ensure the safety of the trade routes, they could hardly avoid participation in the political events which were taking place in that direction. Very soon the Beduin over the northeastern frontier and in Southern Canaan required attention, and Seti I.,² of the nineteenth dynasty, set out to punish them. He accomplished this, and at the same time again secured from the Canaanite tribes a recognition of Egyptian suzerainty. About this date the Hittite tribes began to move energetically southward, pushing before them the Amorites, who in their turn came into collision with the Canaanites west of the Jordan, in the central hill country, and with the Aramean tribes which had occupied the country, on the east side of the Jordan. To the west of the river several Amorite principalities were established as the result of these migrations, and to the east two stronger kingdoms. With the Hittites, Seti I. made a treaty of peace. Rameses II.,³ the successor of Seti I., felt obliged to deal with the apparently dangerous overturning of settled conditions in Palestine due to the movements which have been described. From his second year to his twenty-first year he had continuous fighting in Syria, mainly with the Hittites. In his fifth year he had a great engagement with the latter and a host of their allies; but in this battle, as in many others, the issue was not very decidedly in favor of Egypt. Finally, in the twenty-first year of Rameses, a treaty was signed between the Hittites and himself which gave him some slight advantage as re-

¹ Paton, *The Early History of Syria and Palestine*, p. 103.

²Ca. 1347 B. C.

³Ca. 1320 B. C.

ward for his long period of conflict. Later on, this Pharaoh showed the continuance of the good policy between himself and the Hittites by taking in marriage the daughter of the Hittite King Khatasera. We also read that Rameses II. sent a present of two shiploads of grain to the Hittite monarch when famine was threatening in his land. A point of interest, which we might have noted in connection with the wars of Thutmosis III., is that in them appeared for the first time in the Semitic and Egyptian East the Indo-European peoples of Southern Europe and Asia Minor as mercenaries in the Egyptian armies. These peoples now—in the reign of Rameses II.—appear in both the Egyptian and the Hittite hosts, and their presence with the latter points to a migration of these tribes which was about to overrun Palestine, and also, by way of Palestine and by sea, to strike Egypt.

In the days of Rameses II., the external tradition and that of the Old Testament begin to have points of contact. The narratives of the Bible suggest that it was in this reign that a body of Israelites living in Goshen were put to task service by the king. They go on to say that, in consequence of this, the Israelites left Egypt *en masse* against the will of the Pharaoh. The monuments say that Rameses II. showed special favor to the land of Goshen, or, as it was called, the 'land of Rameses.' He built a canal through it for purposes of irrigation; colonized it with immigrants, some of whom were Syrians (among them a tribe called the Apuri, who have without good reason been identified with the Hebrews¹); and built in it cities, among them the royal city of Rameses. There is no mention of either Israel or Hebrews in the records of Rameses II. In the records of his successor, Merenptah, mention has been found, it is thought, of Israel, but this

¹Great numbers of these Apuri are found in Goshen at a date subsequent to that fixed for the Exodus.

Israel has been defeated by the Pharaoh in Canaan, not held in bondage by him in Egypt. Palestine was in its customary state of turbulence, and Merenptah had gone with an army to chastise the revolted tribes. The record of the expedition shows that he succeeded in his aim; and, among others who were punished, Israel is mentioned. The store-city Pithom¹ has been identified with the modern Tell-el-Mashkuta, but Israel's connection with it has not been shown thereby. Here the parallel between the two traditions is exhausted. It does not involve the particulars of events; nor does it take in the persons concerned in the two accounts. For these—the events and persons—the Old Testament stands unconfirmed by outside evidence, but has in its favor such a general faithfulness in its geographical and archæological references as affords a presumption favoring its value as a record of events.

The Mediterranean peoples whom we have seen fighting in the wars of Rameses II., invaded Egypt in the reign of Merenptah, but he was able to repel their invasion. In this reign, as also before and after, the Semitic element in Egypt was increased, and, after settling in the country, became in time Egyptianized. To such an extent did this go that it was possible, in the period following Merenptah, for a Syrian usurper² to seize the throne.

In the time of the second ruler of the twentieth dynasty, Rameses III.,³ the 'Sea Peoples' were coming on in full force, by the land route through Syria and Palestine, toward Egypt, accompanied by a part of their horde who journeyed in boats by sea. Rameses III. kept a firm hand on Syria, and had no trouble with its native population, but had to undertake a special expedition to deal with these new hordes. In his fifth year he defeated them, both on sea and land, in the vicinity of the Phœnician coast, and obliged them to temporarily withdraw farther north into Syria.

¹ Ex. i. 11. ² ERSU by name. ³ Ca. 1204 B. C.

They did not long remain there. The Egyptian army returned to Egypt, and again the Sea Peoples, possibly pushed out by the Hittites, resumed their march southward, seeking a location where they would be able to permanently settle. Their final settlement was made along the coast south of Mount Carmel as far as the wilderness, and in the adjacent Shephelah. The chief of the tribes embraced in this migration was the Pulasatê, and after them the whole aggregation came to be called in later days the Philistines, and the country which they occupied to be known as the land of the Philistines. In the first half of the eleventh century the Zakkala tribe of these Sea Peoples is found to have a flourishing settlement at Dôr, so that we shall be within reasonable limits if we fix the date of their migration to this region at about the beginning of the twelfth century B. C. They were already in possession of that district when Israel entered Canaan. The impression is made, as we examine the facts regarding the Philistine settlement, that their objective point was in the first instance Egypt, and that the settlement on the coast of Palestine was the outcome of a purpose formed after serious defeat at the hands of the Egyptians under Rameses III.

After Rameses III. the control of Egypt over Syria ceased, except for a brief period in one or two very much later instances. The Pharaoh Sheshonk I. (the Shishak of the book of First Kings) invaded Palestine and captured a great number of towns in both Judah and Israel, including Jerusalem. This occurred in the fifth year of King Rehoboam,¹ nearly three centuries after Rameses III., and was merely an incident, as Egypt did not follow up the conquest by any organized rule over the country. This Pharaoh, the energetic founder of the dynasty of Libyan kings, had found it unwise to attempt the invasion of Canaan as

¹ 933 B. C.

long as Solomon ruled, and kept on good terms with the latter, even bestowing upon him one of the Egyptian princesses in marriage. About two hundred and fifty years after this, Tirhaka (Taharqô),¹ of the twenty-fifth (Ethiopian) dynasty, tried to organize, with the help of the Palestinian and Syrian principalities, an alliance against the advance of Assyria. The campaign of Sennacherib broke to pieces the power of the allies, however, and later resistance on the part of Egypt singly or in conjunction with the Asiatic nations, was crushed out by Esarhaddon, who overthrew the rule of the Pharaohs in Egypt, and by his son, Assurbanipal, who crushed renewed attempts at Egyptian independence.

In the next generation, King Psametik I.² had in his army a goodly number of Semitic mercenaries, and Semites formed a very important factor in the Egyptian population. Papyri of this time are found written in Aramaic, and even native Egyptians show Aramaic inscriptions on their tombs. Necho II.,³ finding affairs on the Euphrates in a disordered condition, conceived the idea of regaining control of Syria. His expedition was successful, and carried everything before it, the defense of such faithful vassals of Assyria as Josiah of Judah proving only disastrous to themselves, until, in 604 B. C., he met Nebuchadnezzar II. at Carchemish, on the Euphrates, and was overwhelmingly vanquished. He and his successor, Apries,⁴ continued, notwithstanding this lesson, to stir up sedition and rebellion against Babylon among the few remaining organized nations of Palestine and Syria. Their yielding to such persuasions, however, always proved to be to their bitter cost.

We have now reached our goal. Through all the long history of the mutual relations of Syria and Egypt, the

¹ *Ca.* 691 B. C. We omit any reference to the 'So, King of Egypt,' of *2 Kings xvii. 4*, as the identity of this king is still uncertain.

² *Ca.* 660 B. C.

³ *Ca.* 609 B. C.

⁴ 588 B. C.

migratory instinct in the Semite tended to make him more of an influence among the Egyptians than they ever constituted in Syria. Commerce always brought the two peoples together, and intermarriage was common, at least in Egypt. Semites who had been in touch with the life of the Nile Valley, came back again to Syria and Canaan among men of their own race. Famine-threatened tribesmen were frequent visitors to the great grain storehouses of the Nile region, for there was always 'corn in Egypt.' Migrations of Semites who had been long resident in Egypt had, if we accept the traditions, come back to permanently locate among the Canaanite tribes in Palestine. It is, indeed, quite in harmony with the general tenor of all the facts we know, that the Hebrew tradition of the Old Testament should picture the Hebrews as from the earliest times enjoying closer and friendlier relations with Egypt than with most of her great neighbors. Hence, we may indorse what Erman says: "Many facts, however, seem to indicate conclusively that the Syrians received almost as much as they gave, and that in their manners and customs they experienced a strong Egyptian influence. In Palestine particularly . . . may we expect to find traces of this influence. As regards the language, we find Egyptian words employed, . . . and in these examples of borrowed words we find a proof that the Egyptians did not fail to exercise a certain ascendancy at any rate over the countries in their immediate neighborhood."¹ In our effort to maintain the influence of the Euphrates Valley over Syria and Palestine, we must not fail to do justice to a nearer neighbor and a much greater commercial power which was found in the historic valley of the Nile.

¹ Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 519 f.