

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

The Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotos. By the Rev. A. H. SAYCE, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford. (London and New York: Macmillan and Co. 1895. Pp. xvi, 342.)

In this little volume Professor Sayce has repeated, condensed, and supplemented a considerable portion of his earlier writings upon Egyptian and Hebrew history, geography, and archæology. According to the preface the work "is intended to supplement the books already in the hands of tourists and students, and to put before them just that information which either is not readily accessible or else forms part of larger and more cumbrous works." The title indicates in a general way the contents of the volume. Three-fifths of the text (pp. 1-174) are taken up with the "Egypt of the Hebrews," including a sketch of the régime of the Ptolemies, and the remainder (pp. 175-286) is devoted to the "Egypt of Herodotos." Appendices, occupying 48 pages, present in tabular form, I. the Egyptian dynasties of Manetho; II. the Ptolemies; III. a list of biblical dates of relevant events; IV. a catalogue of the nomes with their respective gods; V. a critical enumeration of the Greek writers upon Egypt, and VI. directions for archæological excursions in the Delta.

It will be seen from the above summary that the book has an interesting theme. It is also an interesting book, especially for those who have not read the author's earlier publications upon the same or kindred subjects. The works to which I refer especially are, *The Ancient Empires of the East*, appended to the author's edition of the first three books of Herodotos, *Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments*, *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, to which may be added a volume which appears almost simultaneously with the one under review, entitled, *Patriarchal Palestine*. The distinction in plan and purpose between the present work and the others is not that this is intended for popular use, and the others for scholars; for all of them are written in a popular style. The object of the book before us is rather to single out for special treatment that one of the ancient nations to which Professor Sayce has of late years paid most attention, and to exhibit its history from the point of view of a biblical apologist, and a reviser of Herodotos. Naturally nearly everything to be here found has been said already in one and another of the books above mentioned.

The reader is at once conscious of the lack of unity in the book, which is indeed suggested by the title, and one is inclined to ask whether it would

not have been better to write instead a succinct history of Egypt, with archæological chapters and excursuses. It certainly gives a one-sided impression of a great history, to treat it exclusively from special points of view. The biblical and classical interest in Egypt might, under the plan thus suggested, have received their due consideration. However, taking the book as we find it, we must accord it at least such commendation as the author's popular writings generally are entitled to. The style is sprightly, and compels rapid reading, partly because the author manifestly writes in haste, and partly, it must be confessed, because the positions assumed are not treated with judicial deliberation. It is undeniable also that Professor Sayce enlists the attention of his readers by adducing many facts with which he has made himself familiar, and which often have a real importance for national and comparative history. Chapter V., "The Age of the Ptolemies," is the section that will be newest to former readers of the author's writings. But the chapters on the Patriarchal Age (I.), the Age of Moses (II.), and the Exodus and the Hebrew settlement in Canaan (III.), are so replete with information or conjecture as to matters that have only come within our ken in recent years, that they still have an aspect of great freshness, especially as they tell an entertaining story in a fashion only possible to their ingenious author. Above all, the wonders of the earliest age have a perennial interest; and facts like that of the exact fitting together of the immense granite blocks of the great Pyramid (pp. 8 f.) are still surprising, even when they have lost the charm of novelty. In the second portion the chapter headed, "In the Steps of Herodotos," is probably the best worth reading; the preceding one, "Herodotos in Egypt," being perhaps a somewhat superfluous polemic against good old Herodotos, whom Professor Sayce still insists on regarding as a popular historical authority. The fact is that scholars have long since learned both to judge and to utilize the delightful old compiler, while those who are not scholars do not care whether he is accurate or not as long as he tells a good story.

But it may be more useful to the reader to point out some of the features which make the book one to be used with caution. The volume, like others of its class from the same author, is not educative. It does not set forth any principles of historical development, or indeed any unifying principle of more than a superficial kind. It presents a series of disconnected facts and observations, mainly such as confirm or illustrate the Bible, and their collocation with the matter to be confirmed or illustrated ends the significance of their citation. Moreover, the book is sadly lacking in the sense of proportion. The most insignificant matters are dealt with alongside of the most important with no sort of association except that of propinquity, and the merest speculation is co-ordinated with well-established facts. Again, in this and other writings the author justly excites distrust, not merely by his journalistic style and method, but also by his failure to give references or to indicate his sources. No living scholar can speak with independent authority on the multitude of recondite and isolated topics which form the staple of these publications. It is somewhat naïve for the

author to say in the course of a criticism of Herodotos (p. 177), "Reviewers did not exist in his days, nor were marks of quotation, or even footnotes, as yet invented." As a matter of fact, Professor Sayce's writings, in spite of his great talents and services to Oriental learning, abound in mistakes and inconsistencies — the result of over-haste, and as it would almost seem of recklessness. Little space is left here for allusion to errors or doubtful assertions. On page 2 it is said that the Babylonian states were united in 2350 B.C. This is almost certainly a century too early. The matter is of importance here as bearing upon the date of Abraham. It is seriously stated (p. 38) that the 430 years of Ex. xii. 40 f. differs from the 400 of Gen. xv. 13, by "the length of a generation" purposely added. The term *abrek*, "seer," of Gen. xli. 43, can hardly be referred to the alleged "primitive non-Semitic language of Chaldaea" (p. 33), in view of the Assyrian root *barû*, "to see," and the Assyrian nominal termination. On page 116 it is asserted incorrectly of Sennacherib that the spoils and captives of Judah were the only fruits of his campaign in Palestine. On the same page, the statement as to Esarhaddon that "Manasseh of Judah became his vassal and the way lay open to the Nile," is quite misleading, since Manasseh was a vassal of Sennacherib also. On page 118 it is said that "Assurbanipal left Egypt in the full belief that it was tranquil." It is extremely doubtful if Assurbanipal ever saw Egypt. On page 128, the taking of Jerusalem is placed in 588 B.C. instead of 586. We notice also that Professor Sayce still persists in writing "dragomen" (pp. 123, 193, 273, 278, 286).

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The Empire of the Ptolemies. By J. P. MAHAFFY, Fellow, etc., of Trinity College, Dublin. (London and New York: Macmillan and Co. 1895. Pp. xxv, 533.)

It is eminently fitting that the first special and complete history of the dynasty of the Ptolemies in Egypt should come to us from England, after her entrance into the inheritance of the Ptolemies. The problems which confront her in the administration of Egypt are in many ways like those which confronted Alexander the Great and Ptolemy Lagus. And there seems to be on the part of the English government the same marvellous perception of the best methods of evoking and enjoying the inexhaustible riches of this ever fruitful Nile-land, which Alexander first showed when he took it in willing lapse from the mismanagement of Persia, as England from that of Turkey. Ptolemy Lagus wisely adopted the methods of his great master, and established them so securely in the course of his long and successful reign that not even the degeneracy of his latest descendants weakened their hold upon this rich domain. They passed it over to the Romans. Romans, Saracens, and Turks have spoiled but not exhausted the patient land. Its frugal and laborious people, now as always really swayed only by religious masters, willingly pour the fruits of their toil