

### Taskwork.

אֲשֶׁר עַל הַמָּס (2 S 20<sup>24</sup>)—MINISTER OF  
PUBLIC WORKS (*corvée*).

WHILE in certain passages where the word מַס ('forced labour,' ἀγγαρεία) occurs R.V. (margin and text) renders it adequately enough as 'taskwork,' in other (later) passages, however, its true meaning has been obscured—and the significance of the particular passage in consequence apt to be lost sight of—by such inadequate renderings as 'tribute' or 'levy.'

Taking the passage where it is first met with (Gn 49<sup>15</sup>), the full phrase is found—מַס עֶבֶד (R.V. 'servant under taskwork,' i.e. liable to the *corvée* or *angaria*). In Dt 20<sup>11</sup> R.V. (margin) gives the rendering of the phrase לָמַס הִיָּה rightly as 'subject to taskwork,' as also in Jg 1<sup>30-33-35</sup>. In Jg 1<sup>28</sup>, where the expression שׂוֹם לָמַס is met with, R.V. (text) has 'put . . . to taskwork'—imposed upon them (the Canaanites) the *corvée*. In Ex 1<sup>11</sup>, again, the word occurs in the technical phrase שָׂרֵי מַסִּים (R.V. 'taskmasters'), pictorial representation of which officials may be seen on the sepulchral monuments at Thebes, where they are depicted as carrying their bâtons of office as overseers of the *corvée*.

That the Hebrews early adopted, after their entrance into Canaan, this custom of forced labour, universal in the East, to which they were themselves subject in Egypt—taking their impressed labour from the conquered Canaanites—is plain from such passages as Jos 16<sup>10</sup> 17<sup>13</sup>; Jg 1<sup>28</sup>. But

it was scarce to have been expected that such a system would have been found established among themselves so early as under the reign of David. Yet that it was so established seems evident from such a passage as 2 S 20<sup>24</sup>, where R.V. renders the phrase אֲשֶׁר עַל הַמָּס—which corresponds to the שָׂרֵי מַסִּים above—very inadequately as 'over the tribute' (margin 'levy').

David, as the first builder of 'public works' of any pretensions, appears to have originated the office, as it may be termed, of 'Minister of Public Works,' the title of which official was perhaps שָׂר מַסִּים, his duties being to see that the requisite numbers to form such *corvées* as might on occasion be required were forthcoming. Under Solomon the system was more firmly and oppressively established (1 K 4<sup>6</sup>, where R.V. has 'levy'), and was one of the main reasons for the revolt of the Northern tribes, upon whom, doubtless, it was made to fall heaviest.

In Es 10<sup>1</sup> allusion is made to a like practice on the part of the Persian kings. And it may be of interest, as proving its universality, to note that among the Peruvians of old a similar service, but much fairer in its incidence, was claimed from their subjects by the Incas.

W. D. MORRIS.

*Hownam Mansc, Kelso.*

<sup>1</sup> Analogous corruptions of names of foreign plants are very common now. E.g. in 1570 the carnation was known at the apothecaries as *Caryophyllus* or *Flos coronarius*. This full word was corrupted into 'coronations,' then shortened into 'cor'nations,' and finally became 'carnations.'

## Petrie's Researches in Sinai.

BY THE REV. JAMES BAIKIE, ANCRUM.

THE publication of the Egypt Exploration Fund Report, summarized by Mr. Gordon Clark in the May number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, has been quickly followed by that of Professor Petrie's own account of his researches into the antiquities of the Sinai Peninsula. It may be safely said at once that no more interesting account of research has been published for many years, and that from first page to last the book has scarcely a dull page. The author is fortunate in the possession, not only of great gifts as an archæologist and explorer, but

also of the power to make what he finds and sees live before the minds of his readers. Those who are familiar with his other books will not be surprised at the fresh manner in which the incidents of the equipment and journey of the expedition are narrated. There is no obvious reason why the record of a scientific expedition should be dull, though many such records are; in this case no reader is likely to complain of anything approaching to dullness.

The author's remarks on the Bedawyn with

whom he was brought into contact are in one or two instances rather surprising to the stay-at-home mind. It rather shocks one's preconceived ideas of the sinewy Arab of the desert to be told that 'he is physically unfit for any continuous labour except that of slowly wandering on foot all day with his camel.' Against this, however, must be set the fact that he seems to be capable, to almost any extent, of passive endurance. Indeed, Professor Petrie, after balancing the advantages and disadvantages of the nomad life against one another, seems almost to think that the scale dips on the side of the desert wanderer. One anecdote has its own bearing on the historic questions treated later in the volume. It is that of a 'young Bedawy who, from the heights of Serabit, pointed out four black tents in the far-off valley, and exclaimed with dignity, "Behold the city (*medineh*) of the 'Aleyqat"—his own tribe.' 'Such,' Professor Petrie comments, 'is population in Sinai.'

It is when the first scene of the work of the expedition, at Wady Maghâreh, is reached that the real interest of the volume begins. It is, of course, matter of common knowledge that from very early times the ancient Egyptians were in the habit of sending expeditions to Maghâreh to procure the turquoise which was so largely used for personal adornment and other purposes; and, in fact, the records of these Sinai expeditions have been sometimes regarded as affording an indication of the strength of Egypt at the time they were made. The account of the tablets on which the memorials of the expeditions are inscribed, and of the remains left by the turquoise miners, is very full and interesting. The earliest record of an expedition dates from the reign of Semerkhet (Mersekha usually in Egyptian inscriptions), of the Ist dynasty, about 5300 B.C. It has the usual conventional picture of the king smiting a Bedawy; but the astonishing thing is that, so far as can be judged from the admirable photographs which are reproduced, the tablet of Semerkhet shows that even here and at this incredibly early date the art of Egypt was mature. One was familiar, of course, with fine work of very early date in Egypt itself, but to find it in a mining settlement in a remote and savage valley is not a little surprising.

Professor Petrie differs markedly from Maspero in his interpretation of some of the Maghâreh remains. Maspero (*Hist. Ancienne*, vol. i. p. 356) pronounces the collection of miners' huts on the

hilltop in the valley to have been a fort for the protection of the miners against the attacks of the natives of the peninsula. Petrie comes to quite a different conclusion. He points out that the place could not stand even a day or two's siege, as it is not possible to get water under two miles' distance, and there is no means of storage to any extent: and further, that if the buildings were for defence, it is remarkable that the better-built huts, which presumably belonged to the better-off members of the expeditions, should have been placed in defenceless positions in the valley below, while the huts of the common miners were on the hilltop. His suggestion is that the poorer huts were placed there for defence, not against the Monitû, but against wild beasts, such as the lion and the hyæna—the better-built huts in the valley being proof against that danger. The picture of the little mining camp in the desolate valley, cut off from all the resources and comforts of Egypt, and beleaguered nightly by the wild beasts of the desert, is a rather striking one.

One point worthy of notice is that on the tablet which comes next in point of date to Semerkhet's, that of Sa-nekht, IIIrd dynasty, 4950 B.C., the face of the king is of most pronounced Ethiopian type, 'even more so than Shabaka, who was the most marked of the Ethiopian dynasty, the XXVth.' The author infers that the IIIrd dynasty, of which Sa-nekht was the founder, rose as the result of an Ethiopian invasion, and that the great art of the IVth and Vth dynasties may have arisen out of this fusion of races. The account of the manner in which the mines were worked is naturally of more limited interest. A domestic and somewhat pathetic touch is given by the discovery, beneath the floors of the miners' huts, of the pottery which was used for household purposes, and the stones for bruising corn. Apparently the miners of those early days were, or were made to be, thrifty and economical, and when one season's work was done, their meagre furnishings were stored against the next season so carefully that they have mostly survived without a crack or a flaw.

Professor Petrie has something to say on the work done in this valley by an English company which was formed to develop the turquoise industry. It is scarcely credible that such vandalism as was found to have been perpetrated by this company should have been possible at the present

day. Many of the most valuable tablets and inscriptions have been utterly ruined. 'Ignorant engineers destroyed what was, in the European market of museums, worth far more than all the turquoises which they extracted. The Khufu sculptures were smashed up. The half-dozen Assa inscriptions were all destroyed or buried. The Pepy inscriptions were annihilated. . . . The only portrait of Sneferu has been destroyed. . . .' And so on—melancholy reading for fellow-countrymen of the offenders, and for the people who might be supposed to have most interest in Egypt. It is some consolation to be informed that the company lost its money in the venture. The result of this barbarism has been that the remaining inscriptions, with one exception, have had to be bodily removed from the rocks and lodged in the Cairo Museum.

The latter, and more important, part of the volume deals with what was the main achievement of the expedition,—the investigation of the ancient temple of Hat-hor at Serabit el Khâdem, which, beginning as a mere sacred cave, as far back as the reign of Sneferu (IIIrd dynasty, 4750 B.C.), was gradually enlarged and adorned by various kings, especially Amenemhat III. (XIIth dynasty), and Hatshepsut, Tahutmes III., and Amenhotep III. (XVIIIth dynasty), until by the time of the Ramessides, when work upon it apparently ceased, it had reached a length of 230 feet. Professor Petrie's results and conclusions may be briefly summarized. The approaches to the temple are marked by a number of curious structures made of stones roughly piled together into walls, some of them marked by an upright stele, and most of them of small size, sufficient for a man to sleep in. They are not graves, as the ground under them is hard rock. Professor Petrie believes that they were sleeping-places, and that the reason for them clustering towards the temple of Hat-hor was that the turquoise miners came to sleep before the temple with the express hope that Hat-hor, 'the Mistress of Turquoise,' as she was called, might send them in dreams indications of the veins where the turquoise lay. He cites other instances of sleeping at a sacred place in order to dream, and connects the whole with Jacob's action at Bethel, where he made just such a sleeping-place, and set up a stele in the morning to commemorate his dream (Gn 28<sup>10-19</sup>). The investigation of the temple itself has led to results of very considerable

interest. In the first place, we have now a complete plan of the structure which renders it intelligible, and also photographs of a model of the temple (unroofed) from two different points of view. With these aids it is possible to have the whole building before the mind, and those who will compare the plan given in Maspero's *Histoire Ancienne* (vol. i. p. 474) with that given at the end of the present volume will see how great an advance has been made. 'The edifice,' says Maspero, 'is now nothing but a confused heap of ruins, from which the original plan cannot be traced.' Fortunately this has not proved to be the case. A limestone hawk, bearing the cartouche of Sneferu, was found, and the style of the hieroglyphics renders it probable that they are contemporary with the king. Further, so many memorials of other kings make reference to Sneferu as to make it evident that he was regarded as being peculiarly connected with the temple. We have here, therefore, a structure whose beginnings probably go back to 4750 B.C.

The next important remains are those of the Usertsens and Amenemhats (XIIth dynasty), from which period the earliest of the Bethels also dates. The find which, should Professor Petrie's conclusions prove well founded, is perhaps most important of all, belongs also to the time of the XIIth dynasty. This is the great pile of wood-ashes, to which reference will be made later. The greatest builders of the temple were Queen Hatshepsut and her nephew, Tahutmes III. (XVIIIth dynasty). In their inscriptions here they are always associated, and in one case their names are joined, 'one cartouche of each ruler being put together to express their joint rule.' It is remarkable that there is no erasure of the name of Hatshepsut such as occurs so frequently in other instances. The last trace of datable construction is of the reign of Ramessu VI. (1161-1156 B.C.).

Looking at the plan and model of the building, several variations from the ordinary Egyptian types appear; but it is when details are studied that the unique nature of the temple and its worship becomes evident. The details which require to be noticed are four—the presence of the tanks and basin for purposes of ablution; the small incense altars; the heap of wood-ashes already referred to; and the presence of a hall dedicated to Sopdu, the god of the East. Before the north door of the temple is one large tank, in the centre

of the principal chamber of the building there is a circular laver, while two more tanks follow as the worshipper penetrates farther into the temple. Professor Petrie's conclusion is that the system of ablutions in worship 'was evidently the same at Sinai in 1500 B.C., in the Jewish worship of 1000 B.C., and in the Muslim worship down to the present day.' The various forms of altar which were found bore marks of having been used for burning, in accordance with the Jewish form of having a separate altar for incense. In Egyptian worship such a thing was unknown. Incense was always offered in a shovel—or rather in a form of censer held in the hand by the worshipper—frequent examples occur in the vignettes to the Book of the Dead. Most important of all is the great bed of wood-ashes before the sacred cave of the temple, which is estimated at 50 tons at the present day, and must originally have been many times greater. The fuel must have been brought up a height of a thousand feet, for there is no fuel on the hillside. The motive for the fires must therefore have been an important one, and the presence of the temple marks it as religious. The particulars of the ash pile are these. The fires were small, for the ash is all white, and there is no trace of charcoal. No calcined bones were found, so no whole burnt sacrifices can have been offered. Eating in connexion with the sacrifice is suggested by the fact that pieces of pottery and drinking-cups of the XIIth dynasty have been found in the same place. The conclusion is that we have here the relics of a system of festal sacrifices in which the fat and blood of the offerings were burnt and perished, and the rest was consumed by the worshippers, leaving nothing but ashes and pottery. The system of sacrifice thus indicated is essentially Syrian, and not Egyptian, and corresponds to the sacrificing on high places so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. The Bethels with the steles, already mentioned, also mark a departure from Egyptian practice. Finally, there is the association of Sopdu with Hat-hor.

Professor Petrie's summary of the matter amounts to this. While the temple at Serabit is that of Hat-hor, the 'Mistress of Turquoise,' it was not used for an Egyptian imported worship. Hat-hor was always an accommodating goddess whose name was frequently attached to strange goddesses. The Semitic goddess whose attributes most closely re-

semble those of Hat-hor was Ashtaroth or Ishtar. It may, therefore, be concluded that the Semitic worship at Serabit was really that of Ishtar, the local goddess, under an Egyptian name, while the association of a genuinely Egyptian god, Sopdu, with her is strictly in accordance with other examples (2 K 17<sup>26-41</sup>).

The closing sentences of the discussion of the worship at Serabit may be quoted. 'The essential features of Semitic worship are here shown in use earlier than in any other instance. And we see how much of Mosaism was a carrying on of older ritual, how that movement was a monotheistic reformation of existing rites, and how the paganism of the Jews was but the popular retention of more than was granted in the state religion.' These views, as pointed out by Mr. Gordon Clark, have already met with opposition, and it will be interesting to watch further developments. Meanwhile Professor Petrie seems to present a strong *prima facie* case.

In a separate chapter the conditions of the Exodus are specially dealt with. The points of importance brought out are these. The state of learning was such that, centuries at least before the Exodus, writing was common among even the lower classes of the Semites, for articles have been found at Serabit which are engraved with a linear script, and which are evidently the work of 'common Syrian workmen who could not command the skill of an Egyptian sculptor.' This discovery 'finally disproves the hypothesis that the Israelites, who came through this region into Egypt and passed back again, could not have used writing. Here we have common Syrian labourers possessing a script which other Semitic peoples of this region must be credited with knowing.' Next, the argument that the Israelites could not have travelled down to Sinai because of the Egyptian mining camps there has no force whatever, as the Egyptians did not hold the mining district with a garrison, but merely sent expeditions, which at most were only in alternate years, and in the reign of Merenptah only once in many years, and which only remained at Sinai for a few months. Third, there seems no evidence of perceptible change in the climate. If there is any change, it is in the direction of an increase in the rainfall. Therefore the maximum population has not altered to any extent. At present the population is about 5000; it is therefore natural to conclude that the Amalekites, with whom Israel fought at Rephidim,

were not in greater force than this in a battle which is represented as having been very equal, and from this it follows that the numbers of Israel cannot have been much greater. Professor Petrie is accordingly led to examine into the reason for the apparent statement in Scripture of numbers so vastly larger than this. Briefly, his conclusion is that the word *alāf*, which has two meanings, 'a thousand' and 'a family,' should have the latter meaning attributed to it. That is to say, the thousands in the census of Israel as it was in the desert would represent not thousands, but particular families, or tents, and the hundreds following would represent the total number of persons. On this basis, the numbers, instead of amounting to 600,000 men, would work out at 598 tents or families, with a total of 5550 people. The suggestion seems, at least, worthy of consideration.

The dating of one or two of the mining records on the steles at Serabit leads Professor Petrie to incorporate in his volume a very important chapter on Egyptian Chronology, and on the great Egyptian festival known as the Sed Festival. It is impossible to enter into the details of the chapter, and it must suffice to say that he considers it clearly shown by various lines of evidence, that the dating of the Egyptian dynasties must begin considerably earlier than has been generally held. Thus, for the first dynasty he assigns the date 5510 B.C., a date which even goes beyond Mariette's of 5004, which has hitherto been the earliest.

Incidentally, the credit of Manetho is touched upon, and the old historian of Egypt comes, as he has now for a good while been steadily coming, to more of his own rightful position as an authority

of the first class. With regard to the Sed Festival, the conclusion reached is that, in very early times, the Egyptians, like many other nations, killed their priest-king at stated intervals, in order to secure that their ruler should always be a man in the full vigour of life. Gradually this custom was changed by the appointment of a deputy, after whose death the real king renewed his life and reign; and when this change had been accomplished, the festival of the death of the deputy 'became the greatest of the royal festivals, the apotheosis of the king during his life, after which he became Osiris upon earth and the patron of the dead in the underworld.'

The last four chapters of the book are by Mr. C. T. Currelly, and describe his experiences in conducting the fellah workmen of the expedition to and from Sinai, and his visit to the monastery of St. Catharine. Mr. Currelly is strong for Mount Serbāl and the Wady Feirān against Gebel Musa and the plain of Er Raha, as the scene of the giving of the law. He has one observation that seems worth repeating for the sake of those who have read Kipling's indictment of the 'commissariat camuel.' 'The Sudinys have a good explanation for the supercilious look that is so marked on the camel's face; they say that to man has been given the knowledge of the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah, but the camel knows the hundredth and will not tell it.'

The style of the volume, and the reproductions of the photographs, 186 in number, are what would be expected from the reputation of the publisher, and altogether the book does credit both to English exploration and craftsmanship.

## Entre Nous.

**The Great Text Commentary.**—The best illustration this month has been found by the Rev. A. W. Young, Calcutta, and the second by the Rev. Albert H. Walker, B.A., Liverpool.

Illustrations of the Great Text for September must be received by the 4th of August. The text is Lk 2<sup>14</sup>.

The Great Text for October is Lk 2<sup>34,35</sup>—'And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.' A copy of Walker's *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism*, or of Deussen's *Upanishads*, or of Patrick's *James, the Lord's Brother*, will be given for the best

illustration. The illustrations must be received by the 4th of September.

The Great Text for November is Lk 2<sup>49</sup>—'How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?' A copy of Moulton's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, or of Bain's *New Reformation* together with Hodgson's *Primitive Education*, or any two volumes of the 'Scholar as Preacher' series will be given for the best illustration. Those who send illustrations should at the same time name the books they would choose if successful. Illustrations must be received by the 4th of October.

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