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ARTICLE IV.

"THE OLDEST BOOK IN THE WORLD."

SOCIETY, ETHICS, RELIGION, IN EGYPT BEFORE 2000 B. C.

The French Version of the Papyrus Prisse, by M. Philippe Virey, and of the Maxims of Ani, by M. François Chabas. Translated by Howard Osgood, Professor in Rochester Theological Seminary.

THIS work is not published because it is a literary curiosity, but for its importance in the history of man. In the opinion of pre-eminent Egyptologists, Chabas, de Rougé, Naville, Maspero, Renouf, and many others, it is the oldest book now extant in the world, and they, not I, have assigned its title. It professes to have originated at an era many centuries before the epoch of the Exodus. This claim, if alone, would demand too much of our credulity, but with the numerous monuments of the first six dynasties telling their clear story of the high civilization, of the art and literature, of Egypt in hoar antiquity, this claim appears to be without exaggeration. The fragment of the 'work of Kakimna is assigned to the third, and the work of Ptah-hotep to the fifth dynasty.

As to the civilization of Egypt in Pyramid times, the numerous other monuments of this early age have led those most competent to give a sound opinion to tell us as follows:—

It is certain that at least three thousand years before Christ there was in Egypt a powerful and elaborately organized monarchy, enjoying a material civilization in many respects not inferior to that of Europe in the last century. ¹

The fourth dynasty ascended the throne about 3124 B. C., and at that time, long before our usual ideas of the development of nations, there is found a people highly instructed in all the arts of peace; a state completely organized; a hierarchy, firmly founded, minutely divided, and organized

¹ Renouf, *Rel. of Egypt*, p. 81.

even to the smallest external matters; an universally diffused system of writing, and the common use of papyrus; in short, a civilization, which in all essential points has already attained its full maturity, and only by sharp investigation is the further development in some directions discovered. ²

Art under the fourth and fifth dynasties obtained a height never surpassed by following dynasties. Egypt had also a complicated administration, the result of efforts pursued through long years. There were civil grades and religious grades, bishops as well as prefects. Registration of lands was maintained. The King had his court, and a whole world of officials, powerfully and wisely organized, gravitated around him. Literature was held in honor. ³

At the time when the oldest monuments now extant were erected, the Egyptians were a people of high civilization; they had a complete system of writing, a literature, a highly developed art, and a well-ordered state. ⁴

In one of the tombs of Gizeh, a high officer of the first period of the sixth dynasty takes the title of "Governor of the house of books." This simple mention, occurring incidentally between two more exalted titles, suffices, where others are wanting, to show us the extraordinary development of Egyptian civilization at that time. Not only was there already a literature, but this literature was sufficiently large to fill libraries, and its importance was so great that one of the court officers was specially designated for the keeping of the royal library. ⁵

On the inside of the pyramid of Unas (fifth dynasty), it is said of him in the other world:—

When men receive burial, the flesh is miserable that has no writing; the writing of Unas is sealed with the great seal, surely, his writing is not sealed with the little seal. . . . His books are on both sides of him. ⁶

Literature was not a slow fruit of the development of Egypt, but it goes back to the first dynasties. . . . This period seems to have been that in which Egypt was best governed and arrived at the highest point of internal prosperity. ⁷

If we have hitherto believed that the immense literature of the Dead arose gradually during the long history of the Egyptian people, and that it must be possible to follow the development of these ideas among the Egyptians, we can hold that view no longer. This literature was made at an epoch that lies almost beyond our historical knowledge, and later times did no more than pass it on. ⁸

There is, therefore, not only no good reason for rejecting

² Lepsius, Brockhaus' Lexicon, Vol. i. p. 254.

³ Mariette, *Galerie de l' Eg. Anc.*, p. 27.

⁴ Erman, *Ægypten*, p. 59.

⁵ Maspero, *Hist. Anc.*, p. 69.

⁶ Maspero, *Rec. d. Travaux*, Vol. iv. p. 71.

⁷ Naville, *Litterature de l' anc. Egypte*, pp. 7, 8.

⁸ Erman, *Berliner, Philol. Wochenschrift*, Oct. 8, 1887.

the claim of this work to its high antiquity, but there are many reasons for accepting it.

The history of its translations is fully told in the preface of Monsieur Virey, which follows. A high estimate of M. Virey's excellent critical work ⁹ is also given in the extract from Professor Maspero's address in presenting the work to the French Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres.

With M. Virey's permission this translation is published, to popularize, if possible, more correct views of the early history of man. It is made from the French translation in M. Virey's critical edition. Of course, being a translation of a translation, this publication can do no more than represent fairly the French version, and this is sufficient to give a general idea of thought on some most important themes in early days. We may subtract all the words or phrases over which critics contend, and their loss will not at all affect the general picture.

The fragment of Kakimna reveals a society, long removed from the savage state; where manners go far towards making the man, and the ill-mannered surly man is an affliction to his mother; where gluttony is regarded as bestiality, and the man who does not govern his appetite is marked as worthless; where the right instruction of children is the first duty of parents; where the deity is spoken of in the singular, as God who brings to pass events which none foreknow.

But it is to the complete work of Ptah-hotep that we turn for better, fuller instruction on these early days. The whole cast of the work shows the mind of one who has all his life been accustomed to the higher walks of life in a well-ordered society, where he has respected the authority above him, and required the respect and obedience of his subordinates. If Ptah-hotep conformed his life to his excellent precepts he was a calm, firm, gentle, generous, and refined man, as well as a high officer of the court of Pharaoh.

⁹ *Études sur le Papyrus Prisse, Le Livre de Kakimna et Les Leçons de Ptah-hotep*, par Philippe Virey. Paris. F. Vieweg. 1887.

SOCIETY IN PTAH-HOTEP'S DAY.

The state of society to which Ptah-hotep introduces us shows us the king as supreme in the land and the source of all honors (§§ 1 and 44); service in the palace is profitable but severely onerous (31); there are well-defined classes, the lord (15, 24), the ruler of a city (30), the great man (7, 27), the teacher (42-44), the scholar, the artist (2), the judge (17), the plaintiff and defendant (17), the police (28), the officer on guard with the countersign (13), the miners of precious stones (2), the farmer with well-marked limits to his property (9), the pilot and sailors (25). There is also the service of the great man where active obedience and faithfulness are required for success (25-27); and there is the service of another great man where rapacity and oppression were the rule (6, 7, 9). But, better than all else, there is the well-ordered household (21), with the father deserving the reverence of his children and receiving it (39, 40, 42, 44), the single, tenderly loved and honored wife (21, 37), the children trained gently, but firmly, in knowledge and obedience (12, 42), the servants well treated, and faithful in adversity (22, 35), the manager of the estate maintained in his authority (36); and in this household loose morals are abhorred as death (18).

In this state law is supreme, and has been maintained for ages (5), authority is respected (10), "to put an obstacle in the way of the laws is to open the way before violence" (5), but the application of the law to the offender is justice (23).

There is the council where the double-minded talk long on both sides of the question in order not to say anything (15), but the wise man, when he speaks, knows "what objections may be made to him," for "to speak in council is an art, and speech is criticised more than all other work; it is contradiction that puts it to the proof" (24).

PTAH-HOTEP'S ETHICS.

Ptah-hotep instructs his son that the safest path is found

by the elevation of mind which attains calmness in the midst of unceasing activity; "Whatever makes souls calm penetrates him who heeds" (1); "he who is master of his own spirit is superior to him whom God has loaded with his gifts;" and so he advocates calmness in a leader (5), in a counsellor (15, 24), in a judge (17), in a man of power (25), in a man in high station (30), when one meets a heated debater (3, 4, 33), or a great man (7), or a man in anger (23), or when one is in trouble (26), wearied beyond endurance (29), under burdensome authority (31).

This advice is the reflex of the Egyptian ideal from the earliest times. Osiris, the god, had come to earth to benefit man by his teachings as to good government, good laws, an upright, kindly life, and had been slain by the god of evil; but rising from the dead, soul and body joined together again for eternity, he has become the unchangeable god of the final judgment of all men. All who died and were pronounced accepted by Osiris were made like him, partook of his nature so fully that they were addressed as Osiris; the deceased and Osiris were one. So deeply had this idea possessed the Egyptians that every statue, however remarkable as a portrait, also bore the calm, impassive front of Osiris, under which plays the suggestion of a kindly smile, telling of a gentle heart, that will not reject the suppliant.

Tiele's summary of this belief is: "A moral life, a life of holiness and beneficence, was conceived of as being a matter of solemn obligation towards the deity himself. To become like god Osiris, a benefactor, a good being, persecuted but justified, judged but pronounced innocent, was looked upon as the ideal of every pious man, and as the condition on which alone eternal life could be obtained and the means by which it could be continued."¹⁰

In accordance with the same ideal are the maxims on the brotherhood of man. Positive injunctions: act as a "steward of the goods belonging to God" for the benefit of others (30); "Give men life in the midst of peace" (6); Love thy

¹⁰ *Egyptian Rel.*, p. 230.

people (27); Treat dependents well (22, 35); Return a gentle answer (2, 3, 20, 25); "The gentle man overcomes obstacles" (25); Forget the wrong (29); Be content with what you have (9); Be just (5, 23); Inspire men with confidence in you (9); Be kind to all (17); Be companionable (30); Be cheerful (34); Respect authority (10); Respect knowledge and calm speech (25); Be a good hearer (38-42). Negative injunctions: Do not intimidate men (6); Do not condemn or ridicule them even when wrong (4, 33); Beware of pride (2), of hardness of heart (30), of oppressing others (6, 9, 31), of bad temper (19, 20), of scandal (23), of libertinism (18), of accepting flattery (14, 16).

Among the purest gems of Ptah-hotep's thoughts are those recognizing the essential manliness of man; "He who is master of his spirit is superior to him whom God has loaded with his gifts" (14); "Treat well thy people as it behooves thee; this is the duty of those whom God has favored" (22); "May the love that thou dost feel pass into the hearts of those that love thee; may thy people become loving and obedient" (27). "If thou art great after having been low," "do not harden thy heart on account of thine elevation; thou hast become only the steward of the goods belonging to God. Do not put behind thee the neighbor who is thine equal; be to him as a companion" (30); "Take care of those who are faithful to thee when thine affairs are depressed." "It is of more importance than" one's "nobility" (35):

Men have always known more than they have practised, but if Ptah-hotep in any measure exemplified his principles, he deserves to be ranked high among the moral teachers of mankind. Whether he exemplified his principles or not, he teaches truths of the noblest morality, truths which are needful among the most advanced nations of the present day.

PTAH-HOTEP'S CONCEPTION OF GOD.

I have followed M. Virey in calling Ptah-hotep's deity "God." I do not intend, nor do I believe M. Virey intends,

by the capital letter to be understood as deciding Ptah-hotep's view of the deity beyond his own reiterated statements.

Ptah-hotep is certainly no monotheist in our understanding of that term, for he speaks of the gods (1), he prays to Osiris (1), he also mentions Horus as an example (42), and twice he asserts that a man becomes, or is like, a god (9, 13) by certain courses. But in all the other instances (16 times) he speaks of God in the singular and ascribes to him the attributes which seem necessarily to belong to one only. "God loves that man should hearken; if he does not hearken he is abhorrent to God" (39). All that man has is the gift of God; children (44), means of existence (7), possessions (9, 22), rank (10), all are held at the will of God (6, 7), and man at his highest estate is only the steward of the goods belonging to God (30). God's will toward men is that they should have life with peace (6), he wars against the oppressor, and reduces him to helplessness (6, 10). God loves the man who is obedient (12), who loves his people (22) and seeks their good (6). Ptah-hotep believes in prayer, he prays, and believes that he is answered (1), and he also believes himself "beloved of God" (1). All this is as far removed from a "nature god" as it is from pantheism.

Certainly Ptah-hotep's society, and ethics, and conception of God, have nothing in common with savagery or dim moral perceptions. All oppression and antagonism to law is condemned, and war is not once mentioned.

PTAH-HOTEP AND THE USUAL THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT.

These views, held and taught before 2000 B. C. by an Egyptian, set before us a far purer system of religious belief and a nobler conception of the Supreme Being than heathen Greece and Rome, many centuries later, ever possessed. That at an age so remote, far antedating the era of Abraham, the conception of God was so full of truth as to his personality, his attributes, his care of men, his exaltation above all nature gods, and that the moral teaching was so elevated, are facts

which directly contradict the assumption of many orthodox teachers of the Bible. It is often assumed and taught that men in these early ages had no such conception of God or of morality as would warrant the revelation of the higher truths of God and of morality. And hence a theory of development in the Old Testament has been assumed by orthodox writers which is as far from the facts as is the antagonistic theory of development assumed by those critics who deny all historical validity to the Old Testament. The inscriptions in the pyramid of Unas, the precepts of Ptah-hotep, and the Book of the Dead, stand as irreversible contradictions of the theories of these antagonists. Men at this early age taught a morality of great purity, and this morality, they affirmed, was the will of their deity, and only by conforming to it could one be well pleasing to God.

Some teachers of the Bible tell us that the morality taught in the Old Testament was on a much lower plane than that of the New. But the highest authoritative Teacher has told us that the very heart of all Old Testament teaching was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" "and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets." Jesus also condenses the essence of his moral teaching in the injunction, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them;" "for this," he asserts, "is the law and the prophets." From the mouth of him who inspired both Testaments we have the assurance that the morality of both Testaments is precisely the same.

All *a priori* theories of development are frail craft among the reefs of hard fact, and, to avoid shipwreck, the study of the monuments of Egypt and Chaldea is now an indispensable requisite for those who would instruct others about the development of religious thought and morality among men.

THE MAXIMS OF ANI.

In order that a comparison may be made with some of the

later ethical teachings of the Egyptians I have added the translation of the maxims of Ani, as they are rendered in the French version of Chabas, in his periodical, *L' Egyptologie*, 1874-1877. Of the age of these maxims, Chabas says: "It is probably in the last half of the interval of at least six centuries [*i. e.*, from 1300 to 720 B. C.] that our papyrus must be dated. It will be difficult to reach a closer approximation, but it is certain that the greater part of the maxims which this manuscript reproduces belong to a much more ancient teaching."¹¹

Though these two Egyptian moralists are separated by more than a thousand years there is a striking resemblance in their teachings. Ani is not an imitator of Ptah-hotep. Where the similarities are the most apparent, there are also differences which prove the independence of the later writer. And yet the grand result is the same in both teachings. The morality is true, of a high order, and is referred to God as its source, who will punish all infractions of his will. There is not a word of Ani's which implies his service of any but the one God; though, when the papyrus containing these maxims was written, Egypt was crowded with temples dedicated to many gods and decorated with the bas-reliefs of many more. Similar strange contradictions, with many other evidences, have led a large number of Egyptologists to the conclusion, that the Egyptian religion can be explained only by a primitive monotheism, which never entirely lost its hold on the minds of men.

The most succinct statement of the Egyptian conception of God and of their worship, which I have seen, is given by Ani: "The God of this world is in light above the firmament, and his emblems are on the earth. It is to them that worship is offered daily" (36).

According to Ani,—

God dwells in light above the firmament (36);

He is the source and giver of life (25, 26, 36);

He hears and answers prayer (11, 61, 62);

¹¹ Part I., p. 12.

He knows the thoughts and acts of men (11, 35) ;

He punishes the guilty (35, 36, 46).

Hence it is man's duty,—

To give himself wholly to God (46);

To avoid what is abominable to God (36);

To hearken to God (62);

To pray to God (11);

To be grateful to God (26);

To keep God's appointed seasons (2);

To elevate his spirit towards God (5);

To worship in quietness in the sanctuary, for God will hear though no words are uttered (11): To prepare for death (15).¹²

All this is far removed from a "nature god" or pantheism.

The similarities in thought and expression between these Egyptian moralists and many passages of the Bible, especially of the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, cannot fail to impress themselves on the reader. Ptah-hotep and Ani, though heathen, are much nearer to the teachings of the Bible, as to God and morality, than they are to the teachers of Greece and Rome, or to Confucius or Buddha. And it is to this general similarity, and not to any accidental similarity of words, that is due the great interest in these works for students of the Bible and of the history of man.

I am indebted to my daughter for much work on these translations, but I alone am responsible for them.

HOWARD OSGOOD.

¹² On this most interesting subject I must content myself with referring the reader to the works of those Egyptologists who have written upon it. E. de Rougé, *Rituel Funéraire*, 1860; *Conference Sur l. Relig. d. anc. Égyptiens*, 1869; *Melanges d' Archéologie*, 1873; A. Mariette, *Notice d. principaux Monuments*, etc., 1869; F. Chabas, *Calendrier des Jours*, 1877; *Études sur l' Antiquité Hist.*, 1873; Grébaud, *Hymne a Ammon—Ra*, 1874; Renouf, *Hist. of Eg. Religion*, 1880; Pierret, *Panthéon Égyptien*, 1881; H. Brugsch, *Religion u. Mythologie d. alt. Ägypter*, 1885; Lieblein, *Egyptian Religion*, 1884; Maspero, *Revue d. l' hist. d. Religions*, 1887; *Archæology*, 1887; Tiele, *Hist. of Eg. Religion*, 1882, and others.

PREFACE OF MONSIEUR VIREY.

All that is known of the origin and discovery of the Prisse Papyrus was made public long ago by Chabas in "Le Plus Ancien Livre du Monde, Étude sur le Papyrus Prisse," *Revue Archéologique*, 1858. I do not pretend to do anything more than give a summary of the statement by Chabas.

Prisse, who gave this papyrus to the National Library in Paris and published it in 1847 ("Fac-simile d'un papyrus Égyptien en caractères hiératiques," Paris, Franck), had obtained it from one of the peasants whom he employed on his excavations at Draho'bo'l-Neggah, in the necropolis of Thebes. This man pretended to have received the manuscript from a third person, who did not know whence it came; but Prisse suspected that they wished to make him pay for an article which already belonged to him, found among the excavations which were being made at his expense, and that the papyrus must have come from the tomb of one of the Entews of the eleventh dynasty. The large and solid character of the writing gives the impression of a date earlier, rather than later, than the twelfth dynasty.

But if there is still uncertainty regarding the *time when the copy which has come down to us was made*, on the other hand, we know exactly to what date we can trace the *composition of the text*, and we know it from the text itself.

Our first two pages, in which we find some precepts concerning manners and morals, form a treatise which was composed in the beginning of the reign of the king Senoferu (third dynasty) by a man named Kakimna: "At this time the majesty of the king of the south and north, Huni, arrived in port [died]; then arose the majesty of the king of the south and north, Senoferu, a king beneficent over this whole land; then I, Kakimna, was made prefect." The last sixteen pages contain a treatise on morals composed by the prefect Ptah-hotep in the reign of Assa (fifth dynasty): "Precepts of the prefect Ptah-hotep, under the king of the south and north, Assa."

The name of Ptah-hotep, common under the ancient empire, is found also in connection with the name of Assa, where he is called "the favorite of Assa, Ptah-hotep." This Ptah-hotep is perhaps the author of our book, for he boasts of having been "favored by the king among the first of those whose works have made them noble." One passage seems to indicate that he was of the royal race, for he is called, "the son of the king, eldest, legitimate;" however, this last point does not seem at all certain. We might question why the eldest and legitimate son of the king did not reign, if he lived, and Ptah-hotep did not die early, since he was one hundred and ten years old when he wrote his treatise. To admit that he was the son of Assa, and that he died before this king, one must attribute to the latter an extraordinary length of life.

But Professor Maspero has already shown that one must not take literally the titles of "royal mother, royal wife, royal daughter;" and that a woman was a royal wife, for example, by right of birth, before marriage. These names served only to determine the rank which a princess occupied at the court in matters of etiquette and precedence.

If the name of royal wife was only an honorary title, I take this as warrant for supposing that one could be called a son of the king without really being one; and that the title meant "prince;" in this case "son of the king, great, legitimate," was equivalent to "prince of the blood." That this last name could have been given to a person not belonging to the royal family, is not without example in contemporary history, even in the West; there is all the stronger reason therefore that it might happen in the East, where high-sounding epithets accumulate so easily. At the Egyptian court, where the king was the source of all privilege, and all honors came from the king, perhaps all nobility consisted in attaching one's self, at least nominally, to his family, or in drawing near to it. The relatives of the king bore the highest title; but the "royal nurses" themselves, gloried in "the suckling which had mingled their blood with Horus."

Ptah-hotep, at the age of 110, after so many years of service, must have attained the highest dignities, and if the title of prince of the blood appears lofty, I remember that he was first among those whose merit had made them noble. Then enfeebled by old age, forced to give up the work which had made his glory, but unable to resign himself to live uselessly during the remaining days of his life, he resolved to write for younger generations the lessons of wisdom which he himself had received from the ancients, or which long experience had taught him. By a poetic fiction, he addresses himself to Osiris, depicts the miserable state to which old age and infirmities have reduced him, and asks if the god will permit an intelligent being to be condemned to be good for nothing. Osiris replies to his prayer and commands Ptah-hotep to teach the wisdom of the ancients which they learned from the gods.

Then Ptah-hotep begins to "set in order the good word," and sets it in order with a fertility of invention, the cause of which I will soon state. He has chosen his son for hearer; otherwise his doctrine is applicable to all men. After the explanation of his precepts, he returns more directly to his hearer, "If thou dost listen to what I have just told thee, etc.;" and sings the praises of this doctrine. The *ma*,¹³ wisdom and knowledge, were acquired by listening with docility, for docility is the best of all. And since these old precepts are good, they must be held, and no one should teach new ideas. Undoubtedly some innovators will make themselves heard by the ignorant crowd (§ 42), and for a time inspire the public with confidence; but their glory will not last as long as they wish. Therefore nothing must be taken away, nothing added, nothing changed of the

¹³ The *ma*, upon which Professor Grébaud has made a most interesting and complete study in his lectures at the College of France, includes here what we call "the true, the beautiful, the good;" it is the principle of order and harmony in everything. This explanation, which I give here of the meaning of this passage, is entirely insufficient and the question is very complex; but more careful examination would lead to details which would not be in place here.

established teaching; and if any one feels ideas contrary to these germinating in himself, he must beware of disclosing them.

This horror of new ideas and of innovators is interesting to see in the oldest book in the world; but one must not hastily conclude from this that Ptah-hotep was unfriendly to all kinds of progress. He himself says that "the barriers of art are not closed, no artist having attained that perfection to which he should aspire." Only the teaching of morals has been perfect from the earliest times, because it is of divine origin; therefore it must remain unchanged. But it is not forbidden to comment upon these established precepts; the author considers them a "canvas to be embellished," upon which the masters shall exercise their eloquence; but in order to comment upon them without falsifying their spirit, knowledge is necessary, knowledge acquired by application and docility. Again and again he insists on docility; the docile son who receives the word of his father shall live long for that reason, he shall please his lord and obtain favor of the king; on the contrary, the man without experience, who does not listen to the counsels of wisdom, goes astray and is on the road to ruin. And Ptah-hotep ends by quoting his own example: "I have reached one hundred and ten years of life, blessed by the favor of the king among the first of those who have exalted themselves by their works, doing the pleasure of the king, in an honored place."

As for these precepts, the study of which will be fruitful in its results, I shall not try to sum them up here. The work is so composed that such an attempt would lead me to bring into this introduction almost my entire translation; or else I would be obliged to limit myself to a simple list of titles which would not be interesting and would give the impression that the treatise is dry. On the contrary, it is a collection of counsels which, taken separately, are generally very well drawn up, but which follow one another without much order; when two of them can be connected it is because the author insists upon one idea and returns to it; but it is very

hard to find any trace of method ; still less must we look for the spirit of system, the well-ordered development of a philosophy, which one could grasp and epitomize. For this Ptah-hotep does not care ; not that his work is slovenly ; on the contrary, the style is very elaborate, sometimes even overwrought, and this leads me to speak of the difficulties of various kinds which embarrass the translator.

The subtlety of the style, which has been considered not the least of these difficulties, is due principally, I think, to the Prisse Papyrus having been written in verse ; the oldest book in the world is a work, if not poetic, at least rhythmic. In this will be found the explanation of constructions which seem a little strained, for example : " While the father is in great sorrow, and the mother who bore him, another is happier than she." This shows us what Ptah-hotep means when he says that he " set in order the good word." But this order will aid the translator more than it will embarrass him, since the discovery by Professor Grébaud of the laws which regulate the poetic language of the Egyptians enables us to divide the phrases with certainty.

Another difficulty appears to be more serious ; it is due to the use of a certain number of words whose exact meaning we do not know. Some of them, undoubtedly fallen into disuse at an early date, have never until now been met with in the other texts which we have. We may hope that fresh publications will bring us new examples of them. The Ebers' papyrus has given us some archaic words ; and archaic terms may yet be found in the numerous texts of the old Empire which Professor Maspero has published. Moreover, in spite of the beauty and the size of the writing, the text is not always as easy to decipher as one would think at first sight. There are passages of whose meaning I cannot be sure, because I have not yet been able to read them in an exact manner. Sometimes the writing is much abbreviated, which is very embarrassing in the hieratic. Finally, though the manuscript is in general well kept, it is not irreproachable. Thus, I have noticed evident faults, and I also think I recog-

nize the omission of some words where the phrase seems to have no meaning and where the verse is too short.

In spite of many difficulties, this papyrus is so interesting that at an early date Egyptologists courageously undertook its study. Without pretending to reach by the first step complete and definite results, they could at least grapple with the subject, and it is no mean result to make known little by little, even imperfectly, a document of this value. Though Dr. Heath, who set the example in 1855, did not succeed in making Egyptologists accept his too bold interpretations, Chabas some time after was more successful. I have already spoken of his work published in the *Revue Archéologique*. Under the modest guise of an analysis, he gives a satisfactory translation of the first fourteen lines of the treatise of Ptah-hotep and of important passages from the latter part; the rest of the work is simply analyzed. This analysis was very incomplete; and by a partial translation one is liable not to grasp the exact meaning; nevertheless a great advance had been made. In 1869 and 1870, Lauth went farther, and published a complete and coherent translation, accompanied by numerous notes. Such a translation must necessarily be far from perfect; but though one might make a number of criticisms upon this important work, its merit must not therefore be forgotten. It has many times been very useful to me, and I should make a greater point of this here, if I did not have occasion to speak of it constantly in the course of my work. Finally, the translations of Brugsch are very ingenious and interesting, and I shall often quote or discuss them. I had composed this study¹⁴ before the work of Dümichen upon the first two pages of the papyrus appeared: the reading of his translation has not been useless to me, though mine had been finished long before.

Outside of the help furnished by the works of my prede-

¹⁴ My translation of the first two pages was shown to Professor Grébaud in August, 1883. The remainder was sent as a thesis to the *École des Hautes Etudes* in April, 1884. Various circumstances have delayed the publication of the work.

cessors, I have already said how much easier my task has been made by putting into practice the teaching of Professor Grébaud. But I wish at the same time to acknowledge what I owe to the masters who have, from the start, directed my studies; to Chabas, who, unhappily prevented by sickness from guiding me in the way which he had pointed out, did not cease to show me by many tokens of good-will how much he was interested in my progress; and to Professor Maspero, who, taking up again the teaching hardly commenced, has taught me to decipher, and helped me with advice and encouragement in the accomplishment of a difficult work on a newly discovered manuscript which I brought from Thebes.

PROFESSOR MASPERO'S PRESENTATION AND COMMENDATION OF THIS WORK TO THE ACADEMY OF INSCRIPTIONS AND BELLES-LETTRES, TAKEN FROM "LES CONTES RENDUS DES SÉANCES DE L' ANNÉE," 1887.

"The Egyptian work contained in the *Prisse Papyrus*," says Professor Maspero, "is partly a treatise on morals, partly a childlike and honest treatise upon civility. We find in it beautiful maxims concerning the respect which the husband owes to his wife, the obedience which the son owes to the father, and, side by side with these, injunctions concerning the necessity of not eating untidily in society, and upon the demeanor which one should strive to observe on meeting an influential person. The very obscure text has been often translated, but none of the translations, neither that of Chabas nor that of Brugsch, is satisfactory. M. Virey devoted six years to the study of this work. I cannot say that he has entirely succeeded in solving all the difficulties, but his translation is consistent throughout and is very superior to any other that has been made up to the present time. It is the best first appearance that any one has made for a long time in the science of Egyptology, and after this we have the right to expect great things of the author. M. Virey has been attached to the mission at Cairo and has brought

back from these important materials, the publication of which he is hastening."

PROFESSOR MASPERO'S CRITICISM OF THE PRISSE PAPYRUS IN HIS "HISTOIRE ANCIENNE DES PEUPLES DE L' ORIENT," 1886, PP. 78-80.

"Another papyrus, presented by Prisse to the National Library of Paris, contains the only complete work which remains to us of this primitive philosophy. It was written, doubtless, under one of the first kings of the twelfth dynasty, and contains the works of two authors, of whom, one lived under the third, the other under the fifth dynasty. It is, therefore, not without reason that it has been called 'The Oldest Book in the World.' Imperfect at the beginning, it contains the close of a treatise on morals composed by a certain Kaqimna in the first part of the reign of the Pharaoh Senoferu. There followed a work now lost; one of the ancient owners of the papyrus rubbed it out in order to substitute in its place another work which was never written. The last fifteen pages are filled by a work now celebrated in Egyptology, under the title of 'The Instructions of Ptah-hotep.' This Ptah-hotep was the son of a king of the fifth dynasty. He was, no doubt, an old man when he wrote his book, for he begins by an unflattered picture of old age. As we see, Ptah-hotep took up his pen to show old men how to be useful. He would teach them the wisdom of the ancestors, in order that they might teach it again to the young, and preserve virtue in the world.

"One must not expect to find in this work great profundity of conception. Learned analyses, refined distinctions, metaphysical abstractions, were not fashionable in the time of Ptah-hotep. Speculative ideas were neglected in the interest of positive facts, theory in the interest of practice. Man was studied, his passions, his habits, his temptations, his failures, not in order to construct a new philosophy, but in order to reform what was imperfect in his nature and to point out to the soul the way of a glorious eternity. Thus

Ptah-hotep does not trouble himself with new discoveries and deductions. He gives the reflections and counsels which occurred to him, just as they came, without grouping them, and without drawing any conclusion from the whole.

“Wisdom is useful in order to know the good ; he recommends wisdom. Gentleness towards subordinates is necessary to safety ; he praises gentleness. Mingled with all are counsels on proper conduct in the various circumstances of life ; when one meets an imperious man, goes into the world, marries. A detailed analysis of such a work is impossible ; to translate it fully is still more impossible. The nature of the subject, the strangeness of some of the precepts, the style, all tend to bewilder the student and mislead him in his researches. From the most ancient times, morals had been considered a science good and praiseworthy in itself, but so hackneyed that one could freshen it only by form of treatment. Ptah-hotep did not escape the necessities of the subject he chose. Long before him others had spoken the truths to which he aims to give new expression ; he must, in order to allure the reader, search for new and spicy modes of expression. He does not fail in this. In some cases his thought is so disguised that the moral point of his sentence escapes us.”

P. LE PAGE RENOUF, ESQ., PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL ARCHÆOLOGY, LONDON, ON THE PRISSE PAPYRUS, IN HIS HIBBERT LECTURES, 1880, P. 76.

“We are acquainted with several collections of Precepts and Maxims on the conduct of life. Such are the Maxims of Ptah-hotep contained in the Prisse Papyrus, the Instructions of Amenemhat and the Maxims of Ani ; and fragments of other important works are preserved in the museums of Paris, Leyden, and St. Petersburg. The most venerable of them is the work of Ptah-hotep, which dates from the age of the Pyramids, and yet appeals to the authority of the ancients. It is undoubtedly, as Chabas called it in the title of the

memorable essay in which its contents were first made known, 'The most Ancient Book of the World.' The manuscript at Paris which contains it was written centuries before the Hebrew lawgiver was born, but the author of the work lived as far back as the reign of King Assa Tatcara of the fifth dynasty. This most precious and venerable relic of antiquity is as yet very imperfectly understood. Its general import is clear enough, and some of the sections are perfectly intelligible; but the philological difficulties with which it abounds will for many years, I fear, resist the efforts of the most accomplished interpreters. These books are very similar in character and tone to the book of Proverbs in our Bible. They inculcate the study of wisdom, the duty to parents and superiors, respect for property, the advantages of charitableness, peaceableness, and content, of liberality, humility, chastity and sobriety, of truthfulness and justice; and they show the wickedness and folly of disobedience, strife, arrogance and pride, of slothfulness, intemperance, unchastity, and other vices. It is only through a lamentable misunderstanding of the text that some scholars have discovered anti-religious, epicurean, or sceptical expressions."

THE BOOK OF KAKIMNA.—A TREATISE ON MANNERS IN THE TIME OF THE KINGS HUNI AND SENOFERU OF THE THIRD DYNASTY.

I am sure of being respected.¹⁵ A song that is right opens the stronghold of my silence; but the paths to the place of my repose are surrounded by words armed with knives against the intruder,¹⁶ no admittance except to those who come aright.

¹⁵ The book is speaking here.

¹⁶ In the 145th chapter of the "Book of the Dead," we find the gateways of the field Aanro guarded by gods "armed with knives," and the first gate is called "exterminating lady (?) arranging the words which repulse the rebels;" which reminds us of these "words armed with knives against the intruder." The deceased or the Horus, who presents himself at each door in succession, must recite a sort of litany in which he explains that he is in order, that he enters by right. When he has discharged this duty, he is acknowledged pure, and the door opens. The substance of our sentence,

If thou sittest down to eat with a number, despise the dishes which thou lovest; ¹⁷ it is but a short time to restrain thyself; and voracity is something degrading, for there is bestiality in it [comp. Ptah-hotep, §§ 7, Ani, § 39]. As a glass of water quenches thirst, as a mouthful of vegetables strengthens the heart, as one good takes the place ¹⁸ of another good, as a very little takes the place of much, he who is drawn away by his stomach when he is not on the watch is a worthless man. With such people the stomach is master. However, if thou sittest down to eat with a glutton, to keep up with him in eating will lead afar; and if thou drinkest with a great drinker, accept in order to please him. Do not reject the meats, even from a man repugnant to thee; take what he gives thee, and do not leave it; truly that is disagreeable. ¹⁹

As for a man lacking good manners, upon whom all that one can say is without effect, who wears a surly face towards the advances of a gracious heart, he is an affliction to his mother and his relatives. All say: "Show thy name, thou whose mouth is silent; speak, be not proud because of thy strength!"

therefore, is this: "I receive kindly those who deserve it; but none must come to disturb wrongfully my repose, which is guarded as well as the field Aanro." This comparison is interesting because it enables us, perhaps, to trace back to the time of Huni and of Senoferu the 145th chapter of the Book of the Dead. It was a little later, under Menkara, that the prince Hartiti-f discovered, it is said, at Hermopolis, the 64th chapter (Book of the Dead, ch. 64, l. 30 & 31).

¹⁷ That is, "at a repast in society do not give rein to your appetite, your greediness."

¹⁸ The text means that for a man who is not a glutton one good thing is as good as another, and that a moderate amount of food repairs one's strength as well as a greater quantity.

¹⁹ Professor Maspero thinks that reference is here made to that rule of politeness which consists in receiving, with at least the appearance of gratitude, the morsels which another guest divides with you as an honor. This custom is still in vogue in the East. If this guest is repugnant, as the text says, it is disgusting, but one must submit to the custom.

Do not harden the hearts of thy children. Instruct those who will be in thy place; but when he does not permit, none know the events which God brings to pass. Let the chief talk to his children, after he has accomplished the human condition; ²⁰ they will gain honor for themselves by increasing in well-doing, starting from that which he has told them.

If all that is written in this book is heeded as I have said it, in order to make progress in the right, they who heed will learn it by heart, they will recite it as it is written; it will do good to their hearts more than all things on this whole earth, in whatever position they may be.

Then at this time the majesty of the king of the South and of the North, Huni, arrived in port [died]; then arose the majesty of the king of the South and of the North, Senoferu, a king beneficent all over this entire land. Then I, Kakimna, was made prefect. It is finished.

THE PRECEPTS OF PTAH-HOTEP.

I.

The Precepts of the Prefect Ptah-Hotep.

Under the majesty of the king of the South and of the North, Assa, living eternally, forever. The prefect Ptah-Hotep says: "O god over the two crocodiles," ¹ my lord, the progress of time brings old age. Decay falls upon man and decline takes the place of novelty.² A new misery weighs him down each day; the sight grows dim, the ears become deaf; the powers are constantly failing. The mouth is silent, speech is wanting, the mind flickers, not remembering yesterday. The whole body suffers. That which is good becomes bad, taste departs. Old age makes man miserable in every way; the nose is stopped, breathing no longer from ex-

²⁰ That is, when he has gained the experience of life.

¹ [The notes on these precepts are those of M. Virey, except the references to the precepts of Ani, which are by the translator.]

This god is Osiris, as is shown by the 43rd invocation in the 142nd chapter of the "Book of the Dead." We might question why, among the many names of Osiris, Ptah-Hotep chose this one. But, in an article in the *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* (1868, p. 101), Chabas, studying the steles of Horus on the crocodiles, and observing that this god is called "the one grown old who grows young again in his hour, the old man who becomes a child," recalls our passage in the *Prisse Papyrus*, where Ptah-hotep invokes against the evils of old age the aid of the god over the two crocodiles. [On prayer, see Ani, §§ 11, 37, 46, 61, 62.]

² Doubtful translation. Literally: "comes upon newness."

haustion. In whatever position, this is a state (?) of . . . (?) . . . ³ Who will give me authority to speak ⁴ that I may tell him the words of those who have heard the counsels of former times? And the counsels of the gods which have been heard, who [will give me authority to tell of them]? Let it be thus; let the evil of the *rekhi* be driven away; send the double . . . ⁵ The majesty of this god says: "Instruct him in the speech of former times. This it is that constitutes the worth of the children of the great. Whatever makes souls calm penetrates him who heeds, and what is thus told will not produce satiety."

II.

The beginning of the arrangement of good words, spoken by the noble lord, the divine father beloved of God, the son of the king, the eldest of his race, ⁶ the prefect Ptah-hotep, as a means of instructing the ignorant in the knowledge of the choice of good words. There is profit to him who will listen to this; there is loss to him who will transgress them.

He says to his son: "Be not proud because of thy knowledge; converse with the ignorant as with the scholar; for the barriers of art are never closed, no artist ever possessing that perfection to which he should aspire. But wisdom is more difficult to find than the emerald; which is found by slaves ⁷ among the rocks of pegmatite.

III.

If thou hast to do with a disputer while he is in his heat, and if he is superior to thee in ability, lower the hands, bend the back, do not get into a passion with him. As he will not permit thee to spoil his speech, it is very wrong to interrupt him; that shows thou art not able to be quiet when thou art contradicted. If then thou hast to do with a disputer while he is in his heat, act as one not to be moved. Thou hast the advantage over him, if only in keeping silent, when his speech is bad. "Better is he who refrains," says the audience; and thou art right in the opinion of the great.

IV.

If thou hast to do with a disputer while he is in his heat, do not treat him with contempt, because thou art not of the same opinion. Do not be provoked with him when he is wrong; away with that! He is fighting against his very self; do not ask him to flatter thy views. Do not amuse thyself with the spectacle which thou hast before thee; this is odious, small, and of a contemptible spirit. Struggle against this, as something condemned by the great, when on the point of giving thy views. [Comp. §§ 3, 4, with Maxims of Ani, § 16.]

³ The transcription of this passage is quite uncertain.

⁴ I suppose the poet here asks of the god inspiration that he may speak with authority and success.

⁵ I do not understand this word, I cannot even read it; I suppose that Ptah-hotep prays Osiris to give him his power or to send him inspiration, but I can only conjecture.

⁶ Of his loins, that is legitimate. I have stated in the introduction how this title must be understood.

⁷ Literal translation "being found, the latter, by female slaves."

V.

If thou art in the position of leader, to decide the condition of a large number of men, seek the best way, that thine own position may be without reproach. Justice is great, unchangeable and assured; it has not been disturbed since the time of Osiris. To put an obstacle in the way of the laws, is to open the way before violence. Will the low be exalted if the unjust does not succeed to the place of justice, he who says: "I take for myself, according to my will," but does not say: "I take by my authority." The limits of justice are unchangeable; this is a precept which each man receives from his father.

VI.

Do not intimidate men; or God will likewise contend with thee.

If any one wishes to live by that means, he [God] will take the bread out of his mouth; if any one wishes to enrich himself by that means, he [God] says: "I shall take to myself these riches;" if any one wishes to strike down others, he [God] will end by reducing him to impotency. [See Ani, § 36.] That none should intimidate men, this is the will of God. Let one give them life in the midst of peace, and he will obtain as willing gifts [what would have been taken from them by fear].

VII.

If thou art among persons who are sitting down to eat at the house of one greater than thyself, take what he gives thee,⁸ bowing low. Look at what is before thee; bowing profoundly. Look at what is before thee; but do not stare at it: do not look at it frequently; he is blameworthy who breaks this rule. Do not speak to him [the great man] more than he asks, for one does not know what might displease him. Speak when he invites thee to do so, and thy word will please.

As to the great man who has behind him the means of existence, his line of conduct is as he wishes. He does what pleases himself; if he forms the intention of resting, his body realizes it. The great man in stretching out his hand, does that to which other men cannot attain. But as the ["eating of bread"] means of existence are under the will of God, none can revolt against that. [See Ani, § 26.]

VIII.

If thou art one of those who carry messages from one great man to another, keep exactly to that he has enjoined upon thee; do his bidding as he has told thee. Beware of altering in speaking the repulsive things which one great man addresses to another; he who distorts the fidelity of his message by repeating only what is pleasing in the words of any man, great or small, is a detestable being.

⁸ "When thou art sitting at meat at the house of a person greater than thou, look at what is before thee." This passage is found in the Proverbs of Solomon, chap. xxiii.: "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, Consider diligently him that (marg. what) is before thee." It is a true translation. The Hebrews knew then, if not the whole of the maxims of Ptah-hotep, at least several of them which had passed into proverbs.

IX.

If thou art a farmer, reap in the field which the great God has given thee. [See Ani, § 26.] But do not surfeit thy mouth among thy neighbors; it would be even better to make thyself feared by the possessor. [Comp. Ani, §§ 23, 48.] As for him who, master of his own actions, all powerful, seizes like a crocodile in the midst even of the keepers, his children are by reason of that an object of cursing, of contempt, and of hatred; while his father is deep in trouble, and the mother who bore him, another is more happy than she. But a man becomes a god⁹ when he is chief of a tribe who has confidence in following him.

X.

If thou humblest thyself in obeying a superior, thy conduct is wholly good before God. Knowing who ought to obey and who to command, do not lift up thy heart against this one. As thou knowest that in him is authority, be respectful towards him as is his right. Fortune comes only in accordance with his will, and has no law but his caprice; as for the one who . . . ,¹⁰ God who made him superior, turns away from him, and he is overthrown. [See Ani, § 36.]

XI.

Be active, during the time of thy existence, in doing more than is commanded. Do no wrong in the time of activity; he is blameworthy who wastes his hour. Do not lose the daily opportunity for the increase of that which thy house possesses. Activity produces riches, and riches do not last when it [activity] slackens. [See Ani, §§ 21, 53.]

XII.

If thou art a wise man, train a son who will be well pleasing to God. If he adjusts his course to thy way and occupies himself in thine affairs as he should, do him all the good thou canst; he is thy son, a being attached to thee, that thy body has begotten. Do not separate thy heart from him . . . (But) if he behaves badly and transgresses thy will,¹¹ if he rejects every word, if his mouth moves in wicked speech, strike him upon his mouth, such as it is.¹² Give a straightforward order to those who act badly, to him who is restless at heart; and he will not deviate from the direction, and there will be no opposition to interrupt thy course. [See Ani, § 20.]

XIII.

If thou art on guard, stand erect or remain sitting rather than to walk. Lay down this rule to thyself from the first moment: "Never go away, even when thy weariness makes itself felt." Beware of him who enters announc-

⁹ "It is one making himself to be God." This translation is uncertain.

¹⁰ I have not risked a translation of this passage, because a study of the rhythm causes me to suppose that some words have been omitted. If I am not mistaken, half of a verse is wanting.

¹¹ "Thy will" or "thy counsels."

¹² We probably have here a sort of pun, and that the meaning is "strike right," "strike directly" (on his mouth or his face). The explanation which follows seems to say that with unruly subordinates one must give without hesitation precise and positive orders.

ing that what he asks is secret; the countersign allows no such consideration, and all argument to the contrary is to be rejected. He is a god who penetrates into a place where there is no concession even to privileged persons.

XIV.

If thou livest with people who show an extreme love for thee: "Breath of my heart, breath of my heart, where there is no remedy! What is said in thy heart, may it be realized by spontaneous growth! Sovereign Master, I follow thine advice. Thou art right without speaking. Thy body is full of strength, thy face is above thy neighbors."¹³ If, then, thou art accustomed to this excess of flattery and it becomes an obstacle to thy desires, then thy feeling is to obey thy passions. But he who . . . after his own caprice, his soul is . . . his body is . . . While he who is master of his spirit is superior to him whom God has loaded with his gifts [see Ani, § 5], the man who obeys his passion is in subjection to his wife (?).

XV.

Declare thy line of conduct without reserve;¹⁴ give thine advice in the council of thy lord; there are people who take all sides when they speak, so that, by not replying, they may not grieve the one who has made a statement, reasoning thus: "It is for the great to recognize the error; and when he shall raise his voice to combat the error, he will have nothing to reply, since I have spoken to say nothing."

XVI.

If thou hast the position of leader prosecuting plans according to thy will,¹⁵ do the best things which after days will remember; so that the word which multiplies flatteries, excites pride, and produces vanity, shall not succeed with thee.

XVII.

If thou hast the position of umpire, listen to the discourse of the petitioner. Do not ill-treat him; that would discourage him. Do not say to him: "Thou hast already told that." Indulgence will encourage him to do that for which he has come. As for ill-using the complainant because he tells what happened at the moment when this wrong was done, instead of complaining of the wrong itself, do not allow that! The way to obtain a true explanation is to listen with kindness.

XVIII.

If thou desirest to inspire respect in the house which thou dost enter, for instance in the house of a superior, of a friend, or of a person of consideration, wherever thou dost enter, beware of approaching the wife, for there is no good in what one does there. There is no prudence in indulging in that, and thousands of men are lost for the enjoyment of a moment short as

¹³ That is "thou art superior to those who surround thee."

¹⁴Or dissimulation.

¹⁵ That is "having power to execute that which thou decidest."

a dream, while they gain death, in knowing her. It is a base disposition, that of the man who excites himself to such a deed; if he is moved to execute it, his mind abandons him. For he who lacks repugnance for this,—there is no reasoning with him. [See Ani, §§ 8, 55.]

XIX.

If thou desirest that thy conduct be good and kept from all evil, beware of all fits of bad temper. This is a sad malady which leads to discord, and there is no more life at all for the one who falls into it. For it brings quarrels between fathers and mothers, as between brothers and sisters; it makes the wife and the husband abhor each other, it contains all wickedness, it encloses all injuries. When a man takes justice for his rule, walks in her ways, and dwells with her, there is no room left for bad temper.

XX.

Do not give way to temper on account of what occurs around thee; do not scold ["translation uncertain," Virey] except about thine (own) affairs. Do not be in a bad temper towards thy neighbors; a compliment to him who gives offence is better than rudeness. It is wrong for a man to get in a passion with neighbors so that he knows not how to manage his words. Where there is only a little difficulty he creates an affliction for himself at a time when he should be cool. [See Ani, §§ 34, 49, 58.]

XXI.

If thou art wise, take care of thy house; love thy wife purely. Fill her stomach, clothe her back; these are the cares (to give) to her body. Caress her, fulfil her desire, during the time of thine existence; it is a kindness which honors its master. Be not brutal; consideration will lead her better than force; her . . . ¹⁶ this is her breath, her aim, her gaze. This establishes her in thy house; if thou repellst her, it is an abyss. Open thine arms ¹⁷ to her for her arms; call her, show her thy love. [See Ani, § 54.]

XXII.

Treat well thy people, as it behooves thee; this is the duty of those whom God has favored. [See Ani, § 26.] If any one neglects to treat his people well, it is said: "He is a person . . . ¹⁸ As none may know the events that may come to pass to-morrow, he is a wise person in whose house the people are well treated. When devotion is to be shown it is the people themselves who say: "Come, come;" if good treatment has not left the place; if it has left, the people are wanting.

XXIII.

Do not repeat an excess of language; do not hear it; it is something which has escaped a heated soul. [See Ani, §§ 28, 31.] If it is repeated,

¹⁶ Uncertain word. The reading even is doubtful.

¹⁷ I give with reserve the explanation of these lines, in which are two words, which I do not surely understand, and one which I only know in an uncertain way.

¹⁸ Perhaps "an execrable (?) person" in opposition to the words ending the preceding sentence.

look, without hearing it, towards the ground; say nothing about it. Make him who talks with thee, who provokes to injustice, know what is right; do what is wise, let it prevail. Do justice to the abhorred of the law by unvelling it.

XXIV.

If thou art a wise man, sitting in the council of thy lord, set thy thoughts toward that which is wise. Keep silence, rather than pour out thy words. When thou speakest, know what objections may be made to thee. To speak in council is an art, and speech is criticised more than all other work; it is contradiction which puts it to the proof. [See Ani, § 59.]

XXV.

If thou art powerful, pay respect to knowledge and calm speech. Command only to direct; to be absolute is to enter into evil. Let not thy heart exalt itself, nor let it be cast down. Make thine orders heard, and make thy replies understood; but speak without heat; let thy face be stern. As for the vivacity of a warm heart, temper it; the gentle man overcomes obstacles. [See Ani, §§ 34, 58.] The man who hurries all day long has not one good moment; but he who amuses himself all day long does not retain his house. Aim at the right point as (do) the pilots; while one sits down, another works, and applies himself to obeying the command.

XXVI.

Do not disturb a great man; do not distract the attention of the busy man. His care is to accomplish his task, and he strips his body for love of the work. Love for the work they do brings men near to God. Therefore compose thy face, even in the midst of trouble, so that peace may be with thee, when agitation is with.... These are the people who succeed where they apply themselves.

XXVII.

Teach men to render homage to the great man. If thou gatherest the harvest for him among men, return it in its entirety to its master, by whom thou dost exist. (But) the gift of affection is worth more than the offerings themselves with which thy back is covered. For what he receives from thee brings life to thy house, not to speak of the consideration which thou enjoyest, which thou wouldest preserve; it is by this means that he holds out a beneficent hand, and that with thee possession is added to possession. May the love that thou dost feel pass into the hearts of those who love thee; may the people become loving and obedient.

XXVIII.

If thou art a son of one of the guard having in charge the public peace, execute thy orders without question and speak firmly. Do not replace what the instructor has said by that which thou believest to be his intention; the great use words as it pleases them. Thy part is to transmit, rather than to comment.

XXIX.

If thou art wearied beyond bearing, if thou art tormented by some one

who is in his right, put away from thee his visage, and think no more of it when he has ceased speaking to thee. [See Ani, § 16.]

XXX.

If thou art great after having been low, if thou art rich after having been straitened, when thou art at the head of the city, learn not to take advantage of thy having risen to the first rank; do not harden thy heart on account of thine elevation; thou hast become only the steward of the goods belonging to God. Do not put behind thee the neighbor who is thine equal; be to him as a companion. [See Ani, § 38.]

XXXI.

Bow thy back before thy superior. Thou art attached to the house of the king; thy house is solid in its fortune, and thy profits are as is proper. Yet a man is annoyed by having an authority above himself, and he passes his life in being wearied by it.

Although this does not harm thy... "Do not pillage the house of thy neighbors, do not take by force the goods which are beside thee." Do not exclaim against that which thou hearest, and do not be humiliated by it. A man must reflect, when he is fettered by it, that the annoyance of authority is also felt by his neighbor.

XXXII.

["I am not sure of the general meaning of this precept." Virey.]

XXXIII.

If thou aimest at having polished manners, do not question him whom thou meetest. Converse with him alone so as not to annoy him. Do not dispute with him until thou hast allowed him time to impregnate his mind with the subject of the conversation. If he displays his ignorance, and if he gives thee an opportunity to put him to shame, rather than that, treat him with consideration; do not keep pushing him on, do not... his words; do not reply in a crushing manner; do not finish him; do not worry his life out; for fear that he for his part will not recover, and that men will leave thee to the benefit of thy conversation. [See Ani, § 16.]

XXXIV.

Let thy face be bright during all the time of thy life. When one of those who entered carrying his products¹⁹ comes out of the place of toll with a drawn face, that shows that his stomach is empty, and that the authorities are an abhorrence to him. May that never happen to thee; it is...

XXXV.

Take care of those who are faithful to thee, when thine affairs are depressed. Thy merit then is worth more than those who have done thee honor. His... this is what a man possesses absolutely. It is of more importance than his nobility; this is something which passes from one to another. The

¹⁹ Word for word, "the bread of division," probably the portion which each was obliged to remit as tax upon their harvest.

merit of the son of a man is advantageous to him, and that which he is really is worth more than the remembrance of what his father has been.

XXXVI.

Distinguish the overseer, who directs, from the laborer; for manual labor is degrading, and inaction is honorable. If one is not at all in the evil way: what then takes place is the want of submission to (?) authority. [See Ani, §§ 17, 60.]

XXXVII.

If thou takest a wife, do not. . . . May she be more content than any other of her fellow-citizens. She will be doubly bound if the chain is sweet to her. Do not repulse her; grant that which pleases her; it is when contented that she will value thy guidance. [See Ani, § 54.]

XXXVIII.

If thou heedest these things which I have told thee,²⁰ thy wisdom will be ever increasing. Although they are the means for reaching the *ma*,²¹ and it is that which makes them precious, their memory would pass away from the mouth of man, but thanks to the beauty of their arrangement in verse, all these words shall be borne without alteration eternally upon this earth. They will make a canvas to be embellished; of it the great shall talk to instruct man. After having listened to it, he who has hearkened well to the word will become a master because he has hearkened to it.

May he succeed in gaining the highest rank, an excellent and enduring place, with no more to desire forever. By knowledge his course is assured, and by that he is happy upon the earth. The wise man, then, is satiated with his knowledge; he is great because of his merit. His tongue is at one with his mind; right are his lips when he speaks, his eyes when he looks, his ears when he hears. The advantage of his son is to do what is right without mistake.

XXXIX.

To hearken is of benefit, then, to the son of him who has hearkened. A docile hearer is created because I have hearkened. It is well when he hearkens, well when he speaks; whoever has hearkened profits, and it is profitable to hearken to him who has hearkened. To hearken is worth more than all else, for it produces love, the possession doubly blessed. The son who receives the word of his father shall live long on account of it. God loves that man should hearken; if he does not hearken, he is abhorrent to God. [See Ani, § 62.] The heart is his master when he hearkens or when he does not hearken; but in hearkening, his heart becomes a beneficent master to man. Hearkening to the word, he loves what he hears, and to do what is said is pleasant. When a son hearkens to his father, it is a double joy to both, for when these things are told to him, the son is gentle towards his master. Hearkening to him who has hearkened while this was told him,

²⁰ The author has finished the explanation of the wisdom of the ancients. He now speaks in his own name, in praise of the doctrine which he has repeated.

²¹ The *ma* is "the true, the beautiful, the good."

he engraves on his heart what is approved by his father, and thus the memory of it is preserved in the mouth of the living, who are upon the earth.

XL.

When a son receives the word of his father, there is no error in all his plans. So instruct thy son that he shall be a teachable man whose wisdom shall be pleasant to the great. Let him direct his mouth according to that which has been told him; in the teachableness of a son is seen his wisdom. His conduct is perfect, while error carries away him who will not be taught; to-morrow knowledge shall uphold him, while the ignorant will be crushed.

XLI.

As for the man without experience, who hearkens not, he does nothing at all. He sees knowledge in ignorance, profit in injury; he commits all sorts of errors, seizing always whatever is the opposite of praiseworthy. Thus he lives only on the perishable. His food is the evil word that charms him. He lives every day on what the great know to be perishable; fleeing what is best for him, because of the many errors which are before him each day.

XLII.

A son who hearkens is like a follower of Horus; he is happy, because he has hearkened. He grows, he attains consideration; he teaches the same lesson to his children. Let no man make changes in the precepts of his father; let the same precepts be his lessons to his children. "Surely," his children will say to him, "doing thy word works wonders."

Foster the *ma* [see § 38], the life of thy children. If teachers follow what is not right, surely the people who do not understand them will say the same, and, this repeated to the teachable, they will follow what is told. Then all the world will esteem them [these masters], and they will inspire the people with trust; but their glory does not last as long as they wish. Do not, then, take away one word from the established teaching, do not add one. [Comp. Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32.] Do not put one thing in the place of another; beware of uttering the ideas which germinate in thyself, but teach according to the words of the wise. Hearken, if thou wouldest abide in the mouth of those who will hearken to thy words, when thou hast risen to the position of teacher, that thy words may be on our lips...and that there may be a chair for thine arguments.

XLIII.

May thy thoughts overflow, thy mouth be restrained; and thou shalt argue with the great. Agree with the way of thy master; make him say, "This is my son," so that those who hear this shall say, "Praise of him who has begotten this one." Consider when thou speakest; say only perfect things; and may the great who hear them say: "The issue of his lips is twice blessed."

XLIV.

Do that which thy master tells thee. Doubly good is the precept of our father, from whose flesh we come forth. May what he tells us, be in our hearts; do for him more than he has said and satisfy him wholly. Surely a

good son is one of the gifts of God [see Ani, § 25], a son doing better than he has been told. For his master he does ["the *ma*," see § 38] what is right, throwing his whole heart into his ways.

By following these lessons I secure that thy body shall be in health, that the king shall be satisfied with thee in all things, and that thou shalt gain years of life without failures.

They have gained for me upon earth one hundred and ten years of life, with the gift of the favor of the king, among the first of those whose works have made them noble, doing the pleasure of the king in an honored place.

It is finished, from its beginning to its end, according to what is found in writing.

MAXIMS OF THE SCRIBE ANI. DATE, 1000-720 B. C.

I.—ON MARRIAGE.

Marry a young wife; thy son will do the same on account of thine example. At thy birth thou wast a child, who, they predicted, would become a distinguished man; one whom his relatives in great numbers received at his birth with acclamation.

II.—ON RELIGION.

Celebrate the feast of God; keep his appointed seasons. Having once performed your religious duty will condemn you [if you do not continue].

III.—ON STUDY.

If any come to seek thine advice, let it cause thee to turn with diligence to thy books.

IV.—ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

The propitious hour having passed by, we do our best to find another.

V.—THE PRIVILEGES OF A CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE.

There is chant, prostration, and burning of incense in every act of his who elevates his spirits; there is acceptable adoration in all that concerns him. Whoever conducts himself thus, God will place his name above that of the sensual man. [See Ptah-hotep, § 14.]

VI.—RESPECT DUE TO THE HOUSE OF ANOTHER.

Do not enter the house of another; if he brings thee in, it is an honor to thee.

VII.—ON DISCRETION.

Do not watch from thy house the actions of others. If thine eye has seen and thou hast kept silence, do not let it be told outside by another, lest it be for thee a crime worthy of death that the matter has not been revealed.

VIII.—ON GAY WOMEN.

Beware of the foreign woman, unknown in her town; do not associate with her; she is like all her fellows; have no intercourse with her. She is a deep gulf, and her subtleties are unknown. A woman whose husband is far away, sends thee letters, calls thee each day; if there are no witnesses, she stands up, throwing her snares, and this may become a crime worthy of

death when it is noised abroad, even if she has not in reality accomplished her design. Men commit all sorts of crime for this very thing. [See Pta-hotep, § 18.]

IX.—NEITHER ENTER NOR LEAVE FIRST.

Do not enter or leave first, so that thy name be not tarnished.

X.—ON POLITENESS.

If there are deaf people, do not multiply words; it is better for thee to be silent; say nothing.

XI.—ON THE MANNER OF PRAYING.

In the sanctuary of God, that which he abhors is noisy demonstrations. Pray humbly with a loving heart, all of whose words are said in secret. He will protect thee in thine affairs; he will listen to thy speech; he will accept thine offerings.

[Compare Papyrus of Boulak, i. 17. "The sanctuary of God—noise is his abhorrence. Pray for thyself with a heart of love, whose words remain hidden, that he may give thee thy needs, hear and receive thy words." Quoted by Erman, *Ægypten*, p. 370.]

XII.—ON FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

Give the water of the funeral sacrifice to thy father and thy mother, who lie in the tomb; make sure of the water of the divine oblations; in other words, offer that which is acceptable. Do not neglect to do it, even when thou art away from home. Thy son will do for thee in the same manner.

XIII.—ON ABSTAINING FROM INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

Do not warm thyself in the house where intoxicating liquors are drunk; avoid all words that reveal the action of thy neighbor, that leave thy lips and thou art not aware of having spoken them.

Thou fallest from drunkenness, thy limbs are broken; no one holds out the hand to thee. Thy companions drink: they rise up and say: Take thyself off, thou drunken man! Men come to seek thee in order to talk about thy business, and they find thee lying on the ground, like a little child.

XIV.—ON ASSOCIATES.

Do not go out of thy house. Whom thou knowest not, provoke not. Know well where thou dost place thine affections.

XV.—ON THE LAST END.

Remember that which has been. Place before thee, as a path to be followed, an equitable line of conduct. Thou shalt be considered as preparing for thyself a suitable burial in the valley of the dead, which to-morrow shall hide thy body. Let this fact be before thee in all the matters that thou hast to decide. Thou shalt sleep in their midst, as well as the very old men. There is no remission, even for him who behaves well; he meets the same fate. So to you shall come thy messenger of death to carry thee away; yea, he is now ready. Speeches will be of no avail, for he comes, he stands ready. Do not say: I am a young child, I, whom thou bearest away. Thou knowest

not how thou shalt die. Death comes, it walks before the nursing, before the child at its mother's breast, as before him who has reached old age.

Lo! I have told thee useful things, consider them well in thy heart before thou dost fulfil them; thou shalt find happiness in them, and all evil shall be averted from thee.

XVI.—ON PRUDENCE IN SPEECH.

Avoid all occasions of wounding by thy words; do not make thyself feared. In the heart of man garrulity is condemnable; it will not be a resource in days to come. Hold thyself aloof from the wrangler; do not make a companion of him. [See Ptah-hotep, §§ 3, 4, 29, 33.]

XVII.—ON MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESS.

Have one manager only, judicious, truthful, and observe what he does; let thy justice bear him up above his balance-sheet and his sums total. Let thy hand care for him who is in thy dwelling and who has the charge of thine affairs. [See Ptah-hotep, § 36.]

XVIII.—ON PRUDENCE IN MANAGEMENT OF POSSESSIONS.

Let not thy hand be lavish toward the man unknown to thee; he comes for thy ruin; if thou puttest thy possessions at the disposal of thy children, the tempter will come to thee again. Lay up treasure for thyself, and all thy relatives will pay marked attention to thee.

XIX.—ON GENEROSITY.

He who gives little, having received much; it is as if he should requite a serious injury.

XX.—ON DISCIPLINE.

The discipline of a house is its life; make use of reprimand, and it shall be well with thee. [See Ptah-hotep, § 12.]

XXI.—ON IDLENESS.

Have thine eyes open for fear of ending in beggary; there is no man who, having often given himself up to idleness, has been rewarded by fortune. Be a man of business. [See Ptah-hotep, §§ 11, 26.]

XXII.—PRUDENCE IN RELATIONS WITH THE SLAVES OF OTHERS.

Do not associate familiarly with the slave of another, whether belonging to a man of no reputation, to a notorious scoundrel, or to a great lord. One does not always know about it. He rises up; he gives information concerning the theft by his slave accustomed to obedience, pursuing him in order to have him punished for the theft of that which was in his house. Thou art tormented and thou sayest: What have I done? Thy companions say: He is an obstinate man! This is to teach thee the means by which a man seeks to govern his house well on the earth.

XXIII.—ON CONTENTMENT WITH ONE'S LOT.

Thou hast made for thyself a watered enclosure; thou hast surrounded with hedges thy tilled ground; thou hast planted sycamores in a well-marked circle all about thine abode; thou fillest thy hands with all the flowers that

thine eye beholds. Yet one wearies of all that. Happy is he who does not abandon it. Do not rest thy contentment upon the things of others; guard thyself well from that. Work for thyself; do not count upon the wealth of others; it will not enter thy dwelling-place. [Comp. Ptah-hotep, § 9.]

XXIV.—ON LIVING APART.

Build thyself a house; thou shalt succeed in suppressing the hatreds that come from a dwelling in common. Do not say, "There is a house which comes from my father and mother, whose names are in the abode of the dead," for that leads to a division with thy brother, and thy portion will be the outbuildings.

XXV.—PATERAL LOVE.

Thy God has granted thee children, [see Ptah-hotep, § 44] and thy father knows them; so, whoever suffers with hunger satisfies it in his house: I am his sure shelter and his raiment.

XXVI.—ON REMEMBRANCE OF GOD.

Be not without heart; it is thy God who gives life. [See Ptah-hotep, §§ 7, 9, 22.]

XXVII.—ON POLITENESS.

Do not remain sitting while another is standing up, if he is older than thou, or if he is thy superior by the office he holds.

XXVIII.—ON THE DANGER OF SPEAKING EVIL.

He who speaks evil does not reap good. [See Ptah-hotep, § 23.]

XXIX.—ON THE RIGHT WAY.

Always follow the right way; thou wilt make easy the way of return. Who stands stock still though called every day!

XXX.—ON REASONING.

Each profession leads on its obligation; the reasoning of the wife leads on her husband; and a man reasons according to his profession.

XXXI.—ON DISCRETION.

Do not call every comer bad; may the words spoken in the day of your gossiping be buried in thy dwelling: thou wilt find that in the day of thy sorrow. When trouble comes thou wilt be able to bear it. The licentious man is repellent. The pleasure of the licentious is an insanity to his brothers. Thy relatives may gaily praise thee, but they weep in their hearts. If thou art good, eyes are upon thee; whether with a multitude or alone thou wilt find thy circle, and thy wishes will be done. [See Ptah-hotep, § 23.]

XXXII.—ON THE DIGNITY OF KNOWLEDGE.

If thou hast made thyself proficient in the Scriptures, if thou hast penetrated into literature, let them be within thy heart, and all thy right wishes shall come to pass. To whatever profession the scribe may belong he always reasons from literature. There is no son for the chief of the treasury, no heir for the aged chancellor. The scribe whose hand is expert in his profession

does not transmit this profession to his children: their advancement is by their own deeds, their greatness the result of their own care.

XXXIII.—ON THE NECESSITY OF DISCRETION.

Do not let thy thought be known to the man of bad tongue, to give him occasion to abuse with his mouth. The revelation from thy mouth circulates quickly. In repeating it thou dost create hatred. The fall of man is by his tongue; beware of bringing ruin upon thyself.

XXXIV.—ON GENTLENESS IN CONVERSATION.

The breast of man is the hall of the public store-house filled with all kinds of motives. Oh! choose what is good, as good words, and imprison the evil in thy bosom. The brutal reply is like the raising of the stick. Oh! speak with the gentleness of friendship, and thou wilt preserve a lasting peace. [See Ptah-hotep, §§ 20, 25.]

XXXV.—GOD REVEALS TREASON.

The traitor accuses falsely, afterwards God makes known the truth, and death comes and carries him away.

XXXVI.—ON REVERENCE OF GOD.

In making oblations to thy God, beware of what he abominates. Do not discuss his mysteries. Do not have a haughty bearing when he comes forth. Do not approach familiarly the man who carries him.

Do not add to the ritual commands; it is forbidden to give more than is consecrated. Let thine eye consider the acts of his anger! [See Ptah-hotep, § 6.]

Thou shalt make adorations in his name. It is he who gives spirit to myriads of aptitudes, who is the maker of him who becomes great. [See Ptah-hotep, § 10.]

The God of this world is the light above the firmament, and his emblems are on the earth; it is to them that worship is rendered daily. The divine rising the [sunrise] causes all vegetation to flourish so as to multiply food.

XXXVII.—ON MATERNAL LOVE.

It is I who have given thee thy mother, but it is she who bore thee, and in bearing thee she suffered great pain, and she did not throw it off upon me. Thou wast born after the months of maternity and she has carried thee as a real yoke, her breast in thy mouth for three years. Thou didst grow in strength, and no disgust for thine untidiness led her to say: Oh! what shall I do? Thou wast sent to school; while they taught thee in the writings, she was busy each day near thy teacher, bringing thee bread and drink from her house.

Thou didst reach adult age; thou didst marry, thou didst form a household. Never lose sight of the pain which thou hast cost thy mother, nor of all the wholesome care that she has taken of thee. Do not give her cause to complain of thee, for fear that she will raise her hands towards God and he will hear her complaint.

XXXVIII.—THE MAN NEITHER POOR NOR RICH.

Do not eat bread in the presence of an assistant, who is standing, without extending thy hand towards the bread for him. Has one never seen that men may be neither rich nor poor? But bread remains with him who acts as a brother. The rich who has his day, and who sometimes lasts for a while, becomes in time a miserable groom. [See Ptah-hotep, § 30.]

XXXIX.—ON GLUTTONY.

Be not gluttonous to fill thy stomach so that thou canst no longer stand straight. When thou camest into existence I gave thee another happiness.

XL.—CHANGING CLIMATES.

The course of the waters changes from time to time and takes a different direction. The great oceans become arid lands. The shores become deep abysses.

XLI.—NOTHING UNCHANGEABLE.

There is no man who is unchangeable in anything; such is the reply of death. Have an eye to thy life.

XLII.—ON THE RETURNING ROAD.

Labyrinth or precipice, it is not of good augury to tempt it first. Tread the homeward path.

XLIII.—THE WELCOME OF STRANGERS.

Be not rude to the man who is in thy house; he is thy guest. He has given thee an account of what he is. Thou repliest to the salutation of his mouth; thou art acquainted with the business which brings him. Let a repast be offered.

XLIV.—ON THE FINAL ACCOUNT.

He who detests negligence comes, not having been called.

XLV.—THE GOOD WALKER.

Not hurrying himself to come, the good walker comes.

XLVI.—TO KEEP ONE'S SELF FOR GOD.

Give thyself to God, keep thyself continually for God, and may to-morrow be like to-day! Let thine eye consider the deeds of God; it is he who smites the smitten. [See Ptah-hotep, § 6.]

XLVII.—AVOID OCCASIONS OF DISTURBANCE.

Enter not a crowd if thou art there in the beginnings of a quarrel.

XLVIII.—BEWARE OF ENCROACHING ON THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS.

Do not encroach upon any other property; be sure respecting the ancient titles of the owners, lest thou be taken to court before the judges, after legal inquiry has been made. [Comp. Ptah-hotep, § 9.]

XLIX.—KEEP THE PEACE.

Keep thyself aloof from quarrelsome people, and let thy heart be silent in the midst of an armed force. The first comers are not taken into court; the unsuccessful peacemakers are not strangled. [See Ptah-hotep, § 20.]

L.—WONDERS OF FRIENDSHIP.

Pleasant are the deeds of a friend ; he is cleared from his faults, kept from all breach [of friendship].

LI.—THE HEAD OF THE HERD IS ONLY AN ANIMAL LIKE THE OTHERS.

The ox, the head of the herd, leads to the fields, and he himself is an animal like the others.

LII.—THE SPIRITS ARE INVOKED WHEN HARVESTS ARE LOST.

When the crops of the country are lost the spirits are earnestly invoked.

LIII.—ON LAZINESS.

He who has a heart without energy brings woe into his house, for he believes everything absolutely. [See Ptah-hotep, §§ 11, 26.]

LIV.—WORTH OF THE PRUDENT WIFE.

Be not rough to thy wife in her house, when thou knowest that it is in good order. Do not say to her: Where is that? Bring it to us! For she has put it in its proper place. For thine eye has seen her and thou hast kept silence while recognizing her worth. Full of joy put her hand in thine. [See Ptah-hotep, §§ 21, 37.] There are still many people who know not how a man brings misfortune into his house, and, in fact, do not know how to manage it.

All management of housekeeping lies in the calmness of the man.

LV.—ON LIBERTINISM.

Do not follow women, let them not capture thy heart. [See Ptah-hotep, § 18.]

LVI.—A GENTLE REPLY APPEASES ANGER.

Do not reply to an angry master; behave so as to hold thyself aloof. Speak gently when he has spoken brutally; that is the remedy which will calm his heart.

LVII.—REPLY OF THE OLD MAN.

Let the reply of any old man carrying his staff repress thy boldness, lest thou expose thyself to indignation by thy words.

LVIII.—ON CONCILIATORY SPEECH.

Do not change opinion in thine own favor; after an hour of malice, there is an entire change in the favor one has enjoyed; conciliating words are for the best. Hearts are disposed to welcome them. [See Ptah-hotep, §§ 20, 25.]

LIX.—ON SILENCE.

Try to be silent. [See Ptah-hotep, § 24.]

LX.—HUMANITY TOWARDS THE MANAGER.

Restrain him who acts as steward, as manager in thy house. Do not let him turn a deaf ear towards thee; let him share in all that happens in thy house. Do not send him away to be a beggar. Speak honorably to him as long as he behaves himself on earth without reproach in that which he does. Surely, without bread, having no food, his life would be a matter of charity.

He found thy work to do; driven out he is thrown back upon the mercy of thy goodness. [See Ptah-hotep, § 35.]

LXI.—ENTRANCE AND DEPARTURE DIFFER.

Thou dost enter a city with acclamations; thou leavest it and savest thyself only by the strength of thine arms.

THE DIALOGUE.—FIRST REPLY OF THE SCRIBE KHONSHOTEP.

The scribe Khonshotep replied to his father, the scribe Ani: That is too much for me! for I have been taught by thee; in other words, I have fulfilled thine own decisions. All men pull the hair of the son who comes to take his father's place. Art thou a man of this kind, or a man with elevated tastes, all of whose words are chosen? A son has poor judgment who says: All is determined by the Book of the Doctrine. Kind words are for the best; hearts are inclined to welcome them; hearts are joyful. Do not then multiply thy good counsels. They will refer all care to thee. The Book of the Doctrine is always on the tongue of the young man who has not enjoyed superior teaching.

FIRST REPLY OF THE SCRIBE ANI.

Do not let these quibbles delude thy heart; beware of using them in thy prayers to God. They break in the heart. I have already given thee my decisions upon them. Are they not authoritative, these words of mine, by which, thou sayest, thou dost wish to govern thyself?

LXII.

The bull grows old, the victim of the slaughter house does not know how to leave the soil where he tramples under foot his food; his breeding has made him quiet, he is what the herdsman has made him.

The terrible lion, though he remains ferocious, goes farther in obedience than the poor ass.

The horse goes under his yoke, and, obeying it, goes on his way.

The dog, oh! he hears the word; he follows his master.

The she-camel carries burdens. Had not her mother carried them?

The goose falls with the multitude of birds that followed her and is smothered in the snare.

The negro is taught to speak the language of the Egyptians, of the Syrians, and of all foreign countries.

As I have told thee I have done in all my offices; be docile, and thou shalt learn the way to do it thyself.

SECOND REPLY OF THE SCRIBE KHONSHOTEP.

And the scribe Khonshotep replied to his father, the scribe Ani: Do not tell over thy merits: I am troubled by thy deeds. Man does not desert his way by listening and replying properly. Man is God's second, and he is bound to listen. [See Ptah-hotep, § 39.]

The man is under him who replies to him. When two men do not know one another, their words are amiss, like those of him who does not know his teacher.

I have become a man with a heart made to command ; and all the vexatious oppositions which thou hast spoken are at an end. Do not raise a great cry about them as though it concerned some affair of thine ancestors. What I say to God, what thou hast made me swear, put it aside.

The scribe Ani replied to his son, the scribe Khonshotep: O give up these noisy discourses.

LXIII.

Broken wood, left in the field, which shadow and sun have touched, the workman gathers ; he straightens it, he makes out of it the chief's whip. Hard wood serves to make delicate furniture.

O heart ignoring judgment! Hast thou made vows or hast thou fallen away? Lo! they cry alike; the wise man with the powerful hand and the young child still on its mother's bosom. Lo! he says, as soon as he can speak, Give me food!