

THE KEY TO EGYPT'S PAST.

The Rosetta Stone by which Hieroglyphics are Deciphered.

During Napoleon's campaign in Egypt in 1798, one of the French officers was one day presented with a block of basalt about three feet two inches long by two feet five inches wide. The officer saw at a glance that the stone was valuable, but he little realized the importance of that irregular piece of basalt. It was the key to the past of Egypt. It was covered with unusually clear and well-preserved hieroglyphics, and also with what appeared to be a Greek translation of the unknown text. In reality the stone was inscribed in three zones, each in a different language, the first being ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, the second a later form of Egyptian writing, and the third Greek. About one-half of the upper zone was missing, four or five lines remaining. The second zone was almost intact, while but a few words of the Greek translation were missing. The stone contained simply a decree issued about 195 B. C. by an assemblage of priests in Memphis.

For many years before the discovery of this precious relic vain attempts had been frequently made to decipher the many stories in stone with which Egyptian edifices and ruins abounded. Naturally, the finding of a picture writing, as this at first was believed to be, with its Greek translation ready to hand, added a great impetus to this branch of study. Yet it was not until 1822—twenty years after—that Champollion, whose name is now indelibly associated with Egyptology, and who was then a master of the Coptic language, conceived the system of translation which finally led to our present knowledge of hieroglyphs.

Soon Champollion had amassed a list of 200 characters, and his pupil Salvemini added to this nearly 100 more. This state of affairs—nearly 300 characters standing for only fifteen distinct sounds—was very confusing, and it was not until 1837 that a satisfactory explanation thereof was made. In that year Lepsius showed that of these many signs but thirty-four were to be considered as true alphabetical members, and the remaining nearly 270 were combination signs, or syllables, as they were called.

Fortunately, Champollion was a master of the Coptic language, and he early recognized between this language and that of ancient Egypt much the same relationship as now exists between modern French and Latin, its basic language. With this knowledge, and through the medium of a vast mass of comparative readings, a grand total of work was at last made so complete that no longer are these relics of the ancient wonderland closed to us.

A Lion and His Keeper.

The majestic step, the bold look, the strength of the lion have obtained for him the title of king of the beasts. He is greatly indebted to the imagination of the poet for the noble qualities he is supposed to possess. He is, though capable of gratitude toward those from whom he has received kindness, often treacherous and revengeful, and Doctor Livingstone considered him an arrant coward.

The story, however, which we are about to relate describes his better qualities. A lion was kept in the menagerie at Brussels. The animal's cell requiring some repairs the keeper led him to the upper portion of it, where, after playing with him for some time, he both fell asleep. The carpenter, who was engaged in the work below, wishing to ascertain whether it was finished as desired, called the keeper to inspect what was done. Receiving no answer, he climbed up, when seeing the keeper and lion on the side by side, he uttered a cry of horror.

His voice awoke the lion, which, gazing at him fiercely for a moment, placed his paw on the breast of his keeper, and with a look that seemed to say "He is my friend," he turned to him if you dare," he lay down to sleep again as though nothing had occurred.

On the other attendants being summoned, they aroused the keeper, who on opening his eyes appeared in no way frightened when he had occurred to give his fellow attendant so much unbusiness for the safety of his life, but taking the paw of the lion in his hand, shook it and quietly led him down to the lower part of the den, which had by this time been satisfactorily completed.

Absence of Mind.

We have all of us been more or less annoyed at absentmindedness upon the part of those we employed, and we have been led to wonder what rendered them a severity of judgment which was far beyond their deserts. A practical view of the case would guard against the evil, for it would prevent us setting those who were naturally defective to perform tasks which, while they might be light and pleasant to those of a practical temperament, would be utterly distasteful to others. Work that to some would seem pleasantly rhythmical would be positively maddening to another in monotony or constant recurrence. The tendencies that show themselves in absentmindedness constitute a type which includes a large proportion of the finest intellects in the world.

What is really needed is putting the right man in the right place. When this is done, his mind will not wander away from a distasteful employment to a more congenial one. If it become necessary that he should perform the former, try as he may, he cannot do it with satisfaction either to himself or to his employer. The blame is not his, but that of the employer, for not being able to see that he is fit for other things.

The Secret.

Be not afraid and worry about the duties ahead of you are two of the greatest elements which go to the making of a nervous person. When you find yourself mentally doing six things in the time that you should practically be doing one, stop—right where you are—take a long breath, and start over again. A practical writer gives the following good advice on this topic:

"If ever you find yourself where you are doing too many things pressing upon you, let me tell you a secret. Take hold of the first one that comes to hand, and you will find the rest all fall into line, and follow after, like a company of well-drilled soldiers. You have often heard the anecdote of the man who was asked how he had accomplished so much in his life. 'My father taught me to do, to go, and to do.' There is the secret—the word now."

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