

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION OF IKHNATON

No nation ever stood in direr need of a strong and practical ruler than did Egypt at the death of Amenhotep III. Yet she chanced to be ruled at this fatal crisis by a young dreamer, who, in spite of unprecedented greatness in the world of ideas, was not fitted to cope with a situation demanding an aggressive man of affairs and a skilled military leader,—in fine such a man as Thutmose III. Amenhotep IV, the young and inexperienced son of Amenhotep III and the queen Tiy, was indeed strong and fearless in certain directions, but he failed utterly to understand the practical needs of his empire. He had inherited a difficult situation. The conflict of new forces with tradition, was, as we have seen, already felt by his father. The task before him was such manipulation of these conflicting forces as might eventually give reasonable play to the new and modern tendency, but at the same time to conserve enough of the old to prevent a catastrophe. It was a problem of practical statesmanship, but Amenhotep IV saw it chiefly in its ideal aspects. His mother, Tiy, and his queen, Nofretete, perhaps a woman of Asiatic birth, and a favourite priest, Eye, the husband of his childhood nurse, formed his immediate circle. The first two probably exercised a powerful influence over him, and were given a prominent share in the government, at least as far as its public manifestations were concerned, for in a manner quite surpassing his father's similar tendency, he constantly appeared in public with both his mother and his wife. The lofty and impractical aims which he had in view must have found a ready response in these his two most influential counsellors. Thus, while Egypt was in sore need

of a vigorous and skilled administrator, the young king was in close counsel with a priest and two perhaps gifted women, who, however able, were not of the fibre to show the new Pharaoh what the empire really demanded. Instead of gathering the army so sadly needed in Naharin, Amenhotep IV immersed himself heart and soul in the thought of the time, and the philosophizing theology of the priests was of more importance to him than all the provinces of Asia. In such contemplations he gradually developed ideals and purposes which make him the most remarkable of all the Pharaohs, and the first *individual* in human history.

The profound influence of Egypt's imperial position had not been limited to the externals of life, to the manners and customs of the people, to the rich and prolific art, pregnant with new possibilities of beauty, but had extended likewise to the thought of the age. Such thought was chiefly theological and we must divest it of all the ideas which are connoted by the modern term "the thought of the age." Even before the conquests in Asia the priests had made great progress in the interpretation of the gods, and they had now reached a stage in which, like the later Greeks, they were importing semi-philosophical significance into the myths, such as these had of course not originally possessed. The interpretation of a god was naturally suggested by his place or function in the myth. Thus Ptah, the artificer-god of Memphis, furnished the priesthood there with a fruitful line of thought, moving in concrete channels, and thus guiding the thinker, in an age of intellectual beginnings, thinking in a language without terminology for such processes, even when they had once been followed out. Ptah had been from the remotest ages the god of the architect and craftsman, to whom he communicated plans and designs for architectural works and the products of the industrial arts. Contemplating this god, the Memphite priest, little used as his mind was to abstractions, found a tangible channel, moving along which he gradually gained a rational and with certain limitations a philosophical conception of the world. The work-

shop of the Memphite temple, where, under Ptah's guidance, were wrought the splendid statues, utensils and offerings for the temple, expands into a world, and Ptah, its lord, grows into the master-workman of the universal workshop. As he furnishes all designs to the architect and craftsman, so now he does the same for all men in all that they do; he becomes the supreme mind; he is mind and all things proceed from him. The world and all that is in it existed as thought in his mind; and his thoughts, like his plans for buildings and works of art, needed but to be expressed in spoken words to take concrete form as material realities. Gods and men alike proceeded from mind, and all that they do is but the mind of the god working in them. A priest of Ptah has expressed this in a short poem, a part of which vaguely and indefinitely shows how the minds of the time were explaining the world:

Ptah, the great, is the mind and tongue of the gods. . . .
 Ptah, from whom proceeded the power
 Of the mind,
 And of the tongue.
 That which comes forth from every mind,
 And from every mouth:
 Of all gods, of all people, of all cattle, of all reptiles,
 That live, thinking and commanding
 Everything that he (Ptah) wills.

.
 It (the mind) is the one that bringeth forth every successful issue.
 It is the tongue which repeats the thought of the mind:
 It (the mind) was the fashioner of all gods. . . .
 At a time when every divine word
 Came into existence by the thought of the mind,
 And the command of the tongue.¹

Wherever we have used the word "mind" in this passage the Egyptian has "heart," which word served him for "mind" in exactly the same way as the Hebrews and many other peoples frequently employ it; much in the same man-

¹ See the author's account of this remarkable document, *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, XXXIX, 39 ff.

ner indeed as we ourselves often use it, with the difference that the Egyptian believed the heart and the bowels actually to be the seat of mind. Although such notions could have been entertained by very limited circles, they were not confined to the priests alone. Intef, the court herald of Thutmose III, states on his tombstone that he owed his success to the guidance of his "heart," to which he listened implicitly; and he adds that the people said: "Lo, it is an oracle of the god, which is in every body."¹ "Body" is here, as commonly, the word for abdomen or bowels, the seat of mind. The Egyptian had thus gained the idea of a single controlling intelligence, behind and above all sentient beings, including the gods. The efficient force by which this intelligence put his designs into execution was his spoken "word," and this primitive "logos" is undoubtedly the incipient germ of the later logos-doctrine which found its origin in Egypt. Early Greek philosophy may also have drawn upon it.

Similar ideas were now being propagated regarding all the greater gods of Egypt, but as long as the kingdom was confined to the Nile valley the activity of such a god was limited, in their thinking, to the confines of the Pharaoh's domain, and the world of which they thought meant no more. From of old the Pharaoh was the heir of the gods and ruled the two kingdoms of the upper and lower river which they had once ruled. Thus they had not in the myths extended their dominion beyond the river valley, and that valley originally extended only from the sea to the first cataract. But under the Empire all this is changed, the god goes where the Pharaoh's sword carries him; the advance of the Pharaoh's boundary-tablets in Nubia and Syria is the extension of the god's domain. The king is now called "The one who brings the world to him [the god], who placed him [the Pharaoh] on his throne."² For king and priest alike the world is only a great domain of the god. All the Pharaoh's wars are recorded upon the temple walls, and even in their mechanical arrangement his wars converge upon the temple door.³ The

¹ II, 770.² II, 959, l. 3; 1000.³ III, 80.

theological theory of the state is simply that the king receives the world that he may deliver it to the god, and he prays for extended conquests that the dominion of the god may be correspondingly extended. Thus theological thinking is brought into close and sensitive relationship with political conditions; and theological theory must inevitably extend the active government of the god to the limits of the domain whence the king receives tribute. It can be no accident that the notion of a practically universal god arose in Egypt at the moment when he was receiving universal tribute from the world of that day. Again the analogy of the Pharaoh's power unquestionably operated powerfully with the Egyptian theologian at this time; for in the myth-making days the gods were conceived as Pharaohs ruling the Nile valley, because the myth-makers lived under Pharaohs who so ruled. Living now under Pharaohs who ruled a world-empire, the priest of the imperial age had before him in tangible form a world-dominion and a world-concept, the prerequisite of the notion of the world-god. Conquered and organized and governed, it had now been before him for two hundred years, and out of the Pharaoh-ruled world he gradually began to see the world-god.

We have thus far given this god no name. Had you asked the Memphite priests they would have said his name was Ptah, the old god of Memphis; the priests of Amon at Thebes would have claimed the honour for Amon, the state god, as a matter of course, while the High Priest of Re at Heliopolis would have pointed out the fact that the Pharaoh was the son of Re and the heir to his kingdom, and hence Re must be the supreme god of all the empire. Obscure gods in the local sanctuaries would have found similar champions in their priesthoods because they were now identified with Re and claimed his prerogatives. But historically Re's claim was undoubtedly the best. Amon had never succeeded in displacing him. The introduction of official letters still, as of old, commends the addressé to the favour of Re-Harakhte, while in the popular tales of the time it is Re-Harakhte who

rules the world. But none of the old divinities of Egypt had been proclaimed the god of the empire, although in fact the priesthood of Heliopolis had gained the coveted honour for their revered sun-god, Re. Already under Amenhotep III an old name for the material sun, "Aton," had come into prominent use, where the name of the sun-god might have been expected. Thus he called the royal barge on which he sailed with Tiy on her beautiful lake, "Aton Gleams." A company of his body-guard bore the new god's name, and there was probably a chapel dedicated to him at Heliopolis. The sun-god, too, was now and again designated as "the sole god" by Amenhotep III's contemporaries.

The already existent conflict with traditional tendencies into which the Pharaoh had been forced, contained in itself difficulties enough to tax the resources of any statesman without the introduction of a departure involving the most dangerous conflicts with the powerful priesthoods and touching religious tradition, the strongest conservative force of the time. It was just this rash step which the young king now had no hesitation in taking. Under the name of Aton, then, Amenhotep IV introduced the worship of the supreme god, but he made no attempt to conceal the identity of his new deity with the old sun-god, Re. Instructing his vizier in the new faith, he said to him, "The words of Re are before thee . . . my august father who taught me their essence. . . . It was known in my heart, revealed to my face, I understood . . ." ² He thus attributes the new faith to Re as its source, and claims to have been himself the channel of its revelation. He immediately assumed the office of High Priest of his new god with the same title, "Great Seer," as that of the High Priest of Re at Heliopolis. ³ But, however evident the Heliopolitan origin of the new state religion might be, it was not merely sun-worship; the word Aton was employed in place of the old word for "god" (nuter), ⁴ and the god is clearly distinguished from the material sun. To the old sun-god's name is appended the explanatory phrase "under his

¹ II, 869.

² II, 945.

³ II, 934, l. 2.

⁴ II, p. 407, note e.

name: 'Heat which is in the Sun [Aton],' " and he is likewise called "lord of the sun [Aton]." The king, therefore, was deifying the vital heat which he found accompanying all life. It plays in the new faith a similar important part, which we find it assuming in the early cosmogonic philosophies of the Greeks. Thence, as we might expect, the god is stated to be everywhere active by means of his "rays," and his symbol is a disk in the heavens, darting earthward numerous diverging rays which terminate in hands, each grasping the symbol of life. In his age of the world it is perfectly certain that the king could not have had the vaguest notion of the physico-chemical aspects of his assumption any more than had the early Greeks in dealing with a similar thought; yet the fundamental idea is surprisingly true, and, as we shall see, marvellously fruitful. The outward symbol of his god thus broke sharply with tradition, but it was capable of practical introduction in the many different nations making up the empire and could be understood at a glance by any intelligent foreigner, which was far from the case with any of the traditional symbols of Egyptian religion (Figs. 139-40).

The new god could not dispense with a temple like those of the older deities whom he was ultimately to supersede. Early in his reign Amenhotep IV sent an expedition to the sandstone quarries of Silsileh to secure the necessary stone and the chief nobles of his court were in charge of the works at the quarry.¹ In the garden of Amon, which his father had laid out between the temples of Karnak and Luxor, Amenhotep located his new temple, which was a large and stately building, adorned with polychrome reliefs. Thebes was now called "City of the Brightness of Aton," and the temple-quarter "Brightness of Aton the Great"; while the sanctuary itself bore the name "Gem-Aton," a term of uncertain meaning.² Although the other gods were still tolerated as of old,³ it was nevertheless inevitable that the priesthood of Amon should view with growing jealousy the brilliant rise

¹ II, 935.

² II, p. 388, note b.

³ II, 937.

of a strange god in their midst, an artificial creation of which they knew nothing, save that much of the wealth formerly employed in the enrichment of Amon's sanctuary was now lavished on the intruder. One of Amenhotep III's High Priests of Amon had also been chief treasurer of the kingdom, and another, Ptahmose, was the grand vizier of the realm; while the same thing had occurred in the reign of Hatshepsut, when Hapuseneb had been both vizier and High Priest of Amon. Besides these powers, the High Priest of Amon was also the supreme head of the organization including all the priests of the nation. Indeed, the fact that such extensive political power was now wielded by the High Priests of Amon must have intensified the young king's desire to be freed from the sacerdotal thrall which he had inherited. His father had evidently made some attempt to shake off the priestly hand that lay so heavily on the sceptre, for he had succeeded Ptahmose by a vizier who was not High Priest of Amon. This new vizier, Ramose, was won by the young king's gifts,¹ and a servile court followed him, even superintending the quarry work for the new temple, as we have seen. The priesthood of Amon, however, was now a rich and powerful body. They had installed Thutmose III as king, and could they have supplanted with one of their own tools the young dreamer who now held the throne they would of course have done so at the first opportunity. But Amenhotep IV was the son of a line of rulers too strong and too illustrious to be thus set aside even by the most powerful priesthood in the land; moreover, he possessed unlimited personal force of character, and he was of course supported in his opposition of Amon by the older priesthoods of the north at Memphis and Heliopolis, long jealous of this interloper, the obscure Theban god, who had never been heard of in the north before the rise of the Middle Kingdom. A conflict to the bitter end, with the most disastrous results to the Amonite priesthood ensued. It rendered Thebes intolerable to the young king, and soon after he had finished

¹ II, 944-947.

his new temple he resolved upon radical measures. He would break with the priesthoods and make Aton the sole god, not merely in his own thought, but in very fact; and Amon should fare no better than the rest of the time-honoured gods of his fathers. It was no "Götterdämmerung" which the king contemplated, but an immediate annihilation of the gods. As far as their external and material manifestations and equipment were concerned, this could be and was accomplished without delay. The priesthoods, including that of Amon, were dispossessed, the official temple-worship of the various gods throughout the land ceased, and their names were erased wherever they could be found upon the monuments. The persecution of Amon was especially severe. The cemetery of Thebes was visited and in the tombs of the ancestors the hated name of Amon was hammered out wherever it appeared upon the stone. The rows on rows of statues of the great nobles of the old and glorious days of the Empire, ranged along the walls of the Karnak temple, were not spared, but the god's name was invariably erased. Even the royal statues of his ancestors, including the king's father, were not respected; and, what was worse, as the name of that father, Amenhotep, contained the name of Amon, the young king was placed in the unpleasant predicament of being obliged to cut out his own father's name in order to prevent the name of Amon from appearing "writ large" on all the temples of Thebes. The splendid stela¹ erected by his father in his mortuary temple, recording all his great buildings for Amon, was mercilessly hacked and rendered illegible. Even the word "gods" was not permitted to appear on any of the old monuments and the walls of the temples at Thebes were painfully searched that wherever the compromising word appeared it might be blotted out.² And then there was the embarrassment of the king's own name, likewise Amenhotep, "Amon rests," which could not be spoken or placed on a monument. It was of necessity

¹ II, 878 ff.

² See *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, 40, 109-110 and II, p. 386, note b.

also banished and the king assumed in its place the name "Ikhnaton," which means "Spirit of Aton."

Thebes was now compromised by too many old associations to be a congenial place of residence for so radical a revolutionist. As he looked across the city he saw stretching along the western plain that imposing line of mortuary temples of his fathers which he had violated. They now stood silent and empty. The towering pylons and obelisks of Karnak and Luxor were not a welcome reminder of all that his fathers had contributed to the glory of Amon, and the unfinished hall of his father at Luxor, with the superb columns of the nave, still waiting for the roof, could hardly have stirred pleasant memories in the heart of the young reformer. A doubtless long contemplated plan was therefore undertaken. Aton, the god of the empire, should possess his own city in each of the three great divisions of the empire: Egypt, Asia and Nubia, and the god's Egyptian city should be made the royal residence. It must have been an enterprise requiring some time, but the three cities were duly founded. The Aton-city of Nubia was located on the east side of the river somewhere in the vicinity of the third cataract, and was thus in the heart of the Egyptian province.¹ It was named "Gem-Aton" after the Aton-temple in Thebes. In Syria the Aton-city is unknown, but Ikhnaton will not have done less for Aton there than his fathers had done for Amon. In the sixth year, shortly after he had changed his name, the king was living in his own Aton-city in Egypt. He chose as its site a fine bay in the cliffs about one hundred and sixty miles above the Delta and nearly three hundred miles below Thebes. The cliffs, leaving the river in a semi-circle, retreat at this point some three miles from the stream and return to it again about five miles lower down. In the wide plain thus bounded on three sides by the cliffs and on the west by the river Ikhnaton founded his new residence and the holy city of Aton. He called it Akhetaton, "Hori-

¹ II, p. 388, note b; see also my remarks, *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, 40, 106 ff.

zon of Aton," and it is known in modern times as Tell el-Amarna. In addition to the town, the territory around it was demarked as a domain belonging to the god, and included the plain on both sides of the river. In the cliffs on either side, fourteen large stelas (Fig. 140), one of them no less than twenty six feet in height, were cut into the rock, bearing inscriptions determining the limits of the entire sacred district around the city.¹ As thus laid out the district was about eight miles wide from north to south, and from twelve to over seventeen miles long from cliff to cliff. The king's oath regarding it is recorded on the extreme northern and southern stelas thus: "His majesty raised his hand to heaven, to him who made him, even to Aton, saying, 'This is my testimony forever, and this is my witness forever, this landmark [stela]. . . . I have made Akhetaton for my father as a dwelling. . . . I have demarked Akhetaton on its south, on its north, on its west, on its east. I shall not pass beyond the southern landmark of Akhetaton toward the south, nor shall I pass beyond the northern landmark of Akhetaton toward the north. . . . He has made his circuit for his own, he has made his altar in its midst, whereon I make offering to him.'"² Whether this statement that he would never pass beyond the boundary of the district, a vow which is found referring to all four cardinal points, is merely a legal phrase by which a property owner recognized that he had no rights beyond his just limit, the boundary of his property; or whether the king actually carried out this vow literally and remained the rest of his life in Akhetaton we cannot say. But the phrase is not found in any other boundary landmarks known to us. The region thus demarked was then legally conveyed to Aton by the king's own decree, saying: "Now as for the area within the . . . landmarks from the eastern mountain [cliffs] to the western mountain of Akhetaton opposite, it belongs to my father, Aton, who is given life forever and ever: whether mountains or cliffs, or swamps . . . or uplands, or fields, or waters, or towns, or shores, or

¹ II, 949-972.

² II, 954.

people, or cattle, or trees, or anything which Aton, my father has made. . . . I have made it for Aton, my father, forever and ever."¹ And on another stela he says that they are to belong to the temple of Aton in Akhetaton forever and ever as offerings.² Besides this sacred domain the god was endowed with revenues from other lands in Egypt and Nubia,³ and probably also in Syria. The city thus established was to be the real capital of the empire, for the king himself said: "The whole land shall come hither, for the beautiful seat of Akhetaton shall be another seat [capital], and I will give them audience whether they be north or south or west or east."⁴ The royal architect, Bek, was sent to the first cataract to procure stone for the new temple,⁵ or we should rather say temples, for no less than three were now built in the new city,⁶ one for the queen mother, Tiy, and another for the princess Beketaton ("Maid-servant of Aton"), beside the state temple of the king himself.⁷ Around the temples rose the palace of the king and the chateaus of his nobles, one of whom describes the city thus: "Akhetaton, great in loveliness, mistress of pleasant ceremonies, rich in possessions, the offerings of Re in her midst. At the sight of her beauty there is rejoicing. She is lovely and beautiful; when one sees her it is like a glimpse of heaven. Her number cannot be calculated. When the Aton rises in her he fills her with his rays and he embraces [with his rays] his beloved son, son of eternity, who came forth from Aton and offers the earth to him who placed him on his throne, causing the earth to belong to him who made him."⁸

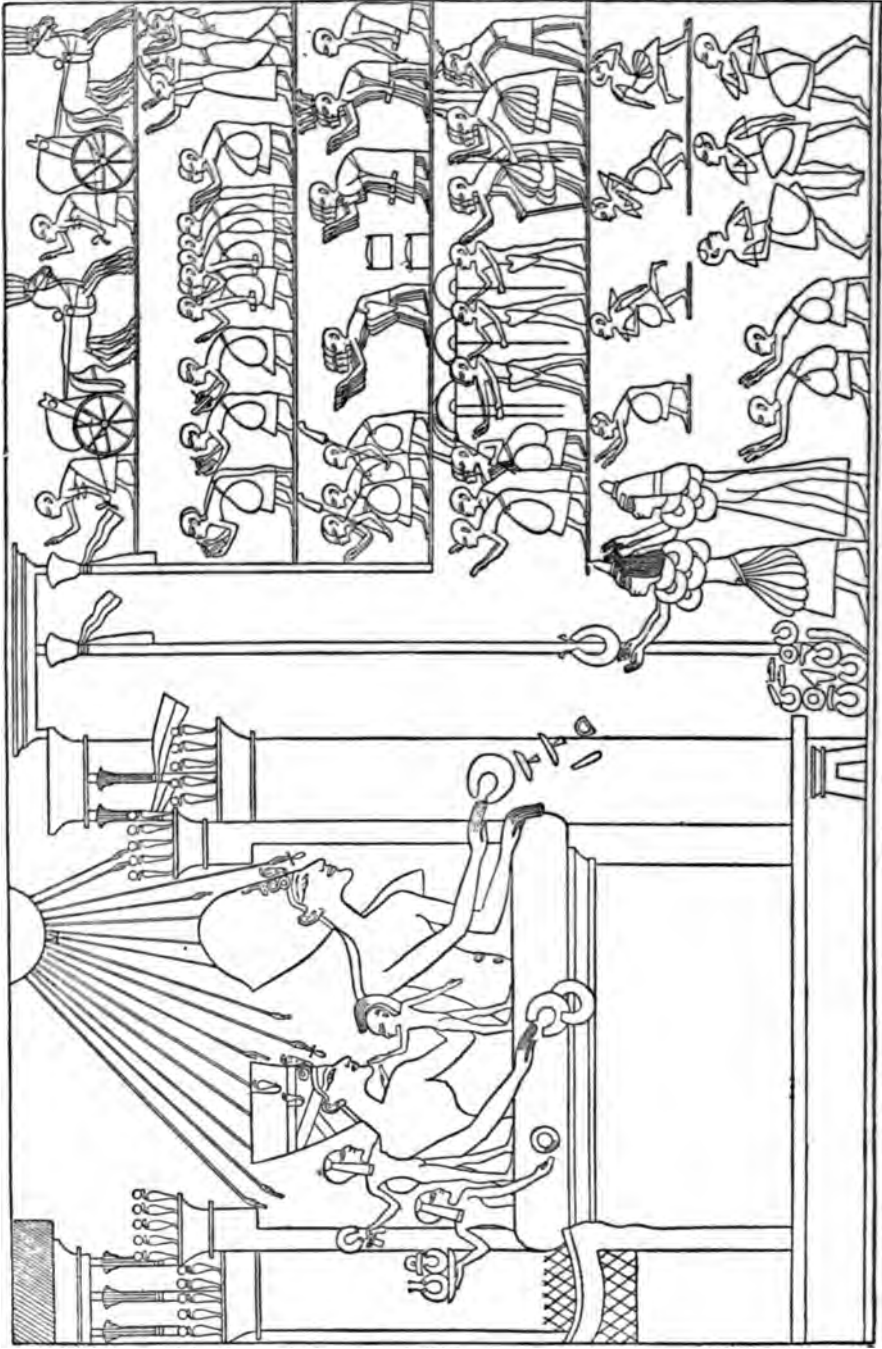
On the day when the temple was ready to receive the first dues from its revenues the king proceeded thither in his chariot accompanied by his four daughters and a gorgeous retinue. They were received at the temple with shouts of "Welcome"; a rich oblation filled the high altar in the temple court, while the store-chambers around it were groaning with the wealth of the newly paid revenues.⁹ The king

¹ II, 966.² II, 972.³ II, 957.⁴ II, 955.⁵ II, 973 ff.⁶ II, 1016-18.⁷ Ibid.⁸ II, 1000.⁹ II, 982.

himself participated in such ceremonies,¹ while the queen "sends the Aton to rest with a sweet voice, her two beautiful hands bearing the two sistrums."² But Ikhnaton no longer attempted to act as High Priest himself; one of his favourites, Merire ("Beloved of Re") was appointed by him to the office, coming one day for this purpose with his friends to the balcony of the palace, in which the king and queen appeared in state. The king then formally promoted Merire to the exalted office, saying: "Behold, I am appointing thee for myself to be 'Great Seer' [High Priest] of the Aton in the temple of Aton in Akhetaton. . . . I give to thee the office saying, 'Thou shalt eat the food of Pharaoh, thy lord, in the house of Aton.'"³ Merire was so faithful in the administration of the temple that the king publicly rewarded him with "the gold," the customary distinction granted to zealous servitors of the Pharaoh. At the door of one of the temple buildings the king, queen and two daughters extend to the fortunate Merire the rewards of fidelity, and the king says to the attendants: "Hang gold at his neck before and behind, and gold on his legs; because of his hearing the teaching of Pharaoh concerning every saying in these beautiful seats which Pharaoh has made in the sanctuary in the Aton-temple in Akhetaton."⁴ It thus appears that Merire had given heed to the king's teachings regarding the ritual of the temple, or, as he says, "every saying in these beautiful seats."

It becomes more and more evident that all that was devised and done in the new city and in the propagation of the Aton faith is directly due to the king and bears the stamp of his individuality. A king who did not hesitate to erase his own father's name on the monuments in order to annihilate Amon, the great foe of his revolutionary movement, was not one to stop half way, and the men about him must have been involuntarily carried on at his imperious will. But Ikhnaton understood enough of the old policy of the Pharaohs to know that he must hold his party by practical rewards, and

¹ II, 994, ll. 17-18.² II, 995, ll. 21 f.³ II, 985.⁴ II, 987.



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FIG. 139. IKHNATON AND HIS QUEEN DECORATE THE PRIEST EYE AND HIS WIFE.
See p. 369, note 1.

the leading partisans of his movement like Merire enjoyed liberal bounty at his hands (Fig. 139).¹ Thus one of his priests of Aton, and at the same time his master of the royal horse, named Eye, who had by good fortune happened to marry the nurse of the king, renders this very evident in such statements as the following: "He doubles to me my favours in silver and gold," or again, addressing the king, "How prosperous is he who hears thy teaching of life! He is satisfied with seeing thee without ceasing."² The general of the army, Mai, enjoyed similar bounty, boasting of it in the same way: "He hath doubled to me my favours like the numbers of the sand. I am the head of the officials, at the head of the people; my lord has advanced me because I have carried out his teaching, and I hear his word without ceasing. My eyes behold thy beauty every day, O my lord, wise like Aton, satisfied with truth. How prosperous is he who hears thy teaching of life!"³ Although there must have been a nucleus of men who really appreciated the ideal aspects of the king's teaching, it is thus evident that many were chiefly influenced by "the loaves and the fishes."

Indeed there was one royal favour which must have been welcome to them all without exception. This was the beautiful cliff-tomb which the king commanded his craftsmen to hew out of the eastern cliffs for each one of his favourites. For the old mortuary practices were not all suppressed by Ikhнатon, and it was still necessary for a man to be buried in the "eternal house," with its endowment for the support of the deceased in the hereafter.⁴ But that eternal house was no longer disfigured with hideous demons and grotesque monsters which should confront the dead in the future life; and the magic paraphernalia necessary to meet

¹ Description of Fig. 139: Leaning upon the cushioned balustrade of the palace balcony with his queen and his infant daughters by his side, the king throws down golden collars, vessels, rings and ornaments to his favourites. The queen likewise throws two collars. The servants and suite of Eye dance with joy or bow ceremoniously. Above (that is behind) are the waiting chariots of Eye and his wife, while next to (below) these his scribes make record of the event, carefully listing all the gifts.

² II, 994, ll. 16-17.

³ II, 1002-3.

⁴ II, 996.

and vanquish the dark powers of the nether world, which filled the tombs of the old order at Thebes, were completely banished. In thus suppressing these base and repulsive devices, which the perverted imagination of a stupid priesthood had imposed upon an implicit people, the king's reform was most salutary. The tomb now became a monument to the deceased; the walls of its chapel bore fresh and natural pictures from the life of the people in Akhetaton, particularly the incidents in the official career of the dead man, and preferably his intercourse with the king. Thus the city of Akhetaton is now better known to us from its cemetery than from its ruins. Throughout these tombs the nobles take delight in reiterating, both in relief and inscription, the intimate relation between Aton and the king. Over and over again they show the king and the queen together standing under the disk of Aton, whose rays, terminating in hands, descend and embrace the king.¹ The vulture-goddess, Mut, who, since the hoary age of the Thinites had appeared on all the monuments extending her protecting wings over the Pharaoh's head, had long since been banished. The nobles constantly pray to the god for the king, saying that he "came forth from thy rays,"² or "thou hast formed him out of thine own rays";³ and interspersed through their prayers are numerous current phrases of the Aton faith, which have now become conventional, replacing those of the old orthodox religion, which it must have been very awkward for them to cease using. Thus they demonstrated how zealous they had been in accepting and appropriating the king's new teaching. On state occasions, instead of the old stock phrases, with innumerable references to the traditional gods, every noble who would enjoy the king's favour was evidently obliged to show his familiarity with the Aton faith and the king's position in it by a liberal use of these allusions. Even the Syrian vassals were wise enough to make their dispatches pleasant reading by glossing them with appropriate recognition of the supremacy of the sun-god.⁴

¹ II, 1012 and *infra*, Fig. 130, p. 368. ² II, 1000, l. 5: 991, l. 3.

³ II, 1010, l. 3.

⁴ Amarna Letters, 149, 6 ff., and often.

The source of such phrases was really the king himself, as we have before intimated, and something of the "teaching" whence they were taken, so often attributed to him, is preserved in the tombs¹ to which we have referred.

Either for the temple service or for personal devotions the king composed two hymns to Aton, both of which the nobles had engraved on the walls of their tomb chapels. Of all the monuments left by this unparalleled revolution, these hymns are by far the most remarkable; and from them we may gather an intimation of the doctrines which the speculative young Pharaoh had sacrificed so much to disseminate. They are regularly entitled: "Praise of Aton by king Ikhнатon and queen Nefernefruaton"; and the longer and finer of the two is worthy of being known in modern literature. The titles of the separate strophes are the addition of the present author, and in the translation no attempt has been made to do more than to furnish an accurate rendering. The one hundred and fourth Psalm of the Hebrews shows a notable similarity to our hymn both in the thought and the sequence, so that it seemed desirable to place the most noticeably parallel passages side by side.

THE SPLENDOUR OF ATON.

Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of heaven,
 O living Aton, Beginning of life!
 When thou risest in the eastern horizon of heaven,
 Thou fillest every land with thy beauty;
 For thou are beautiful, great, glittering, high over the earth;
 Thy rays, they encompass the lands, even all thou hast made.
 Thou are Re, and thou hast carried them all away captive;
 Thou bindest them by thy love.
 Though thou art afar, thy rays are on earth;
 Though thou art on high, thy footprints are the day.

NIGHT.

When thou settest in the western horizon of heaven,	Thou makest darkness and it is night,
The world is in darkness like the dead.	Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

¹ II, 977-1018.

<p>They sleep in their chambers, Their heads are wrapt up, Their nostrils stopped, and none seeth the other. Stolen are all their things, that are under their heads, While they know it not. Every lion cometh forth from his den, All serpents, they sting. Darkness reigns (?), The world is in silence, He that made them has gone to rest in his horizon.</p>	<p>The young lions roar after their prey; They seek their meat from God. (Psalm 104, 20-21.)</p>
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DAY AND MAN.

<p>Bright is the earth, When thou risest in the horizon, When thou shinest as Aton by day. The darkness is banished, When thou sendest forth thy rays, The Two Lands [Egypt] are in daily festivity, Awake and standing upon their feet, For thou hast raised them up. Their limbs bathed, they take their clothing; Their arms uplifted in adoration to thy dawning. Then in all the world, they do their work.</p>	<p>The sun ariseth, they get them away, And lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work, And to his labour until the even- ing. (Psalm 104, 22-23.)</p>
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DAY AND THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS.

All cattle rest upon their herbage,
 All trees and plants flourish,
 The birds flutter in their marshes,
 Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee.
 All the sheep dance upon their feet,

All winged things fly,
They live when thou hast shone upon them.

DAY AND THE WATERS.

The barques sail up-stream and down-stream alike.	Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
Every highway is open because thou hast dawned.	Wherein are things creeping in- numerable
The fish in the river leap up be- fore thee,	Both small and great beasts.
And thy rays are in the midst of the great sea.	There go the ships; There is leviathan, whom thou hast formed to sport with him.

(Psalm 104, 25-26.)

CREATION OF MAN.

Thou art he who createst the man-child in woman,
Who makest seed in man,
Who giveth life to the son in the body of his mother,
Who soothest him that he may not weep,
A nurse [even] in the womb.
Who giveth breath to animate every one that he maketh.
When he cometh forth from the body,
. . . on the day of his birth,
Thou openest his mouth in speech,
Thou suppliest his necessities.

CREATION OF ANIMALS.

When the chicklet crieth in the egg-shell,
Thou givest him breath therein, to preserve him alive.
When thou hast perfected him
That he may pierce the egg,
He cometh forth from the egg,
To chirp with all his might;
He runneth about upon his two feet,
When he hath come forth therefrom.

THE WHOLE CREATION.

How manifold are all thy works! O lord, how manifold are thy
They are hidden from before us, works!

O thou sole god, whose powers no other possesseth. ¹	In wisdom hast thou made them all;
Thou didst create the earth ac- cording to thy desire.	The earth is full of thy crea- tures.
While thou wast alone:	(Psalm 104, 24.)
Men, all cattle large and small, All that are upon the earth, That go about upon their feet; All that are on high, That fly with their wings. The countries of Syria and Nubia, The land of Egypt; Thou settest every man in his place, Thou suppliest their necessities. Every one has his possessions, And his days are reckoned. Their tongues are divers in speech, Their forms likewise and their skins, For thou divider, hast divided the peoples.	

WATERING THE EARTH.

Thou makest the Nile in the Nether World,
Thou bringest it at thy desire, to preserve the people alive.
O lord of them all, when feebleness is in them,
O lord of every house, who risest for them,
O sun of day, the fear of every distant land,
Thou makest [also] their life.
Thou hast set a Nile in heaven,
That it may fall for them,
Making floods upon the mountains, like the great sea;
And watering their fields among their towns.

How excellent are thy designs, O lord of eternity!
The Nile in heaven is for the strangers,

¹ The other hymns frequently say, "O thou sole god, beside whom there is no other."

And for the cattle of every land, that go upon their feet;
But the Nile, it cometh from the nether world for Egypt.

Thus thy rays nourish every garden,
When thou risest they live, and grow by thee.

THE SEASONS.

Thou makest the seasons, in order to create all thy works:
Winter bringing them coolness,
And the heat [of summer likewise].
Thou hast made the distant heaven to rise therein,
In order to behold all that thou didst make,
While thou wast alone,
Rising in thy form as living Aton,
Dawning, shining afar off and returning.

BEAUTY DUE TO LIGHT.

Thou makest the beauty of form, through thyself alone.
Cities, towns and settlements,
On highway or on river,
All eyes see thee before them,
For thou art Aton of the day over the earth.

REVELATION TO THE KING.

Thou art in my heart,
There is no other that knoweth thee,
Save thy son Ikhnaton.
Thou hast made him wise in thy designs
And in thy might.
The world is in thy hand,
Even as thou hast made them.
When thou hast risen, they live;
When thou settest, they die.
For thou art duration, beyond thy mere limbs,
By thee man liveth,
And their eyes look upon thy beauty,
Until thou settest.
All labour is laid aside,
When thou settest in the west;

When thou risest, they are made to grow
 for the king.
 Since thou didst establish the earth,
 Thou hast raised them up for thy son,
 Who came forth from thy limbs,
 The king, living in truth,
 The lord of the Two Lands Nefer-khepru-Re, Wan-Re,
 The son of Re, living in truth, lord of diadems,
 Ikhnaton, whose life is long ;
 [And for] the great royal wife, his beloved,
 Mistress of the Two Lands, Nefer nefru aton, Nofretete,
 Living and flourishing for ever and ever.

In this hymn the universalism of the empire finds full expression and the royal singer sweeps his eye from the far-off cataracts of the Nubian Nile to the remotest lands of Syria. These are not thoughts which we have been accustomed to attribute to the men of some fourteen hundred years before Christ. A new spirit has breathed upon the dry bones of traditionalism in Egypt, and he who reads these lines for the first time must be moved with involuntary admiration for the young king who in such an age found such thoughts in his heart. He grasped the idea of a world-dominator, as the creator of nature, in which the king saw revealed the creator's beneficent purpose for all his creatures, even the meanest; for the birds fluttering about in the lily-grown Nile-marshes to him seemed to be uplifting their wings in adoration of their creator; and even the fish in the stream leaped up in praise to God. It is his voice that summons the blossoms and nourishes the chicklet or commands the mighty deluge of the Nile. He called Aton, "the father and the mother of all that he had made," and he saw in some degree the goodness of that All-Father as did he who bade us consider the lilies. He based the universal sway of God upon his fatherly care of all men alike, irrespective of race or nationality, and to the proud and exclusive Egyptian he pointed to the all-embracing bounty of the common father of humanity, even placing Syria and Nubia

before Egypt in his enumeration. It is this aspect of Ikhnaton's mind which is especially remarkable; he is the first prophet of history. While to the traditional Pharaoh the state god was only the triumphant conqueror, who crushed all peoples and drove them tribute-laden before the Pharaoh's chariot, Ikhnaton saw in him the beneficent father of all men. It is the first time in history that a discerning eye has caught this great universal truth. Again his whole movement was but a return to nature, resulting from a spontaneous recognition of the goodness and the beauty evident in it, mingled also with a consciousness of the mystery in it all, which adds just the fitting element of mysticism in such a faith.

How manifold are all thy works!
They are hidden from before us,
O thou sole god, whose powers no other possesseth.

While Ikhnaton thus recognized clearly the power, and to a surprising extent, the beneficence of God, there is not here a very spiritual conception of the deity nor any attribution to him of ethical qualities beyond those which Amon had long been supposed to possess. The king has not perceptibly risen from the beneficence to the righteousness in the character of God, nor to his demand for this in the character of men. Nevertheless, there is in his "teaching," as it is fragmentarily preserved in the hymns and tomb-inscriptions of his nobles, a constant emphasis upon "truth" such as is not found before nor since. The king always attaches to his name the phrase "living in truth," and that this phrase was not meaningless is evident in his daily life. To him it meant an acceptance of the daily facts of living in a simple and unconventional manner. For him what was right and its propriety was evident by its very existence. Thus his family life was open and unconcealed before the people. He took the greatest delight in his children and appeared with them and the queen, their mother, on all possible occasions, as if he had been but the humblest scribe in the Aton-temple. He had himself depicted on the monuments while enjoying the most familiar and unaffected

intercourse with his family, and whenever he appeared in the temple to offer sacrifice the queen and the daughters she had borne him participated in the service. All that was natural was to him true, and he never failed practically to exemplify this belief, however radically he was obliged to disregard tradition.

Such a principle unavoidably affected the art of the time in which the king took great interest. Bek, his chief sculptor, appended to his title the words, "whom his majesty himself taught."¹ Thus the artists of his court were taught to make the chisel and the brush tell the story of what they actually saw. The result was a simple and beautiful realism that saw more clearly than ever any art had seen before (Figs. 119, 147-8). They caught the instantaneous postures of animal life; the coursing hound, the fleeing game, the wild bull leaping in the swamp (Fig. 144); for all these belonged to the "truth," in which Ikhnaton lived. Even the elusiveness of chiaroscuro was dimly grasped and an attempt made, the first in the history of art, to approach its effects. The king's person, as we have intimated, was no exception to the law of the new art; the old models of the conventional Pharaoh in the traditional postures were thrown out to the waste heaps, and the artists represented Ikhnaton as they saw him (Fig. 141). The monuments of Egypt bore what they had never borne before, a Pharaoh depicted in the natural and unaffected relations of life, not frozen in the conventional posture demanded by the traditions of court propriety. The modelling of the human figure at this time was so plastic that at the first glance one is sometimes in doubt whether he has before him a product of the Greek age (Fig. 142). Yet the strange treatment of the lower limbs by Ikhnaton's artists is a problem which still remains unsolved and cannot be wholly accounted for by supposing a mal-formation of the king's own limbs. It is one of those unhealthy symptoms which are visible too in the body politic, and to these last we must now turn if we would learn how fatal to the material interests of the state this violent break with tradition has been.

¹ II, 975.