



The Pyramid and Pyramid Temple of King Mycerinus at Giza After the Granite Blocks Had Been Cleared Away.

The Harvard-Boston Egyptian Expedition

BY GEORGE A. REISNER, '89, PROFESSOR OF EGYPTOLOGY.

THE Harvard-Boston Egyptian Expedition was begun in 1905, under an agreement between President Eliot of Harvard College and Gardiner Martin Lane, President of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The expedition is still in the field, and has now completed sixteen years of archaeological research in the Nile Valley. During these years, the primary interest has always been the recovery of historical material, and the greatest attention has been devoted to the development of scientific methods of excavating and of recording the excavations. At the same time, a well-coördinated staff of native foremen and skilled diggers has been organized; and the expedition has become noted among foreign scholars both for its scientific methods and for its organization. The expedition has frequently supplied groups of skilled men or even a complete nucleus staff to other expeditions—American, English, German, and Austrian. The most conclusive evidence of the reputation of the expedition for scientific method is the fact that it was selected by the Egyptian Government to carry out the archaeological survey of Lower Nubia when the Assuan dam was raised to lay that country under water.

The following greater pieces of excavation have been carried out:

(1) The pyramid temples of King Mycerinus, who built the Third Pyramid at Giza (about 2,750 B. C.), 1908, 1910.

(2) About half of the great cemetery of princes, courtiers, and officials beside the Giza Pyramids, 1905-07, 1912-16.

(3) The rock-cut tombs of the feudal lords of the Hare-nome at Bersheh, 1915.

(4) The Nubian archaeological survey for the Egyptian Government, 1907, 1908.

(5) The excavation of the palaces of the Israelite kings at Samaria, for the

Harvard Palestinian Expedition, 1909, 1910.

(6) The excavation of the fort and cemetery of the Egyptian administration of Ethiopia at Kerma, in the Sudan, (1900-1600 B. C.), 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916.

(7) Excavations at Napata, the capital of Ethiopia (Sudan), 1916-1920: (a) Temples at Gebel Barkal; (b) Royal cemetery of the Egyptian XXVth Dynasty at El-Kur'uw; (c) Royal cemetery of Tirhaqa and the later kings of Ethiopia at Nuri.

(8) Excavation of the pyramids of Meroe, the later and southern capital of Ethiopia, which was begun in March, 1920, and is still in hand.

The bare record of sites excavated conveys no idea of the months and years of patient work, of the mechanical difficulties overcome, of the stirring discoveries of great works of art, or of the adventures on which the expedition has embarked, often at the risk of its whole future. Over 20,000 photographs have been taken; forty folios have been filled with the register of objects found; fifty diaries have been written; and card catalogues, tomb cards, drawings, plans, and maps have accumulated in similar quantities.

At the Pyramid Temple of Mycerinus we unexpectedly found the inner sanctuary covered with a tangled mass of great granite blocks; and with bare hands and simple implements hardly more elaborate than those of the ancient Egyptians, we were set the task of lifting several hundred pieces of granite weighing from one to eleven tons out of a hole and of carrying them fifty yards away. A distinguished British General gave me the vain advice that I should get a steam crane. We removed the whole mass at about the cost of the freight on such a crane and in less

time than it would have taken to get one out from England. When we had finished, one of the Egyptian foremen said in his pride, "If there is an order, we will build a pyramid."

Another great difficulty was encountered during the excavation of the pyramids at Nuri, where the burial-chambers were cut in a water-logged muscovite schist and the roofs were in a collapsed condition. This was in 1917, during the war, when timbers could not be had for love or money. But we purchased logs of the döm-palm (which grow locally) and propped the roofs with a forest of these stems. At one of the Barkal temples, the overhanging cliffs had fallen on the back rooms, and we had to break up over a hundred tons of stone before we exposed the beautiful granite altar dedicated to Amon-Ra by one of the kings of Ethiopia. Many other mechanical difficulties have met us and have been overcome in some simple way. The expedition has never permitted itself to be turned from its purpose by mere earth and stone.

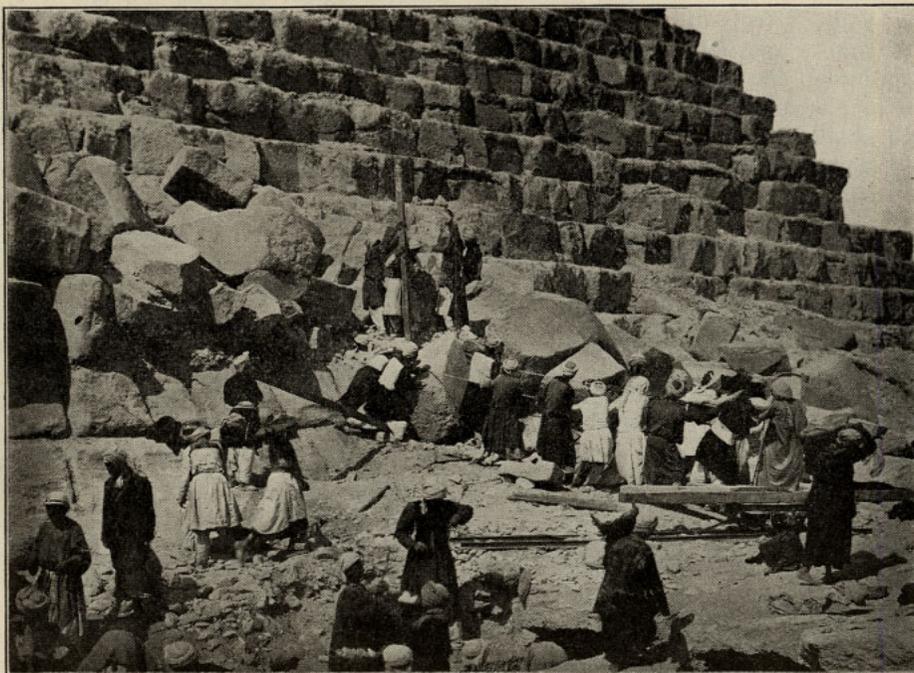
Some of our greatest ventures have been taken in the search for the answer to definite historical questions. The most important contribution to human knowledge which we have made has been the recovery of the history of Ethiopia, that part of the Nile valley which lies south of Egypt proper between the First Cataract and the head waters of the Nile. During the Archaeological Survey of Lower Nubia (the northern end of Ethiopia), which we made in 1907-1912, we had found a strange race and a new culture which, being of the period of about 2000 B. C., was neither Egyptian nor negro. The explanation of the origin of this race and this culture seemed to lie in the South, and so in January, 1913, I took a gang of my workmen south by steamer and rail to Kerma, in Dongola Province, Sudan, about 1,500 miles south of Cairo, to hunt for further historical material concerning this question.

I had intended to reconnoitre about two hundred miles of the Nile Valley from the

Third to the Second Cataract, an utterly desolate region now called *Batn-el-Hagar*, or "The Belly of the Rock." But at the outset, at Kerma itself, I found some important fragments of Egyptian inscription of a still earlier period, and as this place was about to be laid under water by a new irrigation scheme, I stopped at Kerma to rescue the historical material at that place. For four weeks the expedition applied its usual painstaking methods of work, and the objects found had a value about equivalent to our expenditure for postage stamps. But the historical results were startling. We had uncovered a fortified administrative centre occupied by an Egyptian armed force and an Egyptian colony during the period 1900-1600 B.C., a period in which all the history books taught us that Egypt ended just above the Second Cataract. Under this fortress we had also discovered an old trading station of the Old Empire (about 2500 B. C.).

In the next two weeks, however, we found the cemetery of this Egyptian colony two miles away across the plain, and a series of very remarkable objects was formed for the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

It was not, however, until we returned for the second campaign (1913-1914) that the greatest "find" was made,—the beautiful life-sized statue of the Lady Sennuwy, the wife of Prince Hepzefa of Assiut (in Middle Egypt), who had been sent by King Sesostrius III to act as Governor of Ethiopia and had died at Kerma. Many remarkable objects from Kerma are now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts,—carved wooden beds inlaid with ivory figures of animals and gods, bronze swords with tortoise-shell grips and ivory butts, ostrich feather fans, the finest pottery ever made in the Nile Valley, blue-glazed stones and pastes, etc. No positive information was obtained as to the strange race of Lower Nubia, but a new chapter was opened in the history of Egypt and the Sudan (Ethiopia), and a new aspect of the Egyptian character was revealed in the curious Kerman culture created by



Loading Granite Blocks on Trucks at the Pyramid Temple of King Mycerinus at Giza.

Egyptians steeped in Egyptian traditions, but cast by political action in a far land filled with strange forms and presenting new conditions as well as unwonted materials.

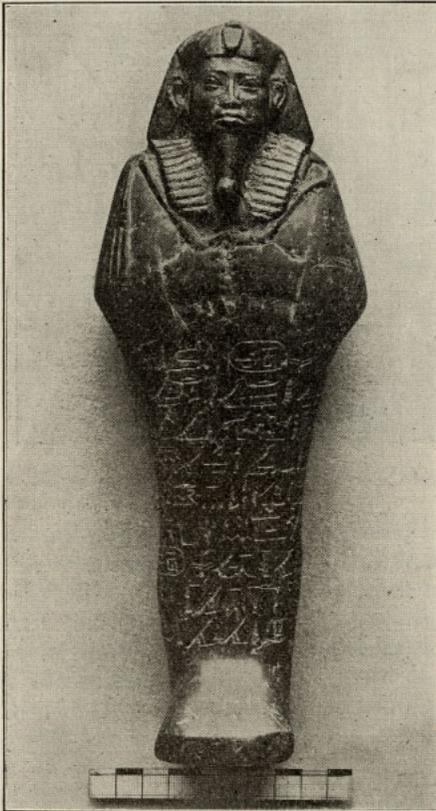
It was, no doubt, local influences, for example, which led the Egyptian officers and officials at Kerma to revive the old custom of burying a man's wives and servants alive in his grave in order that their spirits might accompany his in the after life. This custom had been practiced by the archaic Egyptians before the First Dynasty, but for many centuries before Hepzefa came to Kerma statuettes of the family had been placed in the tomb of the dead man instead of the actual persons.

These discoveries at Kerma opened to the expedition the possibilities of research in Ethiopia. Through the goodwill and courtesy of Mr. J. W. Crowfoot, Director of Education of the Sudan, the site of Napata, the ancient capital of Ethiopia, was offered to us. We were further attracted

by the extensive field of pyramids, supposed to be royal tombs, which were of unknown construction. Several expeditions had attempted to find the burial chambers and had failed. Thus in January, 1916, we began the search for the entrances to the pyramids at Gebel Barkal, the religious centre of the city of Napata. We found our way by the structural entrance into the first Ethiopian pyramid by ten o'clock in the morning of the first day of work; and we excavated this field of twenty-five pyramids in six weeks. A beautiful gold bracelet with the surface enamelled in colors showing Isis seated is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts as a result of those six weeks.

This success led in later years to the excavation of the pyramids at Nuri on the south and at El-Kur'uw on the north of Napata. In these we found the tombs of all the kings and all the queens of Ethiopia and six generations of their ancestors from about 900 to 300 B. C.,—six centuries of the royal family of Ethiopia.

Among them were the five greatest kings who, as the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, ruled Egypt from about 750 to 661 B. C. At Gebel Barkal, the temples built by these kings to Amon-Ra, and those underlying temples built by the kings of the Egyptian New Empire (1550-1200 B. C.) were also excavated. During this work, we found



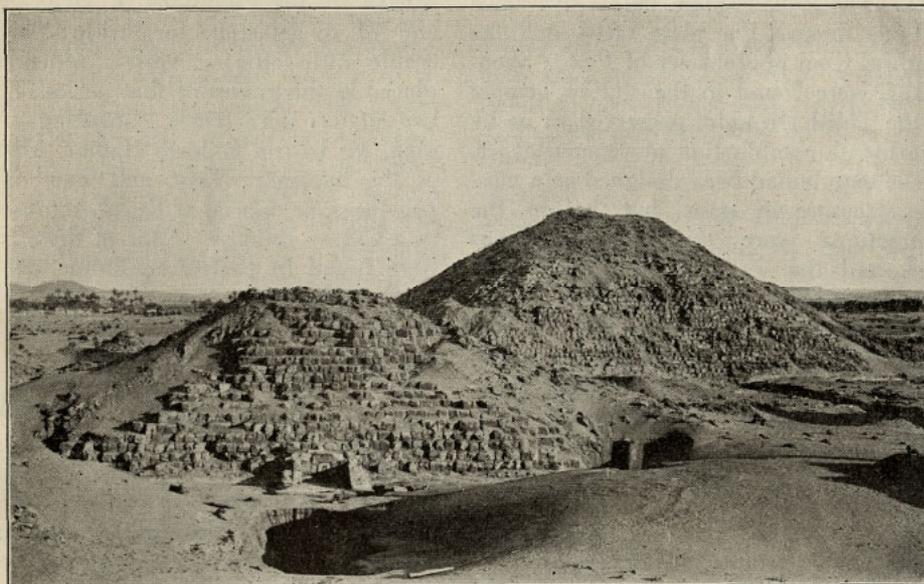
Magical Figure of Tirhaqa from his Pyramid at Nuri.

a long series of royal sculptures made by Egyptian artists, including statues, altars, stelae, and sphinxes, a number of remarkable works of the gold- and silver-smiths of Napata, many stone vessels and Canopic jars, many hundreds of funerary figures in stone and blue faience, and other objects which, being royal works, can never be duplicated. But the greatest achievement was the recovery of the lost names of twelve kings of Ethiopia, and

the arrangement of the whole twenty-six kings in chronological order. The expedition has now at last written the first outline of the history of Ethiopia.

Homer mentions Ethiopia as the land of the care-free Ethiopians whither the Olympian gods retired at times for a holiday. To the later classical writers, it was a land of wonders and fabulous races of men. We now know that it was a land of roads leading to the mine-lands which supplied Egypt with gold, and to the markets of the southern countries whence came the ivory, the ebony, the ostrich feathers, the leopard skins, the resins, the myrrh, the incense, and the black slaves demanded by the Egyptians. The roads were opened by the royal trading caravans of the Old Empire (3000-2400 B.C.). In the Middle Empire (2200-1600 B. C.), a series of forts was built, beginning at the First Cataract and ending with the fort at Kerma (called "The-Walls-of-Amenemhat"), where an Egyptian governor lived and administered Northern Ethiopia. During the New Empire, from 1549 to 1100 B. C., Ethiopia was governed in succession by twenty-three Egyptian viceroys, all of whose names are now known to us, and became thoroughly Egyptianized.

About 900 B. C., a tribe of Libyan nomads settled at Napata, coming in from the western desert, probably by way of the Selima Oasis. They mastered the country with its control of the gold supply of Egypt and of the trade routes to the South, became Egyptianized, and about 750 B. C. obtained possession of Southern Egypt as far as Thebes. In 720 B. C., or thereabouts, Piankhy, King of Ethiopia, conquered Northern Egypt, and he with four of his successors ruled Egypt as a province of Ethiopia. Living far to the south in Napata, a sun-baked town in a poverty-stricken land, these men ruled two thousand miles of the Nile Valley and sent their ambassadors to the courts of Assyria and the other powers of Western Asia. A letter of King Shabaka, the successor of Piankhy, was found in the archives of Nineveh.



Tomb of Senkamansken with the Tomb of Tirhaqa in the Background, at Nuri.

But this was the time of the Assyrian Empire of those great conquerors Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Asurbanipal, and in 670 B. C., the Assyrians had arrived at the borders of Egypt. A ten-year struggle between Assyria and Ethiopia left the Assyrians masters of Egypt, and the kings of Ethiopia were driven back within their own borders after a brief empire of less than a century. But the Ethiopian royal family, sprung from Libyan nomads, had not lost its vitality. For another three centuries they ruled Ethiopia from Napata, and even then a cadet branch of the family, which the days of Piankhy had settled at Meroe in Southern Ethiopia, succeeded to the kingship and ruled the whole country for some centuries with Meroe as their capital. It was this Meroitic Ethiopia of which Strabo, Pliny, and other writers relate so many fables.

Space does not permit me to deal with these fables or to outline the cultural history of the Ethiopian monarchy (900-300 B. C.); but it may be said that the early Ethiopian kings who held Egypt brought Egyptian priests and scribes, artists and

craftsmen, to Napata and established there schools of the best Egyptian traditions, and that the whole history presents a remarkable picture of the age-long effort to maintain these traditions, and of the gradual modification of the forms of Egyptian religion and art into that curious culture now called Meroitic.

But of all the excavations of the expedition, none has so enriched the Museum of Fine Arts as those at the pyramids of Giza. The only really important collection of Egyptian sculptures in America is now in that Museum as a result of the Giza work, and includes eleven portraits in stone of members of the royal family which built the great pyramids of Giza. There are two other great masterpieces of Old Empire sculpture and many pieces of great merit from the tombs beside the pyramids. One of the most beautiful, an incomplete alabaster statue of King Mycerinus, was found in the temple beside the Third Pyramid. The head, an exquisite piece of modelling, lay outside the northern wall of the temple so close to the surface that any loiterer might have exposed it with a walking stick at any

time. The famous slate pair (Mycerinus and his queen), the slate triad, and the youthful head in alabaster of Prince Shepseskaf, were found in the Valley Temple of the Third Pyramid, preserved to us by a fortunate combination of circumstances.

The temple had been designed as a massive structure in stone, but before the foundations were complete Mycerinus died, and the walls were built of sun-dried mud-brick. The site was at the bottom of a wide ravine, so that the rain water rushing down ruined the walls, and the wind covered the ruins with sand. Thus, all that was visible from the Pyramid Temple above was a causeway leading down and plunging under a level plain of sand, a plain of sand which had discouraged archaeologists and illicit excavators from attempts on the temple.

We followed the causeway down by means of pits sunk through the sand, dug at ten-yard intervals, until we found the temple. When we had cleared away the sand, we saw merely a mound of mud, and even my own assistants were loath to believe that we had found the Valley Temple of Mycerinus. But the excavation of the mound of mud revealed the walls preserved to various heights, and a series of beautiful statues inscribed with the name of the king. There had been over a hundred royal statues and statuettes in this temple, but many of them had been

broken by the Egyptians of Dynasties V and VI, to get stone for making the miserable little offering vessels which were placed in the graves of that period. Forty-two statues were triads, consisting of the king, his patron goddess Hathor, Mistress of the Sycamore Tree, and one of the provinces, or nomes, of Egypt, represented as a god or goddess. Four of these triads were found in perfect condition, one imperfect, and there were fragments of a number of others. One alabaster statue of life-size, and large fragments of three others, as well as the famous slate pair, were still in the temple ruins. Perhaps more interesting even than these finished pieces was a series of ten unfinished statuettes of the king in various stages of manufacture, which made plain the technical processes used by the Egyptian sculptors in carving such pieces as the slate pair.

In these sixteen years, I have had a series of fourteen gentlemen coöperating with me in the work, most of whom are now occupying important places with other institutions. My wife has had the management of the camp and has performed a great service in dealing with the antiquities after they had been brought up to the camp. Three other ladies have assisted me at various times with the secretarial work. The mainstays of the native staff have been the two brothers from Keft



Gold Pectoral Ornament from the Tomb of King Netaklabataman at Nuri.

in Upper Egypt,—Said Ahmed Said and Mahmud Ahmed Said ("The Mummy").

It is worthy of note that the cost of the Harvard-Boston Expedition has been borne largely by annual subscriptions given by public spirited men and women of Boston, whose desire has been to provide a really great collection of Egyptian works of art for the use and instruction of the community. Among the subscribers the name of Mr. Augustus Hemenway is especially to be noted for large and continuous contributions. In times of difficulty, the Trustees of the Museum have made appropriations for the work from Museum funds. A full list of the subscribers is as follows:

Mrs. George R. Agassiz
 F. Lothrop Ames
 Miss Mary S. Ames
 Mrs. Frederick Ayer
 Miss Ellen B. Ayer
 Francis Bartlett
 Mr. and Mrs. Oric Bates
 George Nixon Black
 Mrs. T. J. Bowlker
 Alexander Cochrane
 Miss Georgiana G. Eaton
 William Endicott
 A. F. Estabrook
 F. W. Fabyan
 Mrs. Henrietta G. Fitz
 H. C. Frick
 Mrs. L. A. Frothingham
 Augustus Hemenway
 James Fund
 Gardiner Martin Lane and Mrs. Lane
 Morris Loeb
 A. Lawrence Lowell
 Theodore Lyman
 Mrs. William S. Paine
 Emily Esther Sears Fund
 A. Shuman
 W. S. Spaulding
 C. A. Stone for Whitneys
 S. D. Warren
 George Robert White

It is due to the loyal support of these friends and the officials of the Museum that the expedition has been able not only to place in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts the really great collections of Egyptian masterpieces which it contains, but also to add so considerably to the advancement of human knowledge.

THE COLLEGE CHOIR

To the Editor of the BULLETIN:

In your issue of June 8 you published a notice of the services held at the dedication of the memorial to Warren A. Locke, '69, in Appleton Chapel on Wednesday, May 31.

In your article you make no reference to the music furnished by the College Choir under the direction of Dr. Archibald T. Davison. As this formed an important part of the services and they had asked that they might take part in the services as desiring to express their appreciation of what Mr. Locke had done for College music, I write to ask that you make this statement, in order that their part in the exercises may be recognized and understood.

It is the intention of the class at their meeting on Commencement to adopt a resolution expressing their great appreciation of the services of Dr. Davison and the College Choir, but as the notice has been published in the BULLETIN, the class committee desire that some record should be publicly made of their deep appreciation of the part of the College Choir and Dr. Davison in the memorial exercises.

THOMAS P. BEAL,

Secretary of the Class of 1869.

RECENT BOOKS BY HARVARD MEN

'82—Owen Wister, "The New Swiss Family Robinson," Duffield: A new edition of a parody written by Mr. Wister when he was a student in Harvard College; originally contributed to the Harvard *Lampoon*; printed in the old-time format.

'04—Roger C. Griffin, A.M. '05, S.M. '06, "Technical Methods of Analysis," International Chemical Series: By the director of the analytic department of Arthur D. Little, Inc. Pp. 666. Price, \$6.

'10—Heywood Brown, "Pieces of Hate," Doran: Essays originally contributed to the New York *World*, the New York *Tribune*, *Vanity Fair*, *Collier's Weekly*, the *Bookman*, and *Judge*: forty-three short essays on books, plays, baseball players, prize-fighters, ministers, literary style, editors, youthful pessimists, etc.

'12—Henry Bollman (with another), "Motion Pictures for Community Needs," Henry Holt & Co.: By the president of Henry Bollman, Inc., distributors of motion pictures.