

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE FAMOUS EGYPTIAN "BOOK OF THE DEAD."

The various compositions which the Egyptians inscribed upon the walls of their tombs and sarcophagi, their coffins and funeral shafts, their papyri and amulets, for the purpose of insuring the well-being of their dead in the world beyond the grave, are known to the world as *The Book of the Dead*, a complete translation of which by the great Egyptologist Dr. E. A. Wallace Budge has just been issued by the Open Court Publishing Co. The origin of this great collection of religious texts is shrouded in the mists of remote antiquity. The very title, *Book of the Dead*, is unsatisfactory, as it does not in any way describe the contents of the mass of religious texts, hymns, litanies, etc., which are now best known by that name; and it is no rendering whatever of their ancient Egyptian title: "REU NU PERT EM HRU," which means literally "Chapters of Coming Forth by Day." The name, however, is more satisfactory than that of "Ritual of the Dead," or "Funeral Ritual," as it has been called, for the compositions certainly do refer to the dead and what happens to the dead in the world beyond. The ideas and beliefs embodied in its texts are coeval with Egyptian civilisation; some of them are known to have existed in the fifth and sixth dynasties, or about 3500 B. C.; others date from the pre-dynastic period, and are the expression of the religious views of that prehistoric Northeast African race which formed the main indigenous substratum of the dynastic Egyptians. The book was old even in the reign of Semti, a king of the first dynasty, and was copied and recopied and added to by one generation after another, for a period of nearly 5000 years. It is the great national religious composition of Egypt, the embodiment of the history of its religious literature. Every pious Egyptian, whether king or plowman, queen or maid-servant, lived with the teaching of *The Book of the Dead* before his eyes, was buried according to its directions, and based his hope of everlasting life and happiness upon the efficacy of its hymns and prayers and words of power. It was to him the all-powerful guide along the road which, passing through death and the grave, led into the realms of light and life and into the presence of the divine being Osiris, the conqueror of death, who made men and women "to be born again."

The story of the decipherment of the Egyptian papyri and the Egyptian hieroglyphic script, while an exceedingly fascinating one, is too long to be told in this place; suffice it to say that scholars long ago succeeded in translating the Egyptian writings, and that the problems which remain are largely of a technical character and similar to those which confront students of the early forms of all historic languages. Several translations of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* have already ap-

peared in German, French, and Italian. A monumental edition of the hieroglyphic text, with English translation, hieroglyphic vocabulary, colored plates, and full critical and historical apparatus, by E. A. Wallace Budge, keeper of the Egyptian-Assyrian antiquities in the British Museum, was also published four years ago by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. of London, and was favorably received by the learned world. The work was a bulky and expensive one, and beyond the reach of the general reading public. After its appearance frequent requests were made that Mr. Budge's English translation might be issued in a smaller and handier form. The complete English translation of *The Book of the Dead*, with introductory historical and critical matter, index, etc., was accordingly put up on the market, and the sale of the work in America placed in the hands of The Open Court Publishing Co., of Chicago, as sole agents. (Three Vols., Crown 8vo. Pages, 702. Price, \$3.75 net.) The collection of religious compositions here translated is generally known as the Theban Recension or edition of *The Book of the Dead*, that is to say, that edition of the great national funeral work which was copied by the Egyptian scribes for themselves and for Egyptian kings and queens, princes and nobles, gentle and simple, rich and poor, from about B. C. 1600 to B. C. 900.

The translation in the volumes under review is no mere reprint, but has been carefully revised and compared with the original texts, with the addition of many explanatory notes. To make the edition as complete as possible, more than 400 vignettes, head-pieces, tail-pieces, and marginal pictures taken from the best papyri have been reproduced. These vignettes are the pictures which the Egyptian scribes and artists made to illustrate the general contents of their chapters. They have been specially drawn for the books now published by the Open Court Publishing Company, and faithfully represent the originals in form and outline. The translations belong to the group to which, as we have noted above, the Egyptians gave the name "Chapters of Coming Forth by Day," and contain also many introductory hymns and supplementary abstracts from ancient cognate works, rubrics, etc., which were intended to be used as words of power by the deceased in the underworld. Mr. Budge, who is one of the greatest living Egyptologists, has added to his translation popular chapters on the literary history of *The Book of the Dead*, on the doctrines of Osiris, and the Judgment and Resurrection, and on the general contents of *The Book of the Dead*. Everything, in fact, has been done to place within the reach of the student of history, philosophy, and religion, the material necessary to gain a thorough comprehension of the theory of life and immortality held by one of the greatest and most ancient races of the world.

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#### AN INDUSTRIAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

Mr. Edward P. Cheyney, Professor of European History in the University of Pennsylvania, has given us a pleasant and readable book in his recently published *Introduction to the Industrial and Social History of England*.<sup>1</sup> The work of correlating the intellectual, social, economic, and industrial phases of a nation's development with its political and military history, while distinctly indicated by Voltaire, remained the work of the last half of the present century, and has only lately found full recognition in the elementary educational field. Professor Cheyney's book, which is of this character and is especially intended for high schools and colleges, meets in a commendable manner the requirements which should be

<sup>1</sup> New York: The Macmillan Company. London; Macmillan & Co., Ltd. 1901. Pp., x, 317.