

IKHNATON, PHARAOH OF EGYPT.¹

BY L. M. KUEFFNER.

HERE on this last brown slope they have left me alone for a
space as I bade. . . .

The lithe bronzed youths who bore my litter, and Eye the priest. . . .
That I might look once more on thee Akhetaton my city, Aton's
abode.

And on thee O Aton my father, bright in the Western sky.

How beautiful are these sandswept desert-cliffs
As curving about thee Akhetaton, dear city,
They wander down to the great brown Nile couched at thy feet.

Happy each day under flawless blue
Lie thy gardens and homes, my city ;
Stately thy temple stands
Bathed in the golden light.
Even now as I dream
Sweet music floats hither ;
And garlanded dancers throng
To the huge, pillared courts
With flowers and fruits
For thee, O Aton, sole God.

Loth was Eye to leave me here,
Eye, my dear old teacher,
Comrade of dreams from my boyhood days,
My faithful helper in the long hard war
Which, year after year, with Amon's priests I have waged
In glory to thee, O Aton my father !

In glory to thee, O Aton my father,
Whom I have come to adore

¹ During a trip in Egypt I became interested in this Pharaoh whose name is variously spelled and explained as Ikhnaton, Khu-en-'eten, Khûniatonû, etc., and who in the fourteenth century B. C. tried to establish an enlightened monotheism in Egypt. His own thoughts as found in hymns preserved in the tombs of Tell-el-Amarna have been used. Here are the conceptions of the fatherhood of God, the equality of his love for all races, black or white or brown, the teaching of peace, etc.—conceptions usually proclaimed as distinctively Christian contributions to religious thought and feeling.

While far away in thy Western sky
 Thou sinkest to sleep amid glorified hills.
 From thy great gold disk a gleaming path
 Leads hither over the river's broad breast,
 And my eyes are drunken with light.

They have said I must die; yet can that be?
 Am I not young? And does thy fire not throb in my heart
 Each day with a larger love?
 Do not thy hands which thou layest on me
 Bring health even now to thy son?

Soon, they have said,
 I must dwell in the low dark house cut in the Eastern rocks
 Where to-day I have been. . . .
 But it cannot be. . . .

How often thus have I seen thee die O Aton,
 Who every morning wast born anew!
 But thou dost not die:
 Thou merely passest from our sight,
 Our mortal, imperfect sight.
 Nor dost thou dwell in thy visible disk alone.
 Thou dwellest in the lucent moon, and in the stars, and in the leap-
 ing flame;
 Thou art the hidden warmth of all wondrous forms,
 The hunger and pulse and breath of the world;
 Thou helpst the leaf in the seed's dark hull
 As it yearns toward light;
 And thou helpst the chick when it breaks from the shell
 Chirping and strutting in glee.
 Myriad-formed and elusive, O Aton,
 Thou changest, but dost not die!

When but a boy, I sought thee, my father,
 Finding thee first in thy golden disk;
 And searching farther, from year to year,
 I found thee at last in the light of my soul,
 In the pulse of my love-warm heart;
 And I knew thee then
 As the infinite inner light in the minds of men;
 As the love that speaks in their hearts.

O Aton, do I not know thee, my father,
 As none of thy sons have known thee before?
 And knowing thee thus, I have wished to be thy revealer to men.

Long I have served thee:
 Cities and fanes I have built where thy truth is proclaimed;
 Not like Pharaohs of old to their gods, have I offered thee spoils
 of men;
 But peace I have kept, for I know that thou lovest peace
 Who sendest thy myriad hands to all parts of the world,
 Binding together in light and in love
 All men in all lands.

I have taught men to live in thy truth,
 To be simple and faithful
 As thou who returnest each morn
 Making all creatures glad.
 When thy rays touch the water
 The fishes leap up from their sleep,
 The birds flutter forth from the marsh,
 And the flowers dance, drunken with joy.
 But gladdest of all are the hearts of men when thou comest
 O Aton our father,
 For thou healest our sight,
 And once more we behold
 The wonderful world thou hast made
 In the joy of thy own glad heart.

I have taught that no spirits of darkness
 Lie lurking to capture men's souls:
 That in death, as in life,
 Thy love enfolds them, thy children.

All this I have taught; and yet,
 Though the truth is joyous and clear,
 Weak men are but dull and blind,
 And loth to open their eyes.

So they have muttered and cursed, unwilling to give up their gods,
 Thinking by magic rites and runes to appease or constrain these gods
 whom they fear;

Each year they clamor more loudly,
 Demanding, once more, the savage play of Osiris torn and revived!
 The vendors of idols and charms, their wares forbidden, grow ever
 more wrathful;
 While the priests of Amon, selfish, and insolent still, cease not in
 their war
 Against thee, O Aton, sole God.
 Yet, in spite of this muttering protest, this stubborn, smouldering
 discontent,
 Faithful I have been in thy service, and staunch, hoping from day
 to day that thy truth would prevail.
 And now, can I go ere my work is done?
 Friends I leave, to be sure, who worship thy light and truth,
 But none so earnest, and brave, and strong, as our troublous time
 demands.
 Then why hast thou taken thy health from thy son, my father?
 Why have I failed?
 What will become of thy truth if I die?
 And if I must die ere my work is done,
 Ere thy light is revealed in all men's souls,
 Send me some comfort now as I gaze at thy disk,
 O Aton, my father.

With sails dusky before thee the boats on the river float by
 While the evening breeze steals home to the glamored hills;
 The slumbrous sway of the distant palms
 Wins my soul to its peaceful music.
 As I gaze at thy great bronze disk
 And its glimmering path,
 My outer eye grows dark:
 But thy beams have entered my soul, O Aton,
 And within I am all ablaze.
 I thank thee, for now, at a flash,
 My inner eye is unsealed,
 And I see why I failed.
 I see that I tried to force
 What must come as a long slow growth.
 Men often are dull, it is true,
 And their central spark seems quenched
 By error and fear and gloom.
 But light is its food none the less;
 Slowly it grows and grows,

And disentangled at last
 It will know itself one with thee
 And thy light of the world, O Aton!

And I see that a teacher of men must have
 Patience, and infinite faith.
 These I have lacked.
 And if I die, let them bring back old gods if they will:
 Old gods they will be but in name;
 For I know that the vision of thee
 Which my teaching has brought to the world,
 All gods will transform with the gleams
 Of thy beauty and love and truth.
 Once kindled, I know, the vision can never die.

So now I see that thy truth lies hidden in all these forms.
 Thou art Kheper the beetle, rolling his golden egg from the East;
 And thou guardest the world, O wide-seeing Eye!
 Osiris, lotus-born, thou art,
 And Horus, the yellow hawk;
 Ra in his sky-barque sailing,
 And also the falcon with wide wings outspread
 As he steals one's soul from the earth
 To join in his far-poised flight.
 Symbols are these:
 Images found by the first rude seekers,
 But images pregnant of final truth.

Yet I, O Aton, love thee best
 As the literal light in thy disk,
 As the inner light in men's souls.

But have I gazed too long at thy disk, my father?
 Darkness folds over me; I cannot see thee now.
 My brain reels. . . .
 Can this be the night of death?
 Ah, it is dark indeed, where art thou, my father?
 Leave me not in my need. . . .
 But now I see thee again: in the core of my darkness
 Dwells thy light;
 It grows and spreads
 Till all the world is filled,

And I know thee as never before.
 I have reached home at last,
 Lost in thy ocean of light,
 To change, but not to die.

For this death which is life, I thank thee, my father,
 Thou infinite, undying light of the world,
 Aton, sole God!

THE RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION OF AMENHOTEP IV.¹

BY M. A. MORET.

AMENHOTEP IV, who ruled somewhere about 1370 B. C., had the most peculiar, as well as the most enigmatic, physiognomy of all the Pharaohs—enigmatic although numerous monuments of him have come down to us. In that Egypt where tradition was all-powerful, among those Egyptians, “the most religious of all men,” Amenhotep IV conceived and accomplished a religious revolution: he turned away from the great national divinity Amen-Ra, and substituted for him the God, Aten, whose worship he forced upon his court, the priests, the people of Egypt, and his foreign subjects.

The break in relations between the State and the priesthood which has control of the State religion is a difficult task in all countries and at all times, but how difficult was its realization in Egypt! Like all other Pharaohs, his ancestors, Amenhotep IV was considered as the son and heir of the gods, and in particular as the successor of Amen-Ra, patron deity of Thebes, the capital of Egypt at the time of the New Empire. Upon the walls of the temples were to be found the traditional scenes which attested the truth of the procreation of the king by the god.² At Luxor, for example, there was a representation of the union of Amen with Queen Mutemua, mother of Amenhotep III, the actual father of the revolutionary king. There were other representations to the

¹ Translated from the *Annales du Musée Guimet (Bibliothèque de vulgarisation)*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 225ff, by C. E. Eggert.

² The union of the god, Amen-Ra, and the queen is represented at Deir-el-Bahari (Ed. Naville, *Deir-el-Bahari*, II, Plate 57) and at Luxor (Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Plate 63). See translation and commentary on the texts in A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, pp. 50ff.