

**THE RECENT ARCHAIC
DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT
EGYPTIAN MUMMIES AT
THEBES: A LECTURE**

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The Recent Archaic Discovery of Ancient Egyptian Mummies at Thebes: A lecture by Sir
Erasmus Wilson

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A LECTURE

DELIVERED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, AT MARGATE,

February 15th, 1883.

e BY

SIR ERASMUS WILSON, LL.D., F.R.S., F.R.C.S.,

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BIBLICAL ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY;
PRESIDENT OF THE EGYPT-EXPLORATION FUND;
AUTHOR OF "THE EGYPT OF THE PAST."

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P R E F A C E .

TO COMPREHEND Christianity fully, in all its grandeur and divine perfection, a knowledge of the history of the time of its origin and of that which preceded it will be found a useful, if not a necessary assistance. Ancient Egypt is the cradle of the religion of the Western World, and all people are interested in the nature and development of the early faith of mankind; for not only the Christian but likewise the Jewish Religion, is a direct outcome of the original faith. Faith, Hope, and Charity are manifested at every step; and, not least amongst human virtues—Love is inculcated towards all mankind.

Some such train of thought as this suggested to my mind the subject of my First Lecture, addressed to the Young Men's Christian Association, of which I have the honour to be Vice-President. And the co-operation of the Rev. Henry Woods Tindall, Mr. Drew, and other friends

of the Institution, confirmed me in the propriety of my intentions. The history of Ancient Egypt brings us into frequent contact with the Bible narrative ; and the archaïctrope discovered in a subterranean vault, at the foot of a rugged spur of the Libyan Mountains at Thebes, close to the convent of Bahree—founded on the ruins of a Temple of the Thothmes family—seemed well adapted to draw attention to the mysteries of those ancient times.

This marvellous discovery is due to the sagacity and perseverance of Professor Maspero, Chief Curator of the Egyptian Museum at Boulak. His Report has served as the foundation of that part of my lecture which relates to the objects themselves, and the illustrations employed were drawings in chalk from the photographs of Herr Emil Brugsch, Assistant Conservator, which accompanied M. Maspero's excellent paper.

But while I am still writing—news has reached us from Egypt which will interest very deeply every student and every reader of the Bible. Professor Edouard Naville, of Geneva, in unison with Professor Maspero, is at this moment prosecuting some researches on the part of the Egypt-Exploration Fund Committee, of the Bible cities of the Land of Goshen in Lower Egypt, which have

resulted in further discoveries of the most interesting kind. When in chapter i., verse 2; in chapter xii., verse 37, and in chapter xiii., verse 20, of the Book of Exodus, we read :—that the Israelites—“built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses, * * * and the children of Israel journeyed from Raamses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand, on foot, that were men, besides children, * * * and they took their journey from Succoth and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the Wilderness.”—We naturally enquire : Where were Pithom and Raamses, and Succoth and Etham? Now, this question has been triumphantly answered by M. Naville. Pithom and Succoth are identical; and this great “treasure city” of Pharaoh is the Tell-el-Maskhuta of the present day. It lies on the track of the recent war in Egypt, and formed part of the late battle fields.*

Pithom, in Egyptian, Pa-tum, the “house of Tum,” is the name of the temple from which the city derived its *sacred* name; and Succoth, in Egyptian Thukut, was its secular name. Succoth was the first “station” of the people of the Exodus; so that, having discovered its exact

* See letters from Mr. Reginald Stewart Poole and Miss Amelia E. Edwards, in several daily papers of current dates, also, a fuller account in *The Academy*, February, 1883.

situation, the difficulties in the way of tracing the journey of the Children of Israel in their migration to the East, are removed. Another excavation will bring Raamses into being, and the position of Etham must follow soon. We shall no longer read words in the Holy Book which convey no significance to our minds ; but we shall be able to corroborate the Bible History by one of the most important facts of modern geographical science.

I most sincerely hope that this lecture, addressed to the People, may have the effect of leading many to take an interest in and pursue the study of one of the most attractive branches of human knowledge.

THE BUNGALOW, Westgate-on-Sea,

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