LETTER OF PANBESA,

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE CITY OF RAMESES,

XIXTH DYNASTY.

TRANSLATED BY
C. W. GOODWIN, M.A.

In the *Anastasi Papyrus III.*, Plate 1, line 11, is preserved the following letter containing a description of the town of Rameses, near to the fortress of Aanchehutu, built by Rameses II, on the confines of Egypt and Canaan.

This town has been recently supposed to be Zoan or Tanis and the point of departure of the Exodus. The letter has been partly translated by the Rev. I. Dunbar Heath, *Exodus Papyri*, 8vo., Lond., 1855, p. 73. This letter is of great interest, giving in poetic strain the account of the city, and the sentences as is usual in poems, have red dots placed above them to show the lines. Many of the names of fruit and fish are
obscure, although the document throws great light on their nature, whether of the aquatic kind of plants or else from trees in the arboreta or Egyptian orchards. As there is a considerable demand for explanatory notes a few have been added to assist the reader about the obscurer words, phrases and places which are mentioned in it. Many of the things were brought from distant places as far as the Euphrates and other foreign lands and it would seem to have been one of the most flourishing cities of Egypt at the time. The document is unfortunately much mutilated and the only parts untranslated are those which have suffered from worms or from being torn.

S. B.
LETTER OF PANBESA.

1 The Clerk Panbesa salutes his Lord,
2 the Clerk Amenemapt. Long live the King!
3 This is sent for the information of My Lord.
4 Again I salute My Lord.
5 I proceeded to Pa-Ramessu Metamen.
6 I found it flourishing in good things without a rival,
7 like the foundations of Thebes...
8 the abode of felicity.
9 Its meadows are filled with all good things,
10 it is well-provisioned daily.
11 Its pools (are filled) with fish, its ponds with fowl;
12 its fields are verdant with grass,
13 the Ate-flower is in its...;
14 the Tenaka-plant whose taste is like honey
15 is in the fields of the tubs.
16 Its threshing-floors are full
17 of barley and wheat
18 bunches of leeks in the beds;
19 gourds in the arbouer;
20 anhamaa-fruits.

5 City named “House of Ramessu-Metamen.”
6 Abounding in.
7 Lacuna.
8 Unknown plant. S.B.
9 Edible plant, perhaps cucumber or melon kind. S.B.
10 Watering-machines.
11 Sometimes written Anruhama or Atukama; supposed grapes or raisins. S.B.
19 Tophu-fruit, called\(^1\) . . . . . ;\(^3\)
20 Tyb-fruit\(^2\) from the arboretum;
21 sweet wine of the produce of Egypt
22 which is superior to honey.
23 Red Utu-fish from the river of . . . . . ;\(^3\) lilies;
24 Baran-fish from the river Haruma;
25 Barai-fish mixed with Baka-fish
 . . . . . ;\(^3\) fish
26 from the river Puharta\(^4\)
   Atu-fish . . . . . ;\(^3\) from the river . . . . . ;\(^3\)
27 Hanata-fish from . . . . . of Aa-nechtu.\(^5\)
28 The pool of Horus furnishes salt,
29 the Pahura lake furnishes nitre;\(^6\)
30 its . . . . . for the going and coming.\(^7\)
31 There is a supply of provisions there daily.\(^8\)
32 Gladness dwells within it,
33 none speaks scorn of it.
34 The little ones in it are like the great ones
35 (They say) Come let us celebrate its heavenly festivals
36 and the season feasts.
37 The papyrus-marsh is adorned with Menhu-flower\(^9\)
38 the pool of Horus with the Asi-flower;\(^10\)
39 there are Sabara-flowers from the arboretum,
40 festoons from the vineyards . . . . . ;\(^3\)
41 fowls in flocks, to adorn . . . . . ;\(^3\)

\(^1\) Perhaps tet, olives. S.B.
\(^2\) Supposed to be figs or dates. S.B. \(^3\) Lacuna.
\(^4\) Euphrates. \(^5\) The frontier fortress.
\(^6\) One of the natron or bitter lakes near the Isthmus of Suez.
\(^7\) Of boats. \(^8\) Market.
\(^9\) A flower of red and violet colour. S.B.
\(^10\) Apparently another kind of water plant. S.B.
The sea abounds with Baka-fish\(^1\) and Aitu-fish.

It . . . .\(^4\) their boundaries.

The virgins of Aa-nechtu are well apparelled every day;

sweet oil is on their heads, with new curls.

They stand at their doors,

their hands adorned with nosegays,

with bouquets of Pa-Hathor,

garlands of the lake Pahura,

on the day of the arrival of Ra-user-ma Sotep-en-ra,\(^3\)

the war-god\(^4\) of the world,

the morning of the feast of Ka-ha-ka;

all assemble one with another to recite their petitions.

There are sweet drinks in Aa-nechtu;

its liquors are like sugar,

its syrups like the taste of caroobs\(^5\) surpassing honey.

Beer of Kati comes from the port;

wine from the vineyards;

sweet refreshments from the lake Sakabaima;\(^6\) garlands from the arbours.

The sweet singers of Aa-nechtu are of the school of Memphis;\(^7\)

---

\(^1\) The locust tree of the desert, *Ceratonia siliqua*.

\(^2\) Lacuna.

\(^3\) The prenomen of Ramses II.

\(^4\) Mentu or Mentu Ra, the Egyptian war-god. S.B.

\(^5\) The fishes and plants here named have not as yet been certainly identified.

\(^6\) Unknown locality. S.B.

\(^7\) The *Memphites puellas* of the Latin authors. S.B.
joy remains there prolonged, unceasing.

Ra-user-ma Sotep-en-ra,

the war-god of the world,

Ramesu Meiamen, is its god.
The Complete Text can be found on our CD: 
**Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature**
which can be purchased on our Website:
or
by sending **$64.95** in check or money order to:
Brainfly Inc.
5100 Garfield Ave. #46
Sacramento CA 95841-3839

**TEACHER’S DISCOUNT:**
If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher’s discount. Click on Teachers Discount on our website (www.Brainfly.net) or **Send us $55.95** and we will send you a full copy of **Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature AND our 5000 Classics CD** *(a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt))* plus our Wholesale price list.

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:
[webcomments@brainfly.net](mailto:webcomments@brainfly.net)