

Come and prosper, come,
O Nile, come and prosper!

This work has been successfully finished and dedicated to the scribe of the treasury Qaqabu (by the scribe Ennana).

VIII. SPOILIATION OF TOMBS

This extract is a single clause in an extensive report made by a commission for examining into the condition of cemeteries appointed by Rameses IX (about 1100). From this and other sources we learn that tomb robbery was an oft-committed crime. *Records of the Past*, xii. 107.

Sepulchres and chapels in which repose the chanters and mourners, the women and men of the country, in the west-quarter of the city. It was found that the thieves had violated them all, that they had torn their occupants away from their coffins and cases, had thrown them into the dust and had stolen all the funeral objects which had been given to them, as well as the gold and silver and the ornaments which were in their coffins.

IX. EGYPTIAN PRECEPTS

The following precepts are taken from the "oldest book in the world," written on papyrus. It was discovered in the necropolis of Thebes and first published in 1847. It is now in the National Library in Paris.

The first part, in which we find some precepts concerning manners and morals, was composed in the reign of Senoferu (third dynasty). The last part was composed by the prefect Ptah-hotep in the reign of Assa (fifth dynasty). (American) *Records of the Past*, i. 311-320.

The third and fifth dynasties lie within 2900-2540.

If thou sittest down to eat with a number, despise the dishes which thou lovest; it is but a short time to restrain thyself; and voracity is something degrading, for there is bestiality in it. As a glass of water quenches thirst, as a

On eating in company.

Moral
proverbs and
precepts;
*Ancient
World*, 19.

mouthful of vegetables strengthens the heart, as one good takes the place of another good, as a very little takes the place of much, he who is drawn away by his stomach when he is not on the watch is a worthless man. With such people the stomach is master. However, if thou sittest down to eat with a glutton, to keep up with him in eating will lead afar; and if thou drinkest with a great drinker, accept to please him. Do not reject the meats, even from a man repugnant to thee; take what he gives thee, and do not leave it; truly that is disagreeable.

Conduct to-
ward chil-
dren.

Do not harden the hearts of thy children. Instruct those who will be in thy place; but when he does not permit, none knows the events which God brings to pass. Let the chief talk to his children, after he has accomplished the human condition; they will gain honor for themselves by increasing in well doing, starting from that which he has told them.

He says to his son: Be not proud because of thy knowledge; converse with the ignorant as with the scholar; for the barriers of art are never closed, no artist ever possessing that perfection to which he should aspire. But wisdom is more difficult to find than the emerald; which is found by slaves among the rocks of pegmatite.

Treatment
of the quar-
relsome.

If thou hast to do with a disputer while he is in his heat, and if he is superior to thee in ability, lower the hands, bend the back, do not get into a passion with him. As he will not permit thee to spoil his speech, it is very wrong to interrupt him; that shows thou art not able to keep quiet when thou art contradicted. If then thou hast to do with a disputer while he is in his heat, act as one not to be moved. Thou hast the advantage over him, if only in keeping silent when his speech is bad. "Better is he who

refrains," says the audience; and thou art right in the opinion of the great. . . .

If thou art in the position of leader, to decide the condition of a large number of men, seek the best way, that thine own position may be without reproach. Justice is great, unchangeable and assured; it has not been disturbed since the time of Osiris. To put an obstacle in the way of the laws, is to open the way before violence. Will the low be exalted if the unjust does not succeed to the place of justice, he who says: "I take for myself, according to my will," but does not say, "I take by my authority." The limits of justice are unchangeable; this is a precept which each man receives from his father.

Treatment of those under your authority.

Osiris, once a ruler on earth, now the god who judges the dead.

Do not intimidate men; or God will likewise contend with thee. . . .

If thou art among persons who are sitting down to eat at the house of one greater than thyself, take what he gives thee, bowing low. Look at what is before thee, bowing profoundly. Look at what is before thee; but do not stare at it: do not look at it frequently; he is blameworthy who breaks this rule. Do not speak to him (the great man) more than he asks, for one does not know what might displease him. Speak when he invites thee to do so, and thy word will please. . . .

Conduct toward superiors.

If thou art one of those who carry messages from one great man to another, keep exactly to that he has enjoined upon thee. Beware of altering in speaking the repulsive things which one great man addresses to another. He who distorts the fidelity of his message by repeating only what is pleasing in the words of any man, great or small, is a detestable being. . . .

Conduct as a messenger.

Be active during the time of thy existence, in doing more than is commanded. Do no wrong in the time of

Beware of laziness.

activity; he is blameworthy who wastes his hour. Do not lose the daily opportunity for the increase of that which thy house possesses. Activity produces riches, and riches do not last when it (activity) slackens. . . .

Have courage to give sound advice.

Declare thy line of conduct without reserve; give thine advice in the council of thy lord; there are people who take all sides when they speak, so that, by not replying, they may not grieve the one who has made a statement. . . .

Govern your temper.

If thou desirest that thy conduct be good and kept from all evil, beware of all fits of bad temper. This is a sad malady which leads to discord, and there is no more life at all for the one who falls into it. For it brings quarrels between fathers and mothers, as between brothers and sisters; it makes the wife and the husband abhor each other, it contains all wickedness, it encloses all injuries. When a man takes justice for his rule, walks in her ways, and dwells with her, there is no room left for bad temper. . . .

Conduct toward a wife.

If thou art wise, take care of thy house; love thy wife purely. Fill her stomach; clothe her back; these are the cares to give to her body. Caress her, fulfill her desire during the time of thine existence; it is a kindness which honors its master. Be not brutal; consideration will lead her better than force; . . . this is her breath, her aim, her gaze. This establishes her in thy house; if thou repellst her, it is an abyss. Open thine arms to her for her arms; call her, show her thy love. . . .

Conduct of one in command.

If thou art powerful, pay respect to knowledge and calm speech. Command only to direct; to be absolute is to enter into evil. Let not thy heart exalt itself, let it not be cast down. Make thine orders heard, and make thy replies understood; but speak without heat; let thy face be stern. As for the vivacity of a warm heart, temper it; the gentle man overcomes obstacles. The man who hurries

all day long has not one good moment; but he who amuses himself all day long does not retain his house. Aim at the right point as do the pilots; while one sits down, another works, and applies himself to obeying the command.

Do not disturb a great man; do not distract the attention of the busy man. His care is to accomplish his task, and he strips his body for love of the work. Love for the work they do brings men near to God. Therefore compose thy face, even in the midst of trouble, so that peace may be with thee. . . . These are the people who succeed where they apply themselves. . . .

Attitude toward the great or busy man.

If thou art great after having been low, if thou art rich after having been straitened, when thou art at the head of the city, learn not to take advantage of thy having risen to the first rank; do not harden thy heart on account of thine elevation; thou hast only become the steward of the goods belonging to God. Do not put behind thee the neighbor who is thine equal; be to him as a companion. . . .

The duty of one who has risen to power.

Let thy face be bright during all the time of thy life. When one of those who entered carrying his products comes out of the place of toll with a drawn face, that shows that his stomach is empty, and that the authorities are an abhorrence to him. May that never happen to thee. . . .

The duty of cheerfulness.

Distinguish the overseer, who directs, from the laborer; for manual labor is degrading, and inaction is honorable. . . .

When a son receives the word of his father, there is no error in all his plans. So instruct thy son that he shall be a teachable man whose wisdom shall be pleasant to the great. Let him direct his mouth according to that which has been told him; in the teachableness of a son is seen his wisdom. His conduct is perfect, while error carries away him who will not be taught; to-morrow knowl-

A son should be teachable.

edge shall uphold him, while the ignorant shall be crushed.

The un-
teachable
man.

As for the man without experience, who hearkens not, he does nothing at all. He seeks knowledge in ignorance, profit in injury; he commits all sorts of errors, seizing always whatever is the opposite of praiseworthy. Thus he lives only on the perishable. His food is the evil word that charms him. He lives every day on what the great know to be perishable; fleeing what is best for him, because of the many errors which are before him each day. . . .

Obey a fa-
ther or mas-
ter.

Do that which thy master tells thee. Doubly good is the precept of our father, from whose flesh we come forth. May what he tells us be in our hearts; do for him more than he has said and satisfy him wholly. Surely a good son is one of the gifts of God, a son doing better than he has been told. For his master he does what is right, throwing his whole heart into the ways.

Value of
these pre-
cepts.

By following these lessons I secure that thy body shall be in health, that the king shall be satisfied with thee in all things, and that thou shalt gain years of life without failures.

They have gained for me upon earth one hundred and ten years of life, with the gift of the favor of the king, among the first of those whose works have made them noble, doing the pleasure of the king in an honored place.

X. EPITAPH OF BEKA

This inscription is on a pillar in the Museum of Turin. Beka, the deceased, was the great steward of the Public Granary. Its value lies chiefly in the enumeration of virtues attributed to the deceased, representing him as a perfect model of conduct in private and official life. *Records of the Past*, x. 7-10.

A royal gift of offerings to the person of the Steward of the public granary, Beka, the justified. He says, I

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