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PANBESA'S LETTER.

An Account of an Egyptian City Thirty Centuries Ago.

Probably the oldest letter in the world is the letter of Panbesa, written fifteen centuries before Christ to his friend, Amenemapt, a scribe.

The manuscript is of perishable papyrus, and it is amazing that it should have survived for more than thirty centuries and still be legible.

It is preserved in the collection of the British museum. It has been several times translated. It presents an interesting picture of life in Egypt in the time of Rameses II. It is more in the nature of a literary production, a poem composed in celebration of the visit of Pharaoh to the city of Panbesa, than an ordinary letter of today.

Panbesa "greeted his lord, the scribe Amenemapt, to whom he life, health and strength," and then goes on to describe the verdant fields, the thrashing floors, the vineyards, the groves of olives, the orchards of figs, the great daily markets, with their fish and waterfowl and swarms of purchasers.

The citizens had their "sweet wine of Kheini, pomegranate wine and wine from the vineyards," and to these they added "beer of Kati."

There was music in plenty furnished by the singers of the school of Memphis.

On the whole, Panbesa seems to have been a pleasant place to live in. "The lesser folk are there equal with the great folk," and Panbesa writes that its maidens were "in holiday attire every day," with locks "redolent of perfumed oil."

THE CITY OF CANALS.

Venice and the Many Islands Upon Which It is Built.

Venice is one of the most singular and famous cities in Europe and is built upon a cluster of islands in the lagoon. This lagoon is banked off from the Adriatic by a long, narrow sand bank which is divided into a number of islands, six in number. Inside of this sand bank and between it and the mainland is the lagoon, a sheet of shallow water. In parts of this marshy, sea covered plain islets have become consolidated into ground, firm enough to be cultivated.

And in the midst of a crowded cluster of such islands, amounting to between seventy and eighty in number, the city of Venice is built. The chief of these islands is called Isolda de Rialto, or Island of the Deep Stream. The islands, in many places mere shoals, afford no adequate foundation for buildings, and the city for the most part is built upon an artificial foundation of piles and stones.

The Grand canal divides Venice into two equal parts and is the main thoroughfare for traffic and pleasure. The city is subdivided by some one hundred and forty-six small canals or water streets, and the gondola is used for the carriage. Access can also be had to various parts of the city by land, there being over three hundred bridges across canals. The Rialto, the most famous bridge, spans the Grand canal. There are also narrow lanes in among the houses.

The Overruling of a Judge.

A judge once awoke in the night to find his room in the possession of two armed burglars. Covered by the pistol of one of the marauders, the judge watched the proceedings with his usual judicial calm. One of the depredators found a watch. "Don't take that," the judge said; "it has little value and is a keepsake." "The motion is overruled," replied the burglar. "I appeal," rejoined the judge. The two burglars consulted, and the spokesman then replied: "The appeal is allowed. The case coming on before a full tribunal of the supreme court, that body is of the unanimous opinion that the decree of the lower court should be sustained, and it is accordingly so ordered." Pocketing the watch, court adjourned.

Logic and Metaphysics.

Joaquin Miller was once conversing with a learned professor who was visiting California. To the poet's query, "What do you do?" the professor answered that he held the chair of metaphysics and logic at a New England university. Whereupon the venerable Miller, with an encouraging smile, reassuringly patted the professor on the shoulder. "Logic and metaphysics, eh? Well, I suppose we must have people to look after those things, even if they don't exist."

Torture.

"The Carthaginian mercenaries," he said, "incensed their prisoners in a cement that as it hardened contracted. You can't imagine how uncomfortable this was."

"Oh, yes, I can," she answered. "I once had on a tight bathing suit when it began to shrink." — Los Angeles Times.

Plenty of Old Ones.

Mr. Chippis (looking up from the paper)—The doctors have discovered another new disease. Mrs. Chippis—Well, I wish they'd stop looking for new diseases long enough to find a cure for my old rheumatism. — London Telegraph.

Both Disappointed.

He—I suppose, then, we may as well break the engagement and say we have both been disappointed in love. She—There seems to be no other conclusion. You thought I had money, and I certainly thought you had.—Judge.

He Told Her.

She—I wish I knew how I could make you extremely happy, dear Karl. He—Well, write to your father and ask him to double your dowry.—Megendorfer Blatter.

Cause For Hurry.

"I understand they were married in haste."

"Yes; they told the minister to hurry because there was only a little gasoline left in their automobile, and they were twenty miles from home."—New York Town Topics.

Plenty of Them.

Joakley—You're right. Most people worry over what they haven't got, but I know certain people who worry because of what they have. Coakley—That so? What have they? Joakley—Nothing.—Philadelphia Press.

Evolution.

"Father," said little Rollo, "what is evolution?" "Evolution, my son, is a sort of apology which man has invented for displaying so many of the traits of the lower animals."—Washington Star.

Good Plan.

"How can I prevent the flies getting into my sugar basin?" wrote a "Constant Reader" to a journal. "Fill the sugar basin with salt," was the laconic reply.—Pele Mele.

Lovers' purses are tied with cobwebs.—Italian Proverb.

The Builders.

"The Egyptians were the builders," said a contractor enviously. "No wonder their monuments will endure forever. Labor was nothing to them. As you would spend a cent on a newspaper so would an Egyptian king put 10,000 men to work upon a temple. Labor, you see, cost nothing. A striking example of the Egyptian prodigality of labor lies in this fact: No less than 2,000 men were employed for three years in carrying a single stone, a stone of unexampled size, from Elephantine to Sals."

Unlucky at Bridge.

"Do you believe in this thirteen superstition?" asked Tete de Veau. "I do," replied L'Oignon. "I could never understand why I was so unlucky at bridge till I discovered that I was always dealt a hand of just thirteen."—Exchange.

A Little Mixed.

A Hindoo barrister thus excused an absent client whom sickness had prevented from coming to court: "The man has fallen unwell, your honor, and he has sent a man here to say that he is lying and cannot come."

A Theory.

Tommie—Pa, how do storms git out? Tompkins—Get out? What are you driving at—out of what? Tommie—W'y, the weather bureau, o' course. I didn't know but mebbe the man left a drawer open.

A Failure.

"When she gave you the piece of cake, did you say 'Thank you?'" "Yes, ma, but it didn't do no good." "Didn't do any good?" "No; she didn't give me another piece."

Three things too much and three too little are pernicious to man—to speak much and know little, to spend much and have little, to presume much and be worth little.—Cervantes.

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