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were considered far inferior to those imported from Germany, which possessed a far higher degree of plasticity and greater tensile strength, despite the fact that often their chemical composition was similar to that of the American clays. This problem aroused the inventor's curiosity.

Discovering that the best foreign clays generally came from a secondary source, to which they had been carried by a stream of water, he thought of the possibility that small amounts of organic matter suspended in the water might have profoundly altered the workability of the clay, even though so slight as to be extremely difficult to detect by chemical analysis. Testing this possibility by taking types of clay that were difficult to work and adding to them small amounts of various types of organic matter, he finally discovered a tremendous improvement when gallotannic acid was used. In this article in the *Transactions of the American Ceramic Society*, Vol. 6, p. 31 (1904), he added the following remarks:

"I made an effort to find in the history of clay-working some record of the addition of vegetable or organic matter to clay. Only one instance could I find, that of the Egyptians as recorded in Exodus 5. The accepted theory of using the straw fiber as a binding agent for the clay never had appealed to me, and it now seemed likely those ancient people were familiar with the effect I had discovered. I procured some oat straw, boiled it in water, decanted the resultant reddish-brown liquid and mixed it with clay. The result was like that produced with gallotannic acid, and equal to the best I had obtained. This explained why the straw was used, and why the children of Israel were successful in substituting stubble for straw, a course that would hardly be possible were the fiber of the straw depended upon as a bond for the clay, but quite feasible where the extract of the plant was used."

As a result of this Acheson concluded that "Egyptianized Clay" would be a fitting name for straw-treated earths.

The great increase in plasticity and workability which the straw produced in the clay makes it easy to see why

taking away the straw from the Israelites was, indeed, a means of greatly increasing the difficulty of their work. It also shows how even stubble could be useful to them. Moreover, it indicates clearly that the absence of visible marks of straw in an ancient brick is no proof that the brick was made without its help. An incident in the Bible which was difficult to understand becomes crystal clear on the reasonable assumption that the ancient Egyptians were already familiar with a practical scientific procedure which was completely forgotten until its rediscovery within the present century. Such an instance should also lead to caution about assuming that there is a mistake in the sacred narrative, simply because we may not yet be in a position to understand it fully.

The matter of special corroboration is a large subject. Numerous illustrations of it might be cited, for many remarkable correspondences between Biblical statements and archaeological discoveries have been found. Yet it is vital that its nature be properly understood. As we have already noticed, the Bible is not a book of history, in the sense that its purpose is to describe political movements and social conditions in the past. It is rather a presentation of religious ideas.

The Christian finds in the Old Testament the description of God's relation to the universe, and of His preparation for the coming of His Son to be the Saviour of the world. In the New Testament he finds the account of the One foretold in the Old Testament, and the presentation of His relation to those who believe on Him.

Thus ancient history is only partially presented in the Bible. The Old Testament does not attempt to set forth a full history of Israel, but rather a description of God's relations with the people which He chose as His instrument for giving His revelation and for bringing His Son into the world. Sometimes events of great importance in the political