

on the monuments in two parts, with a space in the middle of it, so that it is plain that the serpent is dead and cannot hurt anyone.

After Alexander's conquest (332 B.C.), which began the Hellenistic age in Egypt, many features of Greek culture were incorporated into Egyptian life. Eventually, people began to use a modified Greek alphabet to represent the Egyptian language as it was then spoken. This writing is called Coptic. Its signs have no relation to those used in ancient Egypt, but the language itself is a direct descendant of the language used on the earliest monuments. Since Greek writing, unlike the earlier systems, expresses vowels, the Coptic has been an invaluable tool for the study of the Egyptian language, and has thrown much light on its vocalization.

### 3. The Egyptian Language.

After Champollion opened the door to the reading of the hieroglyphics, many scholars studied the material and eventually grammars were written for the language as used at various periods. Such German scholars as Erman and Sethe carried this investigation to a very high degree of accuracy. While the absence of vowels inevitably results in a certain amount of indefiniteness, ancient Egyptian historical inscriptions can now be translated without much question as to their meaning. Other writings, such as the Pyramid Texts and the Book of the Dead, occasionally contain passages which would be difficult to render accurately regardless of the language used. With help from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the University of Berlin has issued a very extensive dictionary of ancient Egyptian.

### 4. Egyptian Literature.

From the viewpoint of the student of history, Egyptian literature is at