

TOWN PLANNING.

CHAPTER I.

THE TOWNS OF THE PAST.

THE primitive dwelling was a circular hut, and if a few were grouped together in villages they were not crowded, as space all round was a necessity of their construction and use. When a considerable population had to be housed, in close proximity, more compact planning was compulsory, rectangular dwellings were introduced, and as these could be placed side by side, a town with definite streets was developed. The earliest known example, of which remains exist, is that of Kahun in Egypt [*Fig. 1*]. It dates from about 3000 B.C., is rectangular in planning, and was built to house the officials and workmen engaged in erecting the pyramid of Illahun. The houses were mostly small, of one story with flat roofs; the streets narrow but paved, and sloping to a central gutter. Larger towns may have been more developed, but the great lesson Egypt has to teach is axial planning, so finely expressed in its massive temples, with sphinx-bordered

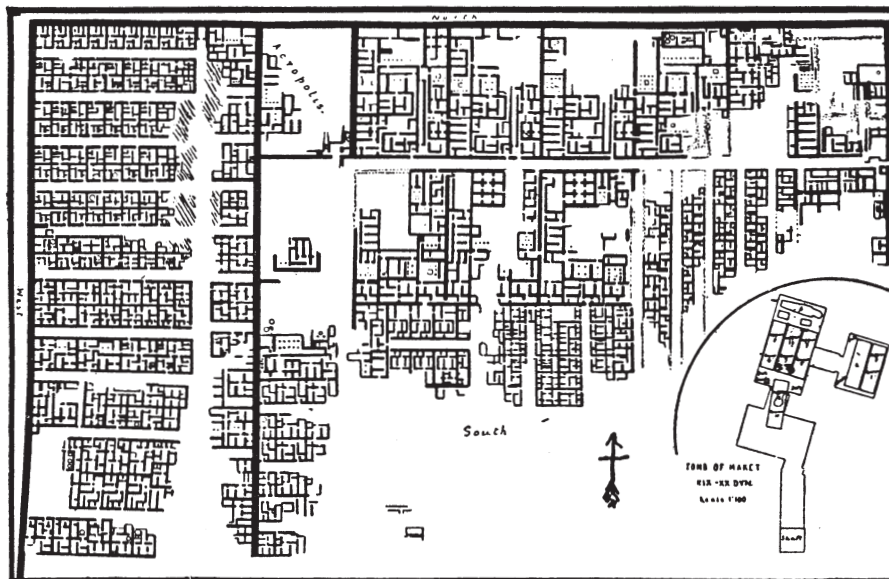


FIGURE 1.
Kahun, Egypt.

processional avenues leading up to the portals; and by the series of internal courts and pillared halls of gradually diminishing size and lighting, leading up to the holy of holies, the chamber of the god. In this way the architectural effect was greatly enhanced, and the awe of the people deepened [*Fig. 2*].

In Babylonia and Assyria exploration confirms the statement of ancient historians, such as Herodotus, that the cities were of considerable size, square in plan, surrounded by high walls, and intersected by streets at right angles. Much open land, in the form of parks and gardens, appears to have been included within the walled area; but, on the other hand, dwellings are described as being two or three stories in height. The chief remains are the city walls, with well defended gates; and the foundations of huge palaces, which were used not only as the residence of the ruler, but as administrative offices and barracks. Built of brick and vaulted, the chambers were comparatively narrow, so that there was not much scope for axial planning. The religion of the people being largely