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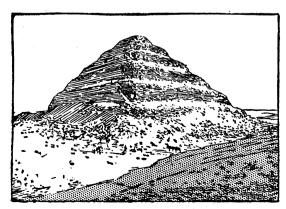
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THE FIRST PYRAMID.—The building of this pyramid marks the beginning of architectural development in ancient Egypt, and King Tjeser (Tcheser, Zeser, Zaser) who built it, became the pioneer who showed the way to the great Pyramid Builders of the next dynasty, about 100 years later. It is recorded of him as a marvel that "he built a house of hewn stones." Royal tombs had hitherto been built of sun-dried bricks, the only instances of the previous use of stone being one granit floor and a limestone chamber. In construction the "stepped pyramid" is transitional from the earlier mastaba (or low-walled tombs) to the true pyramid. It is a huge rectangular structure built in steps to a height of about 195 feet, measuring at the



base 381 feet, from north to south and 398 feet from east to west; it is inaccurately oriented, the northern face deviating 4° 21′ E. of true north. The blocks are of limestone quarried in the neighbourhood; they are small and badly cut, but the facings are carefully dressed. The courses of masonry are concave, in order, in some measure, to counteract the downward pressure and to resist earthquake shocks. The pyramid itself is solid, the chambers and galleries being cut in the rock beneath. Two of the chambers and a doorway are lined with glazed tiles, once attributed to a later date on account of the difficulty of believing such work possible at so early a period, but now considered to be of the date of construction, since glazed tiles are proved to have been made by the Egyptians even before the first dynasty. The work of contemporary Mesopotamians shows nothing that can be compared with that of the Egyptians, who were the first great architects and builders in the world.

Date: 3rd Dynasty ending (some authorities), c. 4650 B.C. (other ,,). c. 3200 B.G.

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