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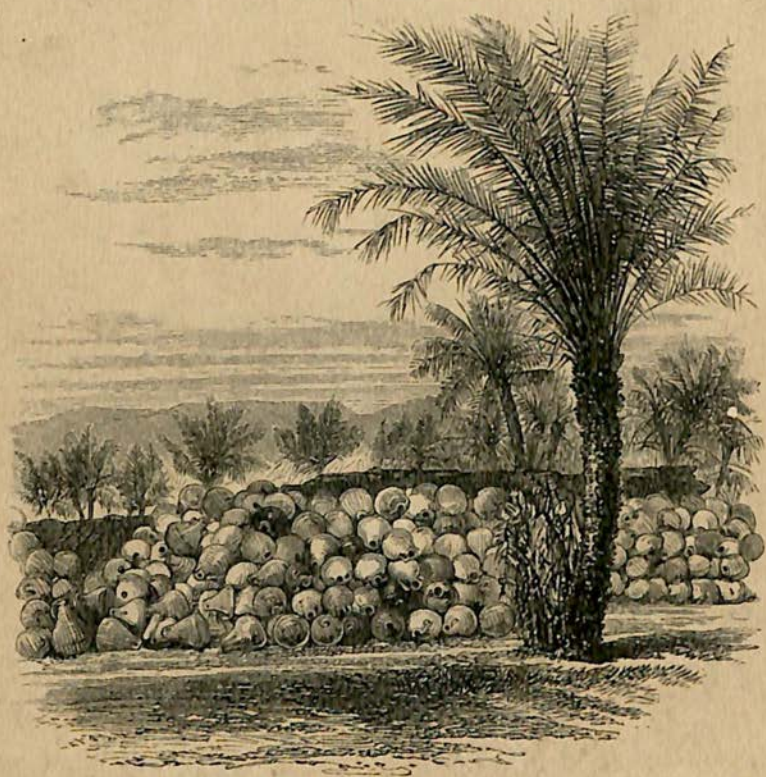
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THE NILE

VOL. I.

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BALLAS JARS AT KENEH (p. 198)

THE ATTRACTIONS
OF
THE NILE AND ITS BANKS

BY REV. ALFRED CHARLES SMITH, M.A.

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME I.

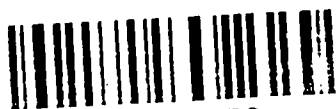
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THE 'SOUTHERN CROSS' AT ANCHOR

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LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1868



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THE NILE AND ITS BANKS

A JOURNAL OF

TRAVELS IN EGYPT AND NUBIA

SHOWING

THEIR ATTRACTIONS TO THE ARCHÆOLOGIST
THE NATURALIST AND GENERAL TOURIST

By REV. ALFRED CHARLES SMITH, M.A.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD: RECTOR OF YATESBURY, WILTS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME I

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1868



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TO

MY DEAR FATHER

THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC OF TRAVELLERS

AND THE COMPANION OF ALL MY MORE EXTENDED TOURS

THIS RECORD OF OUR

LAST, MOST INTERESTING, AND MOST DISTANT WANDERINGS

IS

Affectionately Inscribed

PREFACE.

IT IS NOT IMPROBABLE that some captious critic may feel it to be his peculiar call to attack these unpretending little volumes, and I shall doubtless be told that we have books of travel in Eastern lands *usque ad nauseam*—in number more than sufficient, in size voluminous, and of matter now stale and hackneyed.

Perhaps it may be so. Still I, at any rate, notwithstanding a tolerably extensive perusal of travels in Egypt before leaving home (as is my wont in preparing for any foreign tour), utterly failed to form any adequate conception of the absorbing interest of that marvellous country; or the charms of its boat-life, or the varied scenes which the old old river and its banks daily offered

to view. So that, although there have been doubtless many and admirable works heretofore published on the Nile tour, I venture to think there may be room for yet another, and that so fertile a theme may suggest a new phase at any rate to the subject; while I hope to lay before my readers such a plain sketch of the fascinating delights of the Egyptian tour, as shall incite some to go and judge for themselves, and then I know they will feel grateful for my advice, the said captious critic notwithstanding.

At all events, I shall feel easier in my mind when I have lifted up my voice as loudly as I can, and proclaimed to my fellow countrymen the wondrous attractions of the Nile tour, which I do not think are sufficiently known to, or at all events sufficiently credited by, our English tourists.

My object, however, is not to describe in an inferior way what has already been fully and admirably detailed in the Handbook; but touching very lightly on the objects seen, to relate the impressions they made on me, together with such incidents as befell us on our journey. I propose too,

to speak of the daily life of the traveller in Egypt, and to treat of small matters of detail beneath the notice of many who write books of greater pretension, and who describe the more prominent features of interest; because I hold that, while the latter are of course of paramount importance, the former have their value too; and at any rate, go far to enable the intending tourist the better to realise the scenes he is about to witness, and the life he is about to lead on the Nile.

Moreover, as a loyal member of that most select and learned Society, the British Ornithologists Union, I feel in duty bound to call general attention to the magnificent field for observation of birds, and collecting specimens which the Nile and its banks offer. It is true that very careful, accurate, and full lists of Egyptian birds have been given in the Society's periodical, the well-known 'Ibis.' Still it was impossible, in the limited space which that scientific publication could afford, to give much more than the bare list of birds, which, though admirable indeed for their proposed ends, and of extreme value to the practised ornitho-

logist, can scarcely be said to supply the want of more popular information required by the ordinary sportsman and tourist. And that there is such a want of information on the names and habits of the birds met with on the Nile, was apparent throughout my trip, inasmuch as I believe I speak within the mark when I say that, of Englishmen on the Nile, nine out of ten spend a considerable portion of their time in shooting, whilst few are contented to leave such specimens of the rarer birds as fall to their gun without an attempt to preserve the skin ; and many a time was I summoned on board when we chanced to fall in with other tourists, and entreated to examine and name the skins which had been procured. I have therefore added to the pages of this volume some remarks on the habits and appearance of such species of birds, as came under my own observation, many of which are not generally within the reach of the ornithologist who confines his researches to his own country, or even to such parts of the Continent of Europe, as are usually visited by the traveller.

With regard to the Antiquities of Egypt, I know that the less I say the better, because they have been so fully and so admirably handled by Sir Gardner Wilkinson, both in his large book on Egyptian Antiquities, and also in Murray's 'Hand-book for Egypt,' of which he is the learned author, as well as by many other explorers, English, French, German, and Italian. Bearing this in mind, I hope I shall not be considered too prolix on this absorbing theme, but at the same time, as it is scarcely possible for one who has dabbled in antiquarian pursuits from his youth, and is now Secretary to an Archæological Society, to pass by the pyramids and temples of Egypt without a word, I hope I may be excused if I do prose a little on this most engaging subject, and record my introduction to the monarchs of antiquarian remains, compared to which all hitherto explored ruins become dwarfed into pigmy relics, and even our British earthworks and famous stone temples of Wiltshire seem of modern date.

One remark I would make by way of preface, with reference to ecclesiastical matters. It had been

my hope to have studied the Coptic Church, and mastered the Coptic tenets, discipline, and position; but this was in a great measure frustrated by the insurrection which so furiously raged, as I shall detail in these pages, and which altogether prevented me from carrying out my intention in Upper and Middle Egypt. Enough, however, was seen to convince me that the Copts are a much-maligned, ill-used race, and though ground down by poverty, and though on occasion they cut but a sorry figure as ecclesiastics, yet I believe them to be, as a body, faithful and honest, however oppressed, down-trodden, and persecuted; and I would bespeak the sympathies of Englishmen for this ancient branch of the Catholic Church, and entreat them to mistrust the many tales against them current on all sides, which have often been proved to be most malicious slanders.

Though I deprecate the custom of continually interlarding books of travel with incomprehensible words of some unknown tongue, there are necessarily a very few such words in every language, for which we have no equivalent in English, or which,

coming uppermost every day, should be interpreted at once, and then may be considered naturalised, and used at discretion. These are all comprehended in the following short list:—

Dahabeah, the Nile passenger boat.

Sandal, the small boat in tow behind.

Hawager, the Christian foreigner, or the Frank gentleman, equivalent to 'Sir.'

Taib, good; *taib kateer*, very good; generally used for 'yes!' after the manner of the French 'bien,' or 'très-bien, Monsieur:' thus, when you give an order to an Arab, his answer invariably is 'taib,' or 'taib kateer, ya Hawager,' 'very well, O sir.'

backsheesh it is superfluous to explain.

As there are no circulating libraries yet established on the Nile, and yet books are indispensable to every traveller there, more especially when he must perforce spend all his evenings, and a considerable part of his days, on board, it is of the utmost importance that he be provided with an ample supply of literature; and as most Egyptian travellers are speedily engrossed in Egyptian life, past and present, and travellers on the Nile are usually very enthusiastic in regard to that glorious river, the volumes selected for the library of the dahabeah

will be principally confined to those which treat of Egyptology as well as of those more distant countries whence the Nile takes its rise ; in all of which, and the speculations and discussions thereupon, the travelling Hawager will soon be deeply absorbed. As a useful hint therefore to the intending tourist, I would suggest some of the books which are most valuable on the Nile-boat ; first making the general observation, that whereas in ordinary European travel ‘ the less baggage, the less vexation ; the more baggage, the more bother,’ it is not so in Egypt. Heavy boxes of books may be despatched from Southampton to Alexandria at very small cost, and once on board the dahabeah are invaluable, as every Nile traveller will allow, though, as a matter of fact, all stint themselves unnecessarily in this most reasonable and desirable item.

The following are among those of general interest :—

Wilkinson’s ‘ Ancient Egyptians.’ 3 vols.

Rawlinson’s ‘ Herodotus.’ Vol. ii.

Bunsen’s ‘ Egypt’s Place in Universal History.’ 4 vols.

Henrich’s ‘ Ancient Egypt.’ 2 vols.

- Sharpe's 'History of Egypt.' 2 vols.
 Belzoni's 'Egypt and Nubia.'
 Lepsius' 'Discoveries in Egypt.'
 Stanley's 'Eastern Church.'
 „ 'Sinai and Palestine.'
 „ 'Sermons in the East.'
 Petherick's 'Egypt.'
 Speke's 'Travels in Africa.'
 Baker's 'Albert Nyanza.' 2 vols.
 „ 'Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia.'
 Burton's 'Nile Basin.'
 „ 'Central Africa.' 2 vols.
 „ 'Pilgrimage to Medinah.' 2 vols.
 Livingstone's Works.
 Lane's 'Modern Egyptians.'
 „ 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments.'
 Light's 'Travels in Egypt and Nubia.'
 St. Hilaire's 'Egypt and Suez Canal.'
 Palgrave's 'Central and Eastern Arabia.' 2 vols.
 Hill's 'Travels in Egypt and Syria.'
 Curzon's 'Monasteries in the Levant.'
 Aiton's 'Lands of the Messiah.'
 Bartlett's 'Nile-boat.'
 Prime's 'Boat Life in Egypt and Nubia.'
 Bayard Taylor's 'Landscapes from Egypt.'
 Hoskin's 'Winter in Upper and Lower Egypt.'
 Fairholt's 'Up the Nile and Home again.'
 Beaufort's 'Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines.'
 2 vols.
 Macleod's 'Eastward.'
 Kinglake's 'Eöthen.'
 Warburton's 'Crescent and the Cross.'
 St. John's 'Village Life in Egypt.' 2 vols.

Bush's 'Pilgrimage to Eastern Shrines.'
St. John's 'Egypt and Nubia.'
Lady Duff Gordon's 'Letters from Egypt.'

From these, and those mentioned in the Introduction to the Handbook, a selection may be made; but in addition to these I would recommend the practical ornithologist on no account to omit to forward his copies of

Bree's 'Birds of Europe.' 4 vols.
Yarrell's 'British Birds.' 3 vols.
'The Ibis' (to the present date). 9 vols.

and the latter, if he carefully studies it, will give him full employment during his tour.

With these few prefatory remarks I launch my work on the troubled waters of the world, and consign it to the indulgence of the public.

A. C. S.

YATESBURY RECTORY.

* * I regret to be obliged to add that since these volumes were written, my good friend Mr. Chambers, whose name appears so frequently in connection with our natural history pursuits, has died: and we have to deplore the loss as well of a very promising ornithologist, as of a most estimable and excellent young man.

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ATTRactions
OF
THE NILE AND ITS BANKS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—THE START AND THE VOYAGE.

THE MAGNIFICENT CLIMATE of Upper Egypt has at length been acknowledged by the Faculty in England, and the healthful qualities of the warm dry light air which prevails there throughout the winter months are now attracting to the Nile many who dare not remain through the winter and early spring to encounter the fogs and damp and chilling east-winds which prevail in our more northern latitudes.

Thus, as autumn drew on, I found myself forbidden by the doctors to remain in England during the cold weather, and advised to winter on the Nile; and so, in obedience to medical advice, I began, as soon as I saw the swallows preparing

for their departure, to make arrangements for following in their wake. I am too old a traveller to start upon any tour without due preparation; as I maintain that the more you know of the country you are about to visit, and the better acquainted you are with its peculiarities, the more ready you are to appreciate and enjoy—the less liable to unexpected annoyances. But if this be true with regard to all foreign travel, it is tenfold the case when the tourist contemplates so extended a trip as that to Egypt. There is so much to be learnt of that strange old country, and the relics she contains of bygone times are of such vast proportions as well as of so excessive an antiquity, that the mind requires some previous training to be in proper cue for grasping the facts presented to it; and it is absolutely necessary to study in some degree dates and dimensions with regard to these remains of far-distant ages, if we would not, when brought face to face with them, go away puzzled and confused at the array of figures necessary for defining their size and their age. Then again, in making preparation for a prolonged boat-voyage, the prudent man will provide many things absolutely essential to his amusement, occupation, and even comfort—and all this requires forethought

and time; so that I would recommend the intending Egyptian tourist to begin his arrangements early, and I now proceed to advise how they should be carried out.

The two first requisites for all tours are, undoubtedly, time and money: but as I am not going to show how stocks of these most necessary and most valuable commodities are to be obtained, I must take it for granted that both these essentials are in hand, and in sufficient quantity. The next point will be to make up your party: and as the enjoyment of all travelling depends very much on the companions you chance to have, still more is this the case when for months you are perforce tied to your fellow-travellers in a small boat. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that those only agree to make such a tour in company, whose tastes and, above all, whose tempers harmonise, and whose general opinions accord; otherwise there cannot fail to be discord too often found to be an inmate of the Dahabeah.

This grand preliminary arranged, the next step is to purchase Murray's Handbook for Egypt, and then carefully to study that invaluable volume; and this again I recommend as an invariable rule in preparing for any foreign tour: for until you

have mastered the practical details collected therein, and ascertained the chief points of interest which you desire to visit, it will be unwise to lay down your route, or make any decided plan for your future guidance.

But when the Handbook has been carefully studied, and perhaps other books of Egyptian travel perused, it will be time for the intending *compagnons de voyage* to discuss and arrange their route, with its more essential details; and then agree what books and other requirements for common use each shall provide; so that there may not be unnecessary duplicates, or a superabundance of any one article to the exclusion of another. The Handbook will furnish a list of all that is requisite or even desirable, so that I need not repeat it here, but will return to my own narrative.

Our party formed a Triad, the sacred number in Egypt, and consisted of three English clergymen, all Oxonians, and all eager to exhaust the wonders of the land of Ham—viz., my father (Rev. Alfred Smith), my fellow-collegian (Rev. Leveson Russell Hamilton), and myself. Our main object undoubtedly was health, for which we were contented to leave for a time wives and families;

homes and parishes : but we were fully bent on making the most of our tour, and relieving the tedium of temporary expatriation, by feasting our eyes and minds with novel scenes, and amusing ourselves as best we could. And so we meant to combine pleasure with sanitary ends ; and while we hurried away to spend the cold months of winter in the genial South, and in the glorious climate of Egypt, under the brightest of skies and the warmest of suns, leaving behind us for awhile the fog, and damp, and cold, and biting east-wind which prevail to such an unpleasant extent in all the northern and western countries of Europe—we were prepared to explore, with the most eager anticipations of enjoyment, every point of interest which came within our reach.

Then we began to provide for our several peculiar pursuits : and as in all great expeditions, whether to the polar regions or the tropics, there are invariably attached, as essential to success, an artist and a naturalist, so for this cruise on the Nile, we had both these offices supplied ; and while my father (whom I will hereafter, for brevity's sake, describe as F.) packed his camera and a goodly stock of prepared glasses, and the hundred items which go to make up a photo-

grapher's kit, I prepared my guns and accoutrements, in anticipation of a grand campaign against the rarer species of the feathered tribe—not forgetting some formidable boxes of arsenical soap, and such instruments for preparing and preserving skins, as are well known to every ornithologist. To these we added a reasonable selection of books, wherewith to while away the weary hours, should any such unhappily exist; and sundry stores of provisions for the voyage and the desert, such as Fortnum and Mason can so well supply: and then all our heavy baggage was consigned to the agent of the P. and O. Company at Southampton, and sent on its way round by Gibraltar to Alexandria, some weeks before we made a start for the same port by the shorter route of Marseilles.

Our heavy impedimenta started, we had leisure to sketch a general outline of our whole tour, to which we kept pretty closely. Thus we devoted one month to going out to Egypt, and seeing Cairo, while the boat was being manned and provisioned; when our trip up the river was, for sanitary reasons, to be a lengthened one, extending over the three first months of the year, and was to embrace the passage of the Cataracts; and we were to penetrate within the tropics as far south as Wady

Halfeh, or the Second Cataract, and return again to our starting-point at Cairo. Another month was to be devoted to the Syrian tour and the Holy Land; and the sixth month would take us home, by the time when our period of transportation, so rigidly enforced by the doctors, should expire.

Accordingly, on the Tuesday morning of the last week in November, we met at Charing Cross Station, and, without more loss of time than was necessary, made our way *viâ* Boulogne and Paris to Marseilles. A heavy sea, however, and a head-wind combined to detain us for nearly four hours in the Channel; and when halfway between Amiens and Paris, our engine broke down, in consequence of which we sat motionless in the train, with philosophic patience, for three hours on one of the darkest nights in November, awaiting the arrival of another engine, for which a message had been despatched to Amiens. With these slight drawbacks to expedition, and our consequent detention in Paris for some hours next day, awaiting the delivery of our luggage, we arrived without further mishap at Marseilles. There, in due time, we found ample room in the magnificent P. and O. Company's steamer 'Delta,' and were soon on our course to the East direct.

I am tolerably familiar with steamers of various nations—Norwegian and Swedish, Russian and Danish, French and Spanish, Italian and Austrian—and, above all, our own excellent vessels, which ply between our coasts and the various ports on the western side of Europe. And though I do not share the extreme prejudices of some of my countrymen in favour of our superior accommodation and skill at sea, to the depreciation of everything foreign; yet I suppose every Englishman prefers, when he has the choice, to sail under the British flag: so we embarked in this leviathan vessel with as much satisfaction as confidence, and prepared for a week's sojourn within her capacious limits. Moreover, this was my first voyage in a ship of such gigantic dimensions, and so, to a landsman like myself, there was a great deal to see and to learn that was novel and interesting in the extreme: for it is not to be supposed that a first-class steamer of such power and proportions would demean herself to the arrangements, regulations, and customs which are adopted by the small-fry and comparative cockleshells of her species. On the contrary, she rather assumes the character of one of Her Majesty's ships of war: and there is a regularity, order, and smartness in

her handling which go far (in the eyes of all but naval men) to bear out her pretensions.

It may well be believed then, that, except during a violent storm, which we encountered off the Straits of Bonifacio, when the demon of seasickness sent me in misery to my berth, I was never weary of examining the details of this little floating town, and inspecting all the admirable arrangements. Our ship was one of the fastest and best of the Company's steamers, of immense length (342 feet), and with very powerful engines (450 horse-power). Her crew—with officers, engineers, cooks, and servants (including 32 stewards)—amounted to 107 men; and as we had 130 passengers on board, we numbered, in all, somewhat more than the inhabitants of my own little parish in Wiltshire. Moreover, we had shops on either side of the main-deck, with printed announcements over the doors, marking where the post-office lay—where the butcher, baker, and other necessary trades held their court. We had live-stock on board as well, on which the butcher operated daily; cows for milk, sheep in goodly numbers, and of turkeys, fowls, geese, and ducks quite a large store. Then the officers, dressed in naval uniform; the regular watches of four hours—half

the men on duty on deck, half off duty below ; the shorter dog-watches, the loud ring of the bell which marked every half-hour from noon till eight bells at 4, and from 4 to 8, and from 8 to 12 : all these trifles were of indescribable interest to us landsmen, and we would sit on the quarter-deck for hours, watching all the details of that little busy world—content to gaze, and listen, and dream, as only those do who have a long voyage before them, and by whom these nautical customs, so often read of, are witnessed for the first time. But on board a P. and O. steamer the most absent dreamer is recalled to himself at very short intervals. There are so many substantial meals to be got through in the day, and the steward's bell rings so punctually and so pertinaciously—moreover, the keen sea-breeze is so appetising, that no one who is well shirks this his only real employment during the livelong day : so that, however incredible it may seem, we were always ready for breakfast at 9, lunch at 12, dinner at 4, tea at 7, grog at 9 ; and then at 11 every lamp is put out, and no one ventures to dispute the positive orders of our captain, who on no pretence will allow a light in any cabin after the prescribed hour.

We were destined to experience some rough

weather before we reached Malta, but gradually, as we neared that island, the wind sank, and it became very perceptibly warmer; and as we passed the little island of Gozo—by some affirmed to be no other than Ogygia, where Ulysses was so long detained by Calypso—and as we threw up our rocket and fired our gun, to announce our approach on the dark evening of December 7th, the rain, which had been threatening, came down in torrents; and it was only between heavy showers that we afterwards walked about the streets of Valetta, catching what glimpse we could of the outside of the grand Church of St. John, and of the remarkable architecture of the houses, with their latticed windows and semi-Oriental style. But though the rain and the darkness conspired to hide from our eyes the buildings which derive their chief interest from the Christian knights who dwelt here; yet it was something to know that we were standing on the hospitable island which received the shipwrecked St. Paul, and was witness to many miracles which the great Champion of Christianity wrought.

It was refreshing, too, to stretch our legs on *terra firma*; and so we persevered, notwithstanding the pelting rain, in wandering through the town, and exploring the steep narrow streets of which it

seems to be composed. But, combined with the quaint half-Italian, half-Oriental architecture, it was strange to see English signboards, English money, British soldiers, and to hear the English language, in this thoroughly foreign town; and just the same feeling of surprise which I had formerly experienced, on entering Gibraltar, after a journey through Spain, came over me now. It was such a jumble of at home and abroad, that we felt disposed to rub our eyes to see whether we were awake; and yet it was satisfactory, too, to feel that here, so far away, we were on British soil—a little piece of England out here in the midst of the Mediterranean.

By no means, however, was it an English welcome which we received from those inhospitable skies; for as we wandered through those narrow streets, at midnight, to the harbour, in order to get back to the ship before the gates of the town were closed for the night, a perfect deluge of the warmest rain drenched us to the skin, as, pouring from the roofs through long narrow gurgoyles, it positively flooded the alleys below; and it was by wading through rivulets of warm rain, that we at length descended interminable stairs to the harbour of Valetta.

Next morning at daybreak we were still at anchor in Malta Harbour, though we ought to have been on our way long since ; but the coaling of the ship was sadly hindered, for the Maltese, like lazy fellows as they are, refused to work in the rain. However, by 8 o'clock we were off, and now for three days we were altogether out of sight of land, and during these days we had almost tropical weather—the air so hot and oppressive ; the rain so heavy, so sudden, and so warm ; while between the frequent showers the sun shone out with scorching power, driving all the passengers under the awnings. But the nights were lovely, with a glorious moon, and the stars of wondrous brilliancy : Venus like a little moon ; Jupiter of grand proportions ; Orion the most conspicuous constellation of all, though here he seems in some way inverted, and as it were on his back. By noon on Sunday we began to see the African coast ; and soon after, while looking out for the successor to the notorious Pharos, the father of lighthouses all over the world, Pompey's Pillar was announced as discernible through a glass, overtopping the city of Alexandria. The captain had obstinately persisted in declining to allow us to have service in the saloon, alleging the noise of

the winch, in hauling up the baggage from the hold, the hurry of preparing for shore, the occupation of the stewards, &c. We had, in the early part of the day, successively tried to dissuade him from this peremptory order, but he was decided, and we had to submit. Still, it was a most uncalled-for act of tyranny on his part, as not only the large body of passengers desired it, and there was ample opportunity in the earlier part of the day; but the printed regulations of the P. and O. Company expressly urge it, and require the captains of their vessels to read the service of the Church on Sunday, when there is no clergyman on board. However, our captain, who was a smart seaman, and excellent in other respects, was determined in his opposition to our wishes here; and we had to give way, for is not the captain of a ship, next to the captain of Eton, the most autocratic being in the world?

As it turned out, we landed at Alexandria just in time to attend the evening service at the handsome English church in the Frank quarter; and curiously enough, when we returned to Alexandria six months later, in an Austrian steamer, from a tour in the Holy Land, we reached the same port on a Sunday, at the same hour: so that on each

occasion we were enabled to avail ourselves of a privilege so very rarely to be enjoyed in the East, of joining an English congregation in a consecrated English church.

But I am anticipating matters, for we are as yet in the ship, drawing near to the harbour of Alexandria.

During our seven-days' voyage we had many a feathered visitor. While off the southern coast of Sicily, about twenty miles from land, and after a stormy night, a willow warbler came on board, and must, I think, have become in consequence an involuntary exile; for I saw it about the ship for several days, and then it suddenly disappeared. Early in the morning of December 9, two woodcocks alighted on the rigging, where they rested for some hours, and then took flight and away, no land being in sight at the time. Captain Lockie assured me, we were then seventy miles from the nearest land on the coast of Africa. On another day a hawk was reported to have rested on the mast; but I was below at the time, and did not see it.

When midway between Malta and Alexandria, some turtle were seen floating in the sea, near the bow of the vessel, by the sailor on watch at the

time: it appears that these valuable reptiles are common in these seas, and are purchased for a small sum at Alexandria, and then taken by the stewards of vessels to England, where they fetch a large price. But of that for which I kept a constant look-out, and which I most wished to see—viz., the flying-fish of these waters—I was not so fortunate as to catch a single glimpse: and though I sat for hours at the extreme bows of our ship, whence I could see deep into the clear blue waters, and though the sailors on duty assured me they were constantly to be seen, and in considerable numbers, not a specimen appeared to my anxious gaze. And yet the weather, one would suppose, was all that flying-fish could desire for their aërial excursions, for during the last few days of our voyage, we enjoyed the most balmy air, the most brilliant sun, and the brightest sky: still, misguided and perverse as they were, they remained sulkily under water, and I spitefully wished some good hungry bonito had come amongst them, to rouse them from their ill-timed torpor, and make them seek safety in flight.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST VIEW OF THE EAST—ALEXANDRIA.

THE first moment of beholding the East is notoriously a wonderful epoch in the life of any man, and the sensations then produced have been often compared to those with which our untravelled countrymen for the first time behold Calais or Boulogne. But I would submit that the simile falls far short of its antitype: for European dress and manners to a certain extent do resemble each other, whereas the East is altogether a new world, and everything strikes the stranger as unaccountably peculiar, and even marvellous: and no sooner did our Egyptian pilot, whom we had shipped at Malta, and who had, in his Oriental costume, been an object of no small attraction and admiration to us ever since—no sooner, I say, did that skilful but sedate and imperturbable Mussulman guide us safely through the intricate mazes of the channel into the heart of the harbour

of Alexandria, but the novelty of the scene rivetted our attention, and kept most of us in open-mouthed astonishment and admiration. Vessels of all sizes and shapes thronged the harbour, but we had no eyes for ships—their crews occupied all our attention. Arabs, Egyptians, Nubians, Syrians, Turks, Greeks, with swarthy skins and flowing robes—and all apparently screaming, at the top of their voices, the most unintelligible jargon—formed such a scene of indescribable novelty, confusion, and noise, as positively paralysed all our attempts to prepare for disembarking, and held us fixed in a long stare of amazement and wonder. I defy any European mind, however well regulated, to be prepared for this first view of Eastern life. Let a man be never so well read in Oriental travels; have drank never so deeply of the stores of information as to its habits and customs; have realised as far as possible all the imagery of the Arabian Nights, and other glowing pictures of Eastern scenes—still the reality will so far surpass all his previous conceptions, as literally to take away his breath, when he comes into personal contact with Eastern life for the first time. Now, the harbour of Alexandria is perhaps better calculated than any other spot in the world for this introduction to Oriental scenes; and as the European traveller

steams into it, and threads the long lanes of vessels which always congregate therein, a new world seems to open to his astonished eyes and ears, and he stands amazed at the sight. At least that was our experience: there were such multitudes of ships, of every build and of every rig, the elegant lateen-sail of the Levant of course prevailing; sailors in every imaginable costume, the universal fez (or *tarboosh*) and the full trousers of the East of course predominating; and such a hubbub and very Babel of tongues, screeched at the highest pitch of which the human voice is capable, Arabic of course in the ascendant: these sounds and sights absorbed our whole attention, and kept us thoroughly occupied till we were fairly landed on the quay. This, however, was not effected without the most violent altercation, noise, and confusion on the part of porters, dragomans, and donkey-boys—everyone seizing some article of luggage, and even clutching at the helpless traveller, till he fights his way through. In this struggle for existence, we were ably abetted by a well-intentioned but officious and violent Englishman, who, seeing us mobbed as we landed from the boat, ran to the rescue of the strangers, struck out with his fists right and left indiscriminately, and severely handled one of

the most persevering—who, swarthy and sunburnt though he was, immediately succumbed and, in true Arabian style, burst into tears. This was a perfectly gratuitous act of violence, which, though intended for our benefit, annoyed us not a little, and gave us an early insight into the tyranny almost universally exercised in this country by the strong upon the weak.

But if the harbour was to our eyes full of novelties, what shall I say of the city itself? At first we fairly gave ourselves up to staring about us in the streets, so strange and unwonted, so fairylike, so Arabian-Nightlike, to our Occidental eyes, were the scenes always enacting there. Here came a file of tall camels laden with merchandise, stalking with deliberate solemn step through the bazaars; there rode a grand-looking native gentleman, in all the pride of capacious turban and flowing robes; yonder passed some ladies on donkeys, enveloped in black silk *habara* and the more remarkable white muslin veil, which universal out-of-door costume of Egyptian ladies only suffered two dark eyes to gleam from behind the hideous shroud. And if the carriages we saw had a smack of Europe, they were driven and attended by men in Oriental dress, and—even stranger still—

were preceded, even at their best pace, by a bare-legged running Arab, who shouted to the passengers to get out of the way—the shrill cries of this active *avant-coureur* resounding on every side; and fortunate is the stranger who is not run over in the narrow streets by some cantering donkey, or knocked down by some tall camel laden with heavy boxes, as he stands staring at the unwonted scene—his whole attention rivetted on the everyday life of an Oriental city.

Then there were the palm-trees, and other strange botanical productions in the gardens; there were the water-carriers, and above all the bazaars—fertile source of never-failing interest to the freshly-landed European. But with all its novel sights and sounds—which, as his first specimen of an Eastern city, must leave an indelible impression on the stranger's mind—Alexandria is but semi-Oriental at least: and no more resembles Cairo, than Calais (which, as I said, similarly astonishes John Bull at his first trip abroad) is to be compared to Paris. Moreover, with the exception of Pompey's Pillar (which never had anything to do with Pompey), and Cleopatra's Needle—which was likewise in no way connected with Cleopatra, but which are very interesting monuments, nevertheless—

there are no great sights to detain the traveller from the capital, to which he is sure to hurry away by an early train.

For the present, however, astonishment reigned supreme; and even when we reached our rooms in the great Hôtel de l'Europe, in the Frank quarter, we could not refrain from passing all our time in the balcony, wholly absorbed in the scenes below.

Then, when the first novelty of Eastern life wore away, and we could turn our thoughts to other than street-sights, we began to realise the fact that here we were in renowned Alexandria, once the foremost city in the world, founded by the Great Alexander, enriched by the mighty Ptolemies; the city where beautiful Cleopatra enslaved the fickle Marc Antony, and where both met their tragic deaths; the city where Euclid presided over the mathematical school, where Aristotle studied and taught—once the university of Egypt, when the schools of astronomy and philosophy had been transferred from fading Heliopolis to its halls—once too the great seat of Christian learning, to which the eyes of Christendom turned for advice, and where the world-renowned Catechetical School flourished. Here stood those vast libraries, founded by Ptolemy Soter and his suc-

cessors, whose destruction, first the violence of Cæsar, and subsequently the bigotry of the Caliph Omar, effected. Here laboured those learned translators, the result of whose toil was the priceless Septuagint: here lived the lion-hearted Clement, the indomitable Athanasius, the learned Origen: above all, here the Evangelist St. Mark presided over the Church of Africa.

But we must not linger over such reveries, or indulge our fancies, which would fain rest for awhile in these old-world memories: we must recall our wandering thoughts, and come back to the business in hand, for we have a long trip before us, and preparations must be made. We are well aware that it is of the last importance to us to secure, in the first place, a good dragoman, and then a good *dahabeah*, which should be at once sufficiently capacious to be a comfortable home to us during our journey, and at the same time of light draught, a good sailer, and not too deep in the water for the passage of the Cataracts.

With this view, scarcely had we landed in Alexandria, when we began the important and very puzzling business of hiring, first a dragoman, and then a *dahabeah* for the cruise. Never in my life have I entered upon a more perplexing and harass-

ing task : and as this business devolved principally upon me, for one whole day I sat in my room at the hotel, listening to seven or eight dragomans, who one after another presented themselves—producing their respective books of testimonials, insisting on their own capabilities and general personal merits, and no less vehemently abusing and calumniating every other member of their own fraternity. I am afraid that, before the close of the day, the impression they left upon my mind was that they were but a sorry set of rogues ; and I know that my heart misgave me lest I should make a bad choice, and rue it bitterly for three months. However, the selection must be made : though, heartily alive as we were to the fact that much of the comfort of our whole journey would depend upon our choice, we hesitated between the rival claims of several aspirants to the honour of conducting us on our tour. And then again, before any conclusion could be reached, we had to bargain with these most exorbitant but very plausible gentry. This was indeed fighting them with their own weapons, at which style of warfare all Orientals are practised adepts, while Europeans are but sad bunglers. Moreover, the conversation was carried on sometimes in broken English, sometimes

in French, sometimes in Italian; so that our difficulties were not a little increased, and our confusion heightened. However, even that day of worry came to an end at last; and at its close we had not only hired a dragoman, but a *dahabeah* as well, which we had ridden out on donkeys to the Mahmoudieh Canal to inspect, and which we found to be a serviceable, somewhat rough, and by no means showy boat, but which we thought would answer our purpose well.

The next point—and a very important one—was to make the contract, taking care to specify all necessary particulars, and to enter into all the minutiae of an agreement; for this once satisfactorily done, and nothing omitted, all money transactions were over for three months, and we were to be taken in and done for by the dragoman in every sense of the word. There are two methods of agreement in vogue on the Nile—the one by time, the other by trip. In both cases the dragoman provides everything—boat, sailors, provisions, furniture, linen, horses and donkeys on shore, guides, guards—even *backshish*, or presents to the hangers-on. Both systems have their advantages, and both their drawbacks. Thus, if you hire by time, your dragoman is tempted, by self-

interest, to prolong your tour to the utmost possible extent, and you are continually liable to vexatious and unnecessary delays; while, on the other hand, if you hire by trip, though you arrange for a specified number of days for stopping and sightseeing, you are exposed to be continually hurried on board, on the least intimation of a favourable breeze. It is difficult to say which of these two arrangements is the most desirable, or perhaps I should say the least undesirable, for both are bad. We adopted the first plan, which, on the whole, I am inclined to think is the best, and took our boat by time, contracting to extend our journey to the Second Cataract and back, and to pay a fixed sum per day, which was to cover every expense; so that (as the dragoman is wont to express it) the 'Hawager never has to put his hand in his pocket for anything.' It is well indeed that he has not; for when we did want to purchase trifling curiosities in Upper Egypt or Nubia—a spear or a club, or a nose-ring, or an ostrich egg—and were obliged to get small-change in consequence, the trifling sum of fifty per cent. was what we had to pay, in the first place, for the accommodation of small-change; so that a sovereign done into small money procured just ten

shillings' worth of copper or silver change. This, however, is a digression. In the contract, which it fell to my lot to draw up, it was necessary, in order to avoid any future altercation, to enter into every particular with regard to the navigation of the boat, the daily work of the crew, and the passage of the Cataracts; to specify what we desired in the commissariat department, to enumerate the articles of furniture required, and any special arrangements we wished to make. We had been cautioned how essential it was to our after-comfort to furnish ourselves with a carefully-prepared contract at first, and we did not grudge the trouble; though it occupied another day to prepare this document, and to sign it before the English Consul.* That done, and 120*l.* paid in advance—for provisioning the boat, supplying all necessary stores, and covering the first month's pay of the crew—we were free to finish our inspection of Alexandria, and go off by the morrow's train to Cairo, to amuse ourselves amongst the wonders of that most interesting city during

* A copy of this contract, together with sundry notes of practical information for travellers in Egypt, which I forwarded to Mr. Murray, will be found in the last edition of the Handbook (1867), under the initials A. C. S. I believe the contract there given will be found to include every particular required.

the fortnight, which must elapse ere our gallant bark, now yeleft the 'Southern Cross,' could be manned and provisioned, and towed up the Nile to the port of Cairo—Boulak. So we sallied forth on donkeys beyond the gates of the town, to view Pompey's Pillar; and we skirted the Muslim graveyard, which extends over a considerable tract outside the walls. Everything which met our eyes was an object of wonder—every individual attracted our attention: a funeral procession advancing through the cemetery; a portly Turk on his gaily-caparisoned horse; a file of camels loaded with stores or timber; a lady, muffled to the eyes in black silk, perched astride on her donkey; street-boys in the scantiest clothing, but with red *tarboosh* on their shaven crowns; an encampment of Bedouin Arabs near the suburbs of the town—their long, low, black tents, their horses and camels, suggestive of the desert and nomad life. These and a hundred other sights, with which we were soon so familiar, but which at first absorbed all our attention, employed us fully till we reached the single column which is universally known as Pompey's Pillar, though in reality it should be styled the Column of Diocletian.

It is really a magnificent pillar, no less than one hundred feet in height, and, standing on an eminence, is a conspicuous object from the sea; but that which gave it tenfold interest in our eyes, beyond any intrinsic value it might possess as a work of art, was the probability that it once stood in the centre of the famous Serapion, and belonged to the great library of world-wide renown. And so we gazed at it with increased reverence, befitting the sole surviving relic of a temple unsurpassed in its day by any other building in the world, and the only memorial left to us of that astonishing collection of manuscripts, which the fanaticism of the Caliph Omar doomed to destruction, and which were ignominiously consumed in heating the baths of the luxurious city; so that the invaluable treasures of the intellect of sages, the lifelong labours of philosophers, and all the product of the wisdom and learning of antiquity, were sacrificed to promote the bodily comfort, for an hour, of some degenerate citizen of the captured capital.

The only remaining lion of Alexandria was the Obelisk, called the Needle of Cleopatra. I say the Obelisk, though there are in reality two of these monuments; for one only is erect, and its fellow

is not only prostrate, but buried beneath a mass of rubbish; and I doubt not is now hopelessly covered in by the foundations of a house, for which preparations were being made at the time of our visit. We were so far benefitted by the labours of the workmen, that we had a better view of the prostrate Obelisk than has fallen to the lot of recent travellers, inasmuch as, in excavating the ground at this spot, the labourers had uncovered nearly the entire length of the recumbent granite; and as they were just about to fill in the earth around, I suppose we were the last tourists who have looked in upon the open grave of this renowned relic. Moreover, it is the property of the English, for, with utter disregard for the greatest treasures, which his kingdom possessed, Mohammed Ali presented this Obelisk to Great Britain; though I am bound to add it is the most dilapidated, weather-worn, and ill-conditioned of all its brethren on the banks of the Nile. For this, perhaps, the sea-air, impregnated with salt, may be in some measure responsible; but it also bears marks of rough treatment at the hands of man. At all events, it does not present a fair sample of the skill which Egyptian sculptors so eminently displayed; and I, for one, am glad that it remains in

its native land, and is not transported to the ungenial companionship of the buildings which adorn our northern cities. But, mutilated or perfect, the Obelisks, as seen in Egypt, are of infinite interest; and the two now at Alexandria, as the first specimens we had met with, were a source of unbounded admiration. Carved in the reign of Thothmes III., embellished by the great Rameses, and brought hither from the city of Heliopolis, these mighty columns of granite tell of times when Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, and not improbably looked down upon the youthful Joseph, as he led his bride from the priestly house of Potipherah at On; and so we gazed on them with the veneration and respect due to their years, their experience, and the vicissitudes they have undergone.

CHAPTER III.

JOURNEY TO CAIRO—ITS STREETS.

SLEEP can hardly, I suppose, be expected by the newly-arrived traveller from the West: his head is in such a whirl, with the strange sights and sounds which have greeted him at every turn in this wondrous East—his mind reverts so constantly to the many unwonted things which have presented themselves to his notice—that he finds it difficult to compose himself to slumber. And when he does at last, from sheer fatigue, drop off into a doze, be sure his first dreams will be of those two most Oriental objects, the camels and the palm-trees. He will see again in his visions groves of those tall stately trees, loaded with fruit, so picturesque and so peculiar; or long strings of patient camels, with heads in the air, deliberately following one another through the crowded bazaars. Probably these have been the

sights which have struck him most, and they will assuredly recur again in his dreams, but not for long. Soon a furious barking just below his window proclaims a fierce battle amongst half-a-dozen of the big ugly lurchers, which he has remarked by day asleep in every corner. They may be very useful as scavengers to the city, and they may be clever in knowing their own peculiar quarter, beyond whose limits they have no right to pass; but these admirable qualities will scarcely occur to the suddenly-awakened and fatigued traveller as, hour after hour, and even oftener, through the livelong night, his sleep is rudely disturbed by their everlasting quarrels and loud outcries, as they sweep round the street in full cry after some hapless intruder into their peculiar domain. Nor is the noise occasioned by the violent barking of these packs of ferocious dogs, of a wolfish breed, the only drawback to tranquil slumber; for it is positively equalled if not outdone by the cats, which seem in a perpetual state of chronic warfare on the roofs, and whose number as well as noise is perfectly appalling; and which, from their greater vicinity to the would-be sleeper's ear, make their presence known with thrilling effect. Then there are mos-

quitoes at Alexandria as savage as those of Spain, and as venomous as those of Lapland, which I take to be the highest degree of virulence to which that insect can attain; and though you will of course protect yourself with the usual mosquito curtains, and equally as a matter of course take your candle inside, and destroy every individual in sight—and the curtains generally contain a considerable number—yet there are always one or two villains which escape notice, and these take ample vengeance for their murdered brethren before morning, in which they were well aided and supported by various marauders on the human frame in the shape of bugs and fleas innumerable. Wherefore, I repeat that sleep is not to be had on easy terms by the European just landed at Alexandria.

And now, with the aid of an interpreter, without whom at our elbow we are altogether helpless and mute, we have reached the dingy wooden huts which do duty for the railway station. But we are to make our way to Cairo unprotected, and as best we may, for we have left our dragoon to push forward his preparations for the voyage; and when we have with some difficulty secured our tickets, and deposited our baggage in

the dirtiest of dens, we find ourselves engulfed in an inextricable maze of confusion with regard to the change for good English gold, which we know is always appreciated from its unadulterated purity, the last two words but little known in the East. Such a medley assortment of small coins was tendered in change as I am sure would puzzle any *changeur de monnaie* on the Boulevard des Italiens: for it comprised not only all the ordinary European silver coinage, from Russia to Spain, both inclusive, but a fair sprinkling of Turkish and Egyptian coins as well. However, accepting in perfect faith what was tendered doubtless with the customary roguery, which pervades all classes from the Pasha to the fellah, and pocketing at the same time the cash and the imposition, we were soon seated in one of the most rickety of railway carriages, innocent of paint, grimed with dirt, and with broken glass in the windows, and in all respects but one like a thoroughly worn-out dilapidated first class on one of our European lines. The point of exception is a double roof, with which the compartments of every class are provided, for counteracting the intense heat which sometimes prevails, and which in a carriage of ordinary make would be wholly

insupportable. This second roof is raised on iron pillars considerably above the lower one, and admits of a free circulation of air, which the rapid passage of the train keeps in constant motion, to the great relief of the traveller.

And now we were on our way to Cairo, and very little did the condition of the train occupy our thoughts, for as we puffed out into the country there were scenes enough before us to absorb our whole attention. There were villages on either hand—very numerous and very strange—overshadowed by groves of tall palms, literally mud hovels with domed roofs, with an aperture in the centre, without windows, and often without doors, most wretched dwellings indeed. Here and there stood out the white oven-shaped dome of the tomb of some Muslim Saint or Sheik; and, stranger than all, were the pigeon houses, some like a conglomeration of gigantic tapering sugar-loaves, banded together in harmonious concord; others partaking of the nature of houses of cards such as children delight to pile up, with walls inclining inwards, composed of innumerable earthen jars, stacked one above another, and firmly cemented with mortar, while projecting boughs served as perches, and every earthen pot

became a nest and a nursery for the young, and all built above the huts of the fellaheen, in comparison with which the dwellings of the pigeons certainly bear away the palm. Then there were the inhabitants, squalid, brown, but intensely picturesque in their Eastern dress, moving over the fields in flowing robes and turbans, or seated cross-legged on the ground with that indescribable appearance of ease and comfort which none but an Oriental can ever hope to attain; while the women moved with graceful mien along the paths, clad in long loose blue garments, their faces hidden behind their veils, and their ankles and wrists loaded with brass ornaments of the rudest form.

First we skirted the Lake Mareotis, which for ages served as a reservoir and supplied the town of Alexandria with water; but whose dykes the English during the late war found it necessary to cut away, and the sea has consequently come in and destroyed its usefulness. Then we passed the Mahmoudieh Canal, which brings the Nile from Atfeh, and follows in great part the old Canopic branch of the river; and which was made in a twelvemonth by forced labour, and at an immense sacrifice of human life, by the enlightened Mo-

hammed Ali, some fifty years ago. At length we came to the most ancient of rivers, two arms of which, the Rosetta and Damietta branches, we crossed before Cairo was reached. Yellow, muddy, and apparently sluggish, it does not prepossess one at first sight, as you gaze at it from the train, but this is all forgotten in the associations which belong to its name: and thoughts of Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, Moses and Aaron, crowd into the mind. The whole story of the Israelites in bondage opens out to view. Then Homer and Proteus, Helen and Paris, Ulysses and Menelaus, rise up before us, and we seem transported back in thought from three to four thousand years at once. Then again, who can behold the Nile for the first time, and, as he looks at that broad current, fail to speculate on the source whence those waters have flowed: and then the narratives of our Nile explorers, Pethe-
rick and Burton, Speke and Grant, Baker and his intrepid lady, come quickly to the fore, and one thinks of the Victoria Nyanza, and the Albert Nyanza, those mysterious lakes, which, like the mirage of the desert, or the waters which surrounded Tantalus, seem to fade away into space, as the persevering explorer follows where native report leads on.

It is not to be wondered at that the first view of the mighty river generally disappoints the enthusiastic traveller, whose veneration and curiosity are alike wound up to an excessive pitch. He forgets that he is crossing but a single arm of the great stream, which divides into two principal channels immediately below Cairo, and he marvels how small and narrow the father of rivers appears : and he is inclined to lament the muddiness of its waters, forgetting that such is its chief glory, as the main cause of the fertility it brings. But when he views the undivided river at Old Cairo or Boulac, still more when he comes to sail on its broad stream, and to drink of its sweet water, and becomes familiar with its many attractions and manifold claims on his regard, his enthusiasm will return with tenfold force, and he will cease to wonder how the ancient inhabitants of the land worshipped their prolific river as a god ; and he will heartily subscribe to the Arabic proverb, that ‘ he who has once drank the water of the Nile, will ever long to drink it again.’

But, independently of the first view of the great river of Egypt, and the associations connected with it, and the many memories to which it gave rise ; independently, too, of the many interesting scenes

which we saw for the first time as we travelled on, it was also my introduction to the birds of Egypt; and, in this aspect alone, I shall always regard that railway journey as the greatest ornithological treat I ever had in my life. I was not altogether a perfect novice in observing the birds of other countries, having had some little experience during former tours in France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Norway, Spain, and the coast of Tangier; yet I was quite amazed at the profusion of birds which presented themselves before my astonished eyes on that memorable occasion. I had been told by more than one friend of Egyptian experience, when in England I was making preparations for a collecting campaign, that with the exception of hoopoes, pigeons, and clouds of water fowl to be seen on the sandbanks, but never to be approached, I should find no variety to reward my exertions; and though I knew from the lists in the pages of the 'Ibis,' hereafter to be specified, that such was by no means the case, but only the opinion of careless travellers, who generally have one eye closed to the objects of nature around them, yet I certainly was not prepared for the abundance as well as the great variety which this first day's journey brought before my eyes. Immediately

after leaving Alexandria, as we skirted the shores of the Lake Mareotis, water fowl of many species literally swarmed: *grallatores*, as well as *natatores*, in incredible numbers, well waited on by *raptores*. I shall allude to all these birds again in an after page of this volume; suffice it to say here that vultures of three species, kites of three species, hawks, kestrels, buzzards and harriers were to be seen far and near during our entire passage through the Delta. Here there were dogs on one side, vultures on another, tearing at the carcase of a dead camel, while hooded crows were always at hand to take their share. There were herons and spoonbills in abundance, and flocks of the russet-backed heron fearlessly attending the ploughman, just as rooks are wont to do here; though the Egyptian teams were certainly as strange to our eyes as were the birds which followed them, to wit, a pair of camels, or a pair of cows, or a camel yoked with a cow, or even a tall gaunt camel with a diminutive donkey, an oddly matched pair indeed. Then there were sandpipers and little ringed plovers running on the shallows, flocks of geese and ducks roused from the adjoining marshes by the noise of the advancing train, and, for the first twenty miles or so, gulls and terns of various sorts, which

gradually, as we retired from the sea, disappeared. Here, too, I first made acquaintance with the black-and-white kingfisher, many of which I saw during this memorable journey; while the spur-winged plover sat with humped back on every bank, or flew away, screaming its wild note, as we invaded its haunts.

Many another bird too there was, which then I could not recognise, but with whose form I was destined to become familiar at a later date; but I think I have enumerated enough to show that here was a grand sample before me of the birds of Egypt, enough to turn the head of any eager ornithologist burning to open a campaign amongst them; and you may be sure that my eyes were never moved from the window during that eventful five hours' journey, nor could they cease to regale themselves on the feast of birds before them, until, on a sudden, the three great pyramids of Ghizeh loomed in the distance, and directed my attention from ornithology to archæology, and concentrated all my thoughts on those stupendous monuments of the remote past.

We were yet many miles from our journey's end when a friendly Egyptian, who sat opposite, and who had tried to show us all the civility in his

power, by the offer of oranges, water, and sherbet which were sold at the stations, and cigarettes, which he had been assiduously twisting up for my special behoof, suddenly called my attention to the three pyramids, which reared their heads above the flat alluvial plain in the far distance. Not a word could we exchange with our companion; but it needed no words to tell us that those three triangles were the famous pyramids of which we had read in Herodotus, and heard from our childhood, and from whose summits forty centuries were now looking down on us, as before on Napoleon's army; and now we had fresh matter for meditation, as we thought of their wondrous history, and, as we gradually drew nearer, they seemed to grow larger and larger, until, by the time we reached Cairo, they stood out in all their grandeur, very mountains of hewn stone.

But the railway station at Cairo is of all places the one to recall the thoughts wandering in the midst of distant ages to things present and substantial. Such a din, such confusion, such a crowd, such struggling, such vehement altercation, entreaty, and abuse, as the various porters and drivers vie with one another in attempting to secure the luckless traveller and his goods; and

well for him when he gets clear of that unsavoury, parti-coloured mob, and finds himself and his baggage safely housed within the well-known walls of the Englishman's home in the East, Shepherd's Hotel.

Not long, however, will he repose himself here, or be content to remain within the Frank quarter, for the day is not more than half spent, and is not Cairo all around him? Cairo the Victorious, confessedly the queen of Eastern cities, with its mosques and minarets, bazaars and streets, houses and lattices, people, and all the variety of Oriental dress, medley of strange cries and busy scenes which go to make up street life in the capital of Egypt! And so very soon we found ourselves seated on red-leather, high-pommelled saddles on active donkeys, each attended by his Arab boy of polyglot tongue, though about six words in each European language generally exhausted his whole vocabulary; and now while our running grooms belaboured their respective asses, and shouted to all pedestrians to get out of the way; amid cries of 'Oah, oah;' 'Shimalak ya wellad;' 'Riglak ya bint;' 'Oah, oah;' 'Get out of the way, out of the way; to the left, O boy; to the right, O girl; out of the way, out of the way,' we

careered at a rapid pace through the comparatively open space of the Usbekiah, where the Frank quarter lies, till we were pulled up at the entrance to the narrow bazaars by the dense crowd which seemed to fill the alley-like streets, and make further advance impossible. Through these bazaars, however, in some places thickly crowded with a busy population, in others more open and free, we rode for hours, and for many miles we must have threaded the narrow passages, in some places scarcely wide enough for two donkeys to pass; and yet not only donkeys wend their way through the most frequented streets, but even tall camels, laden with merchandise, heavy pieces of timber, furniture, or grain, surmounted by a swarthy driver perched on high, march demurely through the very centre, while everybody takes care to give room to the loaded camel, and for his own sake moves out of the way. Indeed the pedestrian, as we afterwards often experienced, has need to be on the alert in the crowded bazaar, and must keep a sharp look-out behind as well as before him, lest he be knocked down or otherwise maltreated, so softly and silently do the long files of camels stalk through the dusty streets, so heedless and blind to all but their

own business are the heavily laden porters who are always staggering under the most crushing burdens in the densest quarters. The donkey-rider, however, steering right down the middle of the way is in comparative safety, and though he must have an eye to the crowd before him, can find ample time to enjoy the strange most picturesque scene which opens out before his admiring gaze at every turn. Over his head are stretched the coloured awnings from house to house, shutting out the too brilliant sun; in every shop sits cross-legged the turbaned owner, apparently quite indifferent to the sale of his goods, generally smoking the long chibouque, and frequently chatting with a friend. The whole front of the shop forms the counter, and on this, or in one corner the master is ensconced, while his wares are piled on shelves behind him and on either hand: thus purchasers do not usually enter the shop, but standing in the street, bargain for the goods they want. And in that word bargaining, no trifling matter is involved: there is no rapid road to the most ordinary purchase yet provided in the East; but a long process has to be gone through, of extortionate demand on the one hand, and of corresponding depreciation of the article in

question on the other: the seller begins by asking twice or even three times the value he will ultimately take, and the buyer begins by offering about half the amount he is really disposed to give; then an abatement is made on one side, and an advance on the other, but in any considerable purchase, it is not till the opinion of neighbours has been asked, and bystanders appealed to in most pathetic strains, by both buyer and seller, to add the weight of their judgment; often not till several pipes have been smoked over the transaction, and then with the loudest shrieks of discontent and ill-usage, vehement asseverations of imposition, utter ruin and beggary as the result, that the palms of the hands are struck together with a peculiar vertical clap, in token that the bargain is concluded and the purchase made.

Strange, indeed, are these things to the European eye, and varied and beyond measure picturesque are the ever-shifting scenes of this living kaleidoscope. We seemed never to tire of riding day after day through the bazaars, and there was always something fresh to attract our attention, something unwonted to fascinate our gaze: the many-coloured gay dresses, the invariable red fez, the spotless muslin turban, the flowing robes, the

dark faces of every shade of colour, up to the coal-black Nubian; and, above all, the fair séx, enveloped from head to foot in the universal *haberah* or black silk mantle, which they don whenever they leave the house, with only the eyes visible through the black or white veil, as they ride perched astride on high red-leather saddles on their active donkeys, or waddle with swaying motion through the bazaars; for by such an ungallant term alone can I describe the slow, shuffling gait with which Cairene ladies move when on foot, an ungraceful motion occasioned, I conclude, partly by the manifest difficulty they experience in retaining their large yellow slippers on the feet, partly by the absolute necessity of holding in either hand the front edge of the *haberah*. Then again, conspicuous among the sights and sounds of the bazaar, are the *sakkas* or water-carriers, those useful purveyors of the pure element of the Nile, in which a thirsty water-drinking people delights; and as they move through the throng with the dripping goat-skin on their back, or under their arm, they jingle the brazen cups with which they are provided, and anon as a customer is found, dispense the grateful draught and pass on. These are some of the scenes at which one gazes with astonishment and

never satisfied curiosity, and to which one turns again and again with undiminished interest.

Then the strange architecture, the really handsome fountains, which abound at the corners of the bazaars for the continual refreshment of this water-loving people : the mosques, many of which have no slight pretensions to beauty—above all the minarets, the most graceful and elegant of buildings, and which catch the eye at the distant ends of the streets ; the light and airy lattice-work of the windows, which admits the air, but keeps out prying eyes from the rigidly secluded interior ; these and many a charming bit of detail, on which one continually stumbles in the more retired parts of this extensive city, made our daily rides through the streets of Cairo fascinating and amusing during the whole time of our stay. At intervals, and more especially at the quieter hours of evening and night, came the musical chant of the Muezzins from the galleries of the tall minarets, calling the faithful to prayer ; and as the solemn sound of these ærial invitations to devotion float over the city, it seems like the melodious voices of angels calling out of heaven : ‘ God is great ; God is merciful. There is no Deity but God : Mohammed is the Apostle of God. Come to prayer ; come to

prayer. Prayer is better than sleep. There is no Deity but God.'

But what continually came uppermost in the minds of us all, and I suppose of most of our fellow-countrymen in Cairo, was the strong feeling we had that we were living in the midst of the scenes so familiar to us in childhood from that favourite book, the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments,' but never realised till now. I suppose we all when young drank in our ideas of Eastern life from the entertaining pages of that invaluable work, but none of us probably imagined how graphic were those descriptions, how true to the life many of the details therein recorded. But now as we rode among the bazaars of Cairo, and watched the habits and manners of the people, it is wonderful how that old highly-prized volume, the delight of our childhood, was always recurring to our thoughts; and we almost felt inclined to wonder whether we were not in a dream, so familiar to our astonished eyes was many a scene which we had never beheld before, but which was indelibly impressed upon our memories in our childish days, when engrossed, as doubtless we all have been in turn, in the 'Thousand and One Nights.'

CHAPTER IV.

MOSQUES AND MUSLIMS.

A FORTNIGHT'S stay at Cairo enabled us to become tolerably familiar with the principal sights of that picturesque city. For as we hired a temporary dragoman to attend us during our stay, who rejoiced in the excellent name of Ali Mohammed, and under his guidance started forth every morning mounted on donkeys, which, saddled and bridled, and attended by their respective boys, always stand in a thick crowd in front of our hotel, we were soon introduced to the more prominent lions both of the capital itself and of its environs. Bearing in mind, however, the determination expressed by me at the outset, to enter into no lengthy descriptions of sights or antiquities, which are already sufficiently numerous and full, I will confine myself to very brief remarks on the objects seen, detailing rather the impressions they produced on my own mind, and those of my companions.

Of all the objects which excite the European's curiosity on his first visit to an Eastern city, I suppose the mosques fairly claim the first place: partly perhaps from the mystery with which Muslims have thought fit to envelop them; and even now there are several in Cairo from which we were rigidly excluded, 'dogs of Christians,' as they say we are: partly from the strange fascination which the religion of the false prophet has contrived to throw around many of its tenets, and the picturesque scenes which it often presents: still more from the wonderful hold it has taken of the great world of the East, and the firm grasp it has seized of the people in a body. For these and other minor reasons we were very eager to be introduced to the interior of some of the larger mosques; an anxiety heightened, probably, in no slight degree by the refusal of those in authority at Tangier (the only other Mohammedan city we had ever visited) to admit us within the sacred precincts. Accordingly, our first visit was to the celebrated mosque of Mohammed Ali at the citadel; but before we reached it, the first thing to strike the eye was the magnificent panoramic view obtained from the heights on which it is built. These heights are no other than a rocky spur of the

great Mokattam range. All around and below lies the city of Cairo, which, standing out clear and distinct in this smokeless atmosphere, and with innumerable minarets rising up on all points, first demands attention. Then, looking out beyond the city, we trace the broad Nile winding down from the south, with the barren desert at a short distance from the banks on either hand, and passing away into the north, where the Delta stretches its wide arms of vegetation on either side. And out again, beyond and at a considerable distance, stand the great pyramids of Ghizeh, and, still farther off, those of Sakkara and Dashoor. It is, indeed, an admirable spot from whence to get a general view of the city and its environs—the great Oriental capital spread out below on all sides; the magnificent monuments with which it is surrounded all in view.

And now we turn to the great mosque, which was the principal object of our visit; and certainly very imposing, as well as immense, it was. As this was a show mosque, to which Europeans are generally admitted, we were allowed to retain our boots, merely encasing them in yellow slippers, with which the attendants provided us, and, thus shod in semi-orthodox fashion, we entered the

large outer court, which, paved with marble, and surrounded by a lofty colonnade, and, with a handsome fountain in the middle, requisite for the prescribed ablutions, reminded us, only on a much larger scale, of the Court of Lions at the Alhambra in Granada. The minarets, however, which rose above us, were features wanting to the Alhambra, and very light and graceful they looked; indeed, in no style of architecture do I know anything which gives such an elegant finish to the whole as these incomparable slender towers, which appear to me so well proportioned, and built with such admirable taste. I am speaking now of minarets generally, and not of those belonging to this mosque of the citadel in particular, which have been denounced by Sir Gardner Wilkinson and others as too elongated, and out of proportion, though to my eye they seemed faultless and inexpressibly beautiful. Then the mosque itself, built of Oriental alabaster, and shining in the brilliant sun, struck us all with especial admiration, as indeed a glorious temple for the worship of the One great God, all unchristian and, therefore, all perverted and false though that worship was. Within the mosque it was strange to see the whole area entirely covered with Turkey

carpets, while huge glass chandeliers depended from the roof on all sides. We were fortunate in the time of our visit, when very few Muslims were present; so that after some demur on the part of the guardians of the mosque, speedily overcome by the irresistible offer of backsheesh, F. was permitted, not a little to our surprise, to set up his camera, first in the outer court, and afterwards even within the mosque itself. Scarcely, however, had he finished, when as the hour of prayer drew near, and worshippers began to arrive, at the entreaty of the attendants the camera was hurried away; and then we seated ourselves on the carpet, and watched for the first time Muslim devotion, with which we were not a little impressed, and with which we were afterwards quite familiar.

I need not detail what we saw at other mosques which we visited, though I would make passing mention of the most ancient of all, called the Tayloón, said to have been erected in the ninth century; and which is remarkable for its pointed arches of that early date, as well as for its numerous Cufic inscriptions, still perfectly distinct in this wonderful anti-corrosive climate. It is well worth the traveller's while to ascend the minaret, as the

view from the top well repays the labour, albeit to get to the minaret he has to pass files of the very dirtiest beggars, who are congregated in the open court before the mosque, in whose sunny corners they delight to bask, a very lazaretto of Oriental wretchedness.

On calling to mind the impressions made upon us by our visits to the mosques, while in Cairo and other towns in Egypt, as well as from our constant intercourse with Muslims of all ranks during our stay in the country, we were from the first exceedingly struck with the conviction, and subsequent observation only corroborated our first impression on this point, that the Muslims as a body are in earnest in their religious duties; and are not ashamed to be thought so. There is no *mauvaise honte* in the matter of prayer; and that extraordinary fear of ridicule, and absolute terror lest he be seen to be devout, which besets the Englishman, would be quite incomprehensible to the ordinary Musselman. On this occasion every worshipper, as he entered the mosque—taking off his slippers at the door, and advancing some way into the building, turning himself towards Mecca—was at once absorbed in the task before him; without looking to the right or left,

with no eye to anything taking place around him, or to those who were constantly coming and going on all sides of him, not even to the European strangers, at other times no little objects of attention and wonder, his heart and soul were evidently thoroughly occupied with the business on which he had come, and, though his prayers were muttered with inconceivable rapidity, and his prostrations—now with his forehead on the ground, now kneeling on his knees, now sitting on his heels—might seem to some to savour of formalism, I confess they spoke to my mind of reality and sincerity, and I came away much impressed with the manifest devotion which these Muslims showed; and I thought they read us a lesson which we in England should do well to learn, ashamed as we undoubtedly as a nation are, above all other nations on the earth, with the most reprehensible of all false shame, shame of being found on our knees in our private devotions, pouring out our hearts, as we all confess we are bound to do every day, before God. I know not how it is that the Englishman has attained this unenviable shamefacedness which common Christian manliness should dispell; but I fear it is too true that it is a national evil. It is not found in

France, or Germany, or Italy, or Spain. In primitive Norway such shyness is unknown; in the Tyrol, I have seen the goatherds and cowherds in the mountains fall on their knees on the bleak hill side when the sound of the bell floated up from the distant valley, announcing the elevation of the Host. And on the Riviera I have remarked with satisfaction how those at work at their various trades in their shop doors, and those in the streets, have knelt in prayer when the Friday afternoon bell tolled the hour of our blessed Lord's death, '*le moment de la mort du bon Dieu*,' as it was explained by a peasant, and one of the most beautiful and touching customs I ever witnessed. But I am bound in candour to own that no Christians of any church or creed with which I am acquainted equal the Muslims in their perfect indifference to the observation of others when the hour of prayer leads them to prostrate themselves before God in devotion. This is doubtless attributable in great measure to the severe denunciations in the Koràn against any who hinder others at their prayers, and also to the prevailing habit of private prayer carried on in public, with all the necessary accompaniments of out-stretched hands and prostrations, resulting perhaps in part from

that derunciation. Still, whatever the cause, and however arrived at, it is undoubtedly a very admirable custom, and I heartily wish that Christians in favoured England would learn a lesson herein, albeit that lesson be taught them by the benighted followers of a false prophet in an oppressed country.

And that we had not drawn our conclusions on this head from insufficient evidence, and that it was no exceptional case which we witnessed on our first introduction to Muslim worship, our entire after experience proved : the Arabs who composed our crew in the Nile boat might be daily seen at sunrise and sunset similarly absorbed in their devotions on deck ; the peasants on the banks of the river, the sailors in the crowded native boats which we constantly met, spread their carpet or upper garment beneath them, and worshipped in like manner ; and everything we saw of the religion of Islam from day to day only strengthened our opinion that it had indeed taken a firm hold of the people's hearts, and that they accepted it as a reality, and obeyed some of its precepts at least with unflinching fidelity and care.

At the same time, I am not prepared to deny that there is a certain amount of mechanical ceremonial formalism in these prostrations. Undoubt-

edly there is, and they must be taken only for what they are worth : still the rigid observance, even of prescribed outward forms, betokens sincerity and obedience ; while that Muslim devotions are not altogether formal, but that the ceremonies are accompanied with real devotion and earnestness of heart, I feel most thoroughly convinced ; and therefore I repeat that I cannot but admire that manly independence and that courageous singleness of heart which knows no false shame in openly professing its religion.

Then again there is something singularly attractive in the grave dignified deportment of these Muslims : their demeanour is so solemn and sedate ; they are so openly and really resigned to the will of God, content to accept every thing as from Him ; while their systematic temperance is so universal, that in many points they contrast favourably with their Christian fellow-countrymen.

This is of course the bright side only of the picture, and I need not say there is a dark side as well : for not to touch upon their unbelief in the Redeemer, without which saving faith all their good qualities are worth nothing ; the indolence, the sensualism, the selfishness, the cruelty of the Muslims stand out no less prominently than the

more amiable qualities mentioned above; while the fanaticism and credulity which are rampant amongst them have filled their minds with fear of genii and efreetts to a degree wholly inconceivable to a European. And so, while on the subject of the character of the followers of the faith of Islam, to which our visits to the mosques have naturally led me, I would remark here that after six months' daily observations of Muslim tenets and Muslim practice, I am still at a loss how to sum up my verdict of the results which it has produced, and in what words to define my opinion of its success, regarding it only as a political engine for controlling the vices and promoting the virtues of the people. That Christianity has hitherto taken no real hold of any Mohammedan population is, I fear, but too true; and that notwithstanding the diligence, the persevering efforts, and the self-denying exertions of the most earnest missionaries. While, on the other hand, that Mohammedanism has ingrained itself on the affections of the people of the East, and entwined itself about their hearts with the firmest roots, which resist all efforts at dislodgement, is no less clear to every one conversant with the question.

Now, deeply as I deplore the sad fact, and keenly

alive as I am to the miserable soul-destroying doctrines of the false prophet, and knowing as I do that there is but one name whereby we must be saved; yet (if it be not paradoxical to say so) I am not disposed to regard Mohammedanism as altogether pagan, nor to class the Muslims, as some do, with the idolaters and heathens. That they are not idolaters is easily proved, inasmuch as they abhor the representation of all kinds of living creatures, and in truth have shown themselves the most zealous of Iconoclasts: that they are not heathens may be asserted with equal confidence, inasmuch as Allah, whom they worship as the One true God, is undoubtedly the great God whom we address as 'Our Father.' Neither do they, as is popularly supposed, blaspheme the name of Christ: on the contrary, they reverence the Lord 'Issa,' as a great prophet and apostle; and though they attribute superior dignity to Mohammed, whom they more immediately recognise as the chiefest and greatest of all the prophets, they honour our Lord as equal at all events, if not superior, to the other great names which they revere, Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Therefore, though they have grievously swerved from the faith, and encrusted true Christian doctrine with false ad-

ditions, which have corroded and destroyed the pure metal beneath, yet there is much of the New as well as of the Old Testament which we all accept in common, and they join with us in many of the great tenets we hold, though, alas ! to little purpose, inasmuch as they deny the fundamental principle of all, the Atonement of our Blessed Saviour, round which, as on a pivot, all Christian doctrines turn.

Viewed, then, dispassionately, there is amongst much alloy a certain amount of pure metal in the religion of Islām ; moreover, that religion has accommodated itself in a wondrous manner to the tastes and feelings of the people of the East ; and we may frankly own that there is undoubtedly a good deal to admire in the habits and general conduct of the Muslims. Indeed, Dean Stanley goes so far as to regard Mohammedanism as ‘an eccentric heretical form of Eastern Christianity ;’ and describes the false prophet himself as one of the chief ‘heresiarchs of the Church.’ I should hardly be prepared to endorse so bold an assertion, though not disposed to be severe on their errors, and charitably inclined towards them as far as Christianity will allow. I shall take another opportunity of calling attention to their

self-denial, when I come to speak of the fast of Ramadan, which is no empty pretence, but for the most part very rigorously observed; and, again, the preparations which we witnessed for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, will give me occasion to speak of another duty held in almost equal importance with those of fasting and prayer. For the present I pass on to recount a visit which we paid on the Islamite Sabbath, Friday, to the dancing or whirling Dervishes. The performance took place within a large ring railed off in the centre of the apartment, outside of which, and in the galleries above, were numerous spectators, Europeans as well as Orientals. The sheikh of the Dervishes, a somewhat heavy-featured man of middle age, dressed in dark green robes edged with fur, and with a tall, brimless, conical hat on his head, and a companion similarly dressed, took their seats at the extreme end of the open space, and were closely followed by some twenty men and lads, some quite old and with grey beards, others mere boys of twelve or fourteen. All were dressed in flowing garments, with variously coloured skirts, and laid aside their outer robe before the violent exercise began; but the great singularity of their costume centred in their caps,

• made of brown felt, and exactly resembling flower pots, with just so much brim as those useful vessels possess, and no more. When a chapter of the Koràn had been read, and some very slow, solemn, and stately processions round the ring, and bowing to the sheikhs, had been gone through, the whirling began, to the accompaniment of a drum and two fifes; one by one, and very slowly and deliberately, each man and boy began to whirl round, keeping his heels as near together as possible, and turning on the soles of his feet, not on the toes; the arms were held straight out from the shoulders in a horizontal direction, the palm of one hand, and the back of the other, uppermost during the whole performance; the eyes were always bent down, and in many cases appeared to be nearly or quite closed. Soon the whirling of one and another became more rapid, till the whole twenty were in full swing, and then they occupied with their extended arms and revolving robes, the whole of the area allotted to them, but never in any case did they incommode one another, or even touch one another with outstretched hand or dress. Those near the centre, who occupied the most difficult post, scarcely moved from the spot on which they whirled, al-

though, if you watched narrowly, you would see that all in time made the circuit of the ring; and thus they went on whirling, whizzing, revolving to the tune of the drum and fifes, with two short intervals of about three minutes each, for a full half hour, with no apparent distress or giddiness amongst them all, though it made spectators' heads dizzy to see such rapid revolving of the human frame protracted to so long a time. At the conclusion, another dervish repeated a chapter from the Koràn, the sheikh apparently blessed them, and so brought this extraordinary exhibition to an end; which, for a religious exercise, is certainly the most peculiar fancy ever devised: at least, so I assuredly thought when I beheld it, with mingled amusement and wonder—amusement, at the really ridiculous scene, and wonder, that so grave a people as the Muslims can indulge in such unseemly vagaries. But I have since learnt from a pleasant American author, that the 'zikr,' as it is called, of the dervishes reminded him of like familiar scenes in religious assemblies in America, more than anything else which he saw in Egypt; so closely connected are the extravagances of fanatics, whether found in the East among the Muslim dervishes,

or in the far West, among the ranters of so-called Christian sects.*

It may well be imagined that amongst a people who practise such religious rites, there is a vast amount of superstition; and, accordingly, whilst dread of the ill effects of 'the Evil Eye' amounts to a universal terror, all manner of charms and amulets are resorted to in order to counteract such dire results. The most ridiculous devices are practised, the most absurd tales are implicitly believed; and one hardly knows which to admire most, the impudent boldness of the impostor, or the childish credulity of the dupe. Hence, some of the greatest scamps among the Muslims are held in high veneration as saints, the opinion of these crazy fanatics is regarded as an oracle, and it is no uncommon thing to see one of these reputed men of holiness in some of the villages on the Nile, surrounded by an admiring crowd, from which they are distinguished by the perfect nudity which they affect; whilst the *welys* or saints' tombs are conspicuous objects in almost every village.

With regard to charms against various diseases, their name is legion, and their number commen-

* *Boat Life in Egypt and Nubia*, by W. C. Prime, 1857.

surate with the maladies to which Egyptian flesh is heir; but it would scarcely become me to inveigh too bitterly against such superstition, when I am fully sensible of the enormous degree to which a similar belief prevails even now amongst the peasantry of Christian England. One of the most favourite amulets as a general specific against all evils is a slip of paper or parchment, on which one or more verses of the Koràn is inscribed; this is enclosed within a square leathern case, and thus bound round the arm or wrist; and men, women, and children, are constantly seen adorned with these valuable preservatives.

When we were novices to Oriental customs, it was at first very startling to hear at times the loud burst of wailing wherewith the women invariably announced a death. These lamentations are certainly most expressive of woe, and until we became accustomed to the lugubrious sounds, and learned that they were quite as often attributable to hired mourners as to the relatives of the deceased, they produced a profound impression of melancholy, which it was difficult to shake off and forget—so wild, so shrill, so unearthly, so despairing, were these guttural cries, or rather piercing shrieks, which from time to time rang

forth from the house of mourning, and startled the quiet of the quarter where they occurred. But, as with every other Oriental sound and sight, so with this, we were soon so familiar that it ceased to attract our notice.

Not less strange, and scarcely less shrill, were the cries of joy wherewith a wedding is accompanied; when again the women vie with one another in piercing shrieks or trills, though in a different tone, called *zaghareet*, with which they do honour to the bride. It is well that her triumph is thus proclaimed, for it is but scant admiration that an Egyptian bride can command, even on her wedding day, inasmuch as, enveloped from head to foot in the vast folds of a Cashmere shawl, and walking under a close canopy, she is hermetically veiled from public view, and must trust to her friends and the grandeur of her procession for the general admiration expected on such an occasion.

From mosques, Muslim worship, and Muslim customs, we pass on to Mohammedan tombs, which, immediately outside the gates of the city, stretch away into the desert over an immense area; they are chiefly remarkable for the ruin and desolation which they exhibit, the little up-

right pillars and plaster domes by which they are capped soon crumbling away and exposing the brickwork they were intended to conceal: these pillars are often surmounted with a turban, carved and painted, and not a few are of a brilliant green; this is said to be the distinguishing mark of the descendants of the prophet, and all who are entitled to wear the green turban, dead or alive, are held in high veneration in consequence; but if this be so, then assuredly the prophet's family must have been extraordinarily prolific, so frequently does one meet with the green turban among the crowd in the bazaars, and so often is it seen capping the tombs in the cemetery.

Here the large hungry dogs which make night hideous in Cairo with their altercations, seem to congregate by day, and may be counted by scores, basking on the warm sand, while pigeons, doves, and hoopoes swarm on the overhanging eaves, or within the perforated cupolas of some of the more pretentious monuments. While riding among the tombs in this vast necropolis, we witnessed a funeral procession pass by; the body was carried on a bier above the heads of the people, and while some scattered dates to the crowd on either hand,

an ox was led by an attendant, which was destined to be slaughtered at the grave and distributed to the poor; but this was no ordinary event, as it pertained only to the burial of the opulent.

The tombs of the Mameluke kings, and those of the family of the reigning pasha, are also considered great lions at Cairo, and to these our dragoman insisted on conducting us at an early period of our stay, and evidently fancied we should be much impressed, as he loyally pointed out those of the famous—or perhaps, in recollection of their cruelties, I should say infamous—sons of Mohammed Ali, Ibrahim, Abbas, and Toosoom. But to me they were wholly uninteresting; and beyond the fact that they were as gorgeous as paint and gilding could make them, I could see no real merit in these heavy inelegant square blocks. A pleasant idea, however, was associated with them, for here comes every Friday the whole harèm of the pasha, to scatter flowers and evergreens on the tombs, to bewail the dead, and to give alms to the poor.

Far more beautiful are the so-called tombs of the Caliphs, built on the edge of the desert, just without the eastern gates of the city; these are

really picturesque, and as they stand out apart from all other buildings, and show an endless variety of domes and minarets, they form a most pleasing group, indeed it would be difficult to find, throughout the whole East, more graceful specimens of pure Oriental architecture than these beautiful tombs present.

CHAPTER V.

EXCURSION TO THE PYRAMIDS.

AN expedition to the Pyramids is determined upon very soon after the arrival of the European traveller in Cairo. For me those artificial mountains of stone have ever had a singular fascination, and I had long been looking forward to a personal examination of them with the greatest delight; but, though I had read of faintings and sickness and unconquerable horror overcoming some travellers of unsteady head and weak nerves, when attempting the ascent and descent of those gigantic stone stairs, I had no notion what immense labour and fatigue the excursion involves. The three pyramids of Ghizeh are distant from Cairo eleven miles; not that they are in reality, as the crow flies, much more than half that distance, but on the *gisrs* or winding embankments—by which alone the plain is to be crossed, at any rate in the early

winter, when the inundation from the river is but partially subsided—a great circuit must necessarily be made. So we breakfasted early, and having picked out four strong donkeys for ourselves and our now inseparable Ali, traversed the city to Old Cairo, on the river's bank, a distance of some four miles through the streets and bazaars. Here we were to cross the Nile: and no sooner did we appear at the landing-place, than the most violent altercation began amongst the boatmen, all clamouring at the top of their voices, vociferating, screeching, pushing one another in their eagerness to secure a fare. We dismounted at the top of the bank, and left Ali to select his boat and get the donkeys on board, while we sat down, highly amused at the ridiculous scene going on below. As the donkeys came sidling down the bank, a dozen boatmen made a violent rush at each unhappy beast, with a view to lifting him bodily, each into his own particular boat, a proceeding which was always resented by the opposition with no little fury. The consequence was that the poor donkeys, having been pulled and pushed in every direction with no gentle hands, were now in one boat, now in another, being transferred from boat to boat, and back again to the river's bank, in an incredibly short space of time, according as one or

another of the rival crews got the upper hand ; and it was not till Ali, waxing wrathful at the delay, made a sudden rush upon the crowd, and dealt very violent blows indiscriminately on the boatmen's heads and backs, after true Arabian fashion, that order was restored, the donkeys were summarily ejected from the boats, and bundled into one which he had selected, and with whose owners he had concluded his bargain : and then we embarked, and hoisted sail, leaving those who were lately so clamorous and quarrelsome, suddenly calmed down and friendly, now that the scramble was over ; for this is an every-day affair, and not only here, but at all points of the river, and equally so among the donkey boys in front of our hotel, and in the bazaars of Cairo, and wherever, in fact, competition exists.

We now skirted the island of Rhoda, where the famous Nilometer stands, which for so many years has marked the rise of the waters at the season of the inundation, a matter of tremendous importance to every inhabitant of Egypt. On this little island, too, we gazed with intense interest, for it is said to be the spot where the ark of bulrushes containing the infant Moses was rescued from the water by Pharaoh's daughter. A very short sail

with a favouring breeze took us across the Nile, and we were soon plodding along on the backs of our donkeys at the shuffling walk which is their general pace; but it is a long weary ride of six or seven miles from the river's bank—the Pyramids all the while straight before us, and looming larger and larger on our view as we advanced. And now we came to a broad shallow sheet of water which we must cross, but, through which the donkeys could not carry us; moreover, as our legs very nearly touched the ground, but for the honour and glory of a ride through the water, we might as well wade. There was, however, a remedy at hand against this dilemma; for the half-dozen sturdy Arabs who had followed us from the boat had been reinforced by a dozen more, whom we had attached to our party *en route*, and at the water's edge an equal number had assembled—lazy, half naked, good-tempered fellows—who seemed to have nothing on earth to do but to pick up backsheesh wheresoever they could. Then the hubbub of tongues began again, the screaming, shrieking and pushing of these eager candidates for the privilege of carrying us over.

The only plan, if the traveller does not wish to be pulled to pieces by hungry Arabs, is to sit

quietly on your donkey until you have selected two stout fellows, keeping all the others at arm's length by menacing gestures, as you easily may, for they have a most wholesome terror of European might, and never dream of questioning your perfect right to coerce them. Then, resigning yourself to two swarthy Arabs, you are seated on their shoulders, with one arm lovingly round the neck of each, and so you are safely landed on the other side, not, however, without sundry stumblings and shufflings in the deeper parts, and at the imminent hazard of being pitched head first into the water. And so we all reached the opposite bank, while a good-looking young Arab was supremely happy in carrying my gun, without which throughout the tour I never made any excursion, or indeed moved on shore at all; or, if I did by accident happen to be without it for a moment, I was sure to miss some famous chance of adding to my ornithological stores. Mounted again on our donkeys we had full leisure to enjoy the ridiculous scene which now ensued. Our party had by this time been increased to about fifty Arabs, who had come running over the plain from all parts, with the forlorn hope of picking up some small coin; and

Ali was about to settle with those who had helped us over the water. Then began such a yelling and shrieking, such violence towards one another, as rival claimants for payment insisted on their rights; such an outstretching of a very forest of dark arms and hands; such a scrambling and pushing; while all screamed at the top of their shrill voices, and those who had no claim to urge, shouted 'backsheesh, backsheesh,' with undiminishing energy, that the scene baffles description, but was highly amusing to us at the time. The result was that, though we paid double the usual fare, or perhaps because we did so, the altercation became more violent than ever; and it was not until Ali had used his fist freely amongst them, fairly knocking down the most vociferous, that we could silence the uproar and restore order to our little cavalcade. And now we jogged on quietly enough, having shaken off our motley noisy followers, until we came to the borders of the desert, when we entered the great sandy tract which stretches away for an interminable distance, and on the borders of which all the pyramids of Egypt stand.

- During the whole of this long ride, we had been gazing at those monsters of antiquity with increasing respect; and now as we stood below the largest,

we seemed quite aghast at its stupendous bulk. I had previously studied its dimensions, compared the figures given by the French engineers with those of our countrymen, worked out its proportions on paper, and tried to realise in my own mind a mass of stone building covering an area as large as Lincoln's Inn Fields; but hitherto I had utterly failed to appreciate its gigantic size, and now we could not sufficiently admire its colossal height and breadth as it stretched out before our eyes on either hand.

But already the Arabs of the pyramid, with their sheikh at their head, had been clamouring and screaming around, offering old Roman coins which had a strong look of Birmingham about them, and bronze Egyptian idols and scarabæi, whose origin, to say the least, was extremely doubtful; but with which they pertinaciously continued to tempt us at intervals all the way up the pyramid, and all the way down, and even in the narrow passages of the interior, and indeed throughout our stay. Then again, each endeavoured to persuade us to select him individually for some special service in helping us in the ascent; though by an admirable arrangement entered into of late by the European consuls at Cairo, every traveller pays five shillings

to the sheikh of the pyramid, which covers all demands of every description, and is supposed to set him free from all importunity and noise. Not that such is by any means the result, because I presume it would be as impossible to prevent an Egyptian Arab clamouring for backsheesh, on his own account, as it would be to stop the inundation of the Nile; but however annoying at first, it is astonishing how soon the traveller becomes accustomed to be followed by a hungry, vociferating, screeching train, and how little attention he pays to their demands, till at last he learns wholly to ignore their presence.

Now, however, we began to prepare for the ascent, and fully warned of the fatigue and labour of the climb before us, we by no means despised the help of the Arabs: though if two, instead of half-a-dozen, had been contented to attach themselves to each of us, we should have had more room, more air, and been altogether better pleased; as it was, no less than twenty-two of these active children of the desert accompanied us to the top, while Ali stayed below to take care of our goods. And now we experienced the real dimensions of the stones of which the pyramids are built, which when seen from below, the colossal

size of the whole dwarfs into ordinary steps, and diminishes in a very deceiving manner : for though climbing up steps varying from two to three feet each in height, and some even more than this, may seem an easy task at first, it soon becomes exceedingly laborious and leg-wearying, for there are no less than two hundred and three courses of this Cyclopean masonry superimposed one upon another. We had chosen, of course, the more shaded side for coolness, but we were glad to call a halt, and sit down to rest several times in our upward journey : and when, at the end of half-an-hour's hard climbing, amidst the pushings and pullings of our too willing officious friends, we reached the top, we were fairly out of breath with this novel exertion, which has not inaptly been somewhere likened to climbing up two hundred ordinary dining tables, one after another, which if any one likes to try, he will find to be famous exercise on a hot morning after a long donkey-ride. At every step we took in the ascent, we became more and more impressed with the size of the pyramid. In looking up at our work before us from below, we all entertained the notion that the lower courses of stones were the largest, and that the size of the stones materially diminished nearer the

top; but as we gradually worked our way upwards, we found that such was by no means the case: the stones are all of enormous magnitude and weight, and how they were carried up from the plain below, and placed in their present position, was a problem which we continually asked ourselves, but for which we could find no solution. Then again we marvelled at the extraordinary perfection with which those ancient masons who built the pyramids laid the gigantic blocks in order, so that the joints are often scarcely perceptible, though it could be no easy matter nicely and accurately to lay stones which average some thirty feet in length, and are of proportional breadth and thickness. But *somehow* they had contrived to square them with the greatest accuracy, and then put them together with a precision which the masonry of modern times would find it difficult to imitate, and wholly impossible to surpass.

Whether it is indeed probable that the kings who built these several monuments began their reigns by preparing their sepulchres, and then every year added another layer, and so increased their tombs in size, in proportion to the length of their reigns, I must leave others to argue and decide as they please: to me such a notion seems

incredible, and the internal arrangement of chambers and passages, as well as the smooth coating of the exterior, with which they were in a manner encased, seem irresistible arguments against such a theory, though it is propounded by Egyptologists whose opinion is entitled to profound respect.

And now, seated on the platform on the top, while our merry chattering attendants basked in the sun on the upper steps all around, we thoroughly enjoyed a more leisurely examination of this and its two companion pyramids. We had accomplished one great object of our ambition, and were standing on the summit of the most ancient monument of man's labour in the world: and we had at length grasped in our minds its true dimensions, and realised its prodigious size. As we looked below at those tiers upon tiers of gigantic steps, up which we had toiled, and saw Ali and the donkeys and Arab boys like dwarfish pigmies on the sand, we comprehended that we were above 450 feet in perpendicular height above the plain: and then the description of dear old Herodotus and his account of the cost of garlic and onions which the labourers consumed came into our minds: and we speculated on the *why* and the *how* and the *who* had caused these great pyramids to be built;

and many wild theories were broached, and impossible plans suggested, as we talked of those distant ages when the mighty monuments were reared. Nor did we omit to give due weight to the interpretation of the Arabs, who invariably solve the difficulties attending the erection of these and other great works of antiquity in Egypt, by ascribing their origin to some eccentric ginn or efreet: which solution at all events possesses this merit, that it appertains to a *dignus vindice nodus*.

Then we turned our attention to the second pyramid in size, that of Cephren, and carefully examined the smooth gypsum coating which still covers the top, and with which doubtless all the pyramids were once encased, giving them a glossy even surface, where now successive layers of rough stone alone remain. Some of our attendant Arabs were extremely anxious that we should engage them at a considerable premium to scramble down the great pyramid on which we were standing, and scamper up that of Cephren, and over the smooth upper casing, and promised to reach the apex within ten minutes; but as we had no wish to see them break their necks, we declined to pay them for any such feat, which St.-Hilaire justly describes as *une course diabolique*. So we contented

ourselves with a leisurely examination of the second pyramid, and admired the enterprise of Belzoni, who persevered against every discouragement, until he had discovered the entrance.

Nor was the lesser pyramid of Mycerinus overlooked, which, though comparatively small by the side of its gigantic brethren, is in reality a huge mountain of stone, a very Colossus in size, if it could be viewed apart from its companions. On the other side, again, and buried to the neck in sand, stood the Sphinx, whose calm impassive thoughtful expression, and whose thoroughly Egyptian features, even after the lapse of so many ages and so much violence on the part of man, remain a marvel and a mystery to all beholders. Here were objects of such antiquarian interest all around as to enchain our eyes for a long time to the things immediately near us; but, before we descended, the distant view on all sides from our elevated spot demanded attention. On one side the Nile, winding through the plain from the south, and passing away to the north, marking its course not only by its shining waters, but by the broad belt of cultivated land on either side, which its inundations had fertilised; the great city of Cairo on its farther shore, and many

a village, embosomed in palm trees, studding the plain on either bank; and then the great Mokattam range of mountains, rising behind the capital, whence, in ages long passed away, wretched captives are supposed to have dug the great stones which form these pyramids, the vast quarries still existing to mark the bed whence the materials were hewn, and the very rocks retaining in their name to this day a memorial of the gigantic works which they once beheld—the word *Mokattam* being equivalent to our English ‘hewn.’ On the opposite side, stretched out as far as the eye could penetrate to the dim horizon, the vast interminable desert, sand and rock, rock and sand, in never-varying hue.

But we must not linger on the narrow platform of the pyramid of Cheops, with the descent yet to make, the interior yet unexplored, a nearer view of the other pyramids and the Sphinx to be taken, and a long ride home to Cairo before us; and so we began to go down. I own that, as we now looked below, the prospect before us did indeed seem somewhat formidable, and I could well believe how giddy and terrified the nervous often are, as well as the capital our extortionate Arabs would make from such an exhibition of weakness; indeed, it has often been a trick of these rascals

to terrify the timid unprotected traveller when half way up or down the pyramid, till they extract backsheesh from his pockets, a proceeding which is certain to be repeated over and over again at every few steps, if the victim is unwise enough to give way to their first demands. To an ordinary head there is really nothing terrific in the descent, though to the legs, and especially to the knees, such a succession of jumps, and the jar consequent thereon, is very trying. In this respect we found the downward path much more fatiguing than the ascent; but we were not long in reaching the bottom, the Arabs again as persistent with their help and as officious as before.

Our next thought was the interior, and we had examined the entrance on our way up and down. It was especially interesting to me, who had indulged a pet theory with regard to the entrance to our larger earthen mounds of pre-Roman times in my own county, to find that the aperture leading to the interior of the pyramid was not in the exact centre, but purposely made at a considerable distance on one side, in order to baffle too curious intruders. It was also placed on the northern face of the monument, as I believe has been found to be the case with every pyramid. Now these two

facts, corroborating a view I had formerly advocated with regard to monumental earthworks, pleased me not a little ; for, though these mighty stone sepulchres betray an incomparably higher degree of art and skill than their more humble earthen brethren, they are at least but huge petrified barrows, and the same general principle of internal sepulture may hold good for both.

We now prepared to descend into the interior ; so armed with candles, which we had brought for the purpose from Cairo, and which Ali lighted at the mouth of the entrance, and still mobbed by the Arabs, who crawled after us in a crowd wherever we went, we made our way as best we could down the long narrow inclined passage conducting into the heart of the pyramid. The stone was as slippery as glass, and worn so smooth, that but for notches cut for the feet, it would be hard to avoid going down with a run ; as it was we had some difficulty, in some of the more contracted passages, which in places were mere apertures, through which we had to crawl on our hands and knees, taking care to carry our candles before us, so that they would not be extinguished by striking against the sides or top ; and so slipping here, holding on there, now walking in a

lofty corridor, when it was refreshing to straighten the back, and hold up the head ; now scrambling, wriggling, crouching, sometimes in truth *ventre à terre*, we reached the so-called 'King's Chamber,' immediately afterwards the 'Queen's Chamber,' and then we saw passages branching out in various directions, air-holes above our heads, wells beneath our feet, with just enough opened out by enterprising explorers to lead one to believe in innumerable chambers in this enormous mass, yet undiscovered ; and to show with what wondrous skill the architect had planned and constructed the several rooms and galleries conducting into the very heart of this mountain of hewn rock. As we stood here in the very bowels of the pyramid, it was an oppressive thought, what acres of solid stone intervened between ourselves and the daylight ; what thousands of tons above our heads ! Moreover, as the heat of the interior was stifling, increased by the flare and smoke of so many candles in the narrow passages, and the hot breath of so many garlic-loving Arabs, and as the candles were beginning to burn low, we were not sorry to hasten back to daylight and pure air ; though, when after a long scramble we did reach it, we felt chilled to the bones, so great was the

change of temperature from the interior to the outer atmosphere. But once out of the shade of those vast walls of stone, the sun of Africa was scorching enough in the middle of December to warm us to our hearts' content; and as Ali had spread out lunch, we both basked in the pleasant sunshine, and did justice to the viands he had prepared, while our Arabs sat round, like so many hounds, watching us at our meal. Now came the moment for paying the sheikh of the Arabs the regulation fee of five shillings each, with a small amount of backsheesh to those who had been really useful to us in our climb, which was only accomplished amidst deafening uproar, earnest expostulation, the most frantic gesticulations, and furious din; but again, as soon as they had satisfied themselves that no more was to be gained, they became perfectly quiet and peaceable, and quite friendly towards us. Then for a couple of hours we walked round the pyramids, wandered among the ruins, had a close inspection of the Sphinx, and marvelled at the expression of his* face, quite noble and grand though so dilapidated. Then F. set up his camera, and I secured half a

* The Egyptian Sphinx is of the masculine gender, though it is popularly supposed in England to be a female.

dozen species of birds, which I had never shot before, and then we began the homeward journey, encountering the same confusion and outcry in paying the Arabs, both when we were carried back over the water on men's shoulders, and when we had crossed the Nile in the boat; a confusion and noise inseparable (as we afterwards learnt) from any dealings with Egyptian fellaheen. The wind was dead against us as we re-crossed the Nile, and it took half an hour's hard rowing to take us over the river, by which time it was quite dark; and we had a dreary ride through the empty streets from Old Cairo to the Frank quarter of the modern capital.

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE AT CAIRO, AND EXCURSIONS.

DOMESTIC manners and customs, the interiors of houses, and the common habits of the higher classes in every-day life among Orientals, have an unspeakable interest to the European. This is undoubtedly heightened in no inconsiderable degree by the reserve with which they have thought fit to envelop their home life, and the retirement and seclusion they enforce upon the female part of their families. The harèm, therefore, or portion of the house exclusively appropriated to the women and children, is entirely shut out from the traveller's inspection; and he must content himself with what casual glimpses he can get of ordinary domestic life, in the visits he will from time to time be sure to have occasion to pay to those in authority or otherwise. He will learn a great deal even in these transitory visits of

ceremony or morning calls, but when he leaves the country, he will be equally sure to feel that his curiosity has not been satisfied with regard to much of the detail of daily life and manners of the people, with whom he has been so many months associated, so effectually do they contrive to carry out their system, enforced upon them as a religious duty—for it is commanded in the Koràn — of completely ignoring before their friends the very existence of wives.

The salutations of Orientals are proverbially ceremonious, and good manners require continual attention on the part of Europeans to obviate mistakes; and the stranger will do well to conform as far as possible to customs however extraordinary and formal, and even troublesome, they may seem. Thus he will not omit to remove his boots, if he intends to seat himself *à la Turque* on his friend's divan; for transgression of this rule is considered a mark of the grossest ill-behaviour, and herein many a European has frequently erred in perfect innocence of giving offence, and without the slightest conception of what a breach of etiquette he was guilty. Then he will soon learn to salute his acquaintance, and return the salutations of his servants and others, with the

customary salaams, touching his lips and forehead with his right hand, or placing it on his breast; and he will soon know with what civilities he will be expected to accept the cup of coffee and chibouque, and return them to the hands of the attendant. These and many other ceremonies of politeness, expected of all ranks in every-day life, are very soon learned, and may not be neglected as unimportant, for in the East they are highly esteemed, and the neglect of them engenders annoyance and dislike. Moreover, here they are the heirlooms of the ancient Egyptians, for Herodotus tells us what ceremonious salutations that people used towards one another in the streets.

One of the earliest visits, and at the same time one of the most interesting, which we paid in Cairo, was to an Armenian gentleman to whom we had brought letters of introduction, bearing the quaint name of Hekekian Bey; * who combined the advantages of being high in authority, of great and varied information, and an excellent linguist in European languages, our own mother tongue included. Ushered into the house by the porter who sat at the gate outside, we were bidden

* The title 'Bey' signifies a military chief, and would answer best to our 'General.'

to ascend the stairs, where a Nubian slave girl, black as jet, and with the shrillest of squeaking voices, preceded us into the presence of the Bey, and announced our approach. We were very graciously received by the most polite of Oriental magnates, and were soon seated on the divan, with which the large, lofty, and very handsome apartment was surrounded. Clapping the hands, which does duty all over the East for the European bell, summoned the black slave, who speedily reappeared with tiny cups of excellent coffee, the china coffee cups (fingan) enclosed within others of silver filigree work of the shape of an ordinary egg cup (zarf). This is the first polite attention always shown to visitors at all hours of the day; but speedily the black slave appears again with a long chibouque, filled and lighted with a lump of burning charcoal, and which she takes care not to hand you until she has assured herself it draws well by a few hearty puffs with her own lips: then she brings another pipe, and then another, till we are all supplied, and now etiquette allows us to enter into conversation, for until the great requisites for Oriental enjoyment, coffee and pipes, have been provided, politeness allows nothing but fragmentary sentences. After touching on many

topics of the day—for with European politics generally Hekeian Bey seems thoroughly acquainted—he gave us a great deal of valuable information upon the formation and prospects of the Suez canal, which he considered certain to succeed, and which he evidently regarded with the most intense satisfaction. I am not about to reproduce here an epitome of M. St.-Hilaire's book in his '*Lettres sur l'Égypte*,' with which the Bey's opinions thoroughly coincided; suffice it to say that he entertained no doubts for a single moment of the ultimate triumph of the great canal, and of the enormous benefit which would accrue to Egypt therefrom. How far such expectations are reasonable and how far they are chimerical, I have no means of judging; but if the French engineers as a body seem to any over sanguine of success, I confess that to my mind the tone adopted by the English savours too much of envy and jealousy, and seems to me somewhat ungenerous and unworthy.

Another Egyptian acquaintance which we made early in our sojourn at Cairo, was that of the dragoman to the British consul-general, Massara; a most kind and obliging old man was he, and on several occasions he lionised us to various objects

of interest, more especially among the Coptic and Greek churches; and it was a grand sight, to see this portly old man, in the widest and whitest of turbans, the most ample robes, and his feet encased in the outer yellow slippers, of constant use but of preposterous breadth, jogging along on his large white donkey, which seemed to think nothing of his weight, as he led the way in our various excursions through the lanes and bazaars of the city. But Massara at home was as dignified and punctilious as any pasha or bey: we paid him several visits, for he was a collector and dealer in antiquities on a large scale, and we were always received with the same ceremonious politeness, ushered in by his bare-footed servant, seated on the divan, and refreshed with pipes and coffee, before he would show us any of his curiosities, and explain to us the merits and dates of his most valuable mummies and bronzes, many of which were of exceeding rarity. Now there is almost as much roguery in this same sale of objects of antiquity in Egypt, as there is at Rome or Pompeii; many a true genuine bronze figure of the time of the Pharaohs, or coin of the age of the Ptolemies, as the Arabs who lurk about the ruins declare, was imported from Birmingham

last year; therefore we were very chary of purchasing bronzes, coins, scarabæi and amulets indiscriminately from those who offered them for sale; but with good honest Massara we knew that we were safe: he was far too honourable to deceive us, and far too good a judge to be himself deceived; therefore we bought our curiosities of him with a confidence which we scarcely felt on any other occasion.

From Massara we naturally pass on to the new Museum of Antiquities, just built at Boulak: this very interesting and valuable collection of specimens of ancient Egyptian art, and relics of antiquity of every description, has been formed by desire of the pasha, under the personal direction of M. Mariette, a French antiquary of most indomitable perseverance, whose boat we afterwards fell in with at various points on the river, and whose workmen and inspectors we found busily employed with their picks and shovels and baskets in many a ruined temple or tomb. By pushing on the work in the most likely places, with an unlimited command of labour, and a *carte blanche* as to expense, this most diligent explorer has exhumed objects of the greatest value, and it is quite astonishing what a vast amount of

specimens of almost every kind of Egyptian antiquity he has within a very few years been able to collect. * Of mummied beasts and birds, of human mummies, of bronze and stone figures, there are, as might be expected, the most extensive series; but in addition to the more ordinary memorials of a remote age brought to light in profusion in this country, there are gold and enamel ornaments, unique in pattern, and of the most exquisite workmanship, and many a strange relic of the earlier dynasties, which already give to the museum at Boulak the priority in collections of Egyptian antiquities; and that notwithstanding the famous museums in London and Turin, Berlin and Leyden; while the additions made every day through M. Mariette's researches, promise an enormous increase to the already well-filled rooms; and many new particulars are revealed of the habits and customs of those who dwelt in Egypt from three to perhaps five thousand years ago.

As a climax to the antiquities we had been diligently studying in the museum at Boulak, we now made an expedition on donkeys to Heliopolis, to see the site of that famous city of the priests, and be introduced to the oldest obelisk in Egypt, bearing date, according to Sir Gardner

Wilkinson, about B.C. 2000 : our way lay through fertile gardens, and irrigated fields of corn and rice, and for the most part under the shade of trees ; and we stopped to examine the famous sycamore under whose aged branches tradition declares the Holy Family to have rested on their journey farther south. Then we reached Heliopolis, of which little now remains but a vast accumulation of débris, mounds of crumbled bricks, heaps of rubbish, extending over a large area, the long lines of unburnt earth showing clearly where this once famous seat of learning stood. It is strange to mark the sites of these most ancient cities in Egypt, by the immense heaps of crumbled and broken bricks, which alone in many instances indicate where they once flourished. These bricks, though still hard and sometimes angular, are invariably of unburnt earth, for there was no burnt brick in Egypt before the time of the Roman dominion ; yet so tenacious is the mud and slime of the Nile of which they are composed, and so baking are the powerful rays of the sun in those latitudes, that the ancient bricks are well nigh as hard as stone. And amidst this rubbish of a once noble city stands the single obelisk, covered with hieroglyphics, still sharp and

distinct, though it was a hundred years old when Abraham came down to Egypt and saw it as we see it now. It is of red granite, and must have come from the quarries of Assouan, 800 miles away; but who cut it from its native bed; who carved it so cleverly; who brought it here; how it was transported; how erected; are problems which none can solve. Above sixty-two feet in height, and six feet in diameter at the base, it must weigh considerably more than 200 tons, and would tax the powers of the engineer of the nineteenth century, with all our boasted science and ingenuity, to move so immense a mass over so long a distance; yet the civilised people of ancient Egypt *did* accomplish this feat, and the obelisks stand as lasting memorials of their wonderful power. There is nothing in all Egypt which speaks at once of immense antiquity and of great mechanical skill so much as this obelisk of Heliopolis, and thoughts of by-gone ages crowd thickly on the mind as we gaze up on its fine proportions and regular symmetrical shape; thoughts of the Israelite Joseph more especially, who in the family of the priest of this city found his bride; thoughts of Plato and Pythagoras, who came to study at this famous school of philosophy,

the great university, as Dean Stanley calls it—the Oxford, not only of the country, but of the age; thoughts again of Moses, who here learned the wisdom of the Egyptians; and of Jeremiah, who here wrote the book of Lamentations. And now this one single obelisk stands alone to mark the site of the famous On, bereft of its twin companion—for obelisks always stood in pairs—the only remaining witness of a once flourishing city, notorious for its learning throughout the world. It is not marvellous that so little is left of the celebrated On, for all things in course of time decay, and near four thousand years have elapsed since this city was at its zenith of grandeur; it is only wonderful that anything so old, made by the hands of man, yet remains for our admiration, and I know nothing which on this account demands the reverence of the biblical student and of the archæological alike, so much as the graceful obelisk still *in situ* at Heliopolis. Moreover, it is indeed visiting the obelisk in its own peculiar domain when we gaze on this venerable relic; for was not every obelisk dedicated to the sun, pointing upward as it does with its gradually tapering apex? and here we stand on the ruins of the very city of the sun, where the great god Re

was especially honoured. And here I may observe that once removed from their original position, and transported to another country, the obelisks lose more than half their value: proofs of a conqueror's power they may be, the barbaric power of a vain-glorious general; but dissociated from the temples they adorned, the dromos of sphinxes, the propyla, the pillared courts, they seem out of place and unmeaning. Then again, covered with the hieroglyphics peculiar to Egypt, they so thoroughly belong to that country alone, that when erected in the squares of Rome or of Paris, they look bare and naked and incongruous with the objects around, and are like exotic plants pining under a northern sky, and in an ungenial clime; whereas, when seen in their original position, terminating the dromos of sphinxes, and flanking the entrance to the propyla, or pyramidal towers, they harmonise with all around them, and are by no means the 'ungraceful heavy masses of stone,' as I have heard them designated by those who have only seen them in the capitals of Europe, detached from their true surroundings, and occupying a position for which they were never intended.

Another expedition which we made, to the Petri-

fied Forest, took us into the true desert, and as it was our first acquaintance with that wondrous barren tract of sand, I may as well here record the impression it made upon us. On leaving the walls of Cairo, we at once struck into the caravan track by which it is well known the Indian Mail used to cross to the head of the Gulf of the Red Sea; and though the Peninsular and Oriental Company has discarded that old route in favour of the railway which now connects the capital with Suez, and has exchanged the former fatiguing van journey of sixteen hours for a rapid transit by train of one-third of that time, yet the track is still followed by the natives, and caravans of Arabs with camels and dromedaries travel by that route every day. We were now at once on the open desert, directing our course due east; for some miles we pursued this direction, and were very soon thoroughly surrounded by desert, shut in by sand hills alone on every side. It is a strange feeling which possesses the European traveller as he finds himself for the first time fairly shut in by the desert; there is something so silent and almost awful in that dreary monotony of sand; something oppressive in that long interminable barren waste, ever stretching on,

with nothing but sand for the eye to rest upon as he turns himself round and gazes to the horizon on every side. It is wondrously like the open sea as you contemplate it from the deck of a ship, when out of sight of land : there is the same wide expanse spreading out all around to the horizon ; there are ripples on the sand, resembling little waves, caused by the wind as it sweeps in gusts over the plains ; and then the vastness, the immensity, and the recollection that it still stretches out beyond the horizon many days' journey before its limits are reached ; add to this the feeling of desolation and of isolation, and it is not astonishing that many a traveller feels overpowered at his first acquaintance with the desert, and until habit has reconciled him to its peculiar phases, quite dreads even a short journey into its interminable depths. Now all the pyramids, all the tombs, most of the temples, and many of the villages stand more or less within the desert, generally at its extreme edge, though sometimes deeper within its border : they are so situated because every foot of irrigated land is so extremely valuable, and at the same time land is so scarce, the long narrow strip on each bank of the Nile, which comprises Central and Upper Egypt, giving at last but a very small area of cultivable soil, that the inhabitants have

always made the most of what they occupy, eking out the scanty portion they possess, and seldom encroaching upon it by buildings, for which the desert close at hand always offers an admirable site. And so in visiting these temples and tombs the tourist in Egypt very soon makes acquaintance with the desert, so far at least as little expeditions within its limits are concerned, though in reality when you have penetrated a mile or two of its territory, and are once out of sight of cultivation, you have a perfect sample of the interior, and to all intents and purposes are in the heart of the desert at once.

My account of our introduction to this peculiar feature of the country would be most imperfect if I failed to make mention of the camel, which, carrying on the metaphor of the sea, is often styled the 'ship of the desert.' European travellers have been often ridiculed for giving such extremely contradictory accounts of this animal—one portion decrying it in no measured terms, the other vehemently extolling it; but the two descriptions are perfectly reconcilable, if we take into account the separate conditions under which the animal is seen. When met with on the quays of Alexandria, and on the wharfs of Cairo—espe-

cially when the process of loading and unloading is going on—the camel certainly does not show to advantage; such a savage expression of countenance, such fierce angry looks, such dismal groans, such unearthly cries, as every package is added to its load, do not prepossess one in its favour; neither is it docile and tame as some avow, but stubborn and sullen; and the really vicious nature which many of them possess, and their wild ungovernable temper, go far to characterise them as dangerous ill-tempered beasts, to which the traveller will do well to give as wide a berth as possible. Indeed, so much do these unpleasant characteristics serve to prejudice some against them, that Sir Samuel Baker has not scrupled to condemn them as greedy, stupid, senseless, and perverse beasts; and others have dubbed them sluggish, dogged, ugly, uninteresting, and unmanageable. I cannot but think these are hard terms, the result of one-sided opinion, and wholly unjustifiable; for, allowing that their disposition in civilised life is disagreeable, yet see them in their own proper element, on their long march through the thirsty desert, striding over the deep sand, enduring heat and fatigue, and privation of water, as no other animal can; see the

loads they carry, and the consecutive hours they march on in single file at an even pace; and everybody must confess that they are wonderfully adapted to their peculiar work, and that their value and usefulness here are incalculable. And in this they exactly resemble their masters, the Bedouin Arabs, who when seen within the walls of a city, appear ill at ease, distrustful, suspicious; but no sooner do they reach the wild desert than they breathe more freely, and are happy and content. So intimate is the fellow-feeling between the camel and his master, so similar their tastes, so accurate, in short, is the Arab proverb that 'God created the camel for the Bedouin, and the Bedouin for the camel.' When seen at a distance, moving over the desert, the camels struck me as resembling, in a most remarkable degree, their desert companion, the ostrich: it may seem strange to say that a bird and a quadruped have a similar profile, yet such is undoubtedly the fact with these two denizens of the same sandy wilds; both hold their heads very forward, with necks much elevated and stretched out; then the long legs of the camel are all near together, whereas those of the ostrich are wide apart, and the result is that, seen at a distance, these two

very different creatures might be easily mistaken for each other. Nor is this a fancy peculiar to myself alone, for since writing the above impression, as it struck me in Egypt, I have read in Palgrave's admirable book on Central and Eastern Arabia, that the sight of ostriches running in a line struck that experienced traveller as having a strange resemblance to a string of camels on the march.

So many errors have been made regarding the camel and the dromedary, that it may not be without use to assert once for all that they are the same animal, only that the former, answering to our cart-horse, is heavier, clumsier, slower, and more adapted for heavy burdens; and that the latter, corresponding with our hack, is lighter, swifter, and more fitted for riding. Both have but one single hump, the double-humped species being solely confined to another continent, where it bears the name of the Asiatic or Bactrian camel. Though known in Egypt from very early times,* it is remarkable that these animals do not occur in the paintings and hieroglyphics.

But I must return to the Petrified Forest, from

* Genesis xii. 16 ; xxxvii. 25.

which we have made as long a digression as our guide did, who, following a wrong track, completely lost his way, and did not recover it until we had ridden over many miles of deep sand, most fatiguing to our donkeys. At length we came upon a few small fragments of petrified wood, and here the guide called a halt, and declared we had reached the object of our expedition; we had, however, been forewarned that the petrified forest was at some distance beyond the spot to which the guides are wont to take travellers, so we persevered in riding forward, notwithstanding the vehement protestations of our conductor that we were deceived: he threw himself on the ground and rolled in the dust, he dashed off his turban and tore his clothes in the vehemence of his expostulations, and called on Allah and Mohammed to testify to the injury done him in doubting his word. Still we rode on, giving no heed to his frantic behaviour, until another half hour brought us to the object of our search—whole trees of every size lying about the sand in all directions, completely petrified; for the most part palms, some of which we measured, and found to be sixty-two feet in length, and all turned to the hardest stone. After collecting sundry fragments as specimens

from this strangely weird-looking scene, we set off on our return to Cairo, and again our blundering guide managed to lose his way, becoming at last entangled in some awkward precipices, down which we scrambled, and our clever donkeys managed to slide, but we only extricated ourselves from the desert just as darkness came on, and reached the gates of the city after nightfall. Amongst the precipitous rocks mentioned above, we saw several cones, as of volcanoes long since extinct.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN BODIES—COPTS—PATRIARCH OF
ALEXANDRIA.

CAIRO contains not only a very motley population but a great variety of religions as well. Numerically, of course, the Muslims predominate to a very great degree—I believe the general calculation is that nine out of ten are Mussulmans. But there are considerable numbers of Cairenes who profess other faith than that of El Islam. Of these, again, the Copts monopolise nine-tenths, leaving the remainder to be divided amongst the Jews, Syrians, Greeks, Armenians, and Europeans generally, who are all presumed to belong to the Latin Church. In common with all Oriental towns, Cairo is parcelled out into divisions, and some of these have reference to the creed professed by its inhabitants: thus, there is the Copt quarter, the Jews' quarter, the Frank quarter, and so forth.

But in the Muslim portions of the city as well, the respective trades congregate together, as was the case in ancient times in Egypt; and thus you have the Saddlers' quarter, or *Sook*, tenanted only by those who deal in leather goods; the Braziers' quarter, occupied by workers in metal; the Armourers' quarter, where dealers in weapons reside; the Shoemakers' quarter; the Carpenters' quarter, and others. Doubtless this congregating of those who ply the same trade originally arose from motives of defence, when those who followed the same craft would naturally join together to protect each other from violence from without—by no means an unnecessary precaution in the lawless days not long gone by; and I am not sure but that the precaution is of value now. Still more would this apply to the association in one quarter of those who professed the same religious belief; and well might those in a numerical minority, who differed from the general religion of the country, fasten the gates of their quarter at night, and take every means of defence against outrage and persecution—so hostile, so fierce, and so unrelenting was the fanatical Muslim against all who refused assent to the doctrines of El Islam; so violent on occasion, so easily stirred up to reli-

gious frenzy, is the orthodox Mussulman now, for religious toleration is a dogma as yet wholly unintelligible to the understanding of the Oriental mind.

Amongst the various congregations of Christians who have established themselves, and who, including our own countrymen, have provided themselves with churches, principally in the Coptic quarter, there is one remarkable body, who style themselves by the strange designation of 'Greek Roman Catholics.' This title at first strikes one as paradoxical, but it exactly defines the position of the body of Christians who compose that Church. Orientals by birth, and Christians on principle, whilst deeply attached to the rites and ceremonies of the Greek Church, they have learnt to prefer the doctrines of the Church of Rome; and, thus retaining all the visible marks of the Greek Church, they put themselves under the dominion of the Pope, and implicitly adopt the Romish faith. We visited their church, were introduced to their bishop, and were present on Christmas Eve at the service, followed by the benediction of five loaves of bread, in commemoration of the miracle. The church, which is new and handsome, is arranged in all respects like the

ordinary Greek church, admitting no images, though profusely ornamented with pictures. The bishop is a remarkably dignified-looking man, and, with his attendant priests, half-a-dozen in number, gave us a very favourable impression of their sincerity, truthfulness, and honesty, qualities at all times sufficiently rare in the East, even in ecclesiastics. Bishop and clergy alike were all dressed in black cassocks under handsome robes, with tall black caps on their heads. They all wore long black beards and moustaches, and a long tail of black hair, like the back hair of an Englishwoman, behind their head. This was gathered up under the tall cap when they entered the church, but, as they successively lifted the cap at the Glorias, the roll of hair escaped, and hung half way down the back. There was a great deal of crossing themselves after the Greek form, and several processions into and out of the Sanctuary. At other times all, including the priests, either leant on the tall staff or crutch, peculiar to the church of the East, or, half sitting, leaned on the back of the stalls, somewhat after the fashion in use in England in the olden times, traces of which are still to be seen in the *Misereres* in many of our cathedral choirs. Several times during the

service the bishop gave his blessing : doubling the thumb to the third finger, and then holding up his right hand, the remaining fingers outstretched represented the Holy Trinity ; a form somewhat differing from that in use in Western Christendom. The service lasted about an hour and a quarter, and would be followed by the great Christmas service at ten in the evening, which would continue till two of the following morning, when the services for Christmas would be ended. There are, in all, about fifteen hundred, including women and children, who belong to this somewhat anomalous body—half Greek, in respect to arrangement, usages, ceremonies ; half Latin, in respect to creed and all articles appertaining to faith.

But the Coptic is, *par excellence*, the native Church of Egypt : indeed, for the matter of that, the Copts are said to be, *par excellence*, the native Egyptians, the great body of the Mussulman population being descended from a mixed race of Arabs, Abyssinians, and others. Ethnologists call attention to the general shape of the head and cast of features of the Copts, and maintain that in both particulars they bear a striking resemblance to the pictures and sculptures of the ancient Egyptians, as exhibited on the walls of the temples and tombs—a like-

ness which we fancied we could detect, though I doubt whether we should have perceived it if our attention had not been directed that way. Philologists, too, remark that the Coptic language, still retained in much of their religious services, is no other than the ancient Egyptian tongue. These are matters of dispute among the learned; but there can be little doubt that the name Copt is an abbreviated form of Egyptian, as it contains all the radical letters of that word, and not unnaturally assumes the shorter and more convenient monosyllable, Gypt, Gubt, Kubt, Cupt or Copt, either of which would be as correct a pronunciation of the word as our language will allow.

At all events the Coptic is the original Egyptian Church, and not a little do its members pride themselves on their antiquity; indeed, I am afraid they not only despise, but positively hate, with a most violent antipathy, all other branches of the Church of Christ, upon which they affect to look down with supreme contempt, as heretical and of inferior importance. It is perhaps well that they have something on which they can pride themselves: for despised, persecuted, ill-treated, ground down and impoverished as the Copts generally are, they would find it difficult to bear up against the

tyranny of their oppressors if they had not some vantage ground on which they could rally their drooping spirits. Of late, however, their position has been much more satisfactory, some of the burdens under which they groaned having been removed; and as they are much employed by the pasha in offices which require scribes and accountants, at which they are more adept than their Muslim neighbours, they are in better circumstances now than before. One tangible proof of their improved state is the handsome new church, which is now nearly completed; it is extremely large and lofty, of good proportions, and the decorations and paintings on a grand scale and of a costly character. It has been the fashion of late amongst authors and travellers to inveigh loudly against the Copts, and to denounce them with unmeasured vehemence: thus I have more than once seen it asserted that they are in so degraded and hopelessly debased a condition, both with regard to faith and practice, that they have lost all semblance of Christianity, and must be ranked below the more orthodox Muslims; while Gibbon, with something more than his accustomed ill-nature against Christian Churches, sneers at them as no better than 'a race of illiterate beggars.' Now, this is not only

unnecessarily severe, but quite unjustifiable; for though their bigoted intolerance of other Christians, their exclusiveness and reserve, and even boasted assertions that they acknowledge no connection with any other Churches whatever, in some measure account for such recriminations, it should be remembered that extreme poverty and a long course of ill-treatment have made them so narrow-minded, uneducated and superstitious, and that they are in reality the remnant of a very ancient and once flourishing branch of the Church; whilst the very fact of their holding fast to their Christian tenets, in face of so much persecution, is in itself a most powerful argument that they are not so hopelessly wanting in principle as is sometimes represented. And again, however illiterate, they are, at all events, the most advanced in learning and the most civilised of their fellow countrymen: and however dimly their lamp may burn in this the day of their degradation, let us never forget that there was a time when the Coptic Church held the proud position of the most learned and the most venerated of all, to whose decisions all Christendom bowed in obedience, from whose jurisdiction there was no appeal.

Then, I think it should never be forgotten that

they are Christians dwelling in the midst of a Muslim population, and that they are thorough Orientals themselves; and every allowance must be made for Eastern traditions, ceremonies and habits of thought, which seem to have become engrained in the hearts of the inhabitants of the unchangeable East, be they Christians, Jews, or Muslims. Thus, while the latter flock to Mecca and drink of the sacred well of Zemzem, the Copts deem it no less incumbent on them to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and afterwards to bathe in the River Jordan. The fasts of the Copts are even more severe, more strictly observed, and of far longer duration than those of the followers of the faith of Islam. They observe the seven hours of prayer with no less punctuality than their Muslim neighbours, and like them they deem ablution previous to prayer obligatory: while on entering a church they remove their shoes, but retain their turban. And thus it is not so much from an imperfect faith, as from an innate predisposition to usages common to almost all Orientals, that they retain the rite of circumcision, avoid swine's flesh, and in much of their religious services, more especially at their weddings and funerals, resemble the customs of their Muslim fellow-countrymen.

At the same time I am assuredly no prejudiced partizan, nor blind to their grievous defects, which are too palpable to escape notice. It is not to be denied that, as regards their faith, they are Jacobites, and hold the Eutychian or Monophysite heresy; nay, in their self-satisfied assurance they go so far as to ascribe polytheism to all the orthodox who separate the two Natures of Our Lord. And then, as regards their practice, they have an unenviable notoriety for drunkenness, in which they exhibit a painful contrast to the abstemious water-drinking Muslims; whilst their avarice and unscrupulous pursuit of gain are no less general.

Among the most interesting sights of the capital, the very ancient Coptic churches in Old Cairo claim particular mention. Old Cairo, distant some four miles from the modern city, occupies the site of the old Roman station Babylon, and is the same as Fostat, which was founded in the middle of the seventh century, by Amrou, the conquering lieutenant of the caliph Omar, the same who burnt the library of Alexandria. Riding out one day on those invaluable institutions of Oriental luxury the hack donkeys, which have been well called 'the cabs of the East,' we reached the now desolate and half-deserted suburb, once the capital

of Egypt. There are three of these ancient churches, all of which in turn we visited, and which certainly bear marks of extreme age; they are said to date from the close of the sixth century. In general arrangement they are very much the same as the modern Coptic churches, which in turn very closely resemble those of the Greeks, the principal difference being that in these old Coptic churches there was no porch or narthex, which it is well known is in all Greek churches an essential feature. They were divided into: (1) The *Heykel* or *Sanctuary*, within which stands the principal altar and the celebrant priest, divided from the choir by a close high screen-work, effectually shutting off the holiest place from the view of the people: the altar stands forward from the east wall, almost close to the partition, while in the apse, with which the east end invariably terminates, is fixed the throne of the patriarch, facing west, and the seats of the priests on either hand. (2) The *Chancel*, in which the priests, of whom there are many, have their stalls, and in the midst of which stands the lectern, holding the office book in Coptic. (3) The *Nave*, which the congregation occupies, the men in front, the women behind. (4) What answers to our *Ante-*

chapel at the extreme west of the nave, containing beneath a large trap door a broad and deep tank, called the 'well for Epiphany immersions,' and in which at that festival men and boys dip, in commemoration of Our Blessed Lord's baptism. These are the chief portions of the Coptic church; but north and south, and running parallel with the above to the extreme end of the sanctuary, and, like that portion, similarly terminated in an apse, are two, or more often three, broad aisles, one on the north, and a double one on the south side. These aisles are divided off with partition screens, without much apparent order, and some of the partitions and other portions of decorative wood-work are extremely old, highly though often grotesquely carved, and inlaid with ebony and ivory. This is evidently considered the most valuable feature of each church, and to this our attention was repeatedly directed by one and another of the Coptic brethren, who accompanied us in our tour of inspection. The baptistery is usually a small side apartment, generally very dark, with a sunk font: in this the baptized are immersed, sprinkling only with water being unknown. The two pictures which predominate in these and all other Coptic churches we visited, are those of St.

George and the Dragon, and St. Macarius with two swords wounding the unhappy apostate Julian ; and if it amazes the English traveller to see the patron saint of England doing the same duty for the Church in Egypt, still more astonished are the Copts to learn that their canonized champion has been selected to preside over the fortunes of that busy, bustling, clever race, which, dwelling at the extreme west of Europe, overruns every port and every city in the East.

In one of these ancient churches we were taken down a few stairs into the crypt, and shown the seat where the Blessed Virgin reposed after the flight into Egypt ; but no especial reverence appeared to be entertained for the holy place. Here we were introduced to an excellent old man, who, at his own expense, is building a new Coptic church in place of one lately burnt down : at his urgent entreaty we visited this church, which is receiving the finishing touches from the workmen ; and after duly admiring all the details of this really fine lofty building, our new-found friend—with whom, however, we could not exchange a word but by the help of the dragoman—would not suffer us to depart till we had smoked a chibouque and drunk a cup of coffee with him, which

accordingly we did with as good grace as we could summon, though we sorely grudged the time so occupied, with so many churches of exceeding interest, and the massive ruined towers of the old Roman fortress hard by claiming our attention. But we soon learned that the value of time is utterly unknown in the East: 'no Oriental is ever in a hurry, but lounges through life deliberately, solemnly, sedately, patient beyond the conception of Europeans, who are often not a little provoked at the desultory not to say dawdling manner and the idle tedious ceremonies which have to be observed before the most trifling business can be done, or even the simplest inquiry made.

The time of our departure from Cairo was now drawing near, and we had earnestly desired an introduction to the Patriarch of Alexandria; partly from the natural wish to become acquainted with the head of so ancient a Church, and partly in hopes we should persuade him to furnish us with a letter of introduction to the bishops and heads of convents in Upper Egypt, many of which we desired to enter during our downward voyage. Accordingly, by the assistance of our good friend Massara, a visit was arranged; and introduced by that most excellent and obliging friend, we one

afternoon found ourselves in the Coptic quarter, ascending the stairs of the College, hard by the new church, where the Patriarch then abode. In the ante-room, where the outer slippers are left, stood several priests and attendants, some of whom announced our arrival, and ushered us into the presence of his holiness. We found the reception room nearly filled with visitors, chiefly ecclesiastics, who were sitting cross-legged on divans round the walls, the Patriarch in the midst, while younger men, deacons and attendants, either sat on the ground or stood near the door. Almost all were smoking chibouques; but none had so large and long a pipe as the great man, who puffed forth volumes of smoke during our whole audience, and whose pipe was taken out to be refilled twice while we were there. We were most graciously received, and invited to be seated on the divan: chairs were soon after brought in for the accommodation of the European visitors; I, however, unwisely declined the offer, preferring the divan, as nearer the Patriarch and our interpreter Massara, through whom all the conversation was necessarily carried on; but I little thought how irksome it would be to those unaccustomed to the position to sit cross-legged on a carpet for an hour and a quarter, to which period our interview

extended. Etiquette did not permit much talk until we had been served with the usual cups of coffee, and furnished with lighted chibouques, when at a hint from Massara that now we might address his holiness, the conversation began in the following way :

I to Massara. ‘Pray tell the Patriarch that we are very pleased to have this opportunity of paying our respects to him, and esteem it a most happy occasion.’

Massara interprets this in flowery Arabic.

The Patriarch replies : ‘It always gives me pleasure to see European strangers, more particularly English gentlemen like yourselves.’

I. ‘We are priests of the English Church, and take a great interest in the Coptic Church, of whose tenets we are desirous to become better informed.’

The Patriarch. ‘I am happy to become acquainted with priests of the English Church, although I am not aware what is the doctrine and discipline of that Church.’

I. ‘We are about to proceed up the Nile into Upper Egypt, and are anxious to visit the Coptic churches and convents of those districts.’

The Patriarch. ‘The churches and monasteries will be all open to your inspection, and you have

full permission to enter them as freely as you please.'

I. 'It would be of very great assistance to us, if the Patriarch would kindly furnish us with a letter of introduction to the bishops of Upper Egypt, and superiors of the convents.'

The Patriarch. 'That would be quite unnecessary, as every facility would be readily granted by those in authority, without any recommendation from me.'

In point of fact, he politely declined, though we were somewhat prepared for such a refusal; but by no means contented to forego the letter of introduction without another attempt to obtain it, to which we were also advised by Massara, who found opportunity to suggest a repetition of our request at a later period of the interview.

The Patriarch now began a series of inquiries regarding the Church of England. How many sacraments did we acknowledge? Did we require confession? Was private confession absolutely required? Upon this point he was very persevering. 'You are,' said he, 'an English priest? you therefore celebrate marriages sometimes; is it not so? Now, when a man comes to you for marriage,

do you require of him private confession previous to the marriage? and would you refuse him the sacred rite, if he declined to confess?' When I replied in the negative he seemed much astonished and disappointed, and there was a manifest disapproval of the discipline of the English Church on this point from the Copts who were sitting all around, silently smoking their chibouques, but listening intently to the conversation with the European strangers.

Again the Patriarch began :

' As members of the Church of England *might* confess, did they often do so? and did we give them absolution when they did confess? Was our Church Episcopalian? and had we many bishops? Were our bishops married men? '

The answer ' Yes ' to this last inquiry created quite a start of disagreement on the part of the listeners, and the Patriarch evidently had but an indifferent opinion of the wisdom of the rulers of the English Church.

It was now my turn to question, and I respectfully asked leave to interrogate the Patriarch on a few points. When he had graciously signified his assent, I made several inquiries regarding the Coptic Church. Among others

‘ Might Coptic priests marry ? ’

‘ Yes, certainly. ’

‘ Might not bishop also marry ? ’

‘ Oh ! no. ’

‘ Did they hold seven sacraments ? ’

‘ Yes, certainly. The Coptic was the most ancient Church in the world, and held *all* the ancient doctrines. ’

H. now begged me to put a question regarding Babylon in Egypt, about which we had previously had some discussion. Old Cairo was (as I have already said) originally Babylon; and St. Peter dates his First Epistle from Babylon, coupling with it the name of St. Mark, whom we know to have been the first Patriarch of Alexandria. I therefore made the following inquiries :

‘ Was not St. Mark the first Patriarch of Alexandria ? ’

Answer : ‘ Undoubtedly he was. ’

‘ St. Peter’s First Epistle is dated from Babylon, and St. Mark’s salutation is added : was the Babylon here mentioned Old Cairo ? ’

The Patriarch replied : ‘ St. Peter never was in Egypt, and therefore he cannot have dated from Old Cairo. ’

We were not satisfied, and from the earnest

talk and manifest discussion, it was very clear we had broached a question quite new to the Patriarch and his colleagues. An active young Copt, who was by far the most excited of the party, and fluent in giving his opinion, was here despatched for an Arabic Bible, with which he quickly returned, and read from it the last verse but one of St. Peter's First Epistle, to which we had alluded: 'The Church which is in Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.' There was evident surprise on their faces as the young Copt finished the verse: a new light had evidently broken in upon them, or at any rate a point had been raised of immense interest to them; but the Patriarch did not seem to have been at all acquainted with this verse, nor, to say the truth, did any of them. And now a very animated discussion ensued upon the question which we had raised, one after another solemnly giving his judgment on the point. At last the Patriarch gave an amended answer to our previous question, to the effect 'that there was no tradition among them that St. Peter ever was in Egypt; but if he ever was in the country, then in all probability

our view was the right one, and his Epistle was dated from Old Cairo.’

I now called attention to the Arabic Bible which had been brought, and whose well-known brown cover reminded me of those we are all so fully acquainted with, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. On inquiry we found that it had been printed in London by that same S. P. C. K., and that very many Bibles are sent out here and sold at a small price; but when I informed them that a Bible of similar size and shape could be purchased in England for four piastres (tenpence), their astonishment and admiration were intense; and anew there was much conversation among themselves on this head.

When a pause occurred, I again requested Massara to inform the Patriarch how much we desired a letter of introduction from him to the superiors of the convents and churches in Upper Egypt, and how grateful we should be if he would give it. On this second application he made no demur, but said he would speak to the scribe when next he appeared—for the scribe had come in many times during our audience with sundry letters for perusal and approval, and for sealing with the patriarchal seal.

Upon this I thought it was time to retire. Moreover, my legs were cramped with the unwonted position of a tailor, which I had been obliged to retain on the divan; but Massara knew better than I, not only that importunity alone gains its end in the East, but that a favour promised must not be lost sight of, but followed up till it is obtained. So we sat on till the scribe appeared, when we again reminded the Patriarch of our request, and he graciously directed the required letter to be prepared. And now two visitors of high rank were introduced, and several of those present kissed the Patriarch's hand and retired; and we too rose up, and with many repetitions of thanks and civilities on both sides, which I doubt not were famously embellished by the courtly Massara, we kissed the Patriarch's hand and withdrew.

Then we sought out the scribe, which was no easy matter. At last he came to us, with his reed in his hand, and his silver inkhorn at his girdle; and with the help of Massara immediately began to concoct the rough draft of the note required; this took place as we stood in the court below, in front of the new Coptic church. An Oriental scribe requires no office for his work; he carries

all his materials in his girdle, and the palm of his hand is his usual desk: this accounts for the long narrow slips of paper on which notes are generally written in the East. And now the note is in course of preparation after this remarkable fashion: the slip of paper laid on the palm of the left hand, and the general purport of our requirements quickly stated; but when he came to write our names in Arabic, he was sorely puzzled, and not till he had made several attempts, and had erased and rewritten them with Massara's help many times, was he satisfied with his performance; and even then a grim smile of astonishment overspread his solemn countenance as he contemplated what he evidently considered our barbaric names. By this time the Patriarch had descended from his audience chamber, and attended by seven or eight ecclesiastics, had entered the new Coptic church, to mark its progress towards completion. Soon after a chair was placed for him on the upper steps under the portico, leading to the main entrance; and immediately his pipe-bearer followed with the long chibouque freshly filled and lighted: and there sat the holy man, while his companions stood around or sat on the steps, chatting familiarly with all, and puffing forth

such volumes of smoke as I never saw issue from the lips of less dignified or less orthodox individual, though I must do him the justice to say that his tobacco was the best I tasted during the whole tour in Egypt.

And now the rough draft of our letter of introduction is completed, and the scribe is reading it to the Patriarch for approval; and we see there is some little hitch, the erasing of a word or a sentence, and the substitution of another; but it was not till afterwards that we learnt to our mortification, from Massara, that the objection made by this most reverend head of the African Church was to acknowledge us in his letter as 'priests,' and so he insisted that another word equivalent to *minister* should be substituted, so painfully did the non-enforcement of private confession, and the permission of the marriage of bishops, rankle in his mind against the English Church. It occupied but a short time to make a fair copy of the letter now corrected and approved; for it is marvellous how rapidly and neatly, as well as with what apparent ease, the practised scribe dashes off a page on the palm of his hand. And then the Patriarch handed over his seal, which he always wears attached to his girdle in a purple case, and

an impression was made with ink at the foot of the letter, and it was mine. I gave the good scribe a rupee for his pains, which so astonished him at my wonderful liberality, that he not only continued to touch his lips, forehead, and chest, and to salaam to an amazing extent, but seized my hand and kissed it at least a dozen times, in the exuberance of his gratitude.

Interesting as our interview with the Patriarch had been, and highly as I valued Massara's kindness in procuring us the introduction, and accompanying us on such a serious visit (for it occupied just two hours and a half from the time we entered the Coptic College to the sealing of the letter), I cannot say I was on the whole favourably impressed with the great head of the African Church: good-tempered he undoubtedly was, and amiable and kind, but we thought him singularly stolid, unintellectual, and heavy-browed; an opinion which his coarse, almost sensual features, did not tend to dissipate. In truth, his appearance as well as his manner gave me the impression of a great want of ability and of narrow-mindedness, which, I suppose, was not diminished in our eyes by the view which he so manifestly entertained of the English branch of the Church.

I should suppose him to be about fifty-five years of age, and I believe him to be much respected by his own people, a result quite compatible with the view of his attainments which I have ventured to form.

But when we call to mind the once proud pre-eminence of the Patriarchate of Alexandria—‘the Evangelical See,’ as it was honourably designated, in allusion to its founder, the Evangelist St. Mark—and when we remember that he who presided over that see was styled ‘the judge of the world,’ and ‘the head of the world,’ and what a very prominent part was taken in the great councils of the Church by its patriarch, and what a mighty host of great and learned men have filled that distinguished post—including amongst others the indomitable champion of orthodoxy, the dauntless Athanasius—it is impossible to refrain from contrasting him who now fills the chair of St. Mark with his distinguished predecessors, and from lamenting the evident dulness which is the more conspicuous characteristic of him who now occupies the see.

Let us, however, do him the justice to call to mind the singularly unfit preparation for a life of energy which a long course of inactivity, as a

monk in the desert convent of St. Antony must necessarily give (for from the holy fathers of that convent the patriarch is invariably chosen), and we shall cease to wonder that he is backward in stirring up his subordinates to greater diligence, and in promoting in the Coptic Church the reforms of which it stands so greatly in need.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NILE BOAT: ITS ARRANGEMENTS AND
COMPLEMENT.

WE had now been a fortnight at Cairo, and had seen its principal sights; and though one could never exhaust the wonders of that truly Oriental capital, which is generally allowed to be the queen of all Eastern cities, we were getting eager for the start on our Nile cruise; so that when the dragoman Braheem made his appearance one morning at Shephèard's Hotel to report that the 'Southern Cross' had arrived at Boulak, the port of Cairo, we were quite ready to go on board at once, and hurrying over the last purchases requisite for completing our stores, we embarked on Tuesday, December 27, and before nightfall were well clear of Cairo and its coffee-shops, so seductive to the Arab sailor's mind.

There is something so exquisitely new and in-

dependent in life on board a Nile boat—so different from anything the traveller experiences elsewhere; so easy and even luxurious the mode of travel, and withal so full of interest; in the midst of Oriental vegetation, the most magnificent climate, the most gorgeous sunsets, and the grandest and oldest ruins in the world—that I should like to describe somewhat minutely this joyous and pleasant way of visiting the land, and bring before the mind of my reader all the details and arrangements of our boat and her crew, so that he may picture to himself that gallant barque and her swarthy and motley Arabs.

Moreover, the intending traveller in Egypt will desire to be introduced to the furnished dahabeah, in order that he may understand what his floating home will be; but it is strange that, amongst much passing mention of the Nile boat in every book on Egyptian travel, I failed, previous to my start for the East, to discover what sort of craft that boat might be; nor, till I saw it with my own eyes at Alexandria, did I picture to myself its shape or its dimensions; nor, in fact, had I the very faintest conception of its general appearance. I propose, then, in this chapter to begin at the very beginning, and describe all that appertains to the Nile boat and its crew.

First, however, let me introduce my readers to the most prominent figure amongst our attendants, who was not only dragoman and general controller of the household, but owner of the boat as well—‘Braheem’ was the name by which he was called by the Arabs, and under that title I will designate him in these pages. Maltese by nation, and in personal appearance of short stature, and with a red beard which procured him the sobriquet of ‘Il rosso’ amongst his comrades of Alexandria, he was, like all his countrymen in Egypt, of truly polyglot powers, though at the same time so illiterate that he could neither read nor write. In addition to his native *Maltese* and *English* (which he spoke remarkably well, having served sixteen years on board an English man-of-war), he was quite at home in *Arabic*, *Greek*, *Russian*, *French*, and *Italian*, and I believe he knew a smattering of *Turkish* as well. He was a plausible, civil, obliging man, and generally anxious to please his employers, and to maintain order and harmony on board. And we had no fault to find with his catering; indeed, we occasionally had to remonstrate with him on the unnecessary number of dishes with which he sometimes delighted to load our table. And though we subsequently came

into violent altercation with him on several occasions, when we found ourselves, without reason, dawdling under the bank or making no further progress than drifting down gently with the current, yet he was never sulky in consequence, but bright and cheerful soon after as before. At the time, indeed, he would fly into the most outrageous passion, stamp about on the deck, tear his hair, mutter unintelligible oaths between his teeth, and comport himself in all respects like a madman; while he glared out of his eyes with an expression of intense ferocity, to which his bushy red beard conduced not a little. Indeed, when his wrath was roused, and that occurred not seldom, I never saw a man in such a passion. I shall never forget a sudden attack he made one night upon the cook: it was about ten o'clock, and in bright moonlight, when I was sitting on deck smoking my chibouque, enjoying the coolness of the evening, and our boat was hard and fast on a sandbank in the middle of the river. At such times all the ship's company was expected to help, and we often lent a hand ourselves at the ropes or the poles. Our Arab sailors were all in the water, having slipped off their garments for about the fourth time, and, with the everlasting monotonous chant, were

trying to push off her bows by main force. We had been giving what aid we could at the ropes: Braheem had been working like a horse, and was now straining with all his might at the rudder, to prevent its becoming bedded in the sand; only the cook was idle: he too was a Maltese, but a lazy lubberly fellow, and was now sitting below the companion ladder, gazing out on the water. He had been asked to help, and had declined, and as Braheem told me this, and declaimed on the inveterate sloth of the man, I saw wrath gathering in his eye, and he soon worked himself into a fury. On a sudden, and without a word, leaving the rudder at which he had been busy, he dashed down the companion ladder, and flew upon the unfortunate cook, trying to knock him overboard into the Nile. And undoubtedly over the low bulwarks he would have gone, if he had not seen his master coming, and prepared himself for the attack by laying hold of a rope with both hands; and as a return for the violent blow he received, seized the aggressing hand with his teeth, and bit it to the bone. The commotion soon brought the sailors on board: the opponents were parted, and order was restored; but this was a sample of the fury into which his ungovernable temper would, on provocation, lash

our hot-tempered dragoman. Surely the Bersaker rage, which is wont to overpower the Norwegian and the Swede, must have migrated to the South, and taken up its abode in the breast of this red-haired Maltese.

Another remarkable feature in his character, which soon made itself conspicuous—though I fear it was a failing common, not only to all his countrymen or to all his craft, but to everybody in the East—was an inveterate habit of lying. Not one word could we believe; and we soon learnt that he always said what he thought most pleasant to us to hear, or most expedient at the moment. Did we ask a Moslem to dinner, he would take care to assure him that the turkey was killed by an orthodox believer in Islam, although our Maltese cook had just been seen operating on its throat. Did the boat come to a halt under a bank in a favourable wind, he always vowed it was contrary, or protested it had just veered round. And it was the same in all the little trifling matters which daily occurred: he would unhesitatingly assert whatever seemed to serve his turn for the moment, wholly irrespective of the facts of the case; in truth, he followed out to the letter the Arab proverb, that ‘untruth is to be spoken when need requires.’ And

yet, notwithstanding these serious faults, he was not a bad dragoman on the whole. From his long experience of the river, and his knowledge of all the points of interest, as well as his readiness to oblige, and to cater for our several tastes, he managed to enlist our good-will, and to make us recollect him with satisfaction. Then we had his son for our servant, and a very excellent attendant he was, though he was fearfully ill, poor fellow, for a considerable portion of the tour, and we thought for a long time that he would never recover from the low, depressing fever which, for weeks, confined him to his bed.

Our dahabeah too was the property of our dragoman, and in this, I think, we made a mistake; for he was (naturally perhaps) over careful of his own property, and always fearful of damage occurring under every state of weather but a perfect calm. Moreover, as he was getting a considerable profit by every day's hire of his boat as well as his own services, he was of course the more inclined to protract our trip as much as he could: so that I should strongly advise the traveller on the Nile to let the hire of dragoman and boat be two separate engagements, and with different parties wholly unconnected with each other; and this indeed is

generally the case, as a dragoman has by no means customarily any property in the boats.

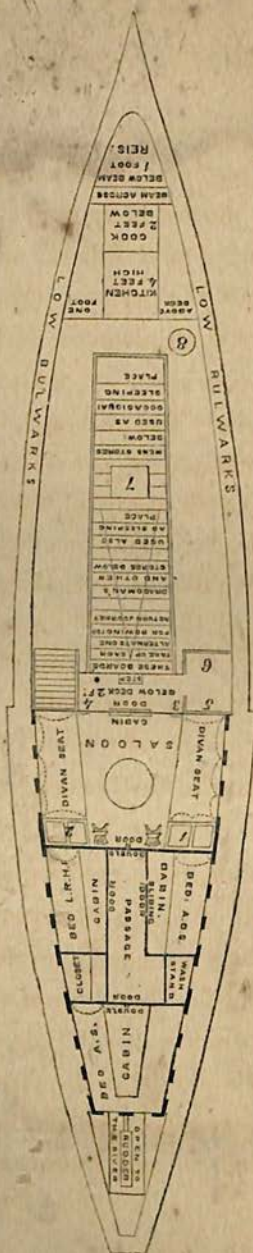
I must now describe the dahabeah as well as I can, for it is a very peculiar vessel, wholly unlike any other craft, and withal extremely well arranged for the comfort and convenience of the hirers; and after we had shaken into place, and in a few days had become accustomed to our contracted cabins, and had made our arrangements, and stowed away our goods to the best advantage, we soon became quite attached to our floating home, where we were thoroughly comfortable, and soon experienced that there was no roughing it on the Nile, but on the contrary, we might live *en prince*, and could glide along the charming river, without motion, and with as little exertion, if we so pleased, as the most indolent could desire: while those whose taste led them to do so, which was my own case, could spend the whole day on shore, shooting on the banks of the river, or penetrating into the desert, and rejoining the boat at any point they pleased.

Our dahabeah was seventy-two feet in total length, and fourteen feet wide at the broadest part: she had a very sharp nose, was very deep in the water forward, and had a cabin deck or quarter-

deck above the cabins and saloon at the stern, high above the water: she was flat-bottomed, as are all the Nile bouts, on account of the extreme shallowness of the river when the inundations are gone down in the spring. A square pent-house, of the smallest dimensions, and lined with brick, within four feet of the bow, represented the kitchen, where the cook took up his abode, and from which he contrived to send us a great variety of excellent dishes every day. Immediately behind the kitchen rose the mast, some thirty or more feet in height, on the top of which, suspended by ropes, swung the long tapering yard, very heavily weighted, thick at the lower end, and gradually diminishing to a thin pole, from whose extreme point floated our streamer, at the height of some seventy feet above the deck. This long yard carried the immense triangular lateen sail, the object of whose enormous dimensions was to catch the wind when the Nile was low, and its perpendicular banks were high; and when her sail was set and we were scudding before the wind, our boat certainly put on a very rakish appearance. The sail was shaken out from the yard cleverly enough, when wanted: but the furling it was a bungling business indeed, and not

without a certain amount of danger in a high wind ; for the sailors had, one behind another, to swarm up this long tapering yard, swaying to and fro as it did, till there were sometimes eight of them upon it, clutching at the sail with outstretched arms, and gathering it up into folds, which they made fast with the rope. The lightest youth went first, and so on in rotation, till the heavy weights were below at the thicker end ; but, even under the weight of the youngest lad, there was a bending and a strain which made us shudder, as we watched the process from the deck. There was also a small stern sail, which was occasionally, but not very often, used in the upward journey, and which on the downward voyage took the place of the great sail, which was then removed and stowed away.

A large filterer within a wooden frame occupied the centre of the main deck, and being four feet in height, was the most prominent feature of that portion of the boat. Very low bulwarks, scarcely six inches in height, ran along the sides, so that it was easy to step in and out of the water, as our Arabs did, on occasion, many times a day. The main deck was chiefly occupied by the sailors and servants ; who, unless when we were tracking or towing,



PLAN OF THE 'SOUTHERN CROSS' (P. 149)

were always congregated there, while in the hold the dragoman's stores were stowed, and sundry other stores, belonging to the crew; here too the servants found a berth at night, and occasionally some of the sailors, though the latter generally preferred to sleep on deck, well wrapped round in thick *bournoise* or *abbas*, and always taking care completely to envelop the whole head.

About midships two steps led down into the saloon, which occupied the breadth of the boat. It had three windows on either side, and was furnished with two divans extending below the windows the length of the saloon: a round table in the centre, a couple of chairs, some glass cupboards and a few drawers, book-cases, and the gun-stand, completed the furniture of our sitting-room. Double glass doors at the farther end of the saloon led, by a narrow passage, to the sleeping cabins, one on either side, each cabin measuring six feet by four, just half of which was occupied by the bed; and a larger one intended for two beds, at the extreme stern, six feet by six, and which F. soon fitted with yellow windows or blinds, and became his photographer's den by day, and bedroom by night. There were also between these cabins the washing-stand, &c., though by means of our portable india-

rubber baths, which were quite invaluable on the Nile, we were wholly independent of such meagre accommodation in this way. On both sides of the saloon door, leading to the main deck were pantries, and in one of these the dragoman slept, while above the other a steep companion ladder led to the quarter-deck, which was in reality our general sitting-room by day, whenever we were on board: it was furnished with two divans, one on either side, and a table; the saloon skylight, two feet high, and always open, occupied the centre; the steersman stood near the stern, but with room behind him for the hen-coops, and turkey pens, which were always kept replenished with a greater or less supply of fowls, as opportunity of purchase allowed. Above all was stretched the awning, which was taken down every evening as the sun became low, and put up every morning as required. A small jolly boat, called promiscuously the *sandal* or *felucca*, furnished with oars and boat-hook, was in tow behind, and in constant use every day for going ashore.

Such is the commodious house-boat, in which the traveller lives for months on the Nile, and which is called the dahabeah; and though one is necessarily somewhat confined for room, I can

assure my readers, it is extremely comfortable, and in this respect cannot easily be improved.

Our crew consisted of reis, second reis, and eight sailors, whose business it was to manage the sails in a favourable wind; to track or tow the boat from the shore in a calm, or to punt her along with poles, and in the downward journey to row with heavy oars. The reis, or captain, named 'Abdullah,' was a quiet, taciturn, little old man, of grave aspect, whose post was at the extreme bow of the boat, which he seldom left on the upward journey, and where he might be seen standing, at any hour, with a long pole in hand, sounding from time to time, and reporting the depth of water, when there was danger of getting into shallows, or running upon a sand-bank. Next in command was the second reis, or steersman, 'Mohammed,' who seemed immovably fixed to the handle of the rudder, so constant was he at his post by day and by night; and even when we were at anchor, so rooted was he to that identical spot, that the heap of blue robes and bournouse, at such times invariably to be seen at the extreme end of the quarter-deck, at all hours, represented the faithful Mohammed asleep. He too was an old man, with grey beard and weak eyes, for which

latter we often administered nitrate of silver, to his grievous pain but inexpressible delight. A famous old fellow he was, by far the most valuable Arab we had on board; and when we knew that Mohammed was in charge, we felt sure all was going right.

As for the rest of the crew, they were a fluctuating, changeable set, and but very few who started with us from Cairo made the whole journey with us to Wady Halfeh and back. Amongst them all, I think we exhausted every type of the Arab race, as well as the whole vocabulary of Egyptian names. There was 'Suleiman,' who ran away at Benisooef, having slipped out of the boat in the night-time, and made off to his village, to which it is to be presumed he only wanted a free passage when he engaged himself as one of our crew. There was 'Achmet Ali,' whom we soon designated as 'Ulysses,' a cunning, crafty, quiet man, with a twinkle of roguish humour in his eye, but withal a powerful, strong man, and an excellent sailor. There was 'Nooa,' nearly as dark as a Nubian, with thick lips and woolly beard, a surly-looking, disagreeable fellow, but strong and active enough when he pleased. There was 'Said,' the blackest, ugliest of them all, and the most idle, and always

the first to cry out for a halt, and always ready to rebel, though he too was able-bodied, and strong as a horse when he liked. There was 'Achmet,' to whom we immediately and unanimously gave the sobriquet of 'the Dervish,' not only to distinguish him from two others of the same name at one time on board, but because his demeanour and dress forcibly reminded us of the whirling dervishes, whose antics had amazed us so much at Cairo; he had the very same brown serge dress, the same brimless flower-pot-shaped brown felt cap on his head; and he was a demure, religious man too, never omitting his morning and evening prayers with his face towards Mecca, and keeping the fast of Ramadan with most scrupulous and very praiseworthy strictness. There was 'Mensour,' another swarthy, silent, good-tempered fellow, ready to follow his comrades, whether for work or relaxation. There was 'Laze,' whose name, had it only been English, would exactly describe his nature, such an indolent, idle dog was this broad-shouldered youth, and as he was our personal attendant in many of our expeditions on shore, we had ample opportunity of marking his detestation of work, and his inveterate love of repose; for, did we stop for a few minutes to

admire a view, or examine a ruin, in an instant Laze was coiled up in the warmest spot he could find, and fast asleep on the sand. Then there was 'Ismail,' a tall slim youth of girlish face, who carried the bag in many of my shooting excursions 'on shore, and who was silent, quiet, and demure. There was 'Mustafa,' who served for many weeks as our table servant and cabin hand, during the long and alarming illness of our Maltese waiter; and who soon became quite an adept in the unaccustomed work, and was generally known amongst us in consequence, by the title of 'the ladies' maid.' And lastly, to omit those who only remained with us a very short time, there was the boy 'Ali,' who waited upon the crew, kindled their fire, and prepared their porridge, and who was universally styled 'el wallad' by the whole ship's company; and as he was at everybody's beck and call, from the Hawagers on the quarter-deck to the sailors at the bow, the shout 'ya wallad' 'O boy,' might be constantly heard from one quarter or another, resounding through the boat. This boy was a perfect sample of the Arab youth—dark-eyed, shy, cunning, idle; when not employed in sucking sugar-cane, long reeds of which he was continually bringing on board, he

spent hours of every day asleep on the quarter-deck in the blazing sun at noon, close to reis Mohammed, to whom he seemed much attached; and it was strange to see how the flies, attracted no doubt by the sugar, swarmed in clouds upon his eyes and mouth: but, even when broad awake, he never seemed to care to brush them off, wherein we concluded that use was second nature, for though we Hawagers were armed, each with his fly-flapper of palm-leaves, not only when we read or wrote in the saloon, but even at our meals, we could scarcely endure the torment and irritation of that terrible plague, which even now rages in Egypt to an annoying degree beyond the power of words to express.

This then was the complement of the 'Southern Cross'—three English 'Hawagers,' three Maltese servants, viz. dragoman, waiter, and cook; and ten Egyptian Arabs, including the reis and second reis, or captain and steersman.

Amongst the sailors, we had many strong, well-grown men, but scarcely one without some blemish or defect, and this we found to be almost universal amidst the fellaheen on the Nile. For, in the first place, the terrible ophthalmia, which prevails in Egypt to so frightful an extent, from whatever

cause it may arise, causes blindness, or partial blindness, to a large proportion of the population : and even when it does not result in the total loss of sight of one or both eyes, leaves many a miserable victim weak-eyed and purblind. There was a time, as we learn from Herodotus* when the Egyptian physicians were considered the best in the world, and were especially celebrated as oculists, probably because they had so much experience in the treatment of affections of the eye. But if they ever possessed such skill, they have certainly lost it, and the poor fellaheen never dream of having recourse to any but their Frank visitors, though they have the greatest confidence in the medical knowledge of every European traveller ; and would run down to our boat, or beset us on shore, or call out from the bank, and entreat us to give them an eye-lotion ; and most grateful indeed they always were for the trifling gift, though the application of it put them to excruciating pain, and made them wince again for a time.

But, as if the unavoidable scourge of ophthalmia, generally attributed to the fine sand and dust, with which the air is often impregnated, was not

* Book II. chap. i.

enough, it has become quite a common custom amongst the Egyptian Arabs to mutilate their children, by blinding the right eye, cutting off the fore-finger, or knocking out the front teeth of their boys, in order to render them unserviceable as soldiers, and prevent their being seized upon as recruits. This is now systematically done by those who actually gain a livelihood by performing these barbarous operations, so general and so deep is the horror entertained by his subjects for the conscription, to which the pasha has now recourse for recruiting the ranks of his army. And, however M. St.-Hilaire, with the national prejudice of a Frenchman for what he truly styles *l'impôt du sang*, may uphold its necessity, legitimacy, and usefulness, the fellaheen regard it with the deepest horror, and no arguments of expediency will weigh against the violent antipathy they entertain against what they consider as the most odious and tyrannical of all the heavy burdens under which they groan.

Thus, then, our Arab crew presented a curious assemblage of one-eyed, forefingerless, toothless men, with bare legs and feet, and clad in robes and caps or turbans of a variety of hues ; with all which garments they would dispense at a moment's

notice, when the exigencies of the boat required them to jump overboard and push or pull in the shallow water. This constant bathing, and the ablutions required by their religion, rendered them a well-washed people, and we never had reason to complain of any want of cleanliness on the part of our men. But indeed I may say generally, that the river population of Egypt is by no means a dirty race; and, though their garments are often torn and ragged through extreme poverty, and their mud houses mere beds of sand and dust, yet the men and women have none of that begrimed appearance which so often characterises the lower orders in Southern Europe, and may I not add, in England too? The same, however, cannot be said of the children, whose bodies a strange religious prejudice forbids the parents to wash during the first eight years of their lives, and from whose eyes and faces a like superstition does not suffer them to brush the flies which (as I have said) are still a most irritating plague in Egypt. The children of the fellahéen are usually quite naked, and miserable, shapeless, and filthy atoms of humanity they generally are; and, as they follow the Hawager with screams for *backsheesh*, which must be the first word they learn to pronounce, it is well for him

that a wholesome dread of such an ogre as every Frank seems to be in their eyes, prevents them from venturing on too near an approach.

While on the subject of the class from which the boatmen are taken, the *fellaheen*, or labouring population and their children, I may here say a few words about their wives; and the substance of all that can be said on this point is, that their condition is lamentable and degraded in the extreme. Ground down with incessant toil, and treated with contempt and harshness, as if they were slaves or an inferior race of beings, their miserable life is spent in obeying the orders of their husbands and in the drudgery of domestic life. They are clothed in the universal blue robe, which is their only garment, if we except the veil which conceals their face, and that which covers the crown of the head, the two connected together by a brass fastening. Their carriage is extremely upright, and their walk graceful, as they traverse the path which leads from the river to their huts, with a ponderous water-jar on their heads; or as they convey a small vessel in a fashion peculiar to themselves, though doubtless after the custom of their ancestors, upon the open palm of the hand lifted and reversed above the shoulder; they may

often, too, be seen carrying a child astride on their shoulder, a true picture of primitive and Oriental life.* They generally tattoo their faces, arms, hands, and feet. This is almost universal on the forehead and chin, and what, to European eyes, has a most disagreeable effect, they tattoo their lips, so as to give them a blue colour, somewhat resembling the hue assumed by the lips of our school children when blackberries are in season, only that, in the case of the African women, their dark skins can ill afford to dispense with the bright colour which nature has imparted to the lips as a set-off to their sombre complexion. Those who aspire to a *grande toilette*—and the ladies of Egypt are by no means behind their sisters of Paris or London in the desire to set themselves off to the most advantage, according to their own ideas of what is becoming—ink their eye-lids with ‘kohl,’ which, by encircling the eyes with a dark rim, is supposed to enhance their brilliancy. They also stain their finger-nails and toes with ‘henna,’ which imparts a bright orange hue. Nor let any one suppose that this is a trifling matter; such elaborate adornment demands a vast amount of

* Genesis xxi. 14.

time and attention, and not a little inconvenience, while the process is being carried out. The method adopted is, first to work up the powdered henna leaf with water into a paste, lay it on the palm of the hand, double the finger-nails and tips of the fingers well into it, and bind the whole closely for at least twenty-four hours, at the expiration of which time the desired effect is produced, and continues for near a month, though some, who are very particular on the point, renew the dye every week. This staining the fingers with henna is not confined to the fair sex alone : amongst the sailors on board our boat, several of the younger men showed traces at least of having undergone the same troublesome process, though I suspect it was not repeated during the voyage.

CHAPTER IX.

ON BOARD THE SOUTHERN CROSS—CAIRO TO
THEBES.

WE had adopted the 'Southern Cross' as the name of our dahabeah, and had, accordingly, caused that constellation to be depicted on our flag, which was to be the distinguishing mark of our boat throughout the cruise. As all European travellers on the Nile are eager to know the names and occupants of the other dahabeahs they chance to meet on the river, they take care to supply themselves, before they leave Cairo, with a correct list of the flags and their owners, and this is readily obtained from the notorious Mr. Pay, who, nominally an English tailor, supplies the universal requirements of the European tourists, and is pre-eminently the undisputed flag-maker for Nile travellers. We had adopted the Southern Cross as our emblem, chiefly because it seemed most

suitable to our order, and, surrounded as we continually were on all sides with native boats which bore the crescent, we were glad to see our long yard surmounted by the emblem of the Christian faith. Moreover, we looked forward, before we reached the tropics, to come in sight of this beautiful constellation of southern skies, so Mr. Pay was charged to prepare the bunting, which composed our pennant, no less than fifteen yards in length; and thus we depicted it—a red cross upon a white ground, at the broad end of the flag, while at the extreme end of each arm of the cross a white star of five points represented the constellation; the remainder of the streamer red.

And now, with the Union Jack at the stern, and our own flag aloft at the point of our tapering yard, we began our upward journey from Cairo, with a prosperous wind, which wafted us along at a steady pace, and I believe we thought, in our simplicity, that three or four miles an hour would be our average speed. If we indulged any such romantic thoughts we were soon undeceived; in a few hours the wind had lulled, and we were at the bank, preparing the tow-rope, to which the men harnessed themselves, eight in a long row, each with a short rope round his chest, and so pulling

by weight as well as by muscular exertion, just as we might any day see the barge horses drawing from the collar on the banks of the Thames; this was tiresome, tedious work in the hot sun, though in good truth I firmly believe that the extreme of heat has not the smallest effect on the swarthy Arab. However, heat as well as cold, and wind, and every other conceivable pretext, did duty as an excuse, from time to time, for relaxing in their work. Occasionally, when tracking, it became necessary to pass some native craft, laden with merchandise, which, being heavier than our passenger boat, and manned with very few hands, crawled up the stream under the bank, at even a slower pace than ourselves; this was seldom effected without violent altercations between the crews, who often contrived to entangle the tow-ropes, and otherwise foul their respective boats. These native vessels, or *murkab*, as they are generically styled (a term which really means *conveyance*, and may be best translated by the French word *monture*, and is applied to the camel indiscriminately with the boat), were of all shapes and sizes; many were a rough species of dahabeah, similarly furnished with cabins of the very rudest description at the stern, and crammed with

human and other freight ; others were laden with corn and the various kinds of grain produced in such abundance in the irrigated lands of this fertile country ; and some, which had the strangest appearance of all, were huge floating ricks of chopped straw, most cleverly piled to a great height on a frame-work of palm-branches. Sometimes two boats were lashed together, and the platform, which projects far over the sides, extended beyond both boats, while the huge stack of finely chopped straw, which is the usual substitute for hay in the East, and is the ordinary food for camels, was built upon this floating foundation with marvellous skill. Sometimes, but very rarely indeed, we had a spanking breeze behind us, and then away we sped at a famous rate, our large sail full, and driving us through the water at six miles an hour. At such times there was no shooting on shore, no sight-seeing, let the temptation be never so great ; but we remorselessly sped by temples and ruins, pyramids and tombs, and left all to be seen on our downward journey. Then our sailors were thoroughly happy : with the exception of two, whose business it was to take charge of the sail ropes, and hold them in their hands, so as to let them fly at a moment's notice, in case of sudden

squalls (a precaution absolutely necessary to be enforced). All the others, wrapped in their thick coarse *abbas*, and with their heads always enveloped in ample folds, were geneally asleep on deck: whether at midday in the blazing sun, or at night under the light of the moon, seemed to make no difference to them, and their capacity for sleep was truly extraordinary; if the wind were to last a week, I believe they would only rouse themselves to eat and smoke, and then slumber again. When a stiff breeze continued all day, as it did on two or three occasions, we made as much as fifty miles in the twenty-four hours; but these were very exceptional days indeed, a gentle breeze morning or evening, and a dead calm during the rest of the day, or indeed a calm day and night being the general rule; so that we began to think the good Herodotus must have been napping when he talked of the wind blowing steadily from the north during the winter months; and we were surprised that Belzoni and Sir Gardner Wilkinson, and other great authorities on Egypt, should have endorsed so wild an assertion, when the log which we regularly kept every day, and which was suspended to the cabin-door, marked but a very small proportion of days when we were favoured by

those said Etesian winds, during our upward journey from Cairo to Wady Halfeh.

But if we were disposed in the earlier part of our tour to call in question that statement of our favourite Greek author, he certainly turned the tables upon us, and had his revenge in the return voyage, when we encountered a succession of those same northerly gales, which hindered our advance, and detained us at anchor from time to time, during the whole of our homeward cruise. In real truth, when Herodotus wrote the result of his own observations, he was very seldom in the wrong, and we were more and more impressed with the accuracy of that much maligned historian, as we saw his graphic and quaint descriptions daily verified before our eyes. With regard to the north wind, it is undoubtedly the prevailing breeze on the Nile, and is generally allowed to blow for nine months in the year, though we did not happen to be favoured with an average share of its benefits when we most desired it; so that our poor sailors had an unusual amount of tracking with the tow-rope, to which they were almost daily harnessed, and to which they attached themselves, however reluctantly, yet without grumbling, or show of sullenness or ill-temper. Besides

sailing and tracking, punting over the shallows with long poles was much resorted to by our men; this was always accompanied by the most monotonous sing-song, consisting of a single phrase, or two at the most, the burden of which was to invoke the aid of Allah or Mohammed, and which each man, as he walked along the edge of the boat, would repeat, without variation, for an hour together.

The words in most constant use, day after day, consisted of :—‘Allah, haylee-sah,’ only varied with an occasional ‘Haylee, haylee-sah,’ or ‘Hay, haylee-sah,’ and then going back to the original text of their cry, ‘Allah, haylee-sah,’ and on other occasions, with even less variation, ‘Ei-ya, Mohammed, Ei-ya Mohammed,’ was the short sentence which issued from every man’s lips, with a slightly nasal twang, and a prolongation of the first two syllables, till the air seemed charged with these perpetual sounds, and our ears wearied with the monotony. It would seem to Europeans almost incredible, that men employed in the really laborious work of punting a heavy boat against the rapid current of the river should continue to repeat this everlasting refrain, without pause or variation; but the Arabs can do nothing without

song; and our boat resounded with their never-ending mournful chants, from morning till night. In this, too, we see a relic of bygone days, for the ancient Egyptians are depicted in the tombs as accompanying their labours with song and clapping of hands, just as their successors do now; and even the sailors of matter-of-fact England and other European nations are apt to indulge in a simultaneous cry when hauling at a rope.

I am aware that the above is but a meagre account of the perpetual sing-song which is the invariable accompaniment of the Nile boat, and one of its most striking characteristics: but it is really quite impossible to give any idea by description, of the mournful monotony of these everlasting chants, without which no rope can be hauled, no pole handled, no sail hoisted, no oar pulled. Sometimes, in rowing, the ordinary phrases would be varied by a more regular song, always however, with the familiar chorus at the end of every line, and fresh matter, relating to present circumstances, the trip, the Hawagers, and so on, was occasionally improvised by the reciter. Then the men rise to their oars, rolling their heads, and, turning up the whites of their eyes, and with the grinning teeth and giggle peculiar to Africans, would shout,

‘Allah ya, Haylee-sah,’ in full chorus, and with all the strength of their lungs; or they would vary their general tune with another, which still rings in my ears, from the many, many hours they were condemned to endure it, when every man rather hummed than sang, ‘Aya hamam, aya hamam;’ and on such occasions the improvvisatore who led the others would sometimes depart from the general termination of ‘haylee-sah,’ by the venturesome substitution of ‘Haylee-issah;’ or by even introducing the fresh cry, though scarcely the novel sentiment, of ‘Ya Allah, Ya Mohammed,’ the former of which was often contracted to the single word ‘Yallah,’ given out with great vehemence, but not a semblance of reverence; and, as often as not, followed by a wild and shrill screech, or loud, boisterous yell; or even a hearty, heathenish laugh or guffaw from the whole crew, which was startling at first, till we became accustomed to what we soon learnt to be the general termination of the song, so-called, of these unsophisticated Arabs.

With all the care of the reis at the extreme bows, and all the skill of our excellent second reis Mohammed, even on the up-voyage, when the Nile was full, we occasionally grounded on sand banks: and then in a moment the men had

divested themselves of their one garment and turban, and were over the side, straining with back and shoulders, and ever with the same interminable chant for the help of Allah, to push off the heavy boat imbedded in the mud. As the fiercest of mid-day suns never daunted them, neither did the coldest water in a sharp breeze in the early morning, or at midnight; though their teeth chattered with cold, and their bodies shook like aspens as they came on deck, they were still the same merry, careless, happy, contented fellows as before. Sometimes it was pitiable to see them stripped and harnessed to the rope, and dragging the boat as they waded through the shallows for an hour at a time, when the channel lay too near the middle to suffer them to tow from the bank; but as we saw the same process followed by all the boats, including the native merchant craft, we concluded that use was second nature, and ceased to commiserate them, as we saw these amphibious sailors step over the side, and plunge into the stream, three, four, or five times in a single day's journey. When the sun went down, unless we were making way under sail, we always moored for the night under a bank, near some village, where watchmen could be procured, to patrol up and

down, and prevent robbery, while our sailors slept; and these brave guards, armed with matchlocks, would fire their pieces from time to time, rather to prove they were on the alert than to overawe any designing marauders. Meanwhile, no sooner were we moored fore and aft, and all made snug on board, but our men dispersed to collect firewood and straw, and soon they had a roaring fire on the bank, round which they sat to eat their porridge and any green food they could pilfer from the neighbouring fields, a cruel piece of dishonesty which I am afraid is universally practised on the river's brink, and which all our remonstrances and stringent orders utterly failed to prevent. But, with the help of a stolen salad, their meal was homely in the extreme, for the abstemious Arabs are content with the plainest fare. A large stock of bread, made of wheat ground with the bran, cut into thin slices as soon as baked, and dried on the quarter-deck, was the stock to last from three weeks to a month: it was the business of the boy, morning and evening, to take a sufficient quantity of this dried bread, and crumble it into a huge wooden bowl; upon this boiling water was poured, and a handful of red lentils scattered, and the whole stirred up with a large wooden

spoon. Then they all sat round in a ring, holding an onion or a lettuce in the left hand, while with the right they dipped their fingers in the bowl, and so alternately took a mouthful of porridge, and then a bite at the salad, till, in less time than I have taken to describe it, the bowl was emptied and the meal at an end. This is believed to be precisely the same food as that for which Esau sold his birthright thirty-six centuries ago; the same which Herodotus described as the provisions of the pyramid makers; and it is the invariable meal of the Egyptian fellaheen, varied only with beans and lupins, to the present day. No sooner is the repast finished, than the pipes are lighted and passed round from hand to hand: and now it is a strange scene on a dark night to see these swarthy Arabs roasting themselves round the roaring fire, as, wrapping their garments round their heads as a protection from the heat, they scorch their naked bodies, and look very savages or fiends crouching over the flames. Their attitude, too, meant for a state of repose, astonished us at first not a little; as they squat, apparently on their hams, after the manner of monkeys, but in reality support the whole weight of the body on the soles of their feet, while they clasp their legs below the

knee with their hands; a position savouring of anything but comfort to the European eye, though to the Oriental, unaccustomed to chairs, but used from infancy to fold the legs and bend the back to a degree inconceivable to us, this strange attitude seemed to give rest. Still more remarkable was it to see our men squatted thus, on some sandbank in the middle of the river, whither they had waded or swam in towing the boat over the shallows; and most astonishing of all, when we were under sail, to see them thus perched, like large birds, on the rounded bulwarks of our vessel, a feat which I defy the most active and supple-limbed of our gymnastic schools to imitate on *terra firma*; though our Arabs, be it remembered, were not aware that they were accomplishing a difficult position, but were simply taking their ease after their own fashion, and assuming what they evidently considered an attitude of repose. A fair wind always filled their hearts with delight, and it was amusing to see how these great, strong, active, overgrown children, as they are, would run, and shout, and tumble on board, when the word was called out that a breeze had sprung up, and a sail should be tried; for they hate work with cordial aversion, and it must be owned that

their work is at times laborious and tiresome in the extreme: pipes of tobacco, songs, and sleep were then their amusement, and sometimes they would awaken hideous music with a tomtom, or *daraboukeh*, which is a kind of drum, composed of a skin stretched over the wide mouth of an earthen vessel, and with which every dahabeah is provided.

And so we advanced up the river at a very uneven pace, sometimes sailing, sometimes punting our way on, oftener tracking from the bank. Now we would run before the wind fifty or sixty miles in the twenty-four hours; for the next three or four days perhaps five or six miles *per diem* would be the result of much harder work on the part of our crew. On these latter occasions I would go ashore with my gun, and either strike into the desert, or beat up the cultivated land on the river's bank, and then I would rejoin the boat some miles higher up, generally loaded with as many specimens of birds as I could find time to skin; so that slow progress exactly suited my ornithological taste, though to F., who wanted to get on to the temples and tombs, and to H., who naturally desired to go ahead, this crawling pace was not a little tiresome, as they watched the ship's

progress from the deck, creeping on against the rapid stream foot by foot, and scarcely making half a mile within the hour.

But the most pleasant part of the day was when we sat on deck, under the awning, for an hour or more before dark, and watched the busy scenes on the banks, the vast flocks of birds on the shallows, and, above all, the magnificent sunsets, for which Egypt is especially famous. In no other land have I ever seen the setting sun throw such splendid lights as we now beheld every evening as the unclouded orb went down behind the red rocks of the Libyan desert: we were never tired of watching this glorious sight evening after evening, and each day the spectacle seemed grander than we had seen before. At this time, too, the water-fowl, waders as well as swimmers, were on the move from the sandbanks in mid-stream, where they pass most of the day; and it was a real treat to watch them, in smaller or larger parties, seeking their feeding ground, and listen to their varied cries—huge pelicans flapping far overhead with enormous wings, or standing on the sandbanks amongst a crowd of geese, very giants in a land of pigmies; graceful cranes stalking over the flats; herons and storks, and the whole race of ducks,

swarming in myriads on every sandbank; and though very rarely, the beautiful red flamingo, too shy to come near our boat, but well observed through the double glass, which is as essential to an ornithologist as his gun, and with which, aboard as well as ashore, I was armed from sunrise to sunset every day.

Here and there might be seen a buffalo, black in colour, ill-favoured in appearance, with a look of mischief in his eye, sullen and surly in his temper, yet, in reality, gentle and quiet and obedient to the naked urchin astride on his back.

Then the numerous villages we passed, embosomed in palm trees, offered ever-varying animation to the scene: men and boys hoeing amidst the maize, working all through the heat of the day, often without a vestige of clothing, and, what was most astonishing to me, even their bare closely-shaved heads entirely unprotected from the fierce rays of the midday African sun; whereas we never ventured out, even for a stroll, without many folds of a thick white turban wound round our hats. But then I called to mind the remark of the observant Herodotus, that ‘the Egyptian skulls are so strong, that you may smite them with a stone and you will scarcely break them in;’ and

the reason he gives, because 'from early childhood they have the head shaved, and so, by the action of the sun, the skull becomes thick and hard'—a solution doubtless correct and satisfactory, though, methought, it was not improbable that *coup de soleil* might supervene during the hardening process; and so like the famous steed, which unluckily died just as he learnt to live on a straw a day, all the clever training come to nought.

With regard to the breadth of the river, I have often been asked to give an approximate idea of its size, and have found it exceedingly difficult to do so: for the Nile varies extremely in width, according to the nature of the country through which it passes; in one place being spread out over a wide surface, with vast sand-banks rising up in its midst; in another confined within a narrow channel, as the rocks compress it within closer bounds. There are indeed certain spots to which I could point, where the bed of the divided stream occupies a width of about two miles: and then again at the quarries of Hagar Silsilis, where it runs within a narrower channel than elsewhere for a thousand miles of its course, it measures scarcely eleven hundred feet in width. But at Old Cairo, near the island of Rhoda, its breadth is three thousand feet;

and at Atfeh, on the Rosetta branch of the Nile, where is the mouth of the Mahmoudieh canal, it is but fifteen hundred feet wide. And I suppose that if I named from half a mile to three-quarters of a mile as its average breadth, I should not be far from a tolerably accurate estimate: while with regard to the velocity of its current, it has been calculated to run at an average rate of between two and three miles an hour. On either bank, at a greater or less distance from the river, rise the rocks which bound the kingdom of Egypt east and west, and which terminate the desert on either side: and these are called respectively the Arabian and Libyan mountains; and the eastern and western shores of the Nile are generally known as the Arabian and Libyan shores.

All day long, but more especially morning and evening, long files of women, in the dark-blue robes with which they are invariably clad, come down to the river's brink to fill the large pitchers they carry on their heads. From every village there is a path straight to the water's edge, and this is constantly traversed by the women of all ages, whose part it is to perform this truly laborious work. The large *ballas* jar, as it is called, is always well washed in the stream, and then filled,

and after a reasonable amount of gossip, they help one another to raise it to the top of the head, where it is placed upright on a hollow pad; and then they wend their way in a long file back to their homes: and it is indeed quite surprising what an enormous weight of water the women carry thus on their heads, and which they bear gracefully too, even up the steep incline which leads from the water's edge to the top of the river's bank; while the younger girls and even small children accompany their mothers, each with a pitcher proportioned to her size. Moreover, to poise so large and heavy a jar on the head, and then to walk away with it—perhaps a distance of half a mile or even more, frequently over rough and uneven ground, never needing to support or even touch it with the hands—is a feat which surprises the traveller, and can only be accomplished by daily practice, of which indeed these poor drudges have more than enough. I speak of course here of those villages only which are (as is the case with the generality) not far from the Nile: for some there are in the wider plains, several miles away, and they must content themselves with what water they can collect, either by canals from the river, or in wells and pools; though, strange to say, even at a consider-

able distance from the great stream, such is the porous nature of the intervening soil, that it is still Nile water which percolates through the sand to these distant tanks, though then it has generally lost its original sweetness, and become impregnated with a brackish flavour. No wonder that the villagers are willing to undergo severe daily toil to obtain the water when they can, for it is the most sweet and soft, and, withal, the most palatable I ever tasted: it is by no means clear as you dip it from the stream, and at first creates a feeling of aversion by its thick yellow muddy appearance; but when passed through the large filter, which occupies the most conspicuous post in the centre of the dahabeah, it has not only lost the sediment, but is sparkling and bright. Moreover, I am bound to own that when we were away from our filter, and drank it direct from the river, the taste was exactly the same as of that we had on board, and I very much doubt if with our eyes shut we could have detected the difference. It is quite marvellous what an immense quantity of this excellent water we daily consumed: 'Moieh, moieh,' was the cry repeated many times a day from the saloon, and many times did the porous jars which held it, called *goollah*, go back to the filter for a fresh supply. Then Nile water

is said to possess the admirable property of being perfectly safe and harmless both for drinking and bathing, however heated the drinker or bather may be: so that when I came in from a long desert walk, as I did almost every day, parched and thirsty, hot and tired, I never scrupled to take long draughts of this most refreshing water, from which I never felt any ill effects. Not, however, that I would mislead any to suppose that water was our sole beverage on board: we had taken care at Alexandria to ship a small cask of excellent Marsala, which, in colour as well as taste, is totally different from the very inferior wine which goes under that name in England. This cask stood just outside the cabin door, exposed to the full force of the sun, and it improved in flavour daily under such treatment, so that what remained on the return voyage below Nubia, was of a very superior quality indeed. Moreover, we had sundry bottles of Cognac, and some dozens of bitter beer, so that we were by no means wholly dependent on Nile water.

• In regard to provisions, we generally had a live sheep on board, sometimes two; and when one had been killed, another was soon bought to supply its place. Then, at the extreme end of the quarter

deck, we had a large pen of fowls and a small pen of turkeys, of which latter one was regularly slain every week for our Sunday's dinner; and this we found to be the invariable custom on all the dahabeahs on the Nile.

Below the main deck, we had stores of flour, rice, biscuits, potatoes, oranges, figs, and an immense supply of dates. Every morning the dragoman sent one of the crew ashore in the small boat to procure milk, if possible, from some village; but when this was not to be had, as sometimes occurred, eggs were beaten up, and did duty for milk at breakfast, and a very fair substitute it was. Then at all large towns, he either went himself, or sent some of his men, to recruit his stores, by purchasing meat, poultry, vegetables and fruit; and the number of eggs which came on board during the trip must have amounted to a very large figure: for eggs in abundance, and cooked in a variety of ways, as well as omelets, appeared on the table at every meal. Hence it will be gathered that the traveller does not fare badly on the Nile cruise; and our clever cook contrived to vary our dinners with semi-European, semi-Oriental dishes, alternating the rôtis of Europe with the *kebab* and *pilavs* of the East, and sending up cucumbers and vegetable

marrows stuffed with mince-meat, and many another dish, whose origin as well as whose recipe I am equally at a loss to explain. As a proof of the profusion which the dragoman thinks it incumbent on his honour to provide, I may mention that one day, when a head wind prevented our reaching the town on which he had depended for supplies, and he had assured us that he had absolutely *nothing* to set before us for dinner, we were as much amazed as amused to see three dishes, containing severally a couple of roast fowls, a couple of boiled fowls, and a couple of stewed fowls; no mean allowance for three persons, when supplemented with soup, the invariable *mish-mish* (or preserved apricots), puddings, and dessert. No meal in the East is of course complete unless it is followed by a little cup of coffee, strong, and the flavour unimpaired by the addition of sugar or milk; and this was always served to us after dinner, as well as on every occasion when a visitor, Oriental or European, came on board at any time in the day.

Beyond the above general account of our daily life on board the 'Southern Cross,' I have but little to add of incidents which occurred in this earlier portion of our voyage between Cairo and Thebes. Throughout the trip, we had daily service on

board our boat, and Holy Communion every Sunday: and we had brought with us surplice and sacramental plate and wine. For the most part we were alone on the Sunday, and then we had an early celebration at eight o'clock: at times we were moored near other boats, and accommodated our hours to those who were glad of the opportunity of joining in our services; and once at Thebes, when detained by the insurrection, as will be related farther on, we had quite a large congregation in a room which the good consul, though a Muslim, allowed us to use, when we extemporised a very becoming altar by covering a table with our Union Jack; and when we had a Belgian prince and his suite, and the occupants of four or five other dahabeahs, besides the resident Lady Duff Gordon, to our service.

The first town we reached on our upward journey was Benisooef, when our dragoman wisely anchored on the opposite bank, lest the crew should get into the coffee shops and detain us. As it was, one man absconded in the night, and though the reis crossed the river in the morning, he could gain no tidings of him: the fellow had probably worked his way so far for his own ends, and then gave us the slip, when he had secured his object

by getting a free passage home. A few miles above Benisooef we first experienced a *khamseen* or hurricane from the south, which brought such clouds of fine dust or sand from the desert, as to make the air thick and heavy, as in a fog: our windows, doors and skylights were closed, yet so fine is this impalpable dust, that it not only made its way into the glass cupboards which held our books in the saloon, but what seems incredible, actually penetrated between the leaves of the books, so that open them at what page we pleased, a fine sand was to be seen and felt. While the hurricane lasted we were closely moored under the bank; every Arab muffled in his *abbas*, with which he completely envelops his head and neck, and asleep on the deck. Twice in the course of this day our dahabeah caught fire: once in the cook's department, and again from the cigarette of one of the crew; but the high wind was the real culprit in both cases.

At some distance above Benisooef stands a cliff called *Gebel e Tayr*, 'the mountain of the bird,' with which is connected a remarkable legend, to be found in most of the books on Egypt, but which nevertheless I may be pardoned if, in consideration of my ornithological tastes, I repeat. On the summit

of this mountain, say the Arabs, all the birds of Egypt congregate on one day in every year, and after much consultation and much clamour, as may be supposed in so large an assembly, depart in a body, with the exception of one which is always left in solitary charge to guard the spot until the return of his fellows at the expiration of his year of duty, when another unfortunate victim relieves him of his irksome responsibilities. I would add that it is generally believed by the Arabs that all the members of the animal kingdom have a language of their own, by means of which they can converse with one another; and with this notion is coupled the pretty idea that beasts and birds do not fail to honour and praise Allah as diligently as any good Muslim, to which I think may in great measure be attributed the general kindness evinced towards the brute creation; and I heartily wish that some such superstition, so harmless in itself, and so excellent in its results, had taken hold of our people at home.

Gebel e Tayr is also well known as the site of the Coptic convent of the Pulley; but, as a strong nor'-wester was blowing behind us, we passed it with both our sails set, and at a spanking pace. Notwithstanding this, no sooner was our flag

descried, than some of the holy fathers of that remarkable fraternity were seen running along the cliff on which their monastery stands, clad in the habit of their order, viz. their own skins only, which distinguishes them from any monks I had met before; and, as they ran stark naked along the brow of the cliff, they screamed 'backsheesh' at the top of their voices; but we congratulated ourselves that the breeze was too stiff, the water too rough, and our pace too good, to tempt them to swim off, on the forlorn hope of a trifling present. We did not know then the pertinacity of an Egyptian mendicant; for soon one hardy fellow, notwithstanding our pace, the width of the river, and the strength of the current, contrived to swim out and board us, and, as some of the crew threw a robe over his shivering limbs, and he crouched before us with chattering teeth, and ejaculated 'Backsheesh, ya Hawager, backsheesh, Christiano, ya Hawager,' I thought I had never seen anything less like a Christian monk or more like a savage ruffian than this swarthy naked shaven Copt. However, we gave him five half-piastre pieces (about sixpence in all), with which he was thoroughly satisfied, and which he placed in his mouth, and, as we declined to indulge him

with brandy, which he also demanded, he was soon over the side and swimming straight for the shore, after the peculiar manner in which all Egyptians swim, striking one arm at a time overhead and straightforward on the water. But, good swimmer as he was, it was laborious work to battle against such waves and such a current as was running then. Several times we saw him stop to rest his arms, while he swam with his feet, and he must have been glad, one would think, to climb up the rock out of the cutting wind and warm his frozen limbs within the shelter of the convent.

As we sailed under a steep cliff higher up the river, we reached another locality sacred to the birds, where, from time immemorial, the Nile boatmen have propitiated the sea gulls, which, in vast numbers, preside over this spot, by throwing bread into the river as they pass. Of course our sailors did not omit to comply with a practice the breach of which would, in their opinion, have certainly entailed misfortune; and doubtless the prosperity of our voyage was much enhanced by the offerings thus made to the feathered genii who condescended to accept our tribute.

The brisk northerly breeze was still driving us

along at a famous pace when we reached the considerable town of Minieh ; so, unwilling to lose a moment of such favourable wind, we gave orders that the boat should continue her course, and ran by the town with a full sail ; but, some hours after, the night being dark, we were brought to against our will by running hard and fast on a sandbank : we had come upon it at full speed, and with such impetus that several hours elapsed before we could get off. It was very provoking, as we were losing so much of the highly-desired north wind, and it was but a sorry consolation that we had several companions in misfortune—three *murkabs* or native merchant vessels aground on the same bank at the same time—for the channel was very intricate here, and the sandbanks abundant. By way of warning we looked out on the masts of a vessel not long since foundered—or ‘drowned,’ as our sailors termed it—on this bank ; and here she is quietly left till, in the course of three or four months, the river has subsided, so as to leave her high and dry, when her crew will return to raise and set her to rights.

We reached the large town of Sioot on the eighth of January, having made the run of 253 miles from Cairo in twelve days, being an average

of twenty-one miles per day, which is a higher average rate of speed than we afterwards attained, for we seldom experienced so much favourable wind as in this earlier portion of our voyage. Here we found two dahabeahs—the ‘Bruin,’ with the flag of Mr. Chambers, whom we fell in with again above the Cataracts, and with whom we afterwards travelled down in consort through the rebels’ country; and the ‘Nile Bird,’ with the flag of Mr. Petit, with whom we were subsequently becalmed in Nubia: with both gentlemen we had become acquainted at Cairo, and both boats had started four days before us, and had been pushing on ever since; but they had been retarded by head winds at first setting out, and now the late breeze brought us up in their wake: so extremely uncertain is Nile travelling with regard to the time required to accomplish any given distance. Sioot is the capital of Upper Egypt, and extends over a considerable area, and possesses very respectable bazaars; but, beyond this, has small claims for admiration, so wretched, dirty, and dilapidated is its general appearance.

We had been strolling through the bazaars of this crowded city, and had reached the gates which open out on the raised causeway leading to

the river's bank, at the distance of a mile from the town, when we were attracted by the loud wailings and heart-rending cries of apparently the whole population, which came pouring out of the gates in a vast crowd. On inquiry, we learnt that the pasha had just pressed two thousand men from that immediate district and the villages near, and now they were on their way to the river, where large barges and a steam tug were ready to convey them to the scene of their labours, said to be on the Suez Canal. It is true that the nominal period of detention is short, three months being the specified time; but it is equally well known that this period is almost always extended, and that they may be involuntary exiles from their homes and families for three or five years, or even more; while a large proportion of them will never return. Meanwhile, their land is but half tilled; their wives and children are left in poverty and misery—for though the *Sheikh el Beled*, or village chief, is bound to provide them with food, it is but a sorry pittance which is granted them—and their hardships are great. The pasha will pay these labourers indeed for their work, but it will be at his own price; and a money-loving despot is not apt to be over-generous. And there is no

escape from this terrible pressgang. The sheikh of each village must furnish so many; it is his unenviable lot to select the victims, and they are seized in their homes at night, or while they are at work in their fields. Never to my dying day shall I forget that heart-rending scene: we accompanied the wailing crowd, which stretched a full mile from the town to the river's bank; tears streamed down the cheeks of the victims, torn away like culprits from their homes; while they hugged their infant children in their arms, and others ran piteously moaning at the side. Many of the women seemed wild with grief, shrieking in their agony, rending their garments, casting dust on their heads, and running frantically hither and thither in their bitter distress; while aged mothers in still more eloquent silence held the hands of the sons they should never see again, or rocked themselves to and fro with a moaning cry of pain most piteous to hear. M. St.-Hilaire, indeed, declares that their wives and families accompany the labourers who are thus forced away from their houses in the service of the pasha, but I am very certain that such is by no means the case. Universal experience asserts that it never has been the case in the public works at

which the fellaheen have been compelled to labour ; nor, however an unscrupulous tyrant may see fit to cajole his European friends, is it probable that such indulgence will be granted to the miserable people so long as these horrible *corvées* are in vogue.

Two days' tracking and sailing brought us to Ekhmim, of which I have nothing to record, except to observe that in the modern name of this town we can trace the old name Chemmis, the city of Chem, or Ham, which indeed once served as the title of the whole country, and from which our common words *chemistry* and *alchemy* were undoubtedly derived.

Thence a fair wind carried us the following day to Girghey, another large town of considerable note, though I can only describe the streets as filthy, the bazaars as wretched, and the outskirts as miserable. Here we were under engagement to stop for a day, to allow our men time to bake a batch of their bread ; and we turned our halt to account by making a long expedition to the ruined temples of Abydus, a donkey ride of some twenty-four miles in all. This was our first essay at riding without bridles, and with only a scrap of sacking for saddles : moreover, our donkeys were poor diminu-

tive weak specimens of their race, very different from their sturdy brethren at Cairo; it was not their fault that they were not strong enough to carry us up the steep banks when we crossed several large dry dykes used for inundating the land. At first we attempted to ride up these embankments, when the attendant Arabs literally pushed our donkeys, as well as ourselves, up the incline, and held us back in the descent; but on two occasions when they were not so attentive, the sacking which served for a saddle, and which was merely tied underneath by a piece of string, slipped bodily, with me upon it, over the donkey's tail, and I found myself astride on the ground, with the so-called saddle between my feet, my steed having literally walked away from under me. After that we thought it wiser to dismount and •walk over the difficult ground, and ride only on the level; and even then donkey-riding under such circumstances becomes very tedious and fatiguing, for it took us four hours and a quarter to reach Abydos, and as much to return to our boat. Our way lay through a broad luxuriant plain, abounding in crops; the hard black mud of the Nile which formed the soil cracked under the scorching sun into innumerable deep but narrow fissures, which

rendered walking over it, except in the beaten path, extremely troublesome. Arrived at the temples on the edge of the desert, we spent some hours in wandering amongst the halls and corridors, and were never weary of examining the architecture, the sculpture and paintings, the hieroglyphics and quaint figures on this the first specimen of Egyptian temple we had seen ; which is also of additional interest as the ancient capital of Upper Egypt, under the name of 'This,' before Thebes sprung up and usurped its place ; as well as one of the reputed burying-places of Osiris, for there are several rival claimants for that distinguished honour. These temples have been nearly buried in sand, but under the energetic direction of M. Mariette, considerable portions are now uncovered, and we found gangs of men, women, and children busily employed in removing the dust and sand with which they are choked. These primitive labourers know nothing of such elaborate tools as the shovel and the wheelbarrow : their hands were the scoops they employed, and with these they filled the basket of palm leaf with which every individual was provided, and then carried it away on their heads. I forbear all description of the charming remains of a bygone

age, in which we revelled at Abydus, referring my reader to the Handbook, where Sir Gardner Wilkinson gives all the details with his usual accuracy, and renders all farther account superfluous; and I pass on to observe that while F. took some excellent photographs, and H. some paper impressions of hieroglyphics—which has now become quite an institution amongst Nile travellers—the daylight wore away; and it was not till nine in the evening, and under a brilliant moon, that we reached our floating home at Girghey, when the sailors' bread being arrived, we gave simultaneous orders to the reis to cast off moorings, shake out the sail, and away; and to the cook to send in dinner without a moment's loss of time.

Three days with little or no wind were consumed in tracking our boat to the large town of Keneh, which bears a close internal resemblance to Girghey and Sioot. Keneh is no other than the Neapolis described by Herodotus as differing from other Egyptian towns in its more liberal tolerance of foreigners; indeed, the present city retains its Greek name, being no other than 'Kaine polis,' or, as we should say, 'Newtown.' It is here that the small porous water jars, called

goollahs, in such constant use on the Nile, are made; we visited several manufactories, and could have well believed we were standing in one of the ancient potteries represented on the walls of the tombs, so exactly did the scene before us correspond in every particular with the paintings. There was the very same wheel, worked in the same way with the hand; there was the identical lump of well-kneaded clay; and the man in scanty clothing who was shaping it into a jar, might well have passed for his predecessor who was similarly employed three thousand years ago on the same spot; for nowhere else but in this neighbourhood is such suitable clay found, so well calculated from its porous nature for the formation of jars which should cool the water they held. The larger vases which the women carry on their heads to the Nile for their daily supply of water, are made in the neighbouring village of Ballas, and hence derive their name of 'Ballasee.' In order to transport them with the greatest ease down the river, large numbers are tied together, and formed into a raft: and we would sometimes meet half a dozen of these fragile rafts floating down the stream; and we thought it was an anxious employment for those who were con-

ducting their course, as any collision, however gentle, must infallibly result in the destruction of many of their charge, which are extremely brittle, and break on the least provocation. But so active are the pioneers, that such accidents seldom occur; and yet the craft to our unsophisticated eyes seemed wholly unmanageable: imagine a huge square platform, composed of near four thousand large fragile jars, tied together with ropes and palm branches, arranged in three regular tiers, the lower row with their mouths upwards, and the two remaining layers placed across them on their sides. On this sat a crew of four men to navigate the unwieldy raft; one on every side, furnished with boughs of trees by way of oars; and with these they contrived to guide their awkward freight as the current carried it down the stream.

Kenah being the point where the Nile approaches nearest to the Red Sea, and being distant only 120 miles from Kosseir, is a great rendezvous for pilgrims on their way to Mecca, and a large caravan annually collects here, and then sets out on its journey over the desert.

Leaving Braheem to replenish his stores in the bazaars and markets of this important town, we

crossed the river in our *sandal*, and then a ride of two miles brought us to the temples of Dendera, dedicated to Isis and Athor: here, too, the workmen were engaged in excavations, and already large and lofty halls have been uncovered, and the work of research is being actively carried on. There is a great difference of opinion among Egyptologists as to the merits of Dendera; some decrying its adornments and general style as debased and even detestable; others upholding it as a most splendid specimen of the architecture of the period. Amongst the latter, Belzoni extols it as the most magnificent temple he had seen, and declares himself more impressed with it than he can express; and indeed that it is a collection of most majestic and imposing buildings, and deserving of careful inspection, and of exceeding interest, and that its portico is superlatively grand, must, I think, be granted by all who are not too prejudiced to allow any merit to the times of the Ptolemies, from which period these temples date. But the antiquarian in Egypt, as his eyes are accustomed to feast on relics which boast an origin above four thousand years back, is sometimes too apt to despise the works of the Greeks and Romans as too modern to deserve

notice: and though the works of the Ptolemies and Cæsars are often of considerable merit, and certainly are not of yesterday, not a few travellers pass them by with a contemptuous sneer, as unworthy of attention, and with much the same feeling that the zealous ecclesiologist in England evinces towards church architecture which dates after the fifteenth century.

Both here and at Abydus, as well as at Heliopolis, and afterwards at many other spots, we lamented the very serious injury which vast colonies of wild bees have effected on the hieroglyphics and sculpture by completely plastering them up, and so effectually concealing them, with innumerable mud cells which these industrious little workers have attached to the stone. The bees in question have an orange head and thorax, and a glossy velvet black abdomen, and are considerably larger and of stouter build than our common hive bee. Their number is legion, and when once the deeply carved sculptures attract their approval, as offering suitable sites for their colonies, it is astonishing how soon the invading swarms take decided possession, to the discomfiture of the tourist; who not only looks upon the rough front of a stuccoed wall instead of the

ancient cartouches of kings and carved pictures he had expected, but if he approaches too near is assailed and driven off by the stings of these venomous insects.

We moved off from Keneh at sunset, when a gentle breeze sprang up, but within a couple of hours we were hard and fast on a sandbank: our Arabs were soon in the water, but after a slight ineffectual attempt to push off they came on deck, put on their clothes, and lay down to sleep till the moon rose. It was not, however, without a violent altercation with dragoman, reis, and men, that, finding a glorious moon and a fair wind at 11 P.M., we insisted that another effort should be made to dislodge us from our position, which was speedily effected, as soon as the men jumped into the water and applied their shoulders to the bows of the boat. Then we sailed away merrily all night, and in the morning learned with intense satisfaction that we were within fifteen miles of Thebes, where we knew we should find letters from home, a treat which none can appreciate but those who have been, as we were then, widely separated from those dearest to them and for a considerable time. But the Nile traveller has to learn patience, however anxious and eager he may be; and though

within three hours' sail under a brisk breeze, yet, without a breath of wind to help us, it occupied two whole days to track and pole against the rapid current to the wished-for goal: at last, when within four miles of Thebes, we could endure protracted expectation no longer; so dismissing the youth Lazé, armed with a big stick to ward off the dogs—for without this weapon of defence no Arab dare approach a town or village—and promising him 'backsheesh' in proportion to the speed with which he returned, we awaited his coming with what patience we could summon: and when he arrived as expeditiously as was possible, and brought us a packet of letters, our delight was unbounded, and we were still devouring our news from home when we reached our moorings on the eastern bank of Thebes, at the village of Luxor.

CHAPTER X.

THEBES.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many and great attractions which Thebes has to offer, our first thoughts were of home ; so we finished the packet of letters we had long been preparing, and consigned them to the care of the British consul, Mustafa Aga, an excellent fellow, and, with his obliging sons, always eager to do anything which lay in his power to assist British travellers. The good Mustafa occupies a house built within a portion of the old temple of Luxor, supported by large lotus-headed pillars, and flanked by huge obelisks ; and over his roof float the Union Jack of England and the Stars and Stripes of America ; but I fear the latter has the most right to claim his services, inasmuch as he receives a salary from Washington, but none (to our shame be it said) from

England, though to both alike he pays every attention.

Mustafa Aga was the first Oriental who honoured our dinner table with his presence, and (like a good Muslim as he is) he would have fared but badly if the untruthful Braheem had not deceived him into the belief that due regard had been paid to his prejudices in the matter of slaying the animals of whose meat he partook. For, as Herodotus tells us, the ancient Egyptians would not taste the flesh of any animal which had been killed by an unclean Greek, so no Muslim may eat fish, flesh or fowl polluted by the knife of the Christian. But our plausible dragoman satisfied the scruples of the Muslim with a barefaced lie, of which he subsequently made boast as a master-stroke of diplomacy; not in the least abashed at his own villany, but much amazed at the rebukes with which we met his bragging of the skilful policy with which he had set at rest the suspicions of our guest. And so the good Mustafa folded his legs under him on the divan, and ate his mutton and his turkey in peace: and as a devout follower of the prophet's bidding, drank no wine, though he atoned for abstemiousness in this respect by 'drinking smoke' (as the Arabs term it) in

abundance ; since for hours after dinner he scarcely laid aside his chibouque, unless during very short intervals.

Our letters, folded in a large packet, sealed with Mustafa's seal, and directed by him in Arabic to the British consul at Cairo, were now consigned to the charge of a running Arab, who immediately started off towards the capital. The stage which this postman had to traverse was a short one, consisting of little more than three miles, to the next village, where the packet was handed to another runner, seven or eight of whom are always bound to be in readiness at each post, and at once carried on to the village beyond ; and so, by this truly clumsy process, and by means of about one hundred runners, our packet was despatched to Cairo, a distance of four hundred and fifty miles. It can hardly be expected that forwarded through so many hands, the letters always reach their destination ; occasionally a runner will lie down to sleep on his road, and wilfully forget his errand ; or he may be attracted elsewhere, and destroy his charge ; and not unfrequently the packet drops out of the bosom of his robe, which serves as his pocket, or falls out of his girdle and is lost. One of these mishaps, or some similar misfortune, befell

the first budget of letters we sent from Thebes, for they never reached Cairo ; but I am bound to add that it was the only loss of the kind which we sustained ; and it is marvellous to me how seldom they go astray, when I reflect on the very insecure character of the delivery, and the infinitesimal degree of trust which can be reposed in an Egyptian Arab. But the doubt whether they will ever come to hand is extremely vexatious to the traveller, inasmuch as Thebes is the only place south of Cairo to and from which letters may be sent with any reasonable chance of their reaching their destination. This is tenfold the case when on leaving that port we are bound for a six weeks' cruise farther south, and know that until we return there is no possibility of receiving or sending letters ; and this is undoubtedly the one great drawback to the perfect enjoyment of a Nile tour—the total isolation from Europe, and the impossibility of gaining any news, whether of a public or a private character, though it be of vital importance, and under whatever emergency. Fully alive as we were to this privation, we sent off several budgets of letters for England during the few days we remained at Thebes, and again on our return, when forcibly detained on account

of the insurrection, we despatched many packets, with the hope that some at least might perform their hazardous journey to Cairo in safety.

We found no less than five dahabeahs moored to the bank at Luxor, including the 'Bruin,' the 'Nile Bird,' and the 'Esperanza,' the latter containing friends of H., for whom we had been on the look-out since we started. Not, however, that it requires an introduction to become acquainted with our fellow-countrymen on the Nile; even John Bull, reserved, cold, and taciturn in France and Germany, thaws under the sun of Egypt, and is ready to fraternise with the few compatriots he meets here: so we always paid and received visits as soon as we fell in with another boat, and described our respective progress, and above all compared our watches, which is the most fertile source of conversation, and produces the warmest discussions on board. There are no clocks in Egypt, and though the muezzins from their lofty posts on the minarets are regular in calling the hours of prayer, this is no reliable guide to ascertaining the exact hour of the day, inasmuch as the Prophet, as a wise precaution against sun-worship, forbade his followers to begin their prayers either at sunrise, sunset or noon. To the Egyptian

punctuality is wholly unknown, and waste of time his ordinary habit; and therefore to him the object of ascertaining the correct hour would be as incomprehensible as the knowledge, when ascertained, would be devoid of interest. But it is otherwise with the busy European, accustomed all his life to clocks; and it is indeed ludicrous to call to mind how very soon the true reckoning of time was lost, when we were left to our own widely varying watches. Every party we met stoutly maintained that, for some cause satisfactory to their own minds, though never admitted by others, their own was the true time; and sometimes there was a difference of a whole hour between the rival claimants for exactness in this matter. So great a divergence as that was of course ridiculous, because, though sunrise and sunset were not reliable guides, in a latitude and longitude which upset our calculations, and in a country on reaching which we found our watches an hour and a half in error, yet the sun above our heads at midday gave us at least an approximate idea of noon; and when F., by the help of our pocket compass and a pin, had most ingeniously extemporised a small sun-dial, we fancied we had attained exactness in this much-disputed

point, and were as loud and as positive as any in maintaining our opinion.

Amongst the English we met at Luxor, Lady Duff Gordon deserves special mention, from the high repute in which she is held by the natives, Muslims and Christians alike. Having established herself here for some years, for sanitary reasons, and to enjoy the magnificent climate of Upper Egypt, she has, by repeated acts of kindness, and by a large sympathy in their troubles and wants, ingratiated herself so effectually with the poor fellahen of the district, that she is regarded as their greatest friend and benefactress, and to her they unfold all their grievances, come for advice in sickness, and gratefully follow her injunctions. Nor is their trust and confidence thrown away, for their kind patroness reciprocates their esteem, and is much attached to her numerous *protégés*. She was earnest in enumerating their wrongs, and deprecating the cruel oppression and injustice under which they labour, as well as in extolling the many virtues for which she affirms they are conspicuous; and finding excuses for some very palpable faults, which could not be denied. But we noticed that her highest praises were always given to the followers of the

False Prophet, at the expense of the unfortunate Copts : there may have been reason for this, and Lady Duff Gordon, from her intimate acquaintance with both parties, had ample means for forming a correct opinion ; and yet it struck me that the prejudice so general in Egypt against the poor Copts was not wholly absent here. That they were tax-gatherers and general collectors of revenue, and on that account disliked, I knew ; that they were oftentimes cunning, grasping, and greedy of gain, I had heard ; and that, by the side of their abstemious Muslim neighbours, they showed to great disadvantage in the use of intoxicating drinks, I was well aware ; but that they were fanatics and fatalists and that the Muslims were neither of these, I had yet to learn, and was surprised to hear the assertion stoutly maintained by this Christian championess of the followers of Islam. So great a hold had this excellent lady gained over the hearts of the people, that when subsequently the insurrection broke out lower down the country, at the first panic caused by the news, numbers of the poor expressed their determination to take refuge in the house of their English ally, and entreated her not to desert them. Nor was it amongst the fellaheen alone

that she was held in reputation ; the governor of Thebes and Mustafa Aga, and the sheikhs of the neighbouring villages were amongst her devoted adherents ; and as an instance of their excessive regard, some of the sheikhs, high in authority, invited her to accompany them to a great religious festival to be held in the heart of the desert in honour of a departed saint, and offered themselves as her escort,—a most remarkable exception to their generally unchangeable rules with regard to religious observances, since it is well known that any Christian, detected intruding on the sacred rites of Islam, is instantly put to death.

Another worthy of Luxor (and he, too, an intimate friend of Lady Duff Gordon), who spent part of an evening on board our boat, was Sheikh Yussuf, the Muslim '*Kasees*,' or priest. Though he could speak nothing but Arabic, we held quite an animated conversation through the medium of Mustafa Aga, for he was a lively, agreeable guest, and exceedingly handsome. He quite fraternized with us when he discovered we were clergymen ; renewing his salaams with redoubled energy, as he styled us '*brother Kasees*,' but, however politeness forbad the expression of our feelings, to that compliment we could not from our hearts

respond. But Sheikh Yussuf was no ordinary man, and, however we might object to a Muslim fraternity, we entertained a deep feeling of regard for the individual; so high did his character stand for excellence of disposition, innocence of life, integrity, humility, and charity. He was the *imam*, or preacher and spiritual director of the followers of Islam at Luxor, and I never saw a sweeter expression than that which from time to time played over his handsome face. He carried a reed and ink in his girdle, and volunteered to write out our names and titles in Arabic, which he did with exceeding grace; the phrase is prosaic and poor, when translated into English, but in Arabic it sounds exceedingly grand, and looks noble and fine: it runs thus, 'Mister Smith, English priest, the bearer of these presents, the gentleman.' It was his own composition, and he was heartily proud of his work, and he flourished his reed in the air, and his dark face was lighted up with a smile of intense satisfaction, as he handed us our respective names and titles, done into Arabic. Two sons of Mustafa Aga also visited our boat that evening, so the saloon of the Southern Cross was full of turbans and tarbooshes, and many chibouques were smoked, and relays of coffee consumed.

On one of our many visits to Mustafa, with whom we became quite intimate, we met the governor of Thebes, a dark, heavy-browed man, extremely polite to the strangers. Indeed, he was too devoted to our interests, for upon one occasion, after a long day's excursion on the opposite bank of the river, among the temples and tombs, we were surprised to find our sailor Lazé in prison, by command of the dragoman, for declining to follow us with the water jar, as was his wont; an act of disobedience of which we had been wholly ignorant. I immediately went up to Mustafa's house, where he was confined, and found he had just been sentenced to receive twenty-six lashes on the soles of the feet, a most terrible punishment, from which I was only just in time to release him, as I did with a severe reprimand, though both our consul and the governor thought it an unwise and untimely act of kindness, and strongly urged me to have him bastinadoed as a wholesome example on board, to prevent future insubordination. But I have already said, that from the first we set our faces very decidedly against all recourse to the stick; and the longer we remained in the country, and the more we heard of this habit of imprisoning

and beating the Arab sailors, at the caprice of their master, the more objectionable did it seem. It was not only liable to abuse, but, to our knowledge, it was very often abused; we heard of several cases, where the whole crew was taken before some petty governor, and flogged severely, at the mere desire of their angry employer, and without attempting to prove their fault, or even name their offence. Nay, it has been recorded by more than one European traveller, that, previous to starting from Cairo, it was the general custom, a few years since, to have the crew soundly thrashed by way of precaution, and in order to intimidate them into good behaviour during the voyage. Such injustice and cruelty are not practised now, but still there is great room for improvement in the laws relating to the protection of the fellaheen, who, when employed by an unscrupulous tyrant, to this day suffer most barbarous treatment, with no redress. And the fact that they bear their wrongs with patience and never dream of retaliation, though enough to disarm the anger of any honest man, rather serves to encourage the bully in his violence towards a submissive race. I do not deny that the stick is the national panacea for all evils, and doubtless the European, who em-

plays it on his Arab sailors, is but falling in with the custom of the country, and doing in Egypt as the Egyptians do. The Muslims themselves have a proverb that 'the stick came down from heaven, a blessing from Allah.' Even the fellaheen are willing to undergo a most cruel beating on the soles of their feet with that terrible instrument of punishment, the *koorbash* (or tapering whip, of flexible hippopotamus hide, hammered into a round form), on the forlorn hope of escaping some paltry tax, though the money which is extracted from them at last, is all the while concealed in their girdle or bosom, and produced when the victim can endure his beating no more, just as we read that, in the fourth century, the Egyptians denied their wealth, and preferred blows from the Roman taxgatherer to paying their demands.* Nay, to 'eat stick,' as a sound thrashing is technically termed, is submitted to with a degree of *sang-froid* quite astonishing to European nations, and is not at all degrading in the eyes of the Egyptian. Moreover it is a classical institution, and we may still see this forcible *argumentum ad hominem* being applied to the soles of offending men and even women, amidst other illustrations of do-

* Sharpe, *History of Egypt*, ii. 284.

mestic life depicted in the most ancient tombs. So that the bastinado has been for ages, and still is, the cure for all delinquencies amongst the natives of the valley of the Nile. Still I maintain, that for the more civilised and more humane Christian, to adopt this practice of barbarism is lowering himself to the level of a semi-savage Muslim, and degrading to him as a brave and upright man.

The morning after we reached Luxor, we rode to Karnac, to see what are generally considered the finest ruins in the world. Dean Stanley, whose nice discrimination and keen appreciation of rival claims to admiration, as well as descriptive powers, are unequalled, styles Karnac 'the grandest building which the world ever raised to the glory and worship of God ;' he also speaks of it as 'the oldest consecrated place of worship in the world,' and calls attention to the fact that 'the principles of religious art first appeared here and have never since been lost.' On all these accounts the interest of the traveller is excited to the highest pitch, as he approaches these noble ruins of world-wide renown. It is but a short ride of half an hour across the plain, to the dromos of sphinxes and the propylon which occupy the

most eastern position. This dromos is no other than a long avenue of ram-headed sphinxes, which extended across the plain to the temple-gate, and could not fail to remind me of the avenues of ruder stones, reported to have once conducted to our Wiltshire temple of Avebury in a similar manner, and perhaps at a similar date. Arrived at Karnac we found it a vast ruin, or rather collection of ruins (built by various kings, and added to from time to time), accumulated on one spot, and occupying an area of two thousand feet by fifteen hundred, as I am informed by H., who spent an entire day in measuring and making a ground-plan of the whole. I will not attempt to describe the innumerable courts, covered within and without with painting and sculpture, the elegance of the richly decorated obelisks, the finish of the polished granite shrine, the number of sedate Osiride figures, the colossal size of the gigantic pyramidal towers or propylons, guarding the entrance on the river-side, the proportions of the vast outer court, or, above all, the magnificence of the celebrated hall of columns, wherein one doubts whether most to admire the conception of the architect who planned it, or the skill of the workmen who carried out the design. Enough

that we returned again and again to this interesting ruin, and always found something new to study, some battle scene of the great conqueror Rameses depicted to the life, some detail of extraordinary beauty, and were never tired of gazing at the mighty columns which thickly filled the large hall, so vast yet so symmetrical, of such excessive bulk, and yet from their height so elegant, the very triumph of architectural ingenuity and mechanical power.

Here, as well as in every grand ruin at Thebes, our admiration at the perfection and preservation of the paintings and sculpture was not unmixed with indignation, when we saw how, with inexcusable selfishness and more than ordinary Vandalism, European savants have carried off the more interesting specimens to adorn their museums in Western capitals; and, not content with removing these noble remains, which are of real value only when seen in their original position, they have with ruthless hands torn down, effaced, and demolished many another priceless morsel, in their vain attempts to cut it away entire. Our own countrymen have much to answer for in these dark deeds of spoliation, as the British Museum and several private collections in England bear ample

testimony ; but, foremost among the systematic and intelligent robbers of temples and tombs on the Theban plain, stands forth, in unenviable prominence, the name of the great German explorer Dr. Lepsius, who seems to have felt no compunction at the havoc he caused, and to have been strangely oblivious of the claims of future generations of antiquarians on his forbearance.

Karnac is undoubtedly the gem of Theban ruins ; but on the opposite side of the river, there are palaces and temples which compete for this honour, and are but a short distance behind in the race. As you cross the Nile in your *sandal*, you see a crowd of donkeys, well bridled and saddled, and indeed little inferior to those of Cairo ; and long before you land, your ears are assailed by the vociferous shouts of the rival owners loudly proclaiming the superiority of their own cattle, and as loudly denouncing those of their companions. This all occurs in a medley of languages, amongst which a few broken sentences of English are conspicuous : ‘ Here, ya Hawager ; ’ ‘ Here, good donkey ; ’ ‘ Him bad, mine best ; ’ ‘ dis strong donkey ; ’ and so forth : and the uproar rages, until you have fixed an eye on the animal you select, and as you land from the boat, seize him and mount.

Then the altercation ceases, for the struggle for custom is at an end, though one sharp little girl continued, as I rode away, 'him berry rough donkey: berry bad bridle;' the latter remark strictly correct, as a small piece of worsted was all the rein I had. However, we had long since learned to dispense with bridles, as useless gear wherewith to encumber the hands: and so we were soon jogging merrily over the wide plain to some of the many objects of interest on this western side of the river.

Most conspicuous, as we ride through the fields, are the two colossal figures known to the Arabs as Shami and Dami, but to irreverent Englishmen as Lord Dundreary and his brother Sam! They are in reality statues of Amunopth III., and one of them is the famous Vocal Memnon, who greeted visitors at sunrise with melodious sounds, which issued from his body, on the origin of which a vast amount of controversy has arisen. The voice of the giant is now hushed, and his features as well as those of his companion are worn away by time: but fine old fellows they are still, and imposing withal, sitting out here in their rocky chairs, and presiding over the plain, as they have done for near four thousand years: annually wetting their feet

and legs during the inundation, and scorching their backs in the fierce sun all the year round. Terribly battered, too, they have been by ruthless hands; yet still there is a dignity and a repose in these unmistakable giants, while they measure above fifty feet in height, as they sit.

Medinet Haboo claims early mention, from its enormous size and many interesting details: and we passed the greater part of a day in carefully going through the many halls and courts, some of which contain pictures and sculpture of great artistic merit: but the general effect of this great ruin is very much impaired by the remains of a Christian village, which was built upon and within it, and which (though destroyed no less than a thousand years ago) still chokes and disfigures the fine proportions of the temple, on whose summit it sits an unsightly incubus, and to whose walls it clings like an ugly parasite. Here we first saw the scorpion, which seems to abound amid the ruins of Medinet Haboo more than elsewhere; and a very detestable creature it is, of which man and beast entertain the greatest horror, so venomous and fierce is its nature, and so repulsive its appearance.

Another day we spent at Old Goorneh, partly temple, partly palace, as were so many of these

grand buildings, reminding one of the similar character of the Escorial in Spain. Indeed, it has been asserted by more than one learned Egyptologist, and is now generally allowed, that the 'hundred-gated' Thebes of Homer and other authors did not derive its appellation, as would at first sight seem the obvious meaning, from so many gates in its walls, for the very sufficient reason that Thebes was never surrounded with a wall: but from the numerous pylons and propylons which guarded the many temples and palaces of this collegiate, ecclesiastical, palatial city.

But of all the temples which stud the plain of Thebes, the Memnonium is, in my opinion, the most picturesque; and we returned to it more than once to feast our eyes with another look at our favourite. It stands out alone on the plain, unencumbered with buildings, flanked with splendid Osiride figures of colossal size, each armed with the crook or crosier and flail, in reference to the final judgment; and is sufficiently perfect to form an admirable ruin. Here, too, we saw the enormous fragments of the gigantic granite figure of Rameses the Great, the largest colossus the world ever saw: it is of red granite, and once weighed the almost incredible amount of 888 tons! Even now the features are discernible,

though the rough treatment it has experienced at the hands of the Arabs, who were in the habit of carving their mill-stones out of its cheeks, somewhat impaired the symmetry of its proportions. One large block, including the head and chest of this colossus, is still thirteen feet in height, but the figure, when entire, measured thirty-five feet, and, with the throne and pedestal on which it stood, no less than seventy feet: a marvellous work indeed! the magnitude of which is almost oppressive, as we come to examine the details of its dimensions. But I was never tired of examining and measuring the fragments of this gigantic figure, and then ruminating on the means which those wonderful people, the ancient Egyptians, employed, in first transporting it from the quarries of Assouan, a distance of 138 miles, then erecting it here, and the scarcely less difficult task, before the use of gunpowder was known, of breaking in pieces so enormous a mass. But I never felt so strong a grudge against the tyrant Cambyzes, as when I called to mind the violence that ruthless conqueror must have used in destroying this monument of art and mechanical skill, which, had it existed to the present day, in its once perfect condition, would have been considered, in this nineteenth century of the Christian era, as one of the greatest wonders of the world.

I had been accustomed to hear all manner of theories propounded in my own country, and much astonishment expressed at the mechanical skill of the ancient Britons in transporting even a dozen miles at the most, and erecting, the huge stones which form the temples of Avebury and Stonehenge; but the largest of those unhewn Wiltshire Sarsens sink into comparative pebbles by the side of this vast granite figure, and even in antiquity are probably inferior to their gigantic rival. For the largest stone of Avebury, which is allowed to be the most massive of its brethren in Wiltshire, weighs no more than sixty-two tons; while here we have a granite figure, well proportioned, delicately carved, and highly polished, bearing the date of about B.C. 1540, and weighing when entire no less than 888 tons! So the great figure of Rameses II. had an irresistible attraction for me, though I confess that, speculate as I would, the problem it offered baffled all my attempts at solution, and it still remains a perfect marvel to myself as well as, I suppose, all other beholders.

Having said thus much of the colossal figures and of the temples, I can scarcely take leave of the city of Thebes without adverting to the tombs, which are the most interesting of all its antiquities.

They are situated in the rocks of the Libyan desert, which you reach by riding up a long winding valley, 'the valley of the shadow of death,' as it has been aptly termed, so desolate, dreary and gloomy is its character; all strewn with boulders, and completely barren, a most fitting approach to the great necropolis. As a general rule, in Egypt, the entrances to tombs are for the most part from the east end of the sepulchre, because the departed was supposed to be in the west, whither he had gone with the setting sun to Osiris in Amenti: but here in this winding valley, the entrances to the tombs faced every aspect, and stood on both sides of our path; they were small and unpretending enough, indeed in most cases had been carefully concealed, and often amounted to mere holes, through which one could barely creep in a stooping posture. Of course we duly explored the best specimens of all these strange sepulchres, the private tombs, those of the Queens, and, above all, those of the Kings; and marvellous indeed it was to see the habits and manners of the Egyptians of three thousand years ago, a very epitome (as it has been called) of ancient Egyptian life; as vividly painted on the walls as if they had been drawn yesterday; the colours

quite fresh, and, in more than one instance, the bold outline of an unfinished painting sketched out by the hand of a master artist, but the colouring never filled in. Many of these tombs, the celebrated ones of Belzoni and Bruce more especially, are much more extensive than I had anticipated : in most of them there is a rapid descent as you pass through the entrance, and this incline, at a greater or less angle, is continued as far as they can be explored. Amongst the most conspicuous ornaments are huge serpents of a vivid green or brownish-red colour, coiling in innumerable folds, with four legs and winged. Boats, too, containing the soul of the deceased, and being tracked *over* steep bridges by ropes, are very general ; but to me this strange anomaly of a boat on dry land was wholly incomprehensible ; it seemed such a useless redundancy of means for conveying the corpse safe over the water, and an anomaly that was quite gratuitous. But it was interesting to trace in this old Egyptian custom of ferrying their dead across the lake or over the river to the necropolis, often on the opposite side of the Nile, the origin of the well-known fable of Charon and the Styx, which herein undoubtedly took its rise, and became a

prominent feature in after ages in the mythologies of Italy and Greece.

Many other subjects, too, there were, perfectly clear as far as the painting is concerned, but very mysterious in intention, and which I believe nobody has ever attempted to explain. These tombs, being all excavated out of the solid rock, are necessarily perfectly dark, and can only be seen by the light of candles, with a due supply of which everyone is provided; so that it is only little by little, and bit by bit, that the paintings, with which the walls are literally covered, can be explored: and now stooping to those near the ground, now holding your candle at arm's length over your head, now attaching it to a long stick provided for the purpose, you trace out the various subjects of interest as they are depicted to the life. It is marvellous to reflect that those who built these sepulchres took such immense pains to excavate and embellish them, lavished upon them such refinement of art, thought no labour or expense too great, and spared no efforts in this display of funereal grandeur: and yet it is doubtful whether they were ever able, or indeed whether they ever desired, to light up the vast and gloomy corridors which they had decorated; or if they

did light them, there arises the question, even more puzzling, what appliances could they have possessed of sufficient power to accomplish their end? The tourist of the present day can only dimly trace out the pictures little by little, but the wax candles which he brings in never so great profusion, have no appreciable effect in lighting up the lofty halls and corridors, where darkness reigns supreme. Can it be that the Pharaohs, acknowledging the undying nature of the soul, and thinking it would after death hover about the body, once its earthly tabernacle, desired to prepare a fitting abode for their own disembodied spirits, where they should delight themselves with contemplating the same scenes in which they took pleasure while on earth? or what sufficient motive can we suggest to account for such vast preparations? These are among the many Egyptian mysteries in which none have yet become initiated, and amongst the riddles to which no modern Œdipus has hitherto discovered the clue.

But at all events, whatever the inducement, and whatever the hopes and expectations, they were powerful enough to cause every Theban king to begin his reign by preparing for himself one of these elaborate sepulchres, the adorning of which extended

to the end of his life, and which his death in many cases interrupted, and caused to be left in the unfinished state which adds no little to their interest. It was difficult to tear ourselves away from these fascinating paintings, and as we passed on from one to another, and examined these most graphic representations of the domestic manners and customs of the Egyptians of olden time, we could well fancy ourselves with Joseph at the priestly house of Potipherah, or with Moses at the court of Pharaoh, or with the Israelites associating with their Egyptian neighbours: for all classes were here represented, from the king on his throne to the woman grinding at the mill, and all were depicted in the pursuit of their respective daily callings, surrounded with the implements or furniture which severally belonged to them.

On leaving the tombs, a sharp scramble over the limestone rocks leads by a short cut back to the great plain of Thebes: up this severe mountain path the donkeys cleverly followed us; and it is worth the exertion, even on the hottest day, and with the sun reflecting its fiercest rays from these glowing rocks, on account of the bird's-eye view of the whole site of the ancient city which bursts on the traveller's eyes from the top. Just below

lies the vast plain west of the river, dotted with the ruins of Goorney, the Memnonium, Dayr-el-Medineh, almost at our feet: the two Colossi and Medinet Haboo beyond: then the Nile winding down from the south; and on its opposite bank Luxor, and, even at this distance, the stupendous ruins of Karnac. From no other spot can the eye embrace the whole of Thebes at one glance, and we sat long in contemplation of the ruined temples and palaces, with which we had now made ourselves familiar: and perhaps lost in reverie, as in imagination we rebuilt the once famous city, and repopled it with the multitudes which thronged its vast courts near four thousand years ago. For few cities of antiquity have attracted more enthusiastic veneration than the far-famed hundred-gated city of Thebes: and, in good truth, what in that early age of civilisation could compare with the luxurious taste, the wealth, and the magnificence of this ancient capital of Upper Egypt, till the destroying arm of mad Cambyzes and his Persian troops overthrew in barbarian wantonness the magnificent works of art which they knew not how to appreciate?

CHAPTER XI.

DATES AND DYNASTIES—KINGS OF EGYPT—
DIVINITIES.

WHILE lingering at Thebes, and with our minds saturated, as I may say, with temples and tombs, sculptures and paintings, hieroglyphics and emblems, it seems a good opportunity to say a few words on the much-vexed questions of dates and dynasties—of the great kings who built these sanctuaries and excavated these tombs, and of the gods to whom the ancient Egyptians dedicated such magnificent temples, and in whose honour they exhausted their highest powers of science and art.

It is not to be denied that Egypt is the oldest state in the world of which we have any precise record. Hundreds of years before Cecrops, leading a colony from his native city of Sais, settled in Attica, and laid the foundations of Athens—a

thousand years before the siege of Troy—the Pharaohs had consolidated a powerful monarchy, and, when the first Assyrian Empire was founded under the Nimrod of the Bible, the Egyptian was a flourishing kingdom. Indeed, if we must accept the generally received chronology of Archbishop Ussher, we shall be driven back very hard upon the Deluge for the latest date to which we can refer the origin of this most ancient empire. But I humbly venture to entertain the opinion that the received chronological tables do not allow sufficient time between the Deluge and the age of Abraham. This, I think, is the only period when, without interfering with the records of Holy Scripture, we may relax the stringent bands drawn too tightly by chronologists, and insert a considerable addition of centuries: without such an interval it is difficult to conceive the rise and growth of many of the greater nations of antiquity, and of Egypt, more especially, compressed within such narrow limits of time; but with this addition (and we need not stint its dimensions) there is no difficulty in accepting the theories of our boldest Egyptologists, who demand many ages for the rise of this mighty kingdom.

Not that I am prepared to endorse the state-

ments of Herodotus, which he derived from the exaggerated figures given him by the priests, and in which he asserts that, from the reign of Menes to that of Sethos, above eleven thousand years must be reckoned. The too credulous historian was doubtless imposed upon by the merry priests, who furnished lists of the contemporary monarchs of the several provinces, and persuaded him that they followed one another in regular succession. But, when we reflect that Egypt was a flourishing kingdom when Abraham visited it, probably in the reign of Apappus* (B.C. 1920); † that it was at an advanced state of civilisation when Joseph became its ruler under Osirtasen I. (B.C. 1715); that it was at the zenith of its power, as well as at its best period of art—the ‘Augustan age,’ as it has been styled—during the reigns of Osireï or Sethi I., the Pharaoh at whose court Moses was brought up (B.C. 1570), and of his son, Rameses II., the Sesostris of the Greeks, and the mighty conqueror, but, to the unfortunate Israelites, the oppressor, from whose palace Moses fled (B.C. 1540), we feel constrained to admit that many ages must have elapsed since Mizraim, the son of Ham or Cham, and

* Wilkinson's *Ancient Egypt*, iii. 278.

† Genesis xii. 10.

the grandson of Noah, laid the first foundation of the kingdom which had attained to such an exalted pitch of eminence and civilisation.

In venturing to give the names of the several Pharaohs alluded to in the Pentateuch, I must own that herein the best-informed Egyptologists widely differ, though the balance of opinion certainly inclines to the names I have given above. And there remains yet another Pharaoh whom we are especially interested to identify, viz. the Pharaoh of the Exodus, about whom the learned have held different theories, Thothmes III. having been for a long time supposed, on the high authority of Sir G. Wilkinson and others, to represent that ill-starred monarch; but now Pthahmen, the son of Rameses the Great, is generally allowed to have been the reigning prince when (B.C. 1491) the Israelites marched out of the land of bondage, and, crossing the Red Sea, saw their oppressors and the hated king dead on the sea shore. To this view, propounded by the late Duke of Northumberland, then Lord Prudhoe, Sir G. Wilkinson has now given in his adhesion,* and we may therefore accept it as the most reliable. I am bound, however, to add that the great Prus-

* Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, ii. 366.

sian scholar, Dr Lepsius, considers Maneptho as the Pharaoh of the Exodus, and Sethos I. as the patron of Joseph, whilst he acknowledges Rameses II. as the Pharaoh of the oppression.

There must of course be necessarily considerable difficulty in assigning exact dates to particular reigns, in dealing with such a remote epoch; but the names of the kings who built or enlarged the temples are generally ascertained by the Egyptian scholar, inasmuch as in the hieroglyphics may be read the titles of the founders, each of whom had a cartouche or oval peculiar to his own name. Full and clear tables of these cartouches are given in the Handbook, and to these the reader will confidently refer for the information he requires; but I would suggest that the few following names be engraven deeply on the memory of the Egyptian traveller, as most valuable for landmarks to guide him in his wide survey, and as embracing the principal founders to whom most of the temples owe their origin:—

Circa

B. C.

1715. *Osirtasen I.*, of whose time a few memorials remain, all of exceeding interest.

1670. *Thothmes III.*—A most munificent founder of temples, as well as a successful warrior.

1600. *Amunoph III.*—In whose reign many a noble building was reared, and great additions made to many existing temples.
1570. *Osireï, or Sethi I.*—A great architect as well as a great conqueror.
1540. *Rameses II. or the Great*, whose many splendid temples, spirited sculpture, and colossal statues, are as notorious as the great victories he gained in the heart of Asia.

These, I think, are the Pharaohs whose names we meet most frequently, and to the magnificent conception or haughty pride of these potentates the grandest temples are due. It is not pretended that their exact dates can be given, but it may be presumed that approximately, and for all practical purposes, they are sufficiently correct.

As we descend to later times, and fall in with the works of the Ptolemies, and afterwards of the Romans, the dates are of course more definite ; but Ptolemaic and Roman remains in Egypt usually attract comparatively small attention, and antiquities which can refer back only two thousand years for their origin are almost regarded as modern, or perhaps I should say mediæval, in that most ancient of kingdoms.

These mighty kings, great in the arts of peace as well as of war—no less remarkable as archi-

fects than as conquerors—delighted to portray themselves as the most conspicuous figures on the walls of the temples they reared to their own glory, not less than in honour of their gods. Adorned with the head-dress used on state occasions—the crown of the upper or lower country, as the case may be—or with the union of both, denominated the *pshent*; ornamented with the asp, the emblem of royalty; guarded by the agathodæmon, or guardian genius, in the form of a serpent, we behold these mighty warriors, vanquishing their foes, taking vengeance on their enemies; under every aspect victorious, triumphant, elated; or presented with the sacred Tau, the Egyptian symbol of life, the so-called key of the Nile, we see them admitted into partnership with the gods they worshipped, and honoured by the approving divinities.

From the founders of the temples we proceed now to consider the very difficult question of the gods they worshipped, and the mysterious rites with which they wrapped up and effectually concealed their real belief from the uninitiated. And if I venture to say a word on the religion of the ancient Egyptians, it is rather by way of calling attention to the fact how very little is really

known of the mythology of that remarkable people, than with a view to any exposition of their creed. For, in sober truth, what is yet known of their theocracy, and who has yet unravelled the mysterious rites in which they delighted to shroud their tenets from the gaze of the vulgar? Something undoubtedly has been unfolded by our great Egyptologists, but the little light which they have been enabled to throw only serves to reveal the profound darkness in which the whole question is still involved.

To the fire-worshipping Cambyses, indeed, the faith of the Egyptians appeared senseless and ridiculous; to the free-thinking Cato it seemed strange 'that one priest could refrain from laughing when he looked at another;' and to the scarcely less infidel Gibbon, the intolerance of the Roman emperor Diocletian, and the excessive severity he showed towards Egyptian superstition appeared justifiable: but Herodotus, with true philosophy, has cautioned us that the religious views of the Egyptians are not to be derided by the uninitiated, and the more we study the character of that wise nation, the less inclined do we feel to believe that they really worshipped as gods the many animals they undoubtedly rever-

enced. 'It is less difficult in Egypt to find a god than a man,' was the contemptuous remark of the proud Greek, as beholding the reverence shown towards the sacred animals, he affected to take their complete deification for granted; and yet the follower of the corrupt paganism of Athens, and the worshipper of a band of almost innumerable divinities which the religion of Greece accepted, could hardly afford to throw stones at the polytheism of Egypt.

But if we are forced to allow that they were in some cases so mad as to offer divine honours to various members of the animal kingdom, we shall still see some method in their madness, and can account for their seeming frenzy. Did the inhabitants of towns distant from the river worship the crocodile? it was in order that the canals on which their prosperity depended might be religiously kept in repair under the nominal plea for the convenience of the sacred reptile. Was the fish oxyrynchus worshipped at the inland towns of Behnesa, or the River Nile at Nilopolis, nine miles from the great stream? it was for a similar reason; while Sir Samuel Baker has pointed out that the scarabæus was so highly honoured as the harbinger of the high Nile, because it regularly

makes its appearance at the season of the flood. Even the extraordinary veneration shown for the bull Apis, wherein their reverence for an animal was carried to an extreme, is explained by their belief that under this form the soul of Osiris occasionally condescended to come upon earth, and so they deified the living shrine in which their great god was tabernacled for a time. For the reason why the sacred Ibis was so highly regarded we have not far to seek, inasmuch as the services that bird rendered in destroying the armies of locusts (which were the winged serpents of Herodotus) and other noxious insects are palpable; and flights of locusts still occasionally visit Egypt and the neighbouring country of Syria in incredible numbers, to the utter destruction of the crops, as I have myself witnessed in the latter country.

Then, again, the doctrine of transmigration of souls, which was undoubtedly entertained as a powerful weapon in the hands of Osiris for chastising those who lived wicked lives, in causing them to expiate their crimes under the form of various animals, was another strong motive for the reverence they showed to the creatures they held sacred, and for the pains they took to embalm their bodies after death,

Then, again, with regard to the animal heads, the hawk, ibis, crocodile, cat, jackal, and others, with which the human figures of the deities are frequently surmounted; though no one can positively assert their meaning, some very plausible explanations have been proposed. Thus, it has been thought by some that this strange practice originated in the intense reverence which was felt for the gods they worshipped, and a consequent disinclination, which English Christians can appreciate, to attempt to pourtray the awful face of the Deity; and therefore they put a mask before the Divine countenance, or substituted the head of some member of the animal kingdom held sacred in Egypt, for that which they dared not represent in its real form. Possibly such animal's head likewise betokened the attribute for which the particular deity was notorious; but at all events we are not driven to believe that so wise a nation as the ancient Egyptians showed themselves to have been, really worshipped the beasts, birds, reptiles and fishes which are popularly represented as their gods. These were the tales in which Herodotus revelled, and yet he could scarcely credit such gross superstition; but leads the way to an explanation of their customs in his story of

the ram's head attached to the statue of Jupiter Ammon; * while Cicero declares that the Egyptian custom of representing the gods with the heads of oxen, birds, and other creatures, was introduced in order that people might abstain from eating them, or from some other mysterious reason,† one object doubtless being to ensure the preservation of some animals which were valuable for food, and of others which were useful in destroying noxious reptiles, or for some similar purpose.‡

It is true that these are but feeble attempts to explain many of the mysteries of the ancient worship; but if they serve to point out how little is really known of Egyptian mythology, and therefore how rash it is to condemn without proof, my object is attained.

And now I pass on to mention some of the more salient points which characterise Egyptian theology. In the first place, it is a very remarkable fact, well worthy of observation, that the sufferings,

* Herodotus, book ii. chap. 42. Rawlinson's Herod. pp. 77, 109.

† Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* i. 36. Porphyry *de Sacrificiis*.

‡ Proteus of the Greeks was figured by the poet as metamorphosing himself into every variety of monstrous animal, because the Egyptian kings wore on their heads curious ornaments, representing such animals, in order to impress their own subjects with greater awe, and to strike with amazement strangers and enemies.—Bunsen's *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, i. 103.

death, burial, and resurrection of their principal divinity, Osiris, form the chief mystery of their religion. Now Osiris was the great god who was slain by his own son Typhon, the counterpart of Satan or sin, and who rose again from the grave, and eventually triumphed over that monster of iniquity; while in his office as judge of Amenti or Hades, and in the crook and flail with which he is universally provided, emblematic of his employment in drawing the good into safety, and chastising the wicked, we trace the outline of the blessed promise dimly revealed in the Old Testament, of Him through whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, the Messiah still expected by the Jews, the Blessed Saviour adored by Christians.

Moreover, this great divinity, in common with his consort Isis, was not confined to any special locality, but universally worshipped throughout the country; while the dread which Herodotus continually evinces of uttering his name or meddling with his attributes, and the restriction he lays on himself lest he carelessly reveal any mysteries connected with the worship of this powerful god, which he has been charged not to divulge, are all so many proofs of the universal reverence shown

towards him; and we have already seen how Abydos and other places contended with Philæ for the distinguished honour of being accounted the burial place of that deity; though the old Egyptian oath, 'by him who sleeps at Philæ,' seems to have decided the question by general consent in favour of the latter spot.

Then, again, it can scarcely be the result of accident that the great serpent Aphophis, which is pourtrayed as drawing along the ground the vast folds of its scaly body, is not only held to be the symbol of the god of the lower regions, the Demon of Evil, and as such is speared by the god Hor-Hat and other divinities; but is essentially set forth as the emblem of discord, to which we can scarcely doubt that the tradition of the part played by the arch-fiend in the garden of Eden, under the form of the subtle serpent, must have given rise.

Another remarkable point of Egyptian worship consists in the fact that every large town or district had its own special Triad, or assemblage of three gods, neither more nor less, whom it delighted to honour; in which, as in the governing Triad of classical mythology, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, and in modern days in the Hindoo association of

Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva (the Creator, Preserver, and Regenerator), we see manifest traces of a corrupted tradition of the Holy Trinity.

Now the Triad, which not only was held in honour in Philæ, but (as I have said) pre-eminently took the first place in general estimation throughout the country, consisted of (1) *Osiris*, the god of goodness, and the god of the dead, partly answering to Jupiter, partly to Pluto, and partly to the Grecian Bacchus. (2) *Isis*, whom Herodotus styles the greatest of all the Egyptian deities, the sister as well as wife of Osiris, the goddess of the dead, representing Ceres or the Moon; and (3) their infant son *Horus*, who answers to Apollo, and from whom sprang the notion of Charon, represented with a hawk's head. Then Thebes, Memphis, and Heliopolis, the three great capitals of the provinces of Upper, Middle, and Lower Egypt, had each its respective Triad: that of Thebes being composed of (1) *Amun Re*, the great Sun-god, or the Jupiter of the system, whose distinguishing head-dress consists of two long feathers. (2) *Maut*, the mother of all, answering in some sort to Latona; and (3) *Khonso*. Memphis worshipped (1) *Pthah* as its chief divinity, who may be styled the Vulcan of the Egyptians; (2)

Pasht or Bubastis, answering in part to Diana, in part to Latona, and always to be recognised by the cat's or lioness' head, with which the figure of that goddess is surmounted, of which we possess so extensive a series in the British Museum ; and (3) *Apis*. Heliopolis was, as its name implies, devoted to the worship of the sun, and therefore held in chief honour (1) the great god *Re*, the sun, symbolised by a hawk's head ; (2) *Mnevis* ; and (3) *Osiris*. Then the great Triad of the Cataracts of Ethiopia, and of the Oases, consisted of (1) *Noum* or *Kneph*, the Jupiter who presides over Creation, always figured with a ram's head ; (2) *Sate*, answering to Juno ; and (3) *Anouke*, who may best be described as Vesta.

In addition to these, there are many other deities, with whose forms and characteristics the traveller soon becomes familiar, such as :

Thoth, the god of letters, the Mercury of the Egyptian Olympus, who weighs men's deeds in a balance before the great judge of Amenti, and who is to be recognised by the ibis head. He was the presiding divinity of Hermopolis. .

Athor, corresponding with Venus, distinguished by the head of a spotted cow : especially honoured at Dendera.

Savak, another form of the sun-god, bearing the head of a crocodile ; the great god of Kom-ombos.

Khem, universal nature, or Priapus, wearing a goat's head.

Anubis, who conducted souls from this life to the next, represented with the head of a jackal.

Seb, answering to Chronos or Saturn, the father of Osiris, the father of the gods ; the earth, whose emblem was a goose.

Neith, the goddess of wisdom and war, corresponding with Minerva.

Thmei, the goddess of truth ; designated by a single feather of great length, which adorns her head.

These are some of the more important deities, with which one meets most frequently ; but there are many others of less note, and held in inferior honour. And the reverence shown to these several divinities, so far as is understood at present, appears to be commensurate with the dignity and worth of their characters, and the value of the quality for which they are conspicuous.

Shall any one, then, rashly presume to affirm that the Egyptians systematically worshipped the various animals which they considered sacred, or

even the multiplicity of gods, distinguished by the heads of animals such as I have enumerated above? or may we not rather suppose that so wise a nation intended hereby to symbolise the various attributes of Divinity, and in reality adored but one God, of which these strange shapes were mere emblems or types? That is, I think, the view to which deliberate consideration of the question leads us; and though the symbol may have arrested the faith of the ignorant,* and the more illiterate, in all probability, worshipped the shadow instead of the substance—as has been oftentimes the case in more modern and Christian times—yet I apprehend with Dean Stanley that ‘loftier minds saw behind these many forms and shapes One Presiding Spirit,’ and surely such a learned, well-instructed body as the priests are known to have been, cannot be supposed to have been contented with any members of the animal kingdom as the gods to whom they must look for protection, and whom they should adore.

But a superficial view of the fragmentary evidence on which our opinions upon this point are based (and they amount at last to no more than

* ‘In the animal worship of Egypt, the animals were to be mere symbols; but became, by the inherent curse of idolatry, real objects of worship.’—Bunsen’s *Egypt’s Place in Universal History*, iv. 640.

mere conjecture) has misled to a general wholesale condemnation of this little understood system : and we find historians, with Gibbon at their head, denouncing the ancient Egyptian worship as the most contemptible and abject of all superstitions. Now that, I maintain, is unfair, and until we know more than we do at present of their religious belief, it is somewhat premature and rash to condemn it with so sweeping a verdict.

There is yet another point on the same subject to which I desire to call attention as deserving careful inquiry, though I will not presume to press any opinion of my own ; and that is the enormous prominence which sun-worship undoubtedly had throughout the country. It has already been shown that several of the greater gods of Egypt, Osiris, Amun Re, Kneph, and others, answer to the Jupiter of the Greeks and Romans : let us now mark how many correspond with the sun, and how universal was the worship of that luminary. That *Re*, the sun, was pre-eminently the god and almost the only god of Heliopolis, is evident from the name of that city : and hard by is the famous fountain of the sun, which Christian tradition reports to have been salt, until the arrival there of the Blessed Virgin and the Divine Babe ; and

nowhere was Osiris held in greater honour or worshipped with more fervour than at the city of On, where he was honoured as 'the Sun,' or rather 'the Son of the Sun;' while his consort Isis, as the mother of the earth, wears on her head the sun's disk, emblematic of her high position. Passing on to the necropolis of Memphis, again we see the sun as the protecting deity of the place, and the Sphinx too is found to be no other than Re, the great god to whom offerings were made. At Dendera the same god is highly honoured. At Thebes, whether we explore the temples at Old Goorneh, Medinet Haboo, Luxor, or Karnac, the Sun-god again is a conspicuous object of worship; the winged orb typifying the sun overshadowing every propylon; the scarabæus sacred to the sun, and emblematic of that luminary, the most frequent ornament: * while if we visit the sepulchres of the kings, at the entrance of every tomb we may see the king making offerings to the Sun; and the early historian Hecataeus is lavish in praise of the magnificent Temple of the Sun which he visited at Thebes. Indeed, we

* 'They represent the sun by the figure of a beetle (scarabæus) probably because of the analogy between the round lump which it rolls before it and the circular form of the ecliptic.'—Bunsen's *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, i. 339.

may say that here the worship of the great luminary in the heavens (pure Sabæism, in short) was practised to an extent scarcely inferior to that which prevailed at Heliopolis. Then at the grand rock temple of Nubia, the renowned Aboo-Simbel, the same great deity is paramount. And to sum up all, Serapis, the last great god of the ancient Egyptians, introduced by Ptolemy, and which took the place of Osiris in Alexandria, and was worshipped there with so much pomp and magnificence, is found to be none other than the sun. But again, does a Pharaoh desire to record his virtues—as kings and nobles were wont to do in other countries than Egypt, and in other times than theirs—‘Amunoph III., the Sun-worshipper;’ ‘Amunoph IV., the Sun-worshipper;’ such are the terms in which they record their piety: and Lepsius describes the latter monarch as ‘that royal puritan who persecuted all the gods of Egypt, and would only admit the worship of the Sun’s disk.’ But indeed the very name of Pharaoh signifies no other than ‘child of the Sun,’ and the orb of light was ever accounted the special deity of the Egyptian monarch. Then again, above our heads, as we enter every temple on the banks of the Nile, we may see the central disk of the sun, flanked by the wings

of Providence, emblematic of that bright luminary overshadowing and protecting the hallowed precincts: so that though it may be doubtful to what extent Sun-worship prevailed in Egypt, I am disposed to agree with Lepsius that 'Helios or Re was the highest god of the Egyptians.'

But if we admit that conclusion, how much is involved in the admission: then we shall recognise in the many deities adopted in various districts, but so many personifications of the attributes of the One Great Divinity in the heavens: and we can readily understand how, in an atmosphere so transparently clear and under a sky so bright, the sun which rose every morning in such exceeding glory, and went down behind the glowing rocks of the desert every evening in such beauty, tinging sands and mountains and sky with such ineffable tints of red and purple and gold, seemed to those who had lost the truth once revealed by Jehovah, to be a god worthy of adoration and honour. And this surely is a very different degree of infatuation and superstition from that with which common report has been accustomed to saddle the ancient Egyptians.

CHAPTER XII.

THEBES TO ASSOUAN.

WE had taken our leave of good Mustafa Aga by a rapid interchange of farewell visits, occasioning the consumption of several cups of coffee, several parting chibouques, and (what we grudged much more) a considerable waste of time; and then we cast off our moorings, and poled away a few hundred yards above Luxor just as the sun went down. In any other country we should have remained at anchor at Luxor till morning, and then made our start with the early dawn; but here the preparations for a move are so prolonged, that the only chance of a fair day's journey is to take time by the forelock, and move off with our whole ship's company the previous afternoon. So we prided ourselves on our generalship, and anticipated an early start and a long voyage the following day. But (as usual with us now) we were

doomed to disappointment. Our reis, who had leave to visit his friends for a couple of days, had encroached on our indulgence, and had now been four days absent, and the dragoman had sent a sailor to bring back the truant captain, so we dawdled on at a snail's pace, awaiting his return. Then a favourable breeze sprang up, and we sailed away to Esnè, which we reached on the afternoon of the following day. Here we were bound by our contract to halt a whole day, in order that the men might bake bread, which should last them all through Nubia and back to this same place; and, as we had very soon seen the only portions of the grand old temple which we could see, inasmuch as it stands completely buried in earth, save where its twenty-four fine columns and perfect roof have been excavated, and as we had very quickly exhausted the attractions of this most essentially wretched town, we anticipated a day of inactivity, and had determined on an expedition somewhere to occupy the time, when, in a happy moment, as we were dressing in the early morning, the flag of the 'Zuleika' hove in sight, for which we had been on the look-out of late, for we knew that our friends Messrs. Peckover, Fayle, Barclay and Tritton, with whom we travelled from Marseilles to

Alexandria, and who had left Cairo some time before us, proposed to return from the first Cataracts, and must be near us now. A salute from our boat soon caught their attention, and when they saw the flag of the 'Southern Cross,' they at once came in to the shore, and very kindly spent the day with us at Esnè. Of course we exchanged hospitalities, and equally of course compared our watches, and disputed about the real time. Then we had a great deal to hear and to tell of our respective progress, the conduct of the dragoman, the behaviour of the crew, the head winds which had baffled us, the favouring breezes which had wafted us along, the success we had met in our shooting expeditions, the sketches we had made, the photographs we had taken, the crocodiles we had constantly looked for but had not seen, the various views we entertained of the temples and tombs. It was quite refreshing to have such a pleasant break in our long voyage amongst strangers, and it seemed almost like a reminiscence of home, and the meeting of very old friends, when we thus encountered our agreeable companions of the 'Delta,' not one of whom we had ever seen previous to our mutual embarkation at Marseilles. As evening drew on, they took their

leave, and rowed away down the river, and soon after the men's bread came on board, and then we shook out our sail, and continued our upward course, till a perfect calm sent us to the bank, and then we tracked the following day to El Kab.

It was during this day's journey that we first saw the crocodile, for which we had kept a daily look-out, hitherto in vain. It is pleasing to find the old Egyptian name for this truly Egyptian reptile, recorded by Herodotus as 'cham-sa,' still retained in the modern Arabic 'tumsa,' and, no sooner were the first specimens described by one of our sailors, than the whole boat resounded with cries of 'Tumsa! tumsa!' speedily followed by demands for backsheesh, to which this special service seemed to open a way. I do not think that, amongst the many crocodiles we subsequently saw in Nubia, we ever met with more magnificent specimens than the two huge monsters which now appeared on a sandbank to our delighted eyes—we were near enough to see them well, and with the glass could examine all the details of their ugly shapeless bodies. They struck me as lighter in colour than I had supposed, and were certainly larger in size than I had anticipated. Crocodiles abounded a few years back below the Cataracts, as

they do now above; but since the Pasha has introduced steam-tugs on the river, which ply as far as Assouan, it is seldom that the timid beast shows itself in Egypt Proper. The consequence is that the traveller who confines his voyage to the river below the Cataracts generally returns mortified on missing this peculiarly Egyptian sight; and so our friends, from whom we parted yesterday, were loud in their expressions of disappointment at the non-appearance of a single specimen of this great reptile, for which they had during the whole voyage kept an anxious look-out; and subsequent enquiry among other boats elicited the fact that very few had seen them in these lower portions of the river, disturbed as they now are from their primitive repose by the snortings of the Pasha's black steam-tugs, and the continual whirr of their paddle-wheels. Afterwards we saw them almost every day in Nubia, and, in certain suitable spots, where sandbanks in the middle of the river prevailed, in some numbers. I think that we reckoned that on the whole we had seen about thirty specimens, some of which were enormous monsters, and others again comparatively small. Sometimes they appeared to be asleep on the sandbanks, on which they delighted to bask in the warm sunshine, and then we could

occasionally come very near before they took fright, and slipped off into the water; at other times they were wide awake, and as they never ventured many yards from the water's edge, they no sooner caught sight of the boat but they began to crawl away, and we could watch them slowly and deliberately sinking into the river, from which they never emerged again while we were in sight. It is useless to attempt to shoot the crocodile with an ordinary rifle ball; the armour of its skin is so hard that, unless the bullet be hardened with tin, it will not penetrate even in the softer portions, though a very lucky shot may perchance penetrate the brain through the small orifice of the eye. Indeed, to bag a crocodile is no small feat, and, amongst all the boats on the Nile which we met, there was but one successful sportsman who had contrived to kill and procure a specimen. Some are undoubtedly wounded out of the many shot at, but, as they invariably seek the bottom as soon as they are hit, the prize is not obtained unless it is shot dead. The only one which was killed and recovered this season we saw skinned and stuffed and laid out on the boom of the '*Cecilia*,' the *dáhabeah* of Sir Theophilus Biddulph and Mr. Harrison, the latter of those gentlemen having

been the fortunate, or, rather, skilful shot who had secured this glorious trophy. We had no proper ammunition on board our boat for a campaign against such river monsters, and, as we had no desire to wound the poor beasts to no purpose, we abstained from firing at them at all. Sometimes, however, when we had sailed noiselessly nearer than usual to some napping monster, we would fire a gun in the air over his head, in order to see him scuttle quickly into the water; but, even then, so heavy are his movements on land that his greatest despatch was by no means rapid motion. The Arabs profess to have little fear of an attack from these formidable animals by day, and we wondered sometimes at the rashness with which they ventured to throw themselves into the water, either to push off the boat when we ran on a sandbank, or in tracking through shallow water; but they always spoke of it as a timorous beast, which never dared to seize a man unless he was quite alone. Yet we noticed that, with all their bravado, they were extremely cautious of entering the water in those parts of the river where crocodiles most abounded,—and very wise they were in such caution; for, clumsy as they seem on land, they are at home in the water, and can in

an instant seize a man in their formidable jaws, and carry him down to the bottom of the river, where his fate is soon sealed; and I fear, from the reports we heard, such is the terrible end every year of many a man, still more of women and children, whom, when separated from their companions, these voracious creatures will even seize on the river's bank.

There is a large river lizard, somewhat resembling the crocodile in shape, called by the natives the 'woiran,' but by more scientific naturalists the 'Nilotic monitor,' and which is, I believe, peculiar to the Nile. It attains the length of above four feet, and is seen sometimes in the river, sometimes on the banks under the thick bushy trees which often line the water's edge. On one occasion, our second reis, Mohammed, succeeded in killing one of these creatures, and brought it in triumph on board, and as the dragoman undertook the somewhat unpleasant task of skinning it, I have it now stuffed as a memorial of that worthy Arab, and his wondrous tale. He gravely assured me, and in this he was vehemently corroborated by all the sailors, that the woiran is the young of the crocodile; that reptile, he asserted, lays a vast number

of eggs, some of which turn out crocodiles, and some woirans; and this, I find, is the prevailing notion wherever these animals abound: it is a villainous-looking creature, with sprawling awkward legs and a very long tail; the colour of its scales is a dark green, or grey, with yellow markings on the neck and back, which give it rather a handsome appearance. It is by no means uncommon, and on two occasions when it had been spied from the deck, I had a regular hunt, with the Arab sailors for hounds. They were always eager for the sport, as the fat of this ugly reptile is considered by them as a valuable specific, or perhaps I should rather say charm, against some malady, but of what description I cannot now recollect. It is very destructive to the eggs and young of the crocodile, and on that account deserves protection; and it is doubtless from the frequency with which it has been detected amidst the eggs and newly-hatched young of its great cousin, that a nearer relationship to the King of Reptiles has been assigned to it.

But to return to El Kab. There is a great deal of interest to the archæologist here, although the remains are on a very small scale. In the first place, the unburnt brick walls of the deserted old town are

in great part very perfect, no less than thirty-seven feet in thickness, and the inclined roads conducting to their summit, and wide enough for chariots, are still entire. From the top of this wall one has a perfect view of the area of the ancient city, now choked with ruins, but once an important place. A short walk of three quarters of a mile to the nearest rocks of the desert brings us to the necropolis of El Kab, now its most interesting feature ; many of these tombs are mere niches or small chambers excavated in the rock, with no pretensions at decoration, and now much mutilated ; others are larger and more highly finished, and some few are extremely interesting from their sculpture and paintings. One in particular gives so faithful a picture of early Egyptian life, and, withal, the story represented on the walls is so easy to follow, that I must shortly describe some of the scenes, which, it must be borne in mind, were executed above three thousand years ago, and so portray the manners and customs of that distant age. The intention of the artist appears to have been to represent first the life and then the death of the owner of the tomb ; he was evidently a rich man, and we all know that the opulent man of antiquity was necessarily a farmer

on a large scale, agricultural and pastoral wealth being in those primitive days the only wealth known. Accordingly on one portion of the wall we have the whole process of the farm represented : men ploughing with rude instruments, but not very different from those employed in the valley of the Nile now, the plough in modern use being a simple construction of two pieces of wood, seldom furnished with an iron share ; others were hoeing the land, or chopping with violent exertion, again with the very hoes we see in use now ; then follow, close behind, men casting in seed from the hand ; others harrowing ; while the owner, seated in his chariot, is looking after his labourers, and inspecting the progress made. Then again we see reapers cutting the various kinds of corn with sickles : the several species of grain distinguished by their different heights ; then we have the tying it in sheaves, next the carrying it to a large heap ; then the treading it out with oxen ; then the winnowing, which is effected by the very primitive plan of casting it down in successive handfuls as far as the upstretched arm can reach ; then measuring it into bags or sacks ; then storing it in barns ; and, lastly, we see the scribe taking an inventory of the quantity so stored. All this is most graphi-

cally described, and while it tells of Egyptian agricultural life five and thirty centuries ago, it portrays, almost as accurately, the customs of the people now, in so uniform a round does Oriental life constantly move, and so little variation occurs in the habits of successive generations in the unchangeable East. ● Another part of the picture represents the keepers of the deceased employed in his service—the fowlers catching ducks, geese, and other birds in a large net; the fishermen in another compartment hauling in a very successful catch of fish of many species and shapes. This is a very spirited design, and tells its story in unmistakable language; and here, too, a scribe is employed, taking down the numbers of wild fowl and fish as given in by the keepers. So far we have followed the owner of the tomb in his agricultural pursuits and his fowling and fishing expeditions; now we see him seated at an entertainment, amidst his family and friends: by his side sits his wife on the same sofa, and, around him, the ladies and gentlemen who are his guests; the former provided with a lotus flower, which each holds in her hand, and generally to her nose, the latter engaged in drinking, their glasses being refilled by attendants in the rear, while musicians, provided

with a variety of strange instruments, assist to enliven the company with harmonious strains. Here it may be observed that certain specified colours, from which there is no deviation, distinguish the women from the men: thus we invariably find the former painted yellow, which is understood throughout Egypt as the conventional colour for females; the latter coloured red, which as universally marks the male sex, and it is a very remarkable coincidence, that in the Mexican paintings these several colours are also universally recognised as distinguishing characteristics of the sexes, yellow being in like manner reserved for the representation of women, red for that of men. From this scene of rejoicing and carousal we pass on to a very different subject: the master of the house is now dead, and his body is taken to the embalmers to be dealt with after the peculiar Egyptian fashion, then, returned by them in the form of a mummy, we behold it received by his friends. This is followed by the funeral procession, the women wailing with the same outward tokens of grief as are in use now. The body is conveyed on a sledge drawn by oxen, while the soul appears before Osiris, where we descry the scales for weighing the good and bad actions of the deceased.

These are some of the principal scenes represented in this highly interesting tomb; there are several other scenes not so evident, and hieroglyphics without end, but I think the above a fair sample of the information in manners and customs, dresses, furniture, instruments, and general requirements for domestic and agricultural life, so fully furnished us even to this time in the vivid paintings which adorn the walls of many of the tombs. Now when we consider the immense antiquity of these pictures, that they represent the habits of a bygone age, long before Herodotus visited and wrote his account of Egypt; that they were old even when Homer composed his poems; we are lost in admiration at the invaluable evidence they afford of the daily life of those early times, so accurate, so definite, so precise, so detailed; and the consequence is, that in regard to the ancient Egyptians, we can reproduce, as we can do with no other nation of equal antiquity, the every-day habits and customs then in vogue, whether in regard to domestic life, agriculture, or sepulture.

A very short sail took us from El Kab to Edfoo, where M. Mariette has recently uncovered one of the most grand as well as perfect temples in

Egypt; it is of considerable size, and though of course in many parts out of repair, can scarcely be called a ruin, so well has the accumulated sand and dust of the desert, with which it was thoroughly choked, preserved the building from destruction. I do not think this is sufficiently appreciated by travellers; but if in England we are much indebted to whitewash as the great preservative of ancient wall painting in our churches, which a puritan age, with questionable taste, desired to obliterate, or at all events conceal; so in Egypt, the accumulation of desert sand, blown in by the Southern wind, however loudly denounced by Europeans as hiding the ancient temples, has in reality proved their best friend, inasmuch as it has not only admirably defended from injury the sharpest outline of the sculpture, but even preserved the vivid colours of the paintings, as no other means could have done. This excellent result of an accidental circumstance is doubtless attributable first to the extremely dry climate which prevails in Egypt, so that the sand thus collected contains no particle of moisture, no trace of damp, which would have ruined all; and also to the very gradual accumulation of this fine dust, which has been deposited with the utmost gentle-

ness, and could only have choked the buildings as it has done after a considerable number of years. To these circumstances peculiar to the country, and chancing to combine in burying the temples of Egypt with a fine dry impalpable dust, may be attributed, I think, the wondrous preservation in which the most delicate carving and the brightest tints of colours have endured through so many centuries to our times.

I refrain from entering into minute particulars respecting the temple of Edfoo, in accordance with the check I imposed on myself in this respect in the preface; though I am sorely tempted to do so, as I not only thoroughly explored it above and below, but even made a rough plan of it (or rather assisted H. to make it, for he was our general surveyor), as it was the most complete sample we had seen of a true Egyptian temple, with all its adjuncts and concomitants with which those buildings are invariably flanked. Moreover, a broad staircase of stone steps conducts at an easy ascent to the top of the pyramidal towers, whence a bird's eye view of the whole temple as well as of the surrounding country is to be had; staircases also conduct from the numerous small chambers which surround the adytum or sanctuary to the roofs of

those low buildings, so that in this remarkable instance one is enabled to examine the upper portions of the buildings, which in almost every other case are out of reach. There is, however, one thing to which I wish to call attention, in regard to the material of which the temple is built; the majority of the stones used in this work are of enormous size, and those which span the space from pillar to pillar, and so form the roof, are of excessive length as well as of immense thickness. This is by no means peculiar to Edfoo; we had seen the same at Abydos, at Dendera, at Karnac, the Memnonium, and other temples; nay in all Egyptian remains of antiquity, including the Pyramids, this one principle seems to have held good—that the stones which composed those mighty structures should be of cyclopean dimensions; no matter to what height they had to be raised, or how accurately they must be poised, or how delicately they must be adjusted on the columns which were to support them; size and bulk seemed preferable in the eyes of those grand architects, and size and bulk they must have: not only so; it was not enough to choose out a gigantic stone, which in breadth should cover the required space on the pillar, and in length should span the interval from capital to

capital, it must have a corresponding depth as well ; and now the traveller marvels as he gazes up at those ponderous masses of stone, poised at a giddy height above his head, and he wonders at the mechanical skill of those early masons, and is lost in admiration as he ruminates on the difficulty of the task, and then speculates how it was surmounted. What intention those ancient builders had in requiring such massive material, and in forming such enduring structures, is now mere matter of conjecture ; though it is generally supposed that they expected to return to earth after the lapse of a few thousand years ; and so they arranged their architectural plans in conformity with such belief, and erected such substantial buildings as to ensure their endurance in good preservation. And assuredly if they did entertain such ideas, they accomplished their object, in so far as the destructive agencies of time and seasons were concerned, but against the ruthless hand of man, no skill nor forethought could guard ; and this alone has proved their overthrow.

It is in this neighbourhood that one sees, perhaps more than elsewhere, the working of the *sakia* and the *shadoof*. The 'sakia' is a water-wheel, turned by an ox, or a camel, or sometimes a donkey

moving on in a perpetual round; and this revolving wheel brings up a succession of earthen pots, filled with water from the river, and empties them into a large trough, communicating with the trenches which conduct it to the cultivated land; the said earthen pots being attached at regular distances to a hempen band, moved by the wheel in endless revolutions, and dipping into the river in their transit from the downward to the upward motion. The 'shadoof' is a still more primitive mode of irrigation, and is practised by those only who have no cattle wherewith to work the 'sakia;' it is attended by a man quite naked, with the exception of a loin cloth and a small skull cap; it consists of a shallow leathern bucket attached to an upright pole, which in turn is suspended from a horizontal bar with a heavy weight at the farther end, to balance the bucket when full: the said bar worked on a lever supported by two conical pillars of mud strengthened with straw. The labour consists in conducting the bucket into the river by means of the upright pole, raising it again when full by the same means, and emptying into a reservoir made for the purpose of receiving the water thus raised. Sometimes the 'shadoofs' are double, and then two men work them, standing one on either side, and

seizing the buckets as they ascend, empty their contents, and lower and raise them again ; and it is surprising how rapidly and incessantly this laborious operation is carried on, and what an immense amount of water is thus poured into the trenches every hour. Where the cultivated land is high above the water's edge, as is not unfrequently the case, it is necessary to employ a succession of 'shadoofs' one above another ; and I have counted as many as six sets of buckets in operation at once, demanding no less than twelve men to raise the water from stage to stage, till it is finally poured into the upper reservoir, which communicates with the gardens and fields. This is certainly a very clumsy and extremely laborious operation, and doubtless a small steam engine would raise a far larger amount of water than many 'sakias' and 'shadoofs' combined ; or even a pump would do the work at half the exertion and at double the speed ; but what of that ? the poor fellaheen know nothing of such advanced machines ; they know only that their land must be irrigated somehow, or it will bear no crops, and have not their forefathers for thousands of years worked the 'sakia' and the 'shadoof' as the paintings in the tombs demonstrate ? Now Herodotus declares that the Egyptians are

the best informed of mankind ; and he grounds his argument for such assertion on the high antiquity of their traditions, and their rigid adherence to them. Assuredly if such observance of ancient customs is enough to constitute wisdom, then the modern fellaheen of the Nile valley may be congratulated on their proficiency ; for with them precedent is everything ; the customs of their forefathers are irresistible arguments ; and, once satisfied on this point, they care not to enquire farther ; they desire no other information, so deeply rooted in the native mind is habit, and so averse are they to attempt anything for which they cannot adduce the precedent of their ancestors ; and thus they persist in the rude hydraulic mechanism which their Pharaonic predecessors employed, notwithstanding the really severe labour which those devices entail.

I have omitted hitherto to make more than passing allusion to the annoying plague of flies, which still exists in Egypt to a most unpleasant extent ; but I feel it is utterly impossible to convey to my readers any idea of the serious inconvenience which the perpetual attacks of countless legions of flies can cause : it must be endured to be appreciated at its real value, and even with the very

vivid recollection I have of the positive misery occasioned thereby, it seems to me, sitting here in peace and undisturbed, as I reflect upon it, almost incredible how much we were sometimes worried by these most tormenting insects. During the hotter portions of our tour, they abounded to that extent, and were so persevering in their attacks as to drive us almost frantic at the irritation. Occasionally we would start up maddened with the annoyance, and make a furious onslaught with our respective fly whisks, and try to clear the cabin of our tormentors: but no sooner did we sit down, exhausted and hot, than our diminutive foes appeared in undiminished numbers, and returned to the charge, in vengeance for their slaughtered brethren. I believe the Nile mud, prolific of animal as of vegetable life, is the fertile bed whence these countless myriads spring into being; but, indeed, what does not the chocolate-coloured slime of the Nile produce? When those rich waters recede from the lands which they have inundated, every year they deposit a thin flake or layer of dark heavy mud, and as you sail by the steep bank of the river you can trace these several flakes by their varying depth of colour, and reckon many a year's overflow in a perpendicular inch.

Nobody has given a better description of this substance than St.-Hilaire: 'Nile mud,' he says, 'is a sort of brown earth (*terre d'Égypte*, in fact), of the consistence of rather stiff clay, with an extremely fine grain. It is very soft and unctuous to the touch; it dissolves easily in water, and is almost inodorous. When dried it becomes very hard, as is seen in the deep cracks with which the ground is furrowed some time after the waters have retired. At times our horses could scarcely walk in these innumerable ruts, and when we took up a piece in our hand it seemed as compact and almost as heavy as stone.' And this dark heavy earth is the very richest of all alluvial soil, so that vegetation thrives with a strength and rapidity never imagined in more northern and less highly-favoured districts: beans and lupins, lentils and tobacco spring up with amazing vigour; the 'dourra' (*Holcus Sorghum*, Linn.), which much resembles the maize, thrives now as it did in the time of the ancient Egyptians; the sugar cane yields a rich harvest to the cultivator; the cotton plantations flourish, and produce a sample scarcely inferior in quality to that of America, and in quantity already prodigious. This is a recent experiment in Egypt, and it has answered beyond

the wildest dreams of the most sanguine; for though known to Herodotus under the name of 'tree wool,' just as the Germans call it 'Baumwolle,' the historian describes it only as an Indian produce, and linen alone appears to have composed the mummy cloths and dresses of those who dwelt on the banks of the Nile. Groves of castor-oil plants again abound on the river-banks, conspicuous for their richly-coloured leaves and gay flowers, and the berries are in great request for the oil which they furnish for lubricating the naked bodies of the fellaheen when exposed to the blazing sun.

Beyond these shrubs which I have mentioned, the trees of Egypt are of very few species, and these seldom attain to a very large growth. First and foremost stands forth the date palm, which is perfectly invaluable to the inhabitants; every part of it is serviceable, the leaves for mats and baskets, the fibres for ropes, the trunk for beams, the fruit for food; and so to every village is attached a grove, sometimes amounting to a forest, of these necessary trees. Its congener, the Dôm or Theban palm, which does not flourish so far north as Lower Egypt, has not in my opinion the same pretensions to picturesque beauty as its more feathery cousin;

but it is of very peculiar growth, the trunk invariably dividing at some four or five feet from the ground; then each branch likewise bifurcates, and each of these again separates into two others; and so the pairs are multiplied till the extreme ends are terminated in single radiating groups of fan-like or fern-shaped leaves. It is a strange tree, and the large hard dark-coloured nut which constitutes its fruit hangs in clusters from the summit. Next to the palms the acacia or *sont* tree of the Arabs is the most common; it is the *acantha* of Herodotus* and the *shittim* wood of the Bible; the *mimosa Nilotica* of botanists, and is still extensively used for boat-building and other purposes. There is also the sycamore, which occasionally attains to very large dimensions; and the tamarisk, which is sparingly distributed throughout the country. These, I think, are the principal trees, shrubs, and useful plants to be found in Egypt; for the traveller will now look in vain for the papyrus, once flourishing in the marshes of the river, and so highly prized, and applied to so many purposes; but now to be sought for only on the higher reaches of the White Nile, within a few degrees of the Equator. Nor will he be more fortunate in

* Book ii. chap. 96.

finding the beautiful rose-coloured lotus; though the unopened bud of this and the full-blown flower of the papyrus were adopted as emblems of the Lower Country, and may continually be seen in the temples as the most favourite capitals of the columns, while these again were the plants selected to ornament the throne of the god Nilus; and the binding them into a sheaf was intended to signify the union of the dominion over the Upper and Lower countries, and to be emblematic of the stability of the empire, as may be seen on the pedestal of the colossal statue of the vocal Memnon. But in truth, as with some of the animals and birds, the sacred ibis for example, it would seem that the lotus and papyrus, however cultivated and acclimatised, were *never* indigenous to the soil of Egypt, but were imported from the warmer latitudes of Ethiopia and still more southern and tropical lands.

To return to our voyage. A brisk breeze carried us along at a famous pace through the straits of Hagar Silsilis, where the rocks shut in the river, contracted here to a thousand feet, the narrowest portion of the Nile in these latitudes. So we reserve the temples and quarries hereabouts to our return, and are glad to run before the wind with

both sails set, till we reach Assouan, where the rocks assume a threatening appearance ; for, black in colour and standing out of the water on all sides, they look as dangerous as picturesque. Here we found two dahabeahs, both of which had just descended the Cataracts,—the ‘ Isis ’ belonging to Messrs. Clark and Potter, and the ‘ Cecilia,’ mentioned above as bearing on her boom the only crocodile trophy obtained this season ; the latter boat has suffered severely in the Cataract, having lost her rudder and sustained considerable damage to her planking, by striking on the rocks in the descent ; so here she is detained while refitting, and while a new rudder is being made. We spent a pleasant evening with the occupants of these two boats, and next day explored the island of Elephantine, which lies picturesquely enough among the huge boulders with which the river is here strewn, wandering over the vast heaps of ruins which cover a portion of the island, and marvelling at the trinkets and ornaments, which seem to form the principal if not the only dress which the juvenile portion of the population, at all events, wears.

Then we rambled amidst the great granite quarries of Assouan or Syene, as it was originally

called, and examined syenite in its native bed. These quarries lie away from the town, beyond the cemetery out in the desert; and anew we marvelled at the masses of ponderous rock which those giants of ancient Egyptian masons hewed and moved. There is one obelisk unfinished, but cut out of the rock, a most magnificent monster, which I measured carefully, and found to be ninety-five feet in length and eleven feet in breadth at the largest part; how such a stupendous mass could be lifted out of the hollow in which it had been cut; how when lifted it could be moved out of the narrow quarry; still more, how it could be transported overland hundreds of miles, is a mystery which none can solve;—though it is very clear the ancient Egyptians knew how to set about it, as all the obelisks of all Egypt hewn, without an exception, from these quarries, amply demonstrate.

Here, then, we seem to have reached the Ultima Thule of ancient travellers. The pillars of Hercules were no firmer barriers on the West than the cataracts of Syene and the island of Elephantine were on the south. Hither, as to the extreme limits of the inhabited world, Juvenal was banished, and here he died. This was the frontier of Ethiopia

of whose inhabitants and their customs little was known; and the scanty reports that prevailed only served to deter the more adventurous from attempting so hazardous an enterprise as a journey within their limits.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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