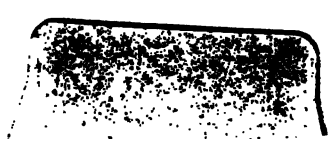


A SHIP OF THE DESERT OUTSIDE CAIRO.

The ladies are out for an airing; they are passing the tombs of bygone Moslem rulers.

THINGS SEEN IN EGYPT

BY

[illegible] HILLAND

[illegible]

[illegible] FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON AND CO.
1908

A SHIP OF THE DESERT OUTSIDE CAIRO.

The ladies are out for an airing; they are passing the tombs of bygone Moslem rulers.

THINGS SEEN IN EGYPT

BY

CLIVE HOLLAND

AUTHOR OF

"THINGS SEEN IN JAPAN," "MY JAPANESE WIFE,"

"A JAPANESE ROMANCE," &c.

WITH FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON AND CO.

1908

Contents

CHAPTER III

THE NILE AND NILE PICTURES

CHAPTER IV

PYRAMIDS, TEMPLES, AND TOMBS

Contents

CHAPTER V

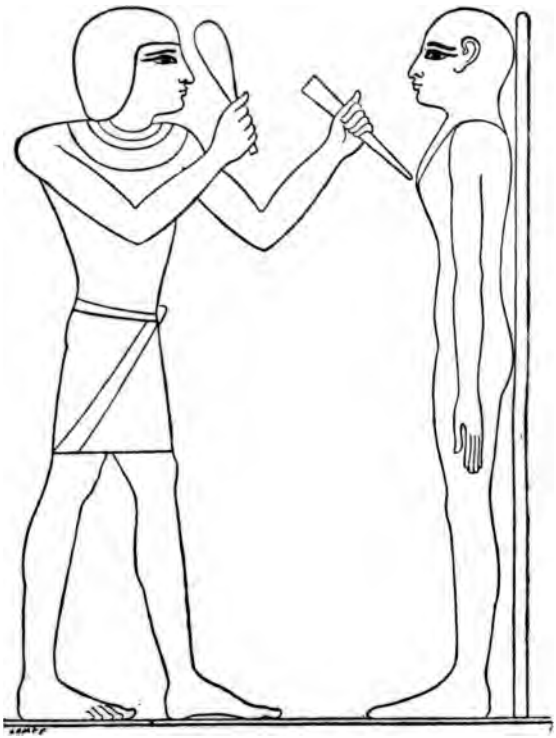
TOWN LIFE AND FESTIVALS

CHAPTER VI

COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY TYPES

List of Illustrations

List of Illustrations



CARVING A STATUE.

Things Seen in Egypt

CHAPTER I

THE SPIRIT OF EGYPT

The Charm of Egypt—The Sense of Age—The Thresholds of Egypt—Port Said—Alexandria—The Delta—The Desert and the Sown—Tel-el-Kebir—The Approach to Cairo.

THE wondrous land of Egypt has almost from time immemorial exercised a fascination for which it is not easy to account. In past ages it has been as a loadstone to the ambition of conquerors. Nowadays it is a magnet which draws the modern pleasure-seeker just as surely. In it the vast ruins of ancient civilizations appear side by side with all that is most modern. But it is rather the spirit of the land than the land itself that repays the traveller and the student.

The story of Antony and Cleopatra is not untypical of this spirit. Egypt has more than once been symbolized by famous French artists as a beautiful woman, and, as with a really beautiful woman, the attraction is often so subtle as to defy rigid analysis.

There is an Egyptian saying (much quoted) that "He who drinks of the water of the Nile must return," and in it there is doubtless some considerable amount of truth, for most of those who have once visited Egypt have at least the desire to fall again under the spell of the desert and the palm.

For the archæologist, student, and artist, Egypt possesses attractions easily explained; but for the average tourist the fascination is not, perhaps, quite so obvious, and yet many of these return year after year, drawn thither by just that indescribable spell to which we have already referred. Many countries possess more beautiful scenery, greater and more facile and cheaper means of travel, and not a few have infinitely more variety. And yet

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

THE NILE BANK AT WADY SABA.

This is between the First and Second Cataracts. An empty bottle *has been thrown from the steamer, and the boys are rushing into the water to get it.* Bottles are treasures here.

year by year travellers flock to Egypt in increasing numbers.

Certain phases of its life are picturesque and interesting, and its ruins of ancient civilizations are, of course, unsurpassed. But if we except these unique relics of bygone greatness, many other lands can present equally great attractions. By a French writer Egypt has been summed up as a strip of alluvial soil surrounded by deserts, and bisected by a sluggish stream, having the hue of *café au lait* and meandering uneventfully between mud-banks. It must be admitted, however, that this description, though superficially correct, does infinite injustice both to Egypt and the Nile, as all who know the land and its historic waterway will admit.

Sunshine is so associated in the mind with Egypt, and sunlight with the marvellous shadows and reflections thrown in street and pool, and on the opaque surface of "old Father Nile," that a dull day in Egypt of a surety seems all the duller and greyer by

reason of its rarity. Possibly the French writer we have quoted saw Egypt (or some small part of it) on a grey day, and the greyness entered into his soul.

The larger portion of the population are poor *fellahīn*, not very picturesque, and often miserably clad, and, except in Alexandria, Cairo, Port Said, and one or two other towns, there is little architecture, and few buildings of any note save the ruined ones of bygone ages. The villages of the Delta and of the Desert are little more than collections of mud-huts, needing all the exquisite Egyptian sunlight and luminosity of atmosphere to disguise their poverty and native ugliness. But the cosmopolitan nature of the population of the towns lends just that variety of colour and note of constant surprise which is so essentially Eastern.

The sky is less brazen than that of Arabia —indeed, one does not dwell beneath "heavens of brass," but under an azure dome scarcely less deeply blue than the skies of Italy. There is, too, within certain limits, a

considerable variety of scenery, the desert and the sown; the yellow and umber of the rocks and desert sands, contrasting vividly with the Hibernian green of the wheat, barley, clover, and maize-fields of the Delta. So it is in a measure to the law of contrast, to its wonderful sunshine, its ambient and luminous atmosphere, and to its elusive, mysterious charm, that Egypt to-day owes the greater part of its vogue.

The sense of age, too, in this twentieth century of rush, enterprise, excitement, and unrest, must of necessity have an attraction for moderns, as must also the brooding spirit of the Pharaohs which seems even now to invest the land.

Customs have almost entirely changed since Herodotus wrote, but the climate, the rising and falling of the Nile—except so far as man's interference is concerned—and many other things, remain unchanged since the time when the Greek historian asserted that the Valley of the Nile held more wonders than any other land. But civilization has at last

laid an obliterating finger upon the relics of the three great art epochs which survive in Egypt—the Ancient Egyptian, the Greek, and the Arab. Of the last some traces still remain; but within even the last decade much that was most characteristic, fascinating, and peculiar to the life of the Orient has disappeared, never to return. It is an inevitable, but nevertheless regrettable, fact that where the East meets the West there arises a spirit of revolutionary ardour and a desire for often ill-considered changes which destroy all the magical fascination of primitive character, and in time threatens to obliterate even the very soul of the East. Into the treasure-houses of the past ages the sons of men are nowadays burrowing, and with impious fingers stripping off the trappings from the poor relics of the once noble and great. So even in this does the old order change, and ancient things pass away, and with them in time will go the spirit of Egypt.

The threshold of the land of Egypt may

ASSOUAN AND ELEPHANTINE ISLAND.

The first Nile cataract is to the right. The tower of Assouan has long marked the southern limit of Egypt proper.

be for the traveller either Alexandria or Port Said: the former the creation of the great conqueror whose name it bears—the ancient port and the city itself were designed by him before Rome had the significance it afterwards bore—the latter the creation of yesterday, chiefly of importance as the entrance-gate to the Suez Canal. These two towns may be said to mark the ancient boundaries of the Delta, where the extreme western and eastern arms of the Nile flow into the Mediterranean some 100 miles apart. The parting of the ways for the great river—but for which Egypt would be an unattractive wilderness—occurs at Cairo, 145 miles from the coast, and these two arms enclose the fertile, triangular-shaped district which came to be called the Delta, from its resemblance to the Greek letter of that name. This low-lying land, which is covered in the autumn by the High Nile, is so wonderfully fertile that it generally produces three, and sometimes even four, crops in the year.

In ancient times this Delta of the Nile,

with its seven mouths, might well have been called the Holland of the East, for these mouths were banked by dykes, and, doubtless, periodical river floods were regulated by sluices and water-gates equal in ingenuity to those of far more modern times. But there ensued a period of twenty centuries of neglect of these same dykes, which not only controlled the Nile, but kept the sea in check, and, in consequence, the latter gradually inundated millions of acres of fertile agricultural land. These fields, once fertile plains, are now vast salt-water lakes and marshes, and the haunt of water-fowl and of hundreds of white-winged boats engaged in the fishery of these teeming waters.

Of the seven ancient Grecian cities which once stood at the mouths of the Nile, only a few mounds remain to mark their sites; for the rest, they lie beneath the sea which, 2,000 years since, swept over them. Once, in the dim ages of long ago, the Nile itself flowed past Port Said on its way to one of these cities, Pelusium, the relics of which

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

THE VALLEY OF THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS.

In this desolate and arid spot have been interred many of Egypt's greatest dead. The hill-sides are honeycombed with tombs, many of great beauty. The entrance to one can be distinctly seen in the foreground to the left of the roadway.

still remain, whilst all around is now a fever-breeding swamp.

Port Said of to-day is modern and utilitarian to a degree. Its quays and jetties are but the concreted desert sand and gravel placed by engineering skill in the Mediterranean itself, as the foundations upon which to build a town. But to the weary voyager this town, seen in brilliant sunshine, standing upon so unsubstantial foundations, and apparently rising so suddenly out of the sea, has a certain attraction and charm of its own, to which the ever-changing Mediterranean, beautiful with its varying tints of golden green, sapphire, and emerald, and the lace-like fringe of white foam which marks the low-lying shore, contributes not a little.

Port Said still bears an evil name as being the resort of the scum of the nations, but an excellent modern police force, at all events, keeps the rougher elements well in check. The motley crowd, which to the student and the artist forms one of the port's most fascin-

ating features, is bewildering in its colour and variety, and travellers who have seen many crowds in other lands are generally agreed that this Eastern throng, in which types of nearly every nation—one might almost say of every tribe—are to be seen, is the most cosmopolitan in the world.

There is infinite variety, too, in the scenery in the neighbourhood of Port Said, flat though the land is, save for the dull brown rocky ridges of the distant hills eastward and south-east. Westward there is the wide expanse of Lake Mensaleh, with its fleets of fishing-craft and its flocks of waterfowl, and southward runs the canal to Ismailia—a blue, silent highway, vanishing in a silver streak, and lost on the far horizon.

Away in the distance lie the mounds of once famous Pelusium, the ancient and busy port where great Pompey was murdered, and where now scarcely a wandering Bedouin would deign to pitch his tent.

On the horizon are other mounds of the

ONE OF THE COLOSSI OF THEBES.

Both, the Colossi were erected by Amenoph III. By a cunning device the *priests* used to make mysterious noises to come from the interiors.

dead cities, once the centre of such teeming life, now waste and desolate, cut off from the Nile for evermore, and denied the blessing of rain as though accursed.

At Ismailia one gets the first glimpse of true Nile water, although one may have drunk it at Port Said. The canal, eighty miles long, follows almost the same course as the ancient one from the Nile to the Red Sea, a plan of which was found on the walls of Seti's Temple at Thebes, where it was engraven nearly fourteen centuries before the Christian era. Not far distant from Ismailia lie the treasure cities which the captive Jews were compelled to build for Ramses, and there still lie many of those bricks made without straw of which the Bible speaks; sun-baked, to make them perfect and to bind them together, they needed the straw they lacked.

Alexandria is a much more picturesque and interesting place than Cairo to the general tourist. Of the great city, finished in the reigns of the Ptolemies (for, although

Alexander the Great designed and commenced it, he left his work incomplete), there is little or nothing remaining. It was the objective of many conquering invaders, and was destroyed several times by the ravages of war. Of its old-time harbour no traces now remain, as the earthquake which destroyed so many of its ancient buildings probably also altered the configuration of the coast, and the site of the harbour is nowadays merely conjectural. That the modern city, with its great tree-environed square, its picturesque streets, and its interesting Mahmûdiyeh Canal, upon the banks of which picturesque Arabs and Arab sailors lounge in the sunshine, or play backgammon in the adjacent coffee-houses or under the trees, is built upon the foundations of the town of ancient Greek and Roman days was proved when it had to be partially rebuilt after bombardment by the British fleet many years ago. The excavations which were necessary brought to light ancient foundations and other remains.

Round Pompey's Pillar, the imposing and sole relic of those ancient days, which, originally an Egyptian obelisk of granite, is at least 3,000 years more ancient than the period of the Roman general it commemorates, were discovered the relics of the Egyptian Temple of Serapis, whilst the pillar itself stands on the broken portal of a temple of Seti.

Egypt, land of sunshine and romance, divides itself almost naturally into three portions—the Delta, fertile, and beautiful in a measure; the Nile, with its infinite charm and historic associations; and the Desert, mysterious, smiling, cruel, entrancing. Of these, the second is by far the most frequented and the best known. But the journey by rail through the Delta, whether made from Alexandria or Port Said, is too little thought of. The latter route, though longer, is of transcending interest to those who make it for the first time. At every station along the line the traveller comes upon the life of the East in the shape of

crowds of mixed nationality, just as he sees in rapid succession the beauties of luxuriant palms, foliage, and growing crops, with flocks of ibises, herons, pelicans, and strange wild-fowl, which haunt the mud flats and rippling shallows of Lake Mensaleh.

But for most we think the abiding interest of the entrance into Egypt commences soon after Ismailia is left behind and the desert is reached; and few, we imagine, can have allowed their eyes to travel across the apparently limitless wastes of sand without being impressed by its mysterious charm and suggestive grandeur. The air is as fresh, pure, and invigorating as Atlantic breezes; and the tan-coloured sand contrasting with the deep blue of the desert sky, the shining salt patches, the scanty grass, the sage-coloured herbage, and the brighter green of hyssop, make a picture of wonderful novelty and charm. Only occasionally does the figure of a wandering Bedouin or a shepherd come into sight to break the vast loneliness of the desert.

THE AVENUE OF SPHINXES AT KARNAK.

This magnificent avenue is of sphinxes of enormous size. Notice the two figures on donkeys in the centre of the picture.

Then, like a thread of silver amid the sandy plain, runs the Ismailia Canal, and upon its surface one catches the first glimpse of the picturesque lateen-sailed boats which every artist puts into his Nile pictures. Southward are the wide marshes of Nefisha, gradually being reclaimed and brought under cultivation, with here and there a farmstead, with the *esbeh* standing amid clumps of feathery-leaved palms. From this prosaic railway-line, which threads its iron way towards Cairo, one catches glimpses of the Suez Mountains, whose red-ochre slopes look blistering in the strong sunlight, running across the desert to join the Mokattam Hills at Cairo. Northward is nothing but the desert, stretching far beyond the limit of vision in unbroken yellowness, until it is lost on the distant horizon in the limitless beyond.

After this picture, or, rather, series of pictures, which, in their essential elements, remain unaltered from the days of Pharaoh, one soon comes in contact with more modern things when Kassassin is reached, with its

memories of Arabi Pasha, and the still remaining relics of the Egyptian Campaign. The condition of the battle-field of Tel-el-Kebir is one more irrefutable proof of the extraordinary virtues of the Egyptian climate. Though many years have passed since the forces of Arabi Pasha were put to the rout, not only do many of the forts and entrenchments remain almost as they were at the close of that fierce September fight, but even the marks of the wheels of the artillery and the circles formed by the rebel tents can be traced with little difficulty.

There is also much of interest in the stretch of country which lies between this point and Cairo. Once again one passes amid fertile fields, palm-groves, and corn-fields, the green of which is brighter by contrast with the desert which one has come through. Once more the desert blossoms; in the fields are *fellahīn* working, with the yoke of oxen and the wooden plough, much as they did in the dim, far-off ages of Mosaic times, or the labourer is seen engaged in

A NILE BOAT UNDER FULL SAIL.

The lofty lateen sails catch all the air there is, even when under the lee of the high river-banks.

making tiny channels for irrigation from the rude water-wheels. Occasionally, too, one catches a glimpse of some picturesque desert maid, full of the untrammelled grace which comes of an outdoor life and the fresh air of heaven, which civilization can only destroy and not create.

This fertile stretch of country is well watered. Canals seem to intersect the fields on every hand, and amid the crops themselves one catches frequent glimpses of white lateen sails and masts springing from unseen boats. Here and there on the banks of the canals are seen the praying places, holy to the faithful, environed by low mud walls, and with the earth thickly strawed.

Then, as night comes on and the sun declines, there comes over the desert and the sown the unrivalled splendour of an Egyptian sunset. The spirit of the land weaves its spell in the azure vault. Gradually the whole dome of sky, from horizon to zenith, takes on the hue of gold-dust, shading off through the crimsons and purples into the

exquisite opalescence which one sees scarcely ever elsewhere, destined to be eclipsed in fascination by the wonderful and indescribable afterglow. And, as one approaches it, Cairo is bathed in pearly radiance, like a city of the Arabian Nights.

CHAPTER II

CAIRO AND THE CAIRENES

Modern Cairo—The Ancient City—The Donkey-Boy—The Fascinating Shops of the Native Quarters—Cairene Types—The Khans of Long Ago—Native Architecture—The Prey of the Curiosity Hunter—Some Strange Cairene Trades—Some Notes upon Costumes and Colours.

NOWADAYS all roads seem to lead to Cairo, which, as regards both its resident population and passing tourists, has become at the same time one of the most cosmopolitan and one of the most fashionable cities in the world. Many "society" people spend the whole winter season in it, and return year after year. Others merely make the town—which can no longer be considered a "quiet" health resort—a base from which to make excursions to Luxor, Assouan,

and other places of interest, or even as far afield as Khartoum.

Cairo has become essentially a pleasure city, with a constant round of amusements in the form of tennis-parties, dinners, dances, and picnics. But although pleasure nowadays dominates Cairo, there yet remains for the more serious the fascination of its many objects of historic and other interest, its ever-changing "colour" of life in the streets and bazaars, and the blending of the immutable East with the insistent, progressive West. Of this varied and kaleidoscopic life very few people receive, or take away with them on a first visit, any markedly definite impression. If one has never been in the East before, the colour pictures, the extraordinary variety of the types seen in the streets, and the strange architecture and customs which meet one on every hand, will provide so many counter-attractions that only the trained observer is likely to gain any definite or adequate knowledge of Cairo life and the Cairenes in all their complexity.

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

FELUCCAS, OR NATIVE BOATS, ON THE NILE AT CAIRO.

These boats have just come through the Kasr-el-Nil bridge, which opens about two hours only every day. It is very interesting to watch the squabbling amongst the boatmen to try to get through first.

Cairo and the Cairenes

Modern Cairo divides itself almost naturally into two fairly distinct and very dissimilar portions: (1) the newer, of comparatively recent growth, including the Kasr-el-Dūbara quarter, where the British Agency is situated, and where many of the chief officials and foreign residents have their homes, and the Esbekîyeh and Ismailia quarters; (2) the older —an entirely native—town, where one immediately finds oneself amidst palaces, houses, bazaars, and mosques, and an atmosphere which has been unchanged for many centuries.

The newer town, in which the ancient houses and narrow streets and byways—into many of which the sun never shone—have given place to fine buildings and broad avenues and streets, shaded by rows of acacia-trees, as are the Parisian boulevards, has grown enormously during the last five or ten years. In response to the demands of wealthy visitors huge hotels have sprung up, competing in size, convenience, and comfort with those of the Riviera, and modern Cairo seems to gain yearly in splendour and magnificence.

But it is not in the new town that the real fascination of the city lies. Here, except for a few of the Italian streets, neither they nor the architecture possess much attraction, and few native scenes are to be witnessed within its confines. "Paris or Brussels in miniature" is not infrequently the description applied by those who see Cairo for the first time, and as yet know nothing of its infinite Eastern charm and variety. Nothing is more wonderful since modern Cairo sprang into being than the recent extensions outside the city itself. On the further bank of the Nile at Ghezîreh there are already many fine residences built by the wealthy, who wish to be free from the noise and dust. And even in the desert beyond Abbasiyeh, a newer suburb has sprung into being, connected with the city by a line of electric tramways. Soon Cairo itself will cease to be the place of residence for the more wealthy. These will reside in the newer and greater Cairo without the radius.

But it will ever be the older portion of

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

A STREET SCENE AT ESNEH.

This is the High Street of the provincial capital, and the centre of an important Soudanese trade. The donkey bears a typical water-skin.

Cairo and the Cairenes

Cairo which interests the traveller, and brings home to the Western mind something at least of the glamour, mystery, and fascination of the East. In it almost every yard of the ancient streets and narrow by-ways affords a new picture or a new type. An exploration of the native quarters is one of the most fascinating of Cairene amusements. Undertaken with a donkey-boy rather than a professed dragoman as cicerone, it is sure to be productive of amusement, and even instruction. The Cairene donkey-boy is a type by himself. He usually possesses a unique knowledge of the by-ways as well as the more frequented parts of the city, and has at least some of the qualities which distinguish the tellers of tales. Imagination is one, and an exhilarating verbosity is another. "Do not believe everything said by a donkey-boy" is good advice. His information may not be as accurate as that of the dragoman who has studied Baedeker and Murray, but, at all events, it is infinitely more vital and entertaining.

Cairo and the Cairenes

The shops of Cairo are, like the houses of the old and new town, ancient and modern. Some of the latter compare not unfavourably with those of Paris or London; but it is the former which provide real interests and fascinations. In the streets and by-ways of the old town or native quarter quaint little shops, many of them with openings but a few feet wide, display goods of the most heterogeneous description—curiosities, carvings, metal work, and stuffs of the gayest hues, protected from injury from the sunshine by ragged awnings, picturesque in their decay. Coppersmiths' wares glint at one from the recesses, where here and there an intrusive sunbeam catches them. And the fruit-stall, with its gay-coloured stock set off by still gayer tissue-paper, stands next door to the dingy room in which the seller of charcoal crouches amid his funereal-hued wares; a tiny "bazaar," displaying coloured fabrics of native manufacture, with a goodly sprinkling of Manchester cotton goods, standing next door to native cafés, where

ON THE WAY TO THE PYRAMIDS FROM CAIRO.

the same idlers seem to pass their time day after day from sunrise to sunset, gossiping as only Easterns can, retailing the stories of the great bazaars, and playing *tric-trac* or backgammon, with drinks of coffee, vermouth, or inferior absinthe as the stakes.

In these streets of the native quarter one meets many types—the sombre-faced, stately Arab; the bronze-skinned, tall and handsome Nubian; the Levantine Turk, oily and animal-looking; the blackest of black Ethiopians, whose ancestors may have been slaves at the Court of Cleopatra herself; the Italian; and the French-Egyptians, whose near male ancestors possibly stayed behind to marry native women after Napoleon's abortive conquest. Greeks, Moors, Jews, Persians, Abyssinians, and Armenians may also be found in the native quarters of Cairo, who, by their different types and costumes, add colour and picturesqueness to the scene.

The babel of languages and other sounds which assail the ears are not a little confusing to the new-comer. Amid the traffic of foot-

passengers, camels laden with packs of goods for the bazaars, or *bercime* for fodder, donkeys bearing tourists or other burdens, with here and there an Arab on a horse, rises an eternal chorus of warning ejaculations—"O-ah! meenuk" (Keep to the right), or "O-ah! meenik," as the person warned happens to be a man or woman. Or "Make way, O my mother," or "Take care, O my lord," for every one is addressed separately, according to his or her presumed station in life.

There are numberless pictures for the artist and the camera in the seething throng which so often blocks the narrower streets; and after a time one easily learns to distinguish the different tribes and nationalities, and thus have an added interest in the life of the town.

Formerly, ere steamers and trains came to make transit speedier and cheaper, each year many caravans used to come to Cairo from Tunis, Algeria, Syria, Arabia, and even Persia, laden with the spices and fabrics of the Further East, and cloths made from the

camel's and goat's hair in Algeria and Tunis. Then, too, many of the *khans* or caravanserais were frequented each by its merchants of a particular nationality or trade; but nowadays, like the old inns of coaching days in England, they have most of them fallen on evil times and into disrepair or ruin. There are still many of these *khans* in Cairo, more especially in the Bab-esh-Shariyeh and Bab-en-Nasr quarters, once the busy haunt of prosperous merchants, who in the lower stories used to display their various wares, much as do commercial travellers in the hotels of more Western climes. These caravan hostelries still, some of them, bear the names of their founders, or of the trade or goods brought by the merchants resorting to them. In former times the best of these *khans* were not only commodious and of considerable size, but possessed good and interesting architecture. There are several of the more noted which are still much as they used to be, though no longer thronged by merchants and their slaves or attendants.

The architecture of the older portions of the town, more especially of the native quarters, is not only interesting, but often extremely picturesque. In many cases the ground-floors of even purely domestic buildings are devoted to the purposes of commerce. Above are the jutting upper stories, with their roomy balconies shut in with fine trellis-work, at first much smaller and intended merely to afford a place in which to stand the jars of drinking-water, so that, though shaded, the cool air might blow freely upon them; then enlarged so as to form coigns of vantage, from which the ladies of the *harîm* could, whilst themselves unseen, enjoy the air and see all that went on in the street. But, unfortunately, these *mashrubiyeh* are yearly becoming less numerous, and in many of the streets where once these picturesque excrescences were one of the most interesting features there are now scarcely any to be seen. The beautiful trellis-work has been stripped from the walls of the houses, to be converted into screens and articles of furni-

THE HAREM WINDOWS OF A WEALTHY CAIRENE'S HOUSE.

The outside of the houses of the rich in Cairo give no idea of their interior beauty. This is the courtyard of such a house.

ture, to which the ornamental carving, alas! only too readily lent itself.

The student of architectural detail will find much that is beautiful and interesting in often elaborately carved corbels which support the outstanding upper stories; whilst many of the doorways, with their fine carving, huge bronze knockers inlaid with silver, and the beautifully wrought *grilles* of iron or bronze which protect many of the lower casements, are worth notice and even attentive study. The mouldings, too, of the arches in not a few of the doorways of the older houses are splendid examples of an art which appears closely allied to that of the more elaborate period of Norman architecture. For the student and the artist Cairo presents many attractions which the average tourist will pass by unnoticed, or, at least, unappreciated. And, indeed, no town in Egypt better repays careful study, whether it be in the matter of types, customs, architecture, or the multifarious variations of its kaleidoscopic life.

Cairo and the Cairenes

Cairo, however, is each year altering. The old order is slowly, but none the less surely, passing away; the change is subtle, because it is not easy to persuade the East to adopt the mode of life of the West. A well-known writer has said: "A century marks little or no change in the changeless East." But nowadays the world travels fast, and in the vortex of its many transmutations Cairo and Egypt are at last becoming more and more involved. The clang of the gongs of electric trams now disturbs the quiet of streets which once resounded with the tinkle of camel-bells. Even ancient gates, such as the Bab-es-Shariyeh at the eastern side of the city, have been pulled down to make way for a wider road, and the wooden-roofed Musky —with its fascinating native shops of a few years ago, in which Europeans wandered seeking bargains—has now the conventional shop-windows of large size and plate-glass, and has been so transmogrified as to be almost unrecognizable by those who knew it twenty years ago, and have not seen it since.

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

A CAIRO SNAKE-CHARMER.

The charmer will suddenly throw his cobras at one's feet. As well as the snakes, a monitor may be seen. It looks like a small crocodile. When not performing *he will carry it on* his head and the cobras in a bag.

But notwithstanding these changes, there yet remain in Cairo many interesting types. Of them all, probably the water-carrier will first attract attention, not only because of his "numerousness," as an American girl once remarked, but also because of his picturesqueness. There are several ranks in the trade of water-carrier. The commonest is the *sakka*, who sells unfiltered water, which formerly he drew from the river direct, but nowadays often obtains from street hydrants. His is a laborious and ill-paid trade, in which he toils from sunrise till sunset to earn an Egyptian "living wage," which would not provide one good meal a day in most European countries. These men — and boys, too — are, in a sense, the water-carts of Cairo, as they are frequently employed by shopkeepers to lay the dust in front of their business premises, and to fill up the large water-jars used for purposes of their trade.

Then there is the seller of filtered water for drinking purposes, known as *khamali*,

whose store is not carried in a skin, but in an earthen jar attached to the back. Then there is the vendor of sherbet and lemonade, known as *sherbutli*, well patronized and frequently even prosperous; and the *sussi*, seller of liquorice-water. Of all the carriers, none transcend the *sherbutli* in picturesqueness, as he goes along the streets wearing a brilliant scarlet apron, carrying his huge glass lemonade-bottle, with its silvered spout, supported by a sling, and his cups often of bright blue-and-white china.

Another "queer" Cairene type is the incense-burner, whose business it is to parade the streets with a brass brazier for the purpose of disinfecting or fumigating the shops or clothing, or to alleviate the objectionable smells which one so often encounters in the less frequented streets and courts of the native quarter. Quite an exhaustive and interesting article was recently written upon "The Distinctive Odours of Ancient Cities." Most, indeed, have their distinctive odour,

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

WATER-CARRIERS AT LUXOR.

The trade of a water-carrier in Egypt is an ancient and important one. There are three grades. These men belong to the Sakka, which is the most common.

and Cairo is no exception to the rule. The incense-burner, therefore, often fulfils a necessary and even important office.

The bread-sellers seem a natural concomitant to the vendors of water and cooling drinks. Both men and women ply this particular trade, parading the streets with their flat loaves of unleavened bread, or tiny sweet cakes threaded upon sticks, of which a surfeit costs but a piastre.

Who does not know the whitewashed doorways, with their red, blue, and yellow designs, which lead to the baths? And who has not noted those upon which designs in bright colouring of a less conventional character appear, in some cases probably rudely illustrating incidents or episodes in the lives of the inmates of the house within? In Egyptian decorations, both ancient and modern, colour plays an important part, and in Cairo this is especially so. Generally speaking, the harmony of colour, if acute, is nevertheless well arranged, and in the "dressing" of shops and stalls, and in the arrangement

of the various richly hued fabrics in the bazaars, one will notice the same evidence of instinctive taste.

As a colour, black is greatly used, both in costumes and in the ornamentation of domestic articles, etc. Its value, as enhancing the brighter tints, all artistic eyes will easily appreciate.

Just as the influence of Western ideas and needs has modified or changed the architecture of the streets, customs, and, in a measure, the life of Cairo itself, so has it had its effect upon native costumes. Nowadays the flowing garments and turbans, which formerly were worn by all, have unfortunately given place, with the younger generation of the higher ranks of life, to European garments. The top hat of convention has—at least, for ceremonial occasions—replaced the picturesque turban. The tweed suit has supplanted the graceful and dignified *kaftan* of the better class, and *gelabieh* (cotton shirt) of the lower orders.

But if the Cairene men have been distress-

THE FIRST PYRAMID EVER CONSTRUCTED.

This picture also shows one of the earliest of man's occupations. These gaunt sheep find some pasture near the adioining village of Sakkara.

ingly progressive in the matter of the adoption of European attire, fortunately the women have remained conservative in their tastes. They seldom—indeed, one might almost say never—appear in the open street save when clad in the garments which custom from time immemorial has prescribed.

Indoors, an Egyptian lady of the upper class is very lightly clad, according to European ideas, her chief garments being a muslin or gauze chemise, left considerably open at the neck, loose trousers of silk, satin, or other material, and a pair of dainty morocco leather shoes. Some wear European footgear with high heels, but they are the few, just as some of the more wealthy women of the upper class have adopted stockings, corsets, and other European articles of attire. But out of doors these women will generally wear the black silk shawl known as a *hubbarah*, which is voluminous enough to envelop them completely. A veil of white muslin—similar to the Turkish *yashmak*—covers the face entirely save the eyes (whose beauty has been

enhanced by the use of *kohl*), and falls almost to the feet. Sometimes the shawl is white in the case of unmarried women, otherwise their costume does not differ from that we have just described. A group of Cairene women coming along the street in their white veils and black shawls at a little distance presents a curious resemblance to a flock of penguins.

The indoor costume of the women of the lower classes does not differ greatly from that of their wealthier sisters, except as regards richness of material. Out of doors, the *milayeh*, or cotton shawl, dyed a greyish blue and ornamented with an indigo-coloured border, takes the place of the richer and more costly *hubbarah*. The *burko-el-arusah*, or bridal veil, of coarse crêpe, with ornaments at the edges formed of gold beads or embroidery, takes the place of the simpler muslin face-covering. Married women, in addition, wear over their noses a remarkable-looking ornament of gold or brass, according to their wealth.

CAIRO FROM THE MOKATTAM HILLS.

The Mosque of El Gewshi is to be seen on the right, that of Mehemet Ali in the middle.

The Copt women and the *fellahīn* women of the country seldom veil, and even in the towns unmarried girls of the lower classes frequently do not cover their faces.

Toilet arts are much practised by Egyptian women in the towns, and Cairene belles indoors wear much jewellery, and tint their nails, fingers, and the palms of their hands with *henna*, and women and girls of the lower orders very frequently tattoo their faces, chins, foreheads, and wrists.

On the whole, the Cairene men—tourists and even residents come very little in contact with the women—are sociable, courteous, and obliging. And for them to offer the hospitality of a cup of coffee, even to entire strangers, who may wander through the streets of the native quarter, is by no means an uncommon thing. It is most impolite to refuse, and, if one knows no Arabic, and one's impromptu host is ignorant of English or French, to indicate one's thanks by the word "salaam," accompanied by a smile, is all that will be expected.

Cairo and the Cairenes

To know anything of Cairo that is best worth knowing, one must wander through the native quarter at leisure, and with an observant and appreciative eye.

CHAPTER III

THE NILE AND NILE PICTURES

Egypt's great "Silent Highway"—Some Evils of Civilization—Nile Scenery: its Infinite Variety—The Charms of a Nile Voyage—Ships that pass Day by Day—The Harvest of the Tourist—Women at the Watering-place—The Building of a Ship—Sunrise and Sunset Glories.

IT is the delusion of many people that when they have spent a few weeks in Cairo, have visited the Pyramids, and, after a donkey ride beneath Ismail Pasha's avenue of *lebbek*-trees, have stood in the shadow of the inscrutable Sphinx, they have seen Egypt. And even many inhabitants of Cairo, who have lived there for years, have never journeyed up the great river further than Kafr-el-Ayat. The Nile, after all, is one of the chiefest charms of Egypt, and probably no other river in the world has so many

interesting features or enjoys so romantic a reputation. During its course of nearly 4,000 miles it traverses half the length of Africa, the most mysterious and engrossing of all continents. As a busy highway, however, this vast river is only navigable for about 380 miles beyond the junction of the Bahr-el-Abiad, or White Nile, with the Bahr-el-Azrak, or Blue Nile.

It is easy to comprehend the superstitious veneration in which the Nile was held in ancient times. For it may be safely assumed that of its source, in the dim regions of the unknown, the ancient Egyptians knew little or nothing, and to their superstitious minds its periodical overflows, which brought fertility and prosperity to the land, must have been regarded as of a supernatural and inexplicable character. At all events, one knows that anciently the rising of its waters was made the reason for a series of beautiful festivals with religious rites, and that the river itself was deified by the Egyptians.

The Nile, for natural as well as sentimental

NILE BOATS, AND TEMPLE OF ABU SIMBEL.

The enormous bank of sand to the right is of a beautiful orange colour.

reasons, is a peculiarly impressive river. Noble as regards both width and length, its silent and unvexed flow from Assouan to its mouth is marked by a feeling of dignity and quietude only to be appreciated by those who have fallen beneath its spell. Unfortunately, to-day there is less romance about this wonderful river than even twenty years ago, for the picturesque *dahabeah*, with its high stern, graceful yards, and lateen sails, has given place to the steamer of the tourist in a hurry and the necessities of modern travel. And with the advent of the steamer upon the Nile many interesting and beautiful things in the shape of water-fowl, and even the crocodiles, have been driven off the main stream to more secluded portions of the river, and with them has also gone some of the ancient quietude and glamour.

Civilization is guilty of many crimes against Nature and Art, and upon the Nile has inevitably fallen the vulgarizing finger of wealth, the modern craze for speed, and the desire to tear the heart out of things in

the least possible time and with the greatest possible comfort. Happily, in a measure, the majestic monuments and ruins of its ancient glories and the beauty of its scenery still remain practically unaltered, notwithstanding the fact that over the Nile spirit has come that subtle change where modern life and ancient things impinge.

The silent, gliding *dahabeah*, which takes many weeks to make the journey under canvas from Cairo to Assouan, still sails the river, the chosen means of transit of those to whom Egypt still means more than a country in which to kill time, and a tourist centre where all that is most meretricious in modern life can be enjoyed to the full. But for the many the steamer — miscalled a *dahabeah*—has supplanted the old-time Nile craft, and on them are held dinners and dances, at the former of which the palates of gourmands are tickled by the dishes of French *chefs*, and at the latter fashionable women exhibit the latest creations of Worth, Redfern, or Doucet. And so also at Cairo,

THE CREW OF A DAHABEAH.

They are Arabs, and though their dress is picturesque, it is not adapted for going aloft or for hurrying. Fortunately, they are seldom called upon to do either.

Luxor, and Karnak, beneath the ægis of the world's most historic ruins, modern tourists and visitors contentedly or discontentedly live the enervating social life of Paris or London in huge modern hotels.

All the changes of recent years which we have indicated have, of course, had their effect upon the native population of Egypt, more especially in the neighbourhood of "objects of interest" and upon the banks of the Nile.

Gone now are the simple-minded and engaging natives, primitive in needs and ideas, of a few years ago, and in their place has been evolved a people whose lives now consist of alternating periods of absolute, demoralizing idleness and feverish seeking after *backsheesh*. And nowadays the traveller in Upper Egypt is looked upon merely as a harvest, and for the least courtesy or service the ubiquitous tip is not only expected, but demanded.

But to be perfectly just, it is only fair to say that the modernizing of the Nile is not

entirely without attributes of good; for at any rate the increased facilities for travelling and the certain element of competition which has crept in must, by affording these facilities, have enabled many students and more thoughtful tourists to have taken a trip which but a few years ago was beyond the means of all save the very well-to-do. And although many will regret the elements of vulgarity which have crept into Nile voyages, the ancient river still remains one of the most delightful and satisfying experiences of modern travel.

The Nile scenery from Cairo to Assouan is so astonishing in its variety that probably no river equally well travelled can compare with it in this respect. Most people who make this journey do so in order that they may be able to say afterwards that they have seen some of the most famous ruins of ancient Egyptian temples. That they should understand their significance is not, perhaps, to be expected; for to appreciate fully the wonderful interest and beauty which is at-

tached to such places as Thebes, Karnak, and Luxor one needs to be not only well versed in the history of former times and ancient things, but to be also a skilled Egyptologist. One may therefore suspect that many Nile tourists are as honestly sick of ruined temples and relics as the American girl who, bored to extinction by the disquisitions of a learned professor—who, like her, was one of a small party on a private *dahabeah*—declared petulantly that Karnak was a "one-horse affair," that all she had seen at Luxor was a lot of stones that needed sizing up, and that the Nile was not even clean water!

But, nevertheless, there are numbers of people who, without being learned Egyptologists, find a real charm in the relics of a past civilization, and an interest in temples which are not at the present day, with one or two exceptions, in themselves beautiful. Most of them, indeed, are so environed and hidden by squalid dwellings and débris as to prevent one from obtaining a general

impression, which might under favourable conditions of light and atmosphere be pictorially impressive.

Probably no river presents so many kaleidoscopic changes with variations of time, weather, and atmosphere as does the Nile. The same scene is not the same, but is almost, indeed, quite different when viewed, say, at sunrise and then again at sunset. The play of shadows thrown by clouds, the fact that the wind is either from the north or from the south, or from the east or from the west, is sufficient to create an entirely new picture out of even familiar materials. When one gets a very few miles away from Cairo such familiar objects as the Mokattam Hills will strike the traveller very differently when seen, not from the outskirts of the city, but from the river. Soon the chief interest becomes concentrated on the waterway itself. *Dahabeahs*, *nuggars* (trading boats), and other smaller native craft, are seen slowly crawling up the wide stream, with their pointed lateen sails bellying in

Photo by Will R. Rose. Chester

A NATIVE CARGO-BOAT ON THE BLUE NILE.

The "nuggar" is constantly to be seen often laden to the gunwale, and its rigging looking not unlike a cage

the light breeze, or equally slowly drifting down the silent highway under bare poles and yards, or urged forward at somewhat greater speed by huge sweeps, which turn their hulls, when seen from the banks, into the similitude of water-beetles.

One object upon the native boats which seldom fails to arouse the curiosity of the voyager ascending the Nile for the first time is the brown canvas bag hung to a short post between the masts, in which are contained the provisions of the crew, placed in full sight of all, so that none can steal food from the others unseen.

A Nile ferry-boat is always an object full of interest as it passes across the stream from shore to shore heavily laden with its freight of country folk and live stock, for in it one often catches glimpses of types which only a journey into the desert would make familiar. Indeed, much of the most picturesque life of the country is to be seen at various points on the river-bank, where, silhouetted against the sky, one catches glimpses of bronze-hued

country folk passing along from village to village with their merchandise strapped to the camels or donkeys, and with produce from their fields. Occasionally one has glimpses, too, of the buffalo or *gamoos* tethered in the fields or turning the numerous water-wheels, whilst on the banks of the river bronze-hued and lightly-clad *fellahīn* work at the *shadoofs* raising water for irrigating purposes. Borne along the silent highway by wind or current or both, to the musical ripple of the coffee-coloured water at the bows of one's *dahabeah*, where it is thrust off to form a creamy wake, the voyager realizes something of the languorous charm which proved so enervating to great Anthony in ancient times.

Hardly a sound reaches one save the somewhat mournful singing of the rowers or Arab sailors on passing boats, and the occasional call of some bird from a mud-flat or from out the sky above. But sometimes the silence is disturbed by the whistle of a passing steamer, or of one making for a

THE NILE.

Sunset on the Nile is not only one of the most marvellous sights of Egypt, but often yields singularly beautiful effects of light and shade.

landing-place, at which will be congregated almost every human being in the village and neighbourhood, and as many as are able throng the landing-stage and raise a chorus of appeal, pitched in varying keys, for the *backsheesh* which the influx of many travellers has by this time taught every Nile-dweller to look upon in the light of a birthright. In the old days most travellers in Egypt provided themselves with a large stock of those useful but somewhat insignificant coins known as *millièmes* with which to appease the voracious appetite for tips which afflicts the native; but nowadays, alas! the *millième* no longer satisfies the natives' greed, which has been fostered by rich tourists to a rapacious degree, and the slightest service must be paid for in piastres.

Private *dahabeahs* avoid, or should avoid, stoppages at the landing-places as much as possible, though an occasional break in the quietude and languorous river life serves to vary its monotony, and to increase one's appreciation of beautiful scenery and the

placidly flowing river. Many of these landing-places, too, are turned into impromptu bazaars by the townsfolk, who bring down with them for sale pottery, walking-sticks, Arab weapons, ornamental baskets, coins, and other odds and ends, in the form of relics found amid ruins or filched at the opening of some tomb. And sometimes, but not often, a real bargain may be picked up if the native happens to have some pressing need for disposing of his or her wares.

Not the least interesting sight to be seen along the banks of the river are the congregations of women and girls, who assemble early in the morning and about sunset at the village watering-places for the purpose of drawing water or cleaning household utensils, and incidentally, as one soon realizes, for that pastime of all nations, gossip. As one approaches one of these spots, where the sand or mud of the bank has been trodden hard by many feet perhaps for centuries past, one sees a single woman appear on the bank with her empty water-pot borne side-

ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE.

In the morning and towards sunset the women and girls come down to the

ways on her head. After descending the path to the water's edge and putting down her two-handled *balass*, she gathers her flowing robe of dark blue cotton around her, and squats down on her heels to await the arrival of the other women, who come one by one or in little parties, each of whom sit down to gossip before proceeding to the work of water-drawing or washing. After a time, however, one or other of them gets up, and throwing her head scarf back, and taking her skirts between her legs, wades into the river. She first scrubs the outside of the water jar, and then, filling it, carries it ashore, and sits down for another rest before starting on her homeward way. The young girls of the party during this time have been engaged in either idling, paddling in the water, or in scrubbing copper cooking-pots.

Many of the girls who come to these watering-places are beautiful, for even amongst the women of the *fellahīn* class there is an element of that coquetry which makes a visit, with the possible excitement of a

passing *dahabeah* and the curious and admiring gaze of the infidel traveller, not an unpleasant form of excitement. Nearly all of the girls are well formed, and possess hands and feet of great beauty and shapeliness. To the charm of their figures is added singular grace of movement, which the almost classic and clinging folds of their draperies enhance.

At length, with their water-pots filled, they rearrange their garments, adjust their headdresses, and then, slowly climbing the path up the bank, their figures are silhouetted for a moment or two darkly against the morning or evening sky before disappearing from view.

In contrast to this picture of a custom which has remained unaltered since the days of the Israelitish captivity, one must set the material evidences of civilization and of modern things which have been brought into being by necessities caused through the industrial development of the country in a restless age of commercial activity. The stately *dahabeah*, the native boats, and even

the tourist steamers, are not the only craft seen upon the Nile. Past one's *dahabeah* nowadays go panting steam-tugs with their strings of dirty barges behind them, laden with coal for use in the sugar factories at Farshoot and elsewhere, which stand stark and utilitarian in appearance on the banks of the glorious old Nile, belching forth smoke of Manchester-like density into the clear Egyptian air. But happily the Nile is so far extending that these eyesores will probably never become sufficiently numerous to imperil its picturesqueness and beauty, and they soon pass out of one's memory, driven thence by the exquisite beauty of succeeding scene.

Not a few of the towns and villages of the Upper Nile are picturesque and interesting, and in this category can surely be placed Sohag, Abu Tig, and Assiūt—the latter the chief town of Upper Egypt, handsome and well situated on a bend of the river, and backed by the imposing cliffs of the Libyan Desert.

But, after all, the real objective of a Nile voyage is the temples, and that of Dendarah is generally the first visited. On landing, one may have the first experience of the pertinacity, lung power, and untruthfulness of the native donkey-boys; for the neighbourhood of the landing-places is absolutely alive with them and their animals, whose praises they so unveraciously sing, and if one escapes without torn clothing from the hands of the persistent owners one is indeed lucky. If you happen to understand the language, and can answer them back, you may be allowed ultimately to choose your own steed for the excursion to the ruins of the Temple of Dendarah. If one cannot, one must expect to be hauled into a saddle and suffer abduction.

From Keneh to the ruins of the temple the way lies along a pleasant enough road across cultivated ground and fields in which cattle graze in charge of boys and girls, most of them good-looking and well-featured and well-formed, from their open-air life,

WATER BUFFALOES.

This is a scene often witnessed at midday, when the buffaloes come down to enjoy a bathe and a drink. Notice the brilliance of the reflections.

unfettered by conventionality. The temple at Dendarah has importance from the two circumstances that it is the first one visited by most people who make the trip up the Nile, and was probably the last temple to be built in Egypt. Now the ruins lie half-hidden by mud-heaps, which cover all that remains of the Roman buildings which once stood around it. Built only 2,000 years ago, it is in a wonderful state of preservation, and forms one of the most impressive temples of the Upper Nile.

Onward by river from Keneh one enjoys an extraordinary variety of scenery—huge cliffs of rock, soaring hundreds of feet into the air, worked by blue-clad or unclad quarrymen, alternating with mud-flats and strips of shingly shore; the mud-banks, often crowned with the green or golden leaves of Indian corn, and the home of numerous wild birds. One feature of these banks which strikes the traveller is their terrace-like arrangement, each cultivated to the fullest possible extent for the purpose of growing

crops of beans, onions, lentils, or other vegetables. The terraces themselves are formed when the Nile falls, the water cutting into the steep sides with astonishing regularity.

In Egypt, so far as the Nile and its vicinity are concerned, there is no waste of cultivable land; and even in the centre of the river, where ultimately, by reason of the periodic fall of the water, tracts of mud will be left bare, these are staked out by enterprising cultivators before the water has left them, so that they may be later on used for cucumber and water-melon beds. It is chiefly from the terraces to which we have just referred that the Nile fishermen throw their nets, which are circular, and from 10 to 12 feet in diameter, having a line attached to the centre. Many of these men possess great skill in casting the nets, which are taken in folds upon both arms and shot by a sharp swing of the body out into the water, upon the surface of which they fall in a perfect circle. Weights are attached

THE RIVER AT KOROSKO.

A typical Nile scene, with the picturesque boats, palm-dotted banks, and the distant hills forming an interesting background.

to the outer edge a short distance apart, which cause the nets to sink slowly to the bottom, enmeshing whatever fish may happen to come within their radius.

Another sight which the voyager frequently sees upon the banks of the river is the primitive shipbuilding yard with the Nile boats in course of construction or hauled up for repairs. Even the untrained eye will recognize the beautiful lines of the vessels and the graceful sweep of the prows. One curious fact in connexion with the building of these boats is that apparently no working drawings are used, but their construction is almost entirely by rule of thumb, and when one sees the primitive nature of some of the tools used and the roughness of the material, one marvels at the satisfactory and even beautiful results. The keel, instead of being straight, is almost always inclined upwards at each end of the boat, so that, should she take the ground, she does so usually very lightly; and from the fact that the bottom of the boat is flat

and the draught amidships shallow, the boat will generally jump the bank on which she has touched.

The launching of new boats generally takes place at flood-time, which saves an enormous amount of labour, and when the graceful vessels float off the banks, as at the launching of ships in almost every land, they are decked with flowers, foliage, and coloured banners, on which are embroidered devices, including the names of Allah, Mohammed, etc. The huge lateen sails, which form so interesting and picturesque a feature of the Nile boats, are rendered necessary by the height of the banks between which the river in places runs. Yards of ordinary height or sails arranged upon an English plan would fail to catch the breeze in many reaches of the river where the high lateen sail extending above the bank successfully does so.

The navigation of the Nile is rendered exceptionally difficult from the fact that the bed changes each year when the river falls, and only the most practised Nile pilots can

at the commencement of a new season tell (more especially in a breeze) where deep water ends and shoals commence. And so the earlier boats which make the passage have to do so by a frequent use of the *midra*, or long pole, used to take soundings. Fortunately, the prevailing wind on the Nile is north, so that boats are enabled to sail most days of the month up against the current, which is sufficiently strong, should the wind be in the same quarter when the return journey must be made, to float them down against it.

To have seen sunrise and sunset upon the Upper Nile is to have witnessed two sights which are likely to remain long in the memory. Over the water just before sunrise creeps a mysterious, illusive beauty, in which frequently wreaths of mist play a fantastic and not unimportant part. Then gradually the mist dissolves, and an orange ruddy tint suffuses the east and touches the bluffs and flat, high ridges of hills, which till then have been plum colour. Then, as the sun climbs

higher, the colours fade, and out of the mistiness of dawn emerges that clarity of atmosphere which by midday makes every ridge and gully and every cave and fissure in the strata sharply defined. Dazzling high lights appear, with plum-coloured shadows thrown by palms or projecting rocks.

Then, as the day passes, the sinking sun paints the landscape once more in warmer colours, and the sky slowly takes on the glorious colours of the Egyptian afterglow. Then begins one of the greatest colour transformations of the day, when, after a time of greyness, a second afterglow appears, gradually growing stronger and stronger, until everything is lit with a rosy light almost as strong as sunshine itself, but far more beautiful and illusive in its effects. Then at last descends the purple robe of dusk, to give place a little later on to the wonderful silvery Egyptian moonlight.

CHAPTER IV

PYRAMIDS, TEMPLES, AND TOMBS

The Cemeteries of Cairo—The Pyramids of Gîzeh—The Burial of Kings—How Pyramids were Built—The Great Pyramid—The Inscrutable Sphinx—Egyptian Temples not for the Worship of the People—Luxor, Karnak, and Thebes—Karnak by Night—A City of the Dead—The Avenue of Sphinxes—The Valley of the Tombs of the Kings—The Beautiful Temple of Queen Hatasu—Assouan Past and Present—The First Cataract—The Great Dam and Philæ.

AMONGST the chief glories of Egypt are its pyramids, temples, and tombs, and of these all save the merest birds of passage amongst tourists and visitors endeavour to see something.

Cairo, living, cosmopolitan, and fascinating, is literally built upon dead cities, and is surrounded by the dead. To the south and east of the city lie the widespread burial-

grounds, where generation after generation of Cairenes have been interred. In these cemeteries, set amid rubbish-heaps, and more especially in the eastern one, known as Kait-Bey, are many beautiful tombs. The tomb mosques of Barkook in Kait-Bey are almost unequalled for grace of design and beauty of decoration. These great cemeteries, with their wilderness of tombs, with domes, cupolas, and minarets, and with houses for the accommodation of the pilgrims who visit them, are almost worthy of the name of separate towns.

But it is to the west of Cairo, on the sweep of the Libyan Desert and well above all risk of inundation, that are built the numerous massive stone pyramids which mark the last resting-places of the most ancient Egyptian Kings. Between Abu Ruweysh and Meydum are scattered no less than seventy pyramids of various heights, some complete and others never finished, all more or less dilapidated. But in spite of the ravages of Time and the thefts of

builders, who have found these monuments of past ages a convenient quarry from which to obtain material for the erection of modern houses, they remain wonderfully impressive, and marvellous, alike from their immense age and huge bulk.

The pyramids are simply barrows, such as were erected over the honoured dead in Saxon England, only of stone instead of earth. The blocks are laid regularly and the edges finished. The governing principle of the pyramid is invariable. An excavation was usually made in some rocky eminence in the tract of desert lying between the Nile and the Libyan Hills, above reach of any inundation, and a sloping passage was cut from the rock-cavity to the surface. Over this was built a heap of stones, to prevent the desert sand encroaching. As a rule, this was done almost as soon as a King succeeded to the throne, and if he died early in his reign, he was buried in the rock-tomb, and a pyramidical cap was placed upon the top of the heap of stones, and triangular blocks

were built at the side, and by these means a small pyramid was formed, by which the tomb was hermetically sealed.

If, on the other hand, the King continued to reign, he did not put on the cap, or side triangular blocks; but after a time another cube upon the first heap of stones and blocks round the base, so as to form a second stage, and so on at various periods; and thus, at the end of his reign (if it had been a long one), there were numerous stages, and the pyramid could be completed by the addition of the cap. The masonry is invariably rougher hewn and less accurately placed in the upper stages, as, no doubt, in the smaller pyramids the masons had more time at their disposal in which to execute the work. There are sometimes other chambers besides the tomb in pyramids, and these are probably substitutes for the subterranean tomb in the later stages of the pyramid. The entrance to the tomb itself is always found carefully concealed. It is usually a steep, long, and narrow passage, sloping gradually

THE GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZEH.

This pyramid is really a tomb 5,000 years old, and is built of limestone.

downwards, and many ingenious devices were employed to prevent the sarcophagus being carried away. Although some of the pyramids are built of bricks—of which almost incalculable numbers must have been used—stone from the neighbouring limestone quarries or brought from Tura and El-Ma'asarah was generally employed.

Nearly all the Egyptian pyramids are built together in one area, and they are all the tombs of kings and officials of the early Memphite dynasties, who ruled over Egypt from about 4000 B.C. to 3000 B.C. Of the old royal city and capital at Memphis, nothing now remains save two huge figures of Ramses II., some blocks of masonry, and fragments of colossi. But of the necropolis of Memphis itself there still remains a large number of tombs.

The greatest and most impressive of all the pyramids are the three of Gîzeh, the so-called "false" pyramid of Meydûm, and the step pyramid of Sakkarah. These can be easily visited by tourists who go to Cairo,

and the former are reached along the fine road constructed by Ismail Pascha, the first Khedive, which takes one seven miles on the way beneath the shade of a handsome avenue of *lebbek*-trees. Sakkarah is nine miles south.

As one approaches the end of the road the real grandeur of the Great Pyramid bursts upon one. Apparently one is beneath its shadow; in reality it is still more than a mile away.

Across the intervening desert one toils on a donkey, camel, or Arab pony up the steeply inclined road until one is at last at the foot of the colossal monument of past ages. These three pyramids of Gîzeh are the tombs of three fourth-dynasty Kings—Cheops (also known as Khufu), Chephren (or Khafra), and Mycerinus (or Menkera). The first is the largest, and is so enormous that one can only stand in silent wonder on first coming beneath its shadow.

Covering an area equal in extent to Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, originally of a height of 481 feet, though now some-

THE STATUE OF RAMSES II., AN EMBELLISHMENT OF HIS NOW VANISHED TEMPLE AT MEMPHIS.

This statue as it lies in ch[illegible]

what less, it has a cubic content of 3,277,000 yards, and it is estimated that at least 7,000,000 tons of masonry were used in its construction. Its base is square, and each side exactly faces one of the four cardinal points of the compass. The sides were originally faced with highly polished slabs of limestone, but these, which bore many inscriptions, have been stripped off by builders in search of easily acquired material. The outer stones are from 2 feet to 5 feet in height, and each recedes from the edge of the next lowest about 15 inches to 1 foot. The sides rise at an angle of about 52 degrees, and at the top is a flat space about 30 feet square. To climb the Great Pyramid is the ambition of most visitors, many of whom "ascend" it by being dragged to the top by the ever-ready Arabs, who have made these "ascents" their means of livelihood.

Originally the entrance was so cleverly concealed that it was indistinguishable, although its whereabouts was doubtless known

to the priests. But nowadays there is no secret. It is plainly visible on the north side, about 50 feet from the ground, and is roofed in. In the Great Pyramid are many chambers, reached, in the first instance, by a long, narrow passage, sloping downwards at an angle of about 27 degrees, and some 320 feet in length. The chief chambers are the King's, the so-called Queen's, the Great Gallery, 150 feet in length and 28 feet in height, and the Sepulchral Chamber.

The experience of visiting the interior of the pyramid is somewhat weird, even though generally accompanied by the disillusioning chatter of the "guides" in very much broken English and the jokes of Cockney tourists.

The other two pyramids of Gîzeh do not differ very materially, as regards their general construction and material, from that of Cheops, but both are smaller. In front of each was once a temple dedicated to the deified King within the sepulchre, and remains of these are to be seen at the base of the two smaller pyramids.

Photo by Will R. Rose. Chester.

THE INTERIOR OF QUEEN NEFERTARI'S TOMB.

The ceiling of this tomb is painted a dark blue and covered with golden stars, representing night.

Pyramids, Temples, Tombs

The approach to the platform of the pyramid was guarded by the sphinx, a lion with a man's head hewn out of the projecting rock, and having a sanctuary between its forelegs. The mysterious figure, the *raison-d'être* of which has never been satisfactorily settled, is partly buried, although its stupendous head and shoulders rise out of the environing sand. In spite of time and weather and mutilation of its face, the loss of the helmet (which originally crowned the head), and the nose and beard, it possesses for most who see it a strange and even weird fascination almost impossible to describe. Indeed, on its impassive face one seems to discover a suggestion of the many wonders it must have witnessed in those bygone ages when the world seemed young.

A few miles north of Gîzeh lies the ruined pyramid of Abu-Ruweysh, and further south is the second great necropolis of Memphis, which—less visited than what are known as "the Pyramids"—is nevertheless of tran-

scending interest. The plateau of Sakkarah, with its eleven pyramids and countless tombs of all ages decorated with magnificent wall-paintings, is of never-failing fascination. There, too, is the wonderful Apis mausoleum discovered by the indefatigable M. Mariette, in which all the sacred bulls, who, when alive, were worshipped as gods at Memphis from the eighteeenth dynasty down to the period of the Ptolemies, ultimately found resting-places in huge sarcophagi placed in long galleries. Outside was a temple for their worship, which the encroaching desert sand ultimately covered up. It is possible that one of the Sakkarah pyramids, that of six steps, is the oldest monument in the world, as it is thought to have been built by Uenephes of the first dynasty.

The pyramids form not only the earliest phase of Egyptian art, but, from their immense bulk and mysterious and fascinating antiquity, remain the most interesting of all monuments of ancient Egypt.

Although there are many ruined temples

scattered through the land, it is on those at Luxor and Karnak, and the beautiful Temple of Isis at Philæ, that most interest is focussed. The ideal way in which to reach them is not by the swift-flying train which passes through the sandy desert, but by the silent highway of the Nile; and few more impressive sights are to be found even in Egypt than the many columns of the temple at Luxor, appearing at first sight to rise out of the water itself as one's *dahabeah* or steamer rounds the sharp bend of the Nile. Even the landing-place itself is of interest, because it is the old Roman quay upon which it is possible the great Antony himself may have stood.

It should always be remembered that the temples of the ancient Egyptians were not intended for the worship of the people, but for priestly processions, and in consequence their chief characteristics are aisles and portals. Within the great, square, rough brick wall, which probably surrounded everything except the Sacred Lake, across

which the dead were borne, an avenue of sphinxes, lions with men's or rams' heads, led up to what is called the first propylon: a gateway composed of two square towers tapering off and having an entrance between them, and often a pair of obelisks or colossal statues in front, or royal effigies seated against the façade of the propylon. Within this was the great open peristyle or court, with colonnades of the peculiar Egyptian columns, the shafts sometimes tapering at the base and tied near the top like a bundle of reeds. Behind this court was the hypostyle, or large hall of assembly, with the roof supported by a veritable forest of columns. Between the first and second courts was a tower, portal, and perhaps obelisks or statues; and, lastly, behind this second hall, and separated sometimes by a vestibule, was the adytum, or sanctuary, where the emblem of the god was kept in a mysterious darkness — a sanctuary only penetrated by the priests whose vestries and treasuries adjoined the Holy of Holies.

THE ISLAND OF PHILÆ.

This photograph was taken from the Island of Bigeh. The square building to the extreme right is a temple to Isis, but called "Pharaoh's Bed" by the natives. It has no roof, and never was finished, but is one of the gems of the place.

This was the general arrangement of the Egyptian temple, but it was, of course, capable of much variation and enlargement by additional halls, vestibules, and avenues of sphinxes, generally separated by propylons, obelisks, and colossi. The whole of the temple, its walls, columns, roofs, and gateways, was covered with sculptures and paintings representative of the great achievements of the King who built the temple, and of those who continued the work, as well as of a great many who doubtless had no right to be commemorated at all. By a singular circumstance the strange mania, which seems to afflict so many present-day tourists, for cutting their names or initials on the relics of antiquity, also appears to have afflicted the ancient Kings of Egypt, who were very fond of inscribing their own names over those of the real founders of the temple.

What a wonderful building Amenhotep's Temple is, with its exquisite lotus columns rising in the clear sunshine, and thrown into relief by the deep shadows! Standing almost

on the quay itself, one can imagine with some degree of accuracy how it must have appeared when the priests of ancient Egypt were passing in and out of its magnificent portals. The Roman Hall of Judgment somewhat blocks the ruins on the right, but it is interesting from the fact that in later times this same judgment-hall was used as a Christian church, traces of the religious frescoes of which are still decipherable near the Judgment-seat. Not far off rise also the double row of columns of Ramses the Great, comparing unfavourably in their roughness and inelegant proportions with those of Amenhotep. The temple when built was undoubtedly above water-level, but the Nile has risen considerably since those days. Until its excavation by Mariette, now many years ago, the temple was almost completely hidden by the squalid native village. The ancient city has entirely disappeared, and it is impossible to form any accurate idea of its plan, or, indeed, its general appearance; but in its ruined temples, the extent

STATUES OF RAMSES II. AT LUXOR.

and beauty of which never fails to be impressive, whether seen at dawn, high noon, or exquisite sunset, we have a record of the history of bygone ages. Here each epoch has left some relic. The Temples of Seti and Ramses II. have within them both Moslem mosque and Coptic church; whilst the remains of the Roman occupation can be traced in the débris which partially covers magnificent edifices which came into being more than a thousand years before Cleopatra wooed Antony.

The advent of huge hotels and fashionable folk, who seem as though they had unwittingly strayed from the Promenade des Anglais at Nice, or the Casino grounds at Monte Carlo, appear indeed incongruous with the relics of antiquity which surround them; and all save the student who has already learnt something of ancient Egypt from books must indeed find it difficult to pick up the threads of history, to arrange dates, and to realize that it is possible the children of Israel, during their captivity, may

have laboured on the erection of these very temples which now form such magnificent ruins.

But though it is given to few to understand the true significance of these remains and the impressive sphinxes, which in their double ranks sit regarding each other and the scene with immutable and mysterious faces, still, few can fail to appreciate the lofty obelisk at the gate of the temple, mourning its other self now adorning the Place de la Concorde, Paris, the beauty of the colonnade, or the impressive statues of Ramses II.

It is fortunate indeed that the great charm of Egypt lies as much in its atmosphere, pictorialness, and the grandeur of the surviving relics of past ages, as in the opportunities it presents to the more studious for the study of ancient customs and dead civilizations. So is it also fortunate that Luxor and Karnak make no call on expert knowledge for appreciation. They immediately impress and fascinate the visitor, whose admiration and interest cannot fail to increase as he

NATIVE METHODS OF WORKING AT KARNAK.

They use practically the same methods as their progenitors 4,000 years ago

wanders through the ruined halls or gazes upon the hugeness of the figures. No more beautiful and strangely mysterious picture can be imagined than Karnak seen by the moonlight, which, in its beauty, palliates much of the ruin and desolation of the place. In the wonderful aisles of the great hall one may almost expect to meet the spirits of its dead priests and builders, whilst in the darker shadows of the palm-groves which surround it there flit to and fro Arab watchmen, or shepherds, to whom the moonlight and impressive surroundings seem to impart a weirdness and mystery.

Between Karnak and Luxor lies the wonderful avenue of sphinxes, and behind it to the west is yet another, half hidden among the beautiful palm-trees and leading up to the ruined pylon.

Karnak, which lies little more than a mile distant from Luxor, and is reached by a road through cultivated fields partly following the ancient one, is almost bewildering on account of the vastness of its ruins. No one can fail

to be wonder-struck, and even at times oppressed, by the vastness of it all. The skilled eye will be, of course, more impressed than the unskilled, for it is not alone the grandeur of the scale upon which the various buildings were erected, but also the wonderful ingenuity exhibited in overcoming apparently insurmountable difficulties of construction, that will appeal to the initiated.

Columns more than 60 feet high, and some of them 12 feet across, which make one wonder how their various sections can ever have been lifted into position save by the aid of steam-cranes and modern "jacks," support huge architraves of enormous blocks of stone, some of them probably weighing 30 tons, or even more, but retaining their position without cement. And then there is the obelisk, which, hewn from one huge piece of rock, stands about 98 feet in height, and was transported, either by land or river, from Assouan, distant nearly 150 miles. There are no records to tell us with what astounding ingenuity and at what cost of

labour it was brought to and erected in its present position, but the colossal task is only one of many problems which the wonderful skill of the ancient Egyptians has left us for solution.

Many of the carvings and paintings on this great temple are exceedingly interesting, and on the outer walls the sculptures tell the stirring history of the two warrior Kings—Seti I. and his son, Ramses II.—and of their fights against the Hittites, the Arabs and the Syrians, and the people of Armenia. One sees them charging the enemy in their mighty chariots, and, indeed, these battle-scenes are drawn with wonderful vigour, and contrast strangely with other sculptures, cut on the columns within, of the same Kings making humble offerings to the gods.

Karnak itself, once connected with Luxor by a magnificent roadway passing down the avenue of sphinxes, has of recent years been much tidied and restored by the hands of the excavator and engineer; and even iron gates and railings now limit the former un-

restricted access, just as the tidying process has robbed the spot of some of the impressive wildness which characterized it only a few years ago. Its restoration, though undoubtedly well done, and perhaps necessary in the interests of scientific research, has gone far, with the concreting of the floor of the temple and the re-erection of fallen masonry and inclined column, to rob the spot of not a little of its mystery, romance, and suggestive charm.

But if restored Karnak is, after all, but ruins; Medînet Habû across the river, with its beautiful background of the Theban Hills, is in so good a state of preservation that from it one can gather a fairly accurate idea of what the temple must have been in those ancient days when the colours on its columns and ceilings were fresh and wonderful. In the Rameseum, a couple of miles away, one is able to trace something of the influence which Egyptian art had upon that of Greece; for here we find the use of sculptured figures as supporting columns, which

THE TEMPLE OF SETI I. AT THEBES.

This temple dates from the middle of the fourteenth century B.C. *It is a mortuary temple, and is really a composite chapel for the Kings of three generations—Ramses I., Seti I., and Ramses II.*

idea is found more fully developed in the form of the Greek caryatides in Athens.

Many climb to the summit of the great pylon, and from thence, indeed, one is able to obtain a bird's-eye view of the vast ruins which lie extended on every hand and are so impressive even by unromantic daylight. To the west, as far as the Theban Hill slopes, once lay the magnificent city from which they took their name, which, with its lofty monoliths, its pylons with their tall masts and fluttering banners, must indeed have been one of the greatest sights the world has ever seen. Ancient Thebes lay on both sides of the Nile, and to-day the river flows as then—a silvery ribbon between the dark, palm-shaded banks. In ancient times there were, in place of present-day ruins, magnificent palaces, temples, a city teeming with human life on the eastern shore, and on the western little save the dwellings of the dead, whilst the Nile (truly to Egypt a river of life) flowed between, and separated for a brief space the living and the dead.

Pyramids, Temples, Tombs

The ancient Egyptians, of course, firmly believed in the resurrection of the body, and that the soul would be one day reincarnated, and for this reason they preserved the bodies of the departed by mummification. But after all there appears a serious flaw in this belief when one remembers that they only made mummies of their greatest dead, whose relatives could pay the heavy charges made by the priests for what was certainly an elaborate and expensive process, ordinary folk being buried unmummified in a common grave.

Many of the arts of ancient Egypt are lost, and we do not understand, amongst others, the texture of the mummy-cloths, nor the composition of the colours employed in the decorations of the tombs, which have preserved their hues in these rock-hewn chambers as fresh to-day as when applied thirty centuries ago. And also all knowledge of the mechanical methods which made it possible for the Egyptian architects and builders to carry out their stupendous works

has passed away. Then, too, one wonders how the houses and the dark inner chambers of the temples were illuminated, for many of the latter were beyond all possible reach of daylight, and yet there is neither sign of sconce or lamp nor any trace of smoke upon the ancient walls.

What is now called Thebes lies on the western side of the river, in ancient times known as the City of the Dead. Of the Thebes of 3,000 years ago, which Homer speaks of as having a hundred brazen gates, and walls a hundred miles in length, there is nowadays scarcely a trace save in the ruined temples and the tombs; and now only the dwellings of the dead are of much account in the western portion of this once populous city, where there is scarcely any living population except those who till the land and those whose harvest is the tourists. There are practically no ruins on the river-banks, and at first one encounters nothing save a level expanse of cultivated meadow, broken here and there by a deep, dry canal. But at

length two enormous figures come into view rising right up out of the fields of corn, rye, and sweet-smelling beans. The huge figures, which are more than 60 feet in height, and which have sat looking across over fields in times of harvest, and over waters in times of flood, for the past 3,000 years and more, are known as the Statues of Memnon, and really represent the great Amenhotep III., who reigned about 1500 B.C. They must have been brought from a great distance, as were so many of the colossal works of the ancient Egyptians, for they are not of the stone of the district. In their present battered and weather-worn condition it is impossible for one to realize the dignified beauty which once undoubtedly distinguished them. They probably stood as the guardian figures at the gates of the magnificent temple which once must have stood in their close vicinity, of which now not a trace remains.

From one of them in ancient times, by a clever device of the priests of the temple, a

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

QUEEN HATASU'S TEMPLE AT THEBES.

...is is not only one of the most beautiful, but also one of the most interesting temples in Egypt. It is built in ... the style which long after its erection was known as Greek.

mysterious noise used to come at daybreak. Now no longer comes any sound from the graven lips, and the huge figures, as they stand majestic, though weather-worn, and gaze solemnly towards the east, almost seem to be mourning over the vanished days of Theban magnificence. An appropriate background are the girdling hills, here rising to a lofty peak, and there fissured by a deep ravine, which leads to that marvellous and fascinating world of the dead buried amidst and in the sides of the hills.

It is a long, warm ride on a sunshiny day to the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings —a barren valley, totally destitute of shade, and without any sign of life save that afforded by a few tourists and one's own party.

There are many beautiful schemes of decoration to be seen in these Egyptian tombs of ancient days; but in the vaulted apartment where the great and good King Seti was laid to rest the decoration is of a very unusual quality and of fascinating

interest. Unhappily, it is now nothing but the husk, for Seti's mummified body itself is in Cairo, whilst his beautiful alabaster sarcophagus is in London. There are many other tombs, such as those of Ramses XII., more gorgeously decorated, but few of greater artistic interest and value than that of King Seti.

The ride from the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings to the other side, where stands Queen Hatasu's Temple, partially built in the rock beneath one's feet, is an experience likely to be trying to the timorous horseman. This temple is a beautiful specimen of perfect Grecian construction, although built a thousand years before the Greeks themselves had emerged from a state of barbarism. It would be possible to spend several days in contemplation of its wonderful beauty, and, indeed, students have spent many weeks in the study of this wonderful creation of a woman's genius and love.

The rocks in the immediate neighbourhood of the temple are full of the magnificent

painted tombs of great officers of state of 3,000 or 4,000 years ago, and, indeed, the whole sides of the hills are perforated with the entrances to the tombs, till they look like those of a huge battleship.

From Luxor to Assouan by the river is one of the most interesting portions of a Nile trip. And although at first the Nile passes through a fertile region, one is nevertheless approaching a rainless one, for soon after leaving Luxor one has on the west the great Sahara Desert, stretching 2,000 miles to the Atlantic and preventing any of the clouds, which, however, one does see, from developing into rain. Soon the cultivated valley becomes a mere ribbon, with a background of the hills, whilst picturesque *dôm* palms line the banks.

At the village of Erment there is an interesting temple built by Cleopatra herself, and the mountains which come into view mark the beginning of the Nubian sandstone, and a consequent change not only in the scenery, but in the people themselves.

The valley narrows even more at Esnê, which is a provincial capital with a fine temple and a considerable and increasing Soudanese trade. Further on is El Kâb, with interesting remains of three temples, and but a little distance further up the river is Edfû, with its stately temple and wonderfully preserved propylon.

The valley of the Nile now becomes hemmed in closely by the hills, and the scenery increases in interest as one passes Kôm Ombo and approaches Assouan. This town, the scene of Juvenal's banishment, and then known as Syene, stands on the east bank in the midst of palms, but situated in a rather gloomy position. In front of it lies the island of Elephantine, a vivid picture of green trees, golden sand, and black syenite.

Assouan has from ancient times been the frontier town of Egypt proper, and nowadays few places in Egypt have a greater power of interesting visitors. It is true that there is little to do, and not much to see; and it is just possible that it is rather its restfulness

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

THE ASSOUAN DAM.

This picture shows the two water-levels.

after much sight-seeing that causes the average tourist, when the time has come to set his face once again north and to leave Assouan behind, to do so with regret. It is not many years since the town, now so peaceful and in its way prosperous, saw stirring scenes in connexion with the great conquest of the Soudan. And not so long ago the bazaars of the town were crammed with genuine Dervish relics—swords and spears from Omdurman and Abu-Klea, hide-shields with many a bullet-hole in them, and blood-stained *jibbehs* (Mahdist coats). Nowadays genuine relics, such as we have described, are less frequently met with, and are much more costly to purchase when found; but there are plenty of curios to be picked up in the shape of long-stemmed pipes, sticks, and ornaments, and strings of beads—some of them of large size and of very fine amber.

And at market-times there still arrive caravans of camels from the further side of the Eastern desert, and the high mud-bank

is dotted with curious figures in fantastic attire. There one sees stately Arab merchants in long black gowns, with splendid bunches of ostrich feathers in their hands; jostling, muscular, half-naked Nubians, armed with long spears and leather shields embossed with silver; and sometimes even Maltese traders are to be seen selling heavy silver bracelets, or perhaps native amulets reputed to serve as potent charms against the *Evil Eye*. On the river-bank a long row of natives sit squatting, each with something to sell: baskets dyed with gay colours and made of woven straw, strings of beads, tiger-skins, pottery, ostrich-eggs, and other goods spread out before them. A lively and interesting scene, where one may meet some types seldom seen even in cosmopolitan Cairo.

Most people who go to Assouan must suffer some disappointment, we fancy, from the First Cataract, which has in the past so often been described in terms which would do scarcely less than justice to Niagara

itself. Picturesque as is the First Cataract, it is really nothing more than a series of rapids, where the stream has forced an intricate passage between the black syenite rocks which choke the bed of the river. But if the Cataract itself is productive of disappointment, just beyond it is one of the most exquisite pieces of scenery in the whole of the Valley of the Nile. When the cataract is left behind, round a bend of the river appears the beautiful island of Philæ, on which stand eight or nine temples, and the most graceful of all in Egypt, dedicated to Isis, spoiled somewhat by a lofty pylon, from the top of which, however, a view of unexampled beauty and magnificence is obtainable.

Many poets and writers have described this exquisite little island, which seems to be the end of Egyptian civilization, and those who know it will contemplate with the keenest concern the likelihood of its destruction in the future through additional height being given to the Great Dam. If this

addition should bring about the submergence of Philæ and its beautiful temples there are many who will sorrowfully regret one more instance of the destruction of ancient things so often brought about by modern progress.

CHAPTER V

TOWN LIFE AND FESTIVALS

In an Egyptian Home—The Harīm and its Occupants—The Place of the Harīm in Domestic Life—Marriages and Marriage Customs—The Matrimonial Agent—Marriage Festivities—The Bridal Procession—Death and some Strange Beliefs—The Birthday of the Prophet—The Fast of Ramadân—The Feast of Bairam—Dancing Dervishes—The Sacred Carpet.

TO gain an adequate knowledge of a people, more especially of an Eastern race, it is necessary to join in their diversions, to study their home-life, and to witness their festivals. Few Western travellers are admitted to participate in the inner life of the Egyptians or Cairenes. But on occasions of public festivals much of that same home-life filters into the streets, and anyone with seeing eyes and a capacity for following up

incidents is at liberty to enjoy the festivities and play what part he likes in the scene.

There is not a little of interest in the home of an Arab of the upper middle class. The exterior, however, is seldom impressive, and on the ground-floor of the house, abutting on the street, there are usually no windows, or only extremely narrow ones, and these are heavily barred. The entrance door, too, is generally shut and bolted; and if it is open the passer-by is only able to catch a glimpse of a long and narrow passage with a seat for the door-keeper, frequently an old and always a trusted servant, who keeps watch and ward literally day and night. His bed is often in the passage, and made of palm-branches.

However beautiful or elaborate the interior may be, the exterior of the house is always noticeably severe and plain. This peculiarity is an interesting reminder of the unrestful time of the Mamelukes, when wealthy Cairenes in particular were careful to avoid attracting the eye by any outward

AN ARAB VILLAGE.

This is the square in which the market is generally held, and where the inhabitants congregate to gossip.

display of their wealth, that thus they might escape the cupidity of marauding despots.

The presence of wooden figures, paintings, or mottoes over the doorways—sometimes stuffed crocodiles and even small elephants are placed there—is held to protect the inhabitants from evil influences. The doorkeeper always warns the women of the household of the approach of a male visitor, and they at once fly screaming to the safety and privacy of their own apartments. At first the visitor is usually asked to wait in the often beautiful court which is open to the sky and is made pleasant by trees and flowers and plashing water. After a short delay, he is conducted to the *mandara*, or sitting-room, of the master of the house. It is polite to remove one's shoes—the servant always does so—and to touch one's forehead, lips, and breast in returning the greeting of the owner of the house is also etiquette, and symbolizes that one is (for the time being) his in thought, speech, and heart.

The reception-room is furnished according

to the position and wealth of its owner. Some are made extremely beautiful by inlaid doors, rich carvings, bright-coloured hangings of silken stuffs, and ornaments of valuable pottery, brass-ware, and rugs. There are, of course, no chairs, but in their place luxurious divans, placed in the angles of the walls or in deep window recesses. Often the middle of the floor of the room (which is usually paved with tiles) is hollowed out so as to permit of a fountain-basin, and it is at the *lewan*, or raised end, guests are seated. Earthenware tiles of various colours and designs form the lower portions of the walls, and the upper are occupied by handsome carved brackets, upon which are placed pieces of fine pottery or brass jars, bowls, or other ornaments. The *mandara*, which generally has a height equal to that of the whole building, is the chief chamber of the house, and, by comparison, the others are, as a rule, small and low. Above them is the attic-floor under the roof, reserved for the use of servants.

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

A STREET SCENE AT LUXOR.

Town Life and Festivals

The *harīm*, which has such an air of mystery for European visitors, is never entered even by the most intimate male friends of the master of the house. By the untravelled and uninitiated its functions are generally misunderstood: it is, in a word, the real home of the Eastern, into which he withdraws from the intrusion of visitors and the worries of the outer world. In it is lived the family life of the East, which is held more sacred and dear than amongst most Western peoples at the present day. Within the *harīm* does not mean within a prison-house, but represents to the Oriental a haven of rest and quietude, where he can enjoy uninterrupted the pleasures of the family circle, and pass the time in company with his children and other members of his family. Much unnecessary pity is lavished by "emancipated" women of the West upon the women of the *harīm*. However objectless their lives—spent in looking after and caring for their children, smoking their *nargilehs*, paying attention to their dress, and taking

part in simple amusements, and by their gaiety and good spirits assisting their husbands to forget business cares, of which they only guess the existence and seldom know the exact cause—may seem to European women, few of them would willingly exchange lots with their Western sisters.

The *harīm* is usually situated in the upper story of the house, and the chief or living apartment—the *ka'ah*—is, in the houses of the wealthy, furnished luxuriously and with barbaric beauty and taste. If the apartment overlooks the street, it is almost always furnished with a *mashrubiyeh*, from which, though themselves unseen, the ladies can observe the life of the street. The rooms of the *harīm* are reached from the court and through the master's apartments. In some of the older and larger houses the staircases and passages leading to the women's domain are so long and tortuous that, were a stranger to penetrate into the court and ground-floor, and have the opportunity of attempting to reach the *harīm*, he would probably fail to do so.

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

THE BAZAAR AT ASSOUAN.

The most picturesque in all Egypt. The sunlight streaming through the broken places in the roof has a most charming effect.

Town Life and Festivals

In many of the more modern houses of the middle classes, and even upper middle classes, the old and magnificent fabrics of former times are already slowly but surely being replaced by those of England, Germany, and more especially Saxony. This lamentable circumstance has arisen chiefly from two causes: the desire for novelty, to which the modern spirit even in Egypt has, to some extent, given rise; and the fact that old fabrics and old furniture have been the prey of tourists for many years past, and have fetched, in recent years, prices so high that the less wealthy Cairenes have been tempted to turn such articles into cash.

The Egyptian customs relating to marriage are sufficiently different from those of Western Europe to be of considerable interest. All social intercourse between the sexes prior to marriage is, by custom, rendered impossible, in consequence of which a man can only under special circumstances ever expect to see his future bride. Thus it

is that a go-between, known as the *khatbeh*, is employed, whose duty it is to approach the parents of eligible damsels, with a view to arranging a marriage between her client and one of the daughters of the house. Very frequently the *khatbeh* combines with her matrimonial agent's office that of a dealer in ornaments or cosmetics, and by these means gains entry the more easily into families where there are daughters of marriageable age. The object of her visit is soon discovered, and then the mothers seek to present their daughters in the most favourable and fascinating light. The result of the preliminary negotiations is immediately conveyed to the would-be bridegroom and to his family. Then his mother, his sisters, or other female relatives, seek an opportunity of inspecting the young lady on his behalf, to confirm or disprove the glowing report of the *khatbeh*. If they express themselves satisfied, the *khatbeh* goes and formally proposes for the hand of the chosen maiden. The parents usually give their consent or

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

A GROUP OF NATIVES AT THE ANCIENT TEMPLE AT WADY SABA.

...ing the chameleon hanging from the boy's extended stick. Most beautiful chameleons are found here, and

refuse it with but little delay, as all along they have known very well what the *khatbeh's* visits foreshadowed. The young lady herself is not consulted, though she has a right of refusal, which, be it said, however, is scarcely ever exercised. To be married is her destiny; not to see the person she is to wed is, perhaps, her misfortune. But, consequently, men are much alike to her, and she cannot have any particular aversion to the one who seeks her hand.

The *fellahīn* girls and women, and those of the labouring classes in the country districts, cannot always go veiled, as they have to work for their living, and in consequence the men in their stations of life often see their wives before marriage, and generally choose for themselves.

There are many bargains to be struck and discussions to take place after two families have come to an agreement regarding the marriage of son and daughter ere the real ceremony takes place. The bridegroom of any position is expected to secure

a certain sum to his wife, of which he retains one-third, only to be disbursed in event of divorce. But inasmuch as the bride's family generally pay back the settlement money as dowry, the operation is very much that of taking money out of one pocket to put it in another. The bride's position regarding her fortune is perfectly free and independent of her husband. As soon as the amount of the dowry is settled, the marriage contract, which is an oral declaration before a magistrate or legal authority, is concluded. The bridegroom then visits the family of the chosen maiden, accompanied by two friends. Her father, who also has two friends present as witnesses and a *fikêe*, or reader, receives them. The bridegroom and father of the bride then kneel opposite one another on a carpet (after the recital of the first chapter of the Korān), and clasping each other by the right hand and lifting up their thumbs, press them tightly together. Whilst they are in this attitude the *fikêe* covers their

clasped hands with a napkin or handkerchief, and, after reciting a short address or a few verses from the Korān, pronounces the formula of betrothal. After presents have been made to the witnesses, and a gift made to the *fikée* of a piece of gold knotted up in the corner of a handkerchief, there only remains the marriage.

The friends of both now take part in the many festivities which precede the actual ceremony. The rejoicings of the men and women are, of course, independent of one another. The bride by custom goes to the bath attended by her friends, and "the bath procession" wends its way slowly through the streets, headed by Arab musicians playing little tambourines, flutes, and clarionets. The married women go first in black shawls (which seem singularly out of place at a wedding amongst the fluttering of gay-coloured flags and the *mahmal* or canopy of red fabric supported by four poles and carried over the bride), then come the young unmarried women and girls in

white veils, followed by the bride, completely enveloped in a red cashmere shawl, and generally wearing for sole ornament a shining gold coronet. The rear is brought up by other musicians.

Arrived at the bath, after refreshing themselves, the bride and her friends pass some time, wrapped in white sheets, smoking, drinking coffee, and listening to the songs of singing women who tell of the joys of married life and love, after which the wedding-party dress and play games for a time, and then the procession wends its way homewards, where a banquet is served.

The next day is devoted to the arts of the toilet, the bride being beautified by *henna*, *kohl*, and, nowadays, even rouge and powder. Then, towards the middle of the afternoon, another procession is formed, and the bride sets out for her new home. The streets of the neighbourhood, if the wedding be that of a person of importance, are thronged by interested spectators, and every *mashrubiyeh* has its little crowd of interested

AN ARAB VILLAGE STREET.

A street in a village of some size. Worthy of notice is the native architecture, also the dog, seldom missing from such a scene, always a scavenger and often fierce.

women peering out through the lattice-work to catch a glimpse of the bride and her cortège.

A more remarkable sight than the procession attending a bride of wealth or position, with its Egyptian musicians playing Arab airs on European instruments, amid the shouts of "Allah!" from the crowd as the bride passes by, and the tumblers, snake-charmers, wrestlers, and water-carriers, and all the hangers-on, can scarcely be imagined. It is a sight not easily forgotten, with its colour and exuberance of life.

At length the procession reaches the bridegroom's abode, and the bride and her friends, with the camels loaded with her clothing, furniture, and belongings, disappear from sight into the house. The bridegroom is entertaining his guests with a feast of many dishes, to which, by means of constant recourse to sour salad as an appetizer, they manage to do full justice. Scarcely ever is anything save water drunk until the coffee is

brought in, and that—so excellent and aromatic—with cigarettes serves to while away an hour or so until the time arrives for the bridegroom and his friends to repair by torchlight to the mosque to offer up the prescribed prayers, from whence they will return in about an hour. From the apartments of the women come sounds of laughter, singing, the tinkle of *kanoon*, and the noise of the *Zikr*. Meanwhile, although the bride's friends have been merrily enjoying themselves, she will have sat silent and with downcast eyes, as custom orders.

At last all her friends and relations retire, leaving her alone with her old *bellaneh*, or nurse. The latter throws a shawl over her charge's head, and at a given signal the bridegroom enters. The nurse leaves them, and the time has arrived when, with the words "In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful," the bridegroom may lift the covering from his wife's face, and see her probably for the first time in his life. He greets her with the words "Blessed

be this night," and she thanks him, answering "God bless thee." Then the waiting women outside anxiously listen to hear whether he is satisfied with the beauty and manners of his bride. If this is the case they send up a shout of joy, which in the opinion of Semitic peoples is one of the most delightful sounds which can be uttered and heard. How old this custom of the bridegroom's announcing his satisfaction is may be gathered by a reference to the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, verse 29: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice."

The customs connected with death are just as ancient in their origin, and remain as unaltered. The dying are usually turned with their faces towards Mecca; and when death does not come suddenly ablutions are performed, as though for prayer. As soon as the spirit has fled, the relatives cry out, "There is no God save the true God, and

Mohammed is his prophet. There is neither might nor power but with the Almighty and Exalted God. We are the Lord's; and we return unto him." The men-folk of the household begin at once to make arrangements for the funeral, which must take place within twenty-four hours. The women, as in Scriptural times, send up their *walwalah* or lamentations of hideous cries, which announce the death to all their neighbours within earshot. This giving way to violently expressed grief is by custom; but there is an Eastern saying, "Woman's hair is long, and her wits are short," and, indeed, their wholly untrained and passionate natures are quite incapable of self-control. Then the dead is wrapped in sheets and covered with cloths, and is watched piously until the morning. Almost at dawn friends, relatives, and neighbours throng into the house of mourning, and the women add their quota of hideous lamentations to those of the bereaved household. The *fikées* arrive, who read or recite the sixth chapter of the Korān in an adjoining room whilst

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

THEBES AND THE NILE, FROM KARNAK.

In the foreground is a native village, and the Theban mountains may be seen in the distance.

the corpse-washer is preparing the departed for burial.

Then the street in which the house of the dead stands becomes blocked with sympathizers and with the curious as the hour for the funeral procession to start approaches. The comments of this crowd are singularly like those of a Western one under similar conditions, just as the interest in a funeral, more especially amongst the lower orders, is the same all the world over: opinions of the virtues of the departed, sympathy with the bereaved, and even the recital of appropriate verses of the Korān and poetry.

Should the deceased have died, as so many Easterns do, without leaving a will, the services of the official appointed for the adjustment of the property of those so dying are requisitioned. He not only distributes the inheritance, but settles with the creditors of the dead.

At last the procession is ready to start for the mosque. The corpse is laid on a rough bier, formed of a lidless box and covered

with a red cashmere shawl. A boy carrying a copy of the Korān on a desk generally heads the procession, and others incessantly chant a verse from the Korān. The boy and his companions, who frequently chant passages from the *Hashriyeh*, are followed by mourners who are often blind, then come the relatives in no particular order. The procession is generally a motley one, and, unlike that of a European funeral, it moves along at a quick rate, as fast as the crowd, which usually gathers in the contiguous streets, will permit. At the mosque there are several observances, but the most curious and interesting is the judgment of the dead, which was known to the ancient Egyptians. The *fikée* turns to those assembled, and says: "What is your testimony of him?" The invariable answer is: "Our testimony is that he was one of the most pious."

The belief is that, even if this be not true of the dead, God, by reason of the unanimous testimony so borne, will judge him leniently, and even pardon his misdeeds.

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

UNLOADING SUGAR-CANE.

The cane is being carried from a native boat lying near Elephantine Island, Assouan. In the distance is a portion of Lord Kitchener's island which is covered with trees.

From the mosque the procession hurries on its way to the cemetery, where the grave of brick, or simply a hole in the ground lying north and south, has been prepared. The body is laid in it so that it rests on its right side with the face inclined in the direction of Mecca. The opening to the brick tomb is then filled in with sand and stones, or the grave filled up, and the ceremony, save for the custom of reminding the dead of how he should behave towards the angels of the tomb, is at an end.

The Mohammedans believe that immediately after death the soul is borne either into the presence of God or into hell, where it has an experience of the lot which ultimately awaits it, returning again to the body, where it remains under the grave-cloth until the two terrifying angels of the tomb appear to it, with fearful teeth, eyes like lightning, and voices like thunder, holding iron rods in their hands. When the soul (which is supposed to be no larger than a bee) sees the angels, it creeps into the nose

of the corpse, which is by this means revived, and able to sit up during the trial which now commences. The angels ask five questions, and if the departed answers them satisfactorily the grave is made wide and easy for him, and he is permitted a *glimpse* of Paradise, with its pleasures and joys. At the same time he loses consciousness of time, so that the interval between his death and the judgment-day "is as nothing." If, on the other hand, he fails to reply to the questions, he is cast into the seventh limbo, after being beaten with the angels' iron rods. This, however, soon casts him out [illegible], returning once more to the grave, [illegible] to undergo the torment seven times.

For three evenings after the funeral the friends assemble in the house of mourning and think of the dead, and for forty succeeding Thursdays the female friends and relatives meet in the house and set up a wail for the dead. On each of forty Fridays after the burial, early in the morning, the relatives go to the cemetery to lay palm-branches or

THE DESERTED TEMPLE AT LUXOR.

reeds on the grave, and at the same time they distribute dates, bread, and other kinds of food to the poor. And for ever afterwards with the pious the spot remains a place of periodical pilgrimage, and when visits are paid to it the memory of the dead is kept green by gifts to the poor.

Amongst the domestic and other feasts of the devout Mohammedan there are three which stand out clearly—Mūled-en-Nebee, the birthday of the prophet, and those of Ramadân and Bairam. None are celebrated with more spirit and rejoicing than the first named. All the guilds and sects have their share in it, and from early morning in such a city as Cairo processions pass through the streets, in which stalls and booths of confectioners, cooks, coffee-sellers, and sherbet-sellers have been rapidly erected; whilst jugglers, snake-charmers, wrestlers and buffoons, and the proprietors of roundabouts, see-saws, etc., hurry to obtain possession of the best sites. At night more especially is the scene interesting and picturesque. On

both sides of the crowded streets the lines of booths are brilliantly lighted; torchlight processions escorting the carriage of some high functionary, princess, or wealthy merchant, give a goblin-like effect. Coffee is drunk to the accompaniment of the professional story-teller's imaginings, and the Egyptian "Punch," known as *Karakush*, gives somewhat startlingly realistic performances in a discreetly closed tent. Dervishes, on their way to their religious observances, pass by with music and torches. Then, where the swings and roundabouts are set up outside the walls of Cairo on the plain, the crowds of children thicken—charming ragged urchins, and young girls of the lower classes, often beautiful and always full of grace. The Bûlâk road is thronged, for there will be fireworks, and these never fail of appreciation by Eastern peoples.

The festivities are kept up for nine days, and each day the scenes to be witnessed seem to be more splendid, the streets more crowded, and the enjoyment more universal.

AN ARAB BIG WHEEL.

After the Feast of Ramadân comes that of Bairam, when the Moslems throughout the East enjoy themselves. In Cairo there is held a fair, in which such sights as this are to be seen.

Town Life and Festivals

During Ramadân, for a whole month the faithful give themselves up to fasting. What amount of self-denial this entails may be imagined when it is remembered that Ramadân often falls in the middle of the hottest of summers, and that from sunrise till sunset neither "bite nor sup," nor any drink whatever, must pass the lips of any save soldiers on the field of battle, the sick, or those who are travelling.

The last *fantasia*, which ends Ramadân, takes place in the beautiful mosque of Mohammed Ali, the graceful and lofty minarets of which soon become familiar landmarks to all visitors to Cairo. The mosque is situated in the Citadel, the medieval fortress built by Saladin, which, with its vast enceinte, is one of the most interesting places in the city, and is really a town within a town, comprising streets, mosques, a palace, hospital, prison, and many other buildings. After the Khedive's devotions have been performed, the mosque is thrown open to all comers. The interior

is beautifully and brilliantly illuminated, and the floor covered with handsome carpets. The scene, once beheld, can never be forgotten, with its extraordinary variety of types and gorgeous costumes.

Near the eastern wall a large circular space is reserved for the performance of several score of dancing Dervishes. At the commencement of the *Zikr* each sweeps the floor with his long locks when pronouncing the name of Allah, to the accompaniment of music made by young men playing tambourines. Then the enthusiasm is *worked* up by the music, and the dancers begin to whirl. After each pause from exertion the pace is increased until the performers are so breathless that even to pronounce the word Allah distinctly is impossible. The less inured often fall insensible from excitement and giddiness; but they are pulled unceremoniously out of the way of their companions, and the dancing goes on uninterruptedly. The final effort is what the expectant and excited crowd delight in.

The dancing approaches the frenzy of madness, whilst the musicians beat their tambourines so swiftly that the music is one continuous and loud humming note, which soars up into the dome, and seems to fall back to earth again enriched by its flight. Quite suddenly the whirling throng of skirted dancers cease the *Zikr*, and the spectators set to work with attempts to restore to consciousness the maddened devotees, many of whom have dropped down unconscious or are still mechanically dancing, unaware that the ceremony is over.

It is not to be wondered at that the end of Ramadân and the coming feast of Little Bairam are awaited with anticipations of pleasure by even the most faithful of the faithful, when the world will return to its ordinary courses.

The morning following the end of Ramadân is given up by the better classes to friendly visits. And in even the poorest households there will be visitors to partake of the cakes that have been baked. All the

world of Cairo seems to put on holiday attire, and presents of clothes and shoes are usually given to children and servants; and one of not the least charming and interesting sights is to witness the little ones of the poorer class exhibiting to each other their new shirts or red or yellow slippers with conscious pride and coquetry. On every hand are smiling faces and clean garments—some of the latter will probably remain on their wearers' backs almost continuously until another Ramadân has come and gone—and everywhere there is an air of *kind*liness and hospitality. And even the foreigner, whose religious beliefs are at opposite poles to those of the Moslems around him, will instinctively feel something of the spirit of the Easter of Islam entering his soul.

There are, of course, other festivals—some of which partake of an incongruous blending of religion and commerce not unlike that which characterizes some of the greater "pardons" of fair Brittany—such as the

photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

THE GROTTO TEMPLE OF ABU SIMBEL.

Hewn out of solid rock with consummate skill. The front is 119 feet wide and 100 feet high; the four colossi are each 65 feet high. It was wrought by Ramses II., and reading from the left the complete figures are those of his daughter, his mother, and his wife. To realize the size, notice the lady beneath the left-hand figure.

interesting and picturesque Seyideh Zeynab or the Mūled-es-Saleh. The procession of the Holy Carpet, or *Mahmal*, is one that, occurring during the time when Egypt is most visited by travellers, must be familiar to many readers. The origin appears to have been the Mecca pilgrimage performed in A.D. 1272 by the Sultan Ez Zahir Beybars beneath the shelter of the *mahmal*, a canopy used to protect him from the sun. Until quite recent years succeeding rulers have followed the same practice. But the Khedives have ceased to make the pilgrimage in person, and send the *mahmal* instead, in which is wrapped the *kisweh*, a costly carpet made of eight pieces of black cloth, manufactured each year in Cairo, of silk and cotton richly ornamented with inscriptions in gold thread. On the receipt of the new carpet, the one sent the previous year is brought back to Cairo by pilgrims, and is then cut up into small pieces, which are sold as holy relics for the benefit of various Moslem charities.

Town Life and Festivals

The Khedive ceremoniously receives the pieces that are to form the *kisweh*, which are afterwards borne in procession through the streets of the city to the Hasaneyn Mosque, where they are stitched together. At the expiration of a month it is once more taken to the Khedive, who blesses it, and then it is enclosed in the *mahmal* and starts with the pilgrim band for Mecca.

The reception and departure of the Holy Carpet forms one of the most picturesque of Egyptian festivals, and is accompanied by all the colour and enthusiasm of the crowd and soldiery which distinguishes Eastern festivals generally. The return of the old carpet is not less a matter for rejoicing. It is met far out in the desert by the friends and relatives of the pilgrims, who welcome the ragged and dirty *hadjis*, who have travelled so far afoot to the tomb of the Prophet, with unbounded demonstrations of affection and enthusiasm.

To the artist and the student the religious observances, as well as the concrete evidences

of the same in the guise of the many beautiful and almost numberless mosques of Cairo, must always prove of the deepest interest.

CHAPTER VI

COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY TYPES

The Life of the *Fellahīn*—The Fertility of Egypt—Modern Agriculture and Ancient Implements—A Quaint Method of Threshing Corn—The Beneficent Modern Government of Egypt—The Poetry of Greetings and the Spirit of Hospitality—Dinners and Diners—Divorce and the Position of the Wife—Education and the lack of it—The Future of Egypt.

UPON the Egyptian in the past has not infrequently been placed the stigma of laziness, but even a short time spent amongst the *fellahīn* and labouring classes of Egypt is sufficient to dispel any such error. Most labour with a patient, and not always eminently productive, industry, which, worthy of all praise, has hitherto been too little recognized by the less serious writers upon Egyptian subjects.

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

EVENING AT PHILÆ.

This shows the beautiful Temple of Isis on the far-famed island of Philæ. The heightening of the dam will submerge much, if not all, that is to be seen in this picture.

Country Life and Types

Almost ere the sun has risen both man and beast set forth to their work, and seldom return from their labours until night has fallen. Not a yard of land capable of cultivation is wasted. If it will not produce one crop it may possibly grow another, seems to be the guiding principle. And, moreover, the best that the land can give is rigorously exacted from it. There is not much that can be taught the *fellahīn* as regards the art of agriculture. His implements are primitive, let it be granted, but the results from them are astonishing. A yoke of oxen and a wooden plough seem capable of results unsurpassed by the most modern American or European machinery. But though in a measure conservative, as all Easterns are, the *fellahīn* have proved open to conviction, and the picturesque *shadoof* and *sakkia* have in many places given way to the steam turbine as a means of raising water for irrigation purposes, just as the old hand-mills have disappeared to give place to steam-power. Many, doubtless, who value the

quaint and interesting will regret these things, and many other ancient methods of agriculture and implements will no doubt gradually disappear with the increase of capital. Deep ploughing is not required, so the wooden plough, with its yoke of oxen, or even with a camel harnessed alongside a donkey, is still almost universally used.

Of the best land in Egypt it is not too much to say that "if you tickle it with a hoe it laughs with a harvest." But its productiveness is almost entirely dependent upon the means of irrigation. Modern Egypt has become a land of canals; the larger, which are useful waterways as well as irrigators, have lesser ones radiating from them, and out of these water is drawn by *shadoof* and *sakkia*, or steam-turbine. The number of the former is regulated by the Government according to the acreage to be supplied, and the amount of water pumped up by the turbines is regulated at so many gallons per day or week, and is accurately measured by meter.

Country Life and Types

Most of the fields are divided up into squares between ridges of mud, so that the water which is brought from the pumps or wells in a shallow runlet can be easily turned into whatever portion of the field requires irrigating by the simple expedient of making a temporary gap in the ridge of mud.

Every member of a *fellahīn* family works. The father may be at the plough, the sons at the water-wheel, the women and elder girls in the fields at various tasks. Even the small children are employed in minding the cattle in the clover-fields or tending the ox which turns the water-wheel.

They are a contented folk, and often prove the truth of Kirk White's lines:

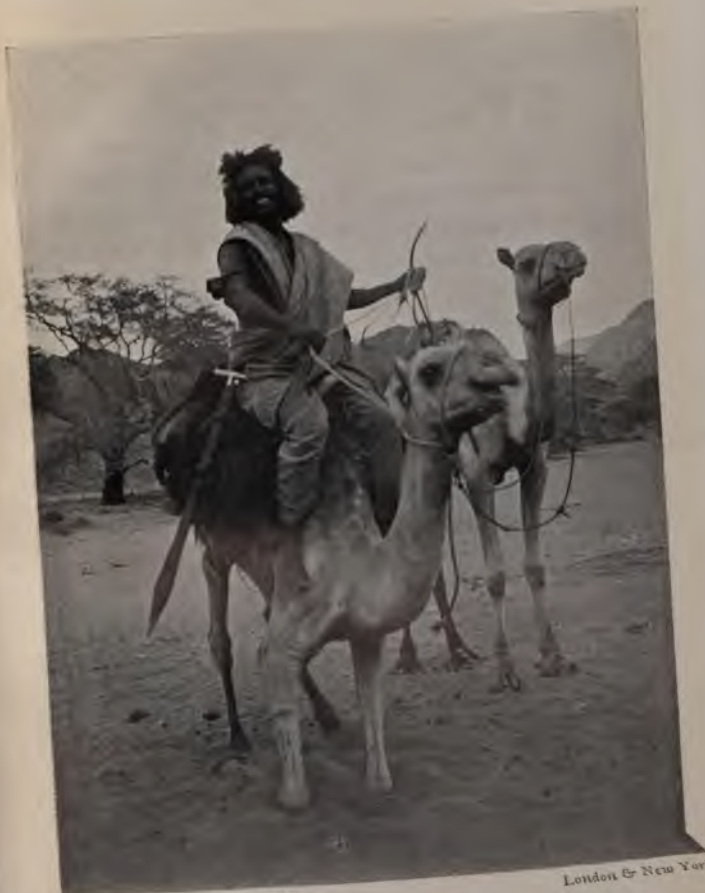
"Content can soothe where'er by fortune placed,
Can rear a garden in a desert waste."

There are many crops, usually two of *bercime* (clover), the first of which is generally grazed down by cattle; the second is the richer for their manure, and finds its way to

market as fodder. Then whilst the corn is growing the labour for the cotton crop begins, the fields of which have to be weeded. Then there are the vegetables to be planted, and the palm-trees to be tended and pruned, and afterwards the female flowers will need to be fertilized with male pollen. This is not left to chance, for the farmer has to pay a tax on each tree which bears, or should bear, fruit, and therefore wants no barren ones; and, moreover, date cultivation is a profitable undertaking if the trees are well cared for.

Economy is the motto of the *fellahs*, and so on a farm little or nothing is wasted. For example, the palm-leaves pruned from the trees are dried and manufactured into baskets or beds.

The corn is harvested in a somewhat different way from European methods. It is generally pulled up by the roots and tied into little bundles, which are then taken to a suitable open space, which is turned into a threshing-floor. The harvesters are chiefly



HOW THE MAILS ARE CARRIED IN THE DESERT.

women and girls, who travel about from village to village so long as there is work to be had. The threshing is done in truly Biblical fashion by means of a *nurag*, which is best described as a large and rudely made chair on wooden runners, closely resembling those of a sleigh. To this is harnessed a yoke of oxen, which are driven round and round the pile of sheaves, gradually treading out the grain. Between the runners of the *nurag* are knives, which revolve and cut up the straw into short lengths, so that when the threshing is completed there remains a pile of grain, chaff, and short lengths of straw, which must be separated by winnowing. A day with a strongish breeze is selected, and the man who is to winnow the corn tosses the mixed chaff, straw, and grain into the air. The grain, being heavy, falls into a pile near at hand, whilst the breeze takes the lighter chaff and straw to a distance. The three results of the winnowing are then carefully separated and stored for the market or future use.

There is one element of encouragement in regard to Egyptian agriculture which is frequently absent from that of some other lands. Provided the soil is adequately irrigated—and this is yearly rendered more easy by turbines, the making of new canals, and the crowning work of all, the completion of the Great Dam at Assouan—the climate and soil are so favourable that good crops are assured to the hard worker. Even land reclaimed from the desert is capable of being brought under cultivation; and, in the course of three or four years, of yielding two or three crops per annum.

That the *fellahîn* class is a prosperous one under the new régime is abundantly evidenced by their desire and ability to purchase land. The system of small holdings in Egypt has proved an undeniable success, and in the case of Government land preference is given to smaller buyers, who are enabled to pay off the purchase-money and taxation as well by a cleverly graduated system of payments. This system, be it

noted, has two distinct advantages, in that it encourages thrift amongst just the class which must eventually be the backbone of Egyptian progress, and also puts into circulation again much money which has been, and would still otherwise be, hoarded.

The entire absence of fences or other obvious divisions between the different estates or farms is a circumstance which at once strikes the traveller in the country districts of Egypt. Except for the canals (which may or may not happen to serve as boundary marks in some cases, nothing save an occasional stone or post is used to delimit the different fields, the owners of which, however, know the extent of their property to a degree of exactness which is simply astonishing. To remove a boundary mark is—as in Biblical times—a crime which few would readily commit, and disputes, when they arise, which is but seldom, are generally settled by the headman of the village.

A misapprehension appears to exist in many minds regarding the duties and

privilege of the *sheikh*. The title, which is usually a birthright, does not necessarily confer or even imply authority, and each village has an *omdeh* (headman) or *sheikh* appointed by Government, who is responsible for the good conduct of the villagers and the collection of local taxes, and who exercises a fatherly and general control over village affairs. He may be an hereditary *sheikh* or one especially made, the title in the latter case being held only so long as the appointment continues.

The *fellahīn* are not only an interesting race, but are peaceable, industrious, and clannish. As in some parts of Europe, the customs of salutation amongst even absolute strangers are graceful and courteous. Some of their greetings and adieux are full of the poetry of the Eastern mind. "*Ana huashtini ya akhuya*," which, freely translated, is "I have longed to see you again, O my brother"; and the form of leave-taking or parting, "*Shūf wishuk b'il khare in-sh'llah*," which means "Good-bye until by God's will I

A BISHARIN HOME IN THE ARABIAN DESERT.

Notice the way the baby is carried.

see your face again in health," are examples of expressive phrases of a truly Eastern and poetical type. The native handshake includes no grasp. It is merely a coming together of the hands, after which each kisses his own in token of regard.

The duty of hospitality is nowhere thought more of than in Egypt, and it is performed by even the country folk with a graciousness not surpassed by the Spaniard, and superior to his in genuineness. When one returns thanks for the services rendered, for shelter or food afforded, the giver will often reply, "You have brought a blessing with you to the house"; or, "It is nothing; you have conferred a favour by coming."

The *fellahīn* of the poorer class are almost always exclusively vegetarians, living principally upon coarse black bread made from millet; cakes of unleavened flour, flavoured with salt, caraway, garlic, or onions; vegetables; and fruits, such as dates and melons. His drink is water or coffee. Only the most depraved and those who have come into

close contact with town life ever drink spirits. Of tobacco he consumes a large quantity, which, however, varies according to his means. They can therefore offer but simple fare to guests or travellers.

But an Egyptian host of the better class will place before one a menu which for variety will compare very favourably with anything one could obtain in many far more civilized countries.

Of course, one washes in public ere sitting down to the *sahniyeh*, as the brass tray on which the meal is served is called. This washing, too, is remarkably complete, for not only does one rinse one's hands and face in the water, which a servant has poured into the copper or brass *tisht*, or basin, but one also washes one's mouth, and is expected to sniff water up one's nose!

Upon the *sahniyeh* are usually little piles of thin loaves, almost like bannock-cakes, which serve the purposes of plates, and also mark each person's place at the table. The chief dishes, some of which need an "ac-

quired" taste to enable one to appreciate them, one may expect to find comprised in the menu are as follows: Soup, which is almost always somewhat greasy, and sometimes has lemons squeezed into it; salads; boiled meats; turkey (stuffed with nuts and rice), when in season; vegetables, including potatoes, spinach, beans, cucumbers, peas, etc.; *malfoof*, minced meat, spiced and cooked with oil, served rolled up in vine-leaves; puddings, made of flour, honey, fruits, and oil.

Sometimes a supplementary dinner will be served, which will tax the digestion and appetite almost as severely as the first. In this will probably appear several additional meats, including sausages, stewed fruits, fish, and the final dish served with every meal, called *riz-bi-leban*, consisting of rice boiled in milk.

The liquid dishes are, of course, eaten with a spoon, all the others with the right hand. This is a somewhat trying custom at first, not rendered less so by the practice

of one's host or fellow-guests courteously pressing upon one any tit-bit delved from their own portion! It is not considered etiquette to partake of every dish, nor is the most voracious appetite at all likely to sin in this respect, so numerous and satisfying are the viands, as a general rule, set before one. The last dish save one is always composed of bones of some kind or other. It is the signal to the diners that there remain but the bones and the *riz-bi-leban* with which to satisfy any appetite which may be still unsatisfied!

Coffee and cigarettes, of an aroma which is seldom, if ever, preserved in even the most carefully imported articles, are always served, and form a delightful conclusion to the frequently heavy gastronomic ordeal through which one has passed.

In striking contrast to the elaborate hospitality of the well-to-do and town dwellers we have described is that of even a Bedouin *sheikh*. He will give of his best as a matter of course and courtesy, but the

Photo by Will R. Rose. *Chester.*

A GROUP OF BISHARI AT ASSOUAN.

Notice the amulets containing texts from the Koran. They anoint their hair and skin with castor oil, and also use it in cooking.

more elaborate dishes and viands will be absent—bread, koomis (curdled mare's milk), dates, milk, rice, cheese made from camel's milk, salads, vegetables, and perhaps one kind of meat or bird, being the staple of the repast. But, after all, under Eastern or Western skies, the spirit of hospitality is not to be measured by the elaborateness of the menu.

As we have already shown in a previous chapter, modern Egypt differs very materially and in many respects from that of even two decades ago. In nothing is this alteration more marked than in the increased wealth and prosperity of the people. The British rule in Egypt has borne excellent fruit. It deserved to do so from its efficiency, which has been ensured by the fact that the administration has, happily, been almost entirely free of party politics. Probably at the present day, indeed, Egypt is the best governed country in the world, and it is not less satisfactory to note the moral as well as mere material improvement in the condition

of all classes. In the old days corruption was the means by which the administrative machinery was hindered or made to move according to the wishes of the then ruling classes. But now a due regard for the religious and other customs of the people, backed up by a firm administration of justice for poor as well as rich, and a determination to abolish abuses, has given to Egypt—the land and the people—a sense of security which it had not experienced for centuries.

But with all the advance that has been made socially and politically, there are still several things crying aloud for redress. The ignorance of the average Egyptian woman is great, and by this we do not refer merely to those accomplishments which used to be known as "book learning." It is an ignorance of things they should know almost by instinct, so appalling that something must be done in the near future to combat it. To this ignorance must be accredited the extraordinary mortality amongst infants,

***THE SIXTY-FIVE* FEET HIGH PORTRAIT-STATUES OF RAMSES II.**

Notice how puny the native appears. These statues are in front of the rock-hewn temple of Abu Simbel.

which is stated by one reliable authority to exceed 85 per cent. of births. //

The women's ignorance may, we think, be attributed to two or three causes. Firstly, the fact that, religiously, they are considered inferior to their husbands. The teaching of Mohammed, which places them upon a markedly lower level, is not only fatal to their self-respect, but also to their exercising a wise and beneficent influence over even young children. Secondly, their position as wives, so far as its legal aspect is concerned, is very insecure. The husband is able to divorce a wife despotically and without any chance of appeal on the woman's part. And in addition, though the divorced wife possesses no claim on her husband, he, on his part, can enforce her return at any time, should his mood alter. She cannot, however, be divorced more than twice without its becoming absolute, though by pronouncing the words "Thou art trebly divorced" on the first occasion the same result is ensured, and the woman is free.

By a strange custom, after such a pronouncement, the woman is only able to remarry her original husband by first marrying some one else!

So far as wives of the peasant class are concerned, they are in reality little better than mere chattels of their men folk. And it is, therefore, clearly impossible to effect much improvement in the race whilst the position of the mothers is so unsatisfactory. Marriages of girls scarcely emerged from childhood also militate against progress or the possession of the requisite knowledge for the proper bringing up of children. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at if the agricultural class has not made as much advance as the immensely improved conditions of the country would lead one to anticipate.

The position of the men of the *fellahīn* and labouring classes as regards education is not much better than that of the women. Very few indeed can read or write, and in consequence a written signature in some

districts is looked upon with suspicion as likely to be forged, and is only accepted if attested. It is a common practice to affix signatures by seal, the owner's identity, of course, having to be certified.

It is doubtless this lack of ability to read or write that has made rebellion to properly constituted authority so easy in the past. Unable to read the papers, the *fellahīn* and natives of the lower and even lower middle classes have accepted hearsay versions of political questions, and have often in consequence been the victims of schemers and revolutionaries.

In the villages education of children is scarcely known. At the most, the great majority are taught a few verses of the Korān by heart, and it is more than probable that few masters are capable of reading with any degree of facility themselves! In the towns matters are decidedly better. The Ministry of Public Instruction has inaugurated a very excellent system of education in all grades, from the primary to the

advanced schools, which, if properly taken advantage of, is capable of fitting a boy to qualify for any position in life that may be open to him. In many of the schools European masters, some of them University men, are to be found, and care is taken that the system shall be thorough and modern in the best sense of the word.

With the present elementary state of education as regards the great mass of the people, the introduction of a rashly proselytizing spirit could not have failed to bring about disaster. From ignorance the lower classes are still very fanatical, a fact which is traceable, we think, to the circumstance that few Moslems know much of the Korān. If they were taught its precepts in the primary native schools, much would be done to quench the ever-smouldering hatred of the Christian. For has not Mohammed himself said that, after the Moslem, the Christian is most to be esteemed?

To this ignorance may also be attributed the lamentable, but not, perhaps, incompre-

A CARAVAN ON ITS WAY ACROSS THE DESERT.

hensible, increase in crime which undoubtedly has occurred alongside modern progress. With Western civilization have come Western vices. Though forbidden by Mohammed, hashish, opium, tobacco, and intoxicating drinks of many kinds, are nowadays indulged in by thousands of Moslems in Cairo and the other large towns alone; and to their demoralizing effects, as well as to lack of education, may be attributed the greater part of the increase in crime from which Egypt of to-day suffers. The Moslem is not naturally of a criminal nature—rather, indeed, the reverse. And whatever one's personal views regarding prohibition of opium, hashish, and the sale of intoxicants may be, there can be no disputing the fact that their prohibition in Egypt would be a considerable step towards the diminution of crime, and a checking of the deterioration of the Moslem race.

What will be required in the very near future, so that the development brought about by the great irrigation works which have

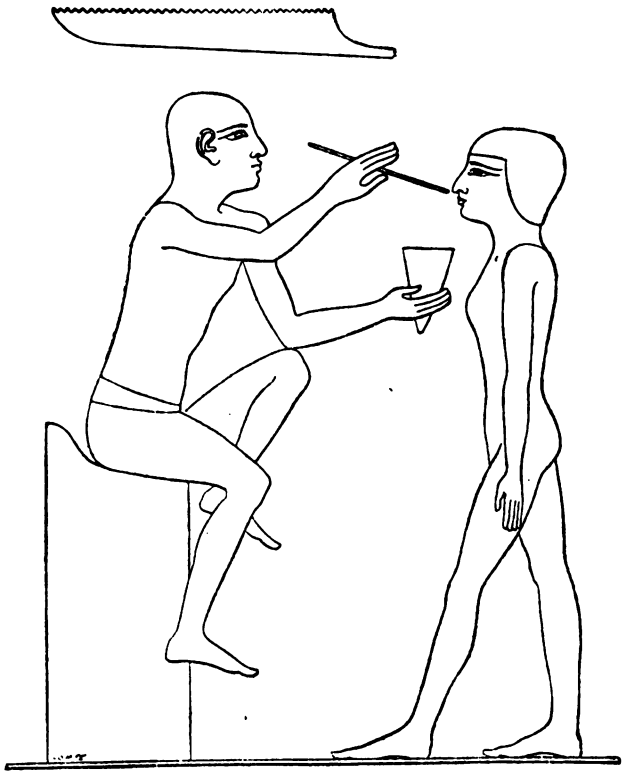
been undertaken may produce the best results, will be labour. It is a problem which will have to be faced, for the native population, for reasons already mentioned, increases far too slowly to meet the demand. Tens of thousands of acres have been quite recently reclaimed from the desert or otherwise rendered available for cultivation, whilst the labouring population has practically stood still. It is a common error to think of irrigation works as making labour lighter and less necessary. The truth is quite the contrary. What happened in the past was that land was left uncultivated on account of the immense amount of labour required to irrigate it, or was uncultivable because no water could be taken to it. Nowadays, though the supply of water and the means of applying it are improved, the increased facilities have produced a greater demand for labour. It is with this problem that the authorities will soon have to grapple.

There should, however, be a bright and prosperous future for Egypt, where an almost

perfect agricultural climate is wedded to a soil capable of wonderful fertility. It needs but labour now to make the desert literally blossom as the rose, and Egypt may ultimately become one of the world's most important grain-producing areas.

But be this as it may, the charm of Egypt must ever remain so long as climate lasts, and the marvellous Nile flows calmly through the desert to the sea.

BILLING AND SONS, LTD., PRINTERS, GUILDFORD.



PAINTING A STATUE.