WARNER CHARLES DUDLEY

MY WINTER ON THE NILE

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My Winter on the Nile / Eighteenth Edition:

Содержание

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O Commander of the Faithful. Egypt is a compound of black earth and green plants, between a pulverized mountain and a red sand. Along the valley descends a river, on which the blessing of the Most High reposes both in the evening and the morning, and which rises and falls with the revolutions of the sun and moon. According to the vicissitudes of the seasons, the face of the country is adorned with a silver wave, a verdant emerald, and the deep yellow of a golden harvest.

From Amrou, Conqueror of Egypt, to the Khalif Omar.

PREFATORY NOTE

"My Winter on the Nile," and its sequel, "In the Levant," which record the experiences and observations of an Oriental journey, were both published in 1876; but as this volume was issued only by subscription, it has never reached the large public which is served by the general book trade.

It is now republished and placed within the reach of those who have read "In the Levant." Advantage has been taken of its reissue to give it a careful revision, which, however, has not essentially changed it. Since it was written the Khedive of so many ambitious projects has given way to his son, Tufik Pasha; but I have let stand what was written of Ismail Pasha for whatever historical value it may possess. In other respects, what was written of the country and the mass of the people in 1876 is true now. The interest of Americans in the land of the oldest civilization has greatly increased within the past few years, and literature relating to the Orient is in more demand than at any previous time.

The brief and incidental allusion in the first chapter to the peculiarity in the construction of the oldest temple at Pæstum—a peculiarity here for the first time, so far as I can find, described in print—is worthy the attention of archaeologists. The use of curved lines in this so-called Temple of Neptune is more marked than in the Parthenon, and is the secret of its fascination. The

relation of this secret to the irregularities of such mediaeval buildings as the Duomo at Pisa is obvious.

Hartford, October, 1880.

C. D. W

CHAPTER I.—AT THE GATES OF THE EAST

THE Mediterranean still divides the East from the West. Ages of traffic and intercourse across its waters have not changed this fact; neither the going of armies nor of embassies, Northmen forays nor Saracenic maraudings, Christian crusades nor Turkish invasions, neither the borrowing from Egypt of its philosophy and science, nor the stealing of its precious monuments of antiquity, down to its bones, not all the love-making, slave-trading, war-waging, not all the commerce of four thousand years, by oar and sail and steam, have sufficed to make the East like the West.

Half the world was lost at Actium, they like to say, for the sake of a woman; but it was the half that I am convinced we never shall gain—for though the Romans did win it they did not keep it long, and they made no impression on it that is not, compared with its own individuality, as stucco to granite. And I suppose there is not now and never will be another woman in the East handsome enough to risk a world for.

There, across the most fascinating and fickle sea in the world—a feminine sea, inconstant as lovely, all sunshine and tears in a moment, reflecting in its quick mirror in rapid succession the skies of grey and of blue, the weather of Europe and of

Africa, a sea of romance and nausea—lies a world in Everything unlike our own, a world perfectly known yet never familiar and never otherwise than strange to the European and American. I had supposed it otherwise; I had been led to think that modern civilization had more or less transformed the East to its own likeness; that, for instance the railway up the Nile had practically "done for" that historic stream. They say that if you run a red-hot nail through an orange, the fruit will keep its freshness and remain unchanged a long time. The thrusting of the iron into Egypt may arrest decay, but it does not appear to change the country.

There is still an Orient, and I believe there would be if it were all canaled, and railwayed, and converted; for I have great faith in habits that have withstood the influence of six or seven thousand years of changing dynasties and religions. Would you like to go a little way with me into this Orient?

The old-fashioned travelers had a formal fashion of setting before the reader the reasons that induced them to take the journey they described; and they not unfrequently made poor health an apology for their wanderings, judging that that excuse would be most readily accepted for their eccentric conduct. "Worn out in body and mind we set sail," etc.; and the reader was invited to launch in a sort of funereal bark upon the Mediterranean and accompany an invalid in search of his last resting-place.

There was in fact no reason why we should go to Egypt—a

remark that the reader will notice is made before he has a chance to make it—and there is no reason why any one indisposed to do so should accompany us. If information is desired, there are whole libraries of excellent books about the land of the Pharaohs, ancient and modern, historical, archaeological, statistical, theoretical, geographical; if amusement is wanted, there are also excellent books, facetious and sentimental. I suppose that volumes enough have been written about Egypt to cover every foot of its arable soil if they were spread out, or to dam the Nile if they were dumped into it, and to cause a drought in either case if they were not all interesting and the reverse of dry. There is therefore no *onus* upon the traveler in the East to-day to write otherwise than suits his humor; he may describe only what he chooses. With this distinct understanding I should like the reader to go with me through a winter in the Orient. Let us say that we go to escape winter.

It is the last of November, 1874—the beginning of what proved to be the bitterest winter ever known in America and Europe, and I doubt not it was the first nip of the return of the rotary glacial period—that we go on board a little Italian steamer in the harbor of Naples, reaching it in a row-boat and in a cold rain. The deck is wet and dismal; Vesuvius is invisible, and the whole sweep of the bay is hid by a slanting mist. Italy has been in a shiver for a month; snow on the Alban hills and in the Tusculan theatre; Rome was as chilly as a stone tomb with the door left open. Naples is little better; Boston, at any season, is better than

Naples—now.

We steam slowly down the harbor amid dripping ships, losing all sight of villages and the lovely coast; only Capri comes out comely in the haze, an island cut like an antique cameo. Long after dark we see the light on it and also that of the Punta della Campanella opposite, friendly beams following us down the coast. We are off Pæstum,' and I can feel that its noble temple is looming there in the darkness. This ruin is in some sort a door into, an introduction to, the East.

Pæstum has been a deadly marsh for eighteen hundred years, and deserted for almost a thousand. Nettles and unsightly brambles have taken the place of the "roses of Pæstum" of which the Roman poets sang; but still as a poetic memory, the cyclamen trails among the *debris* of the old city; and the other day I found violets waiting for a propitious season to bloom. The sea has retired away from the site of the town and broadened the marsh in front of it. There are at Pæstum three Greek temples, called, no one can tell why, the Temple of Neptune, the Basilica, and the Temple of Ceres; remains of the old town wall and some towers; a tumbledown house or two, and a wretched tavern. The whole coast is subject to tremors of the earth, and the few inhabitants hanging about there appear to have had all their bones shaken out of them by the fever and ague.

We went down one raw November morning from Naples, driving from a station on the Calabrian railway, called Battipaglia, about twelve miles over a black marshy plain,

relieved only by the bold mountains, on the right and left. This plain is gradually getting reclaimed and cultivated; there is raised on it inferior cotton and some of the vile tobacco which the government monopoly compels the free Italians to smoke, and large olive-orchards have been recently set out. The soil is rich and the country can probably be made habitable again. Now, the few houses are wretched and the few people squalid. Women were pounding stone on the road we traveled, even young girls among them wielding the heavy hammers, and all of them very thinly clad, their one sleazy skirt giving little protection against the keen air. Of course the women were hard-featured and coarse-handed; and both they and the men have the swarthy complexion that may betoken a more Eastern origin. We fancied that they had a brigandish look. Until recently this plain has been a favorite field for brigands, who spied the rich traveler from the height of St. Angelo and pounced upon him if he was unguarded. Now, soldiers are quartered along the road, patrol the country on horseback, and lounge about the ruins at Pæstum. Perhaps they retire to some height for the night, for the district is too unhealthy for an Italian even, whose health may be of no consequence. They say that if even an Englishman, who goes merely to shoot woodcock, sleeps there one night, in the right season, that night will be his last.

We saw the ruins of Pæstum under a cold grey sky, which harmonized with their isolation. We saw them best from the side of the sea, with the snow-sprinkled mountains rising behind for

a background. Then they stood out, impressive, majestic, time-defying. In all Europe there are no ruins better worthy the study of the admirer of noble architecture than these.

The Temple of Neptune is older than the Parthenon, its Doric sister, at Athens. It was probably built before the Persians of Xerxes occupied the Acropolis and saw from there the flight of their ruined fleet out of the Strait of Salamis. It was built when the Doric had attained the acme of its severe majesty, and it is to-day almost perfect on the exterior. Its material is a coarse travertine which time and the weather have honeycombed, showing the petrifications of plants and shells; but of its thirty-six massive exterior columns not one has fallen, though those on the north side are so worn by age that the once deep fluting is nearly obliterated. You may care to know that these columns which are thirty feet high and seven and a half feet in diameter at the base, taper symmetrically to the capitals, which are the severest Doric.

At first we thought the temple small, and did not even realize its two hundred feet of length, but the longer we looked at it the larger it grew to the eye, until it seemed to expand into gigantic size; and from whatever point it was viewed its harmonious proportions were an increasing delight. The beauty is not in any ornament, for even the pediment is and always was vacant, but in its admirable lines.

The two other temples are fine specimens of Greek architecture, also Doric, pure and without fault, with only a little tendency to depart from severe simplicity in the curve of the

capitals, and yet they did not interest us. They are of a period only a little later than the Temple of Neptune, and that model was before their builders, yet they missed the extraordinary, many say almost spiritual beauty of that edifice. We sought the reason, and found it in the fact that there are absolutely no straight lines in the Temple of Neptune. The side rows of columns curve a little out; the end rows curve a little in; at the ends the base line of the columns curves a trifle from the sides to the center, and the line of the architrave does the same. This may bewilder the eye and mislead the judgment as to size and distance, but the effect is more agreeable than almost any other I know in architecture. It is not repeated in the other temples, the builders of which do not seem to have known its secret. Had the Greek colony lost the art of this perfect harmony, in the little time that probably intervened between the erection of these edifices? It was still kept at Athens, as the Temple of Theseus and the Parthenon testify.

Looking from the interior of the temple out at either end, the entrance seems to be wider at the top than at the bottom, an Egyptian effect produced by the setting of the inward and outer columns. This appeared to us like a door through which we looked into Egypt, that mother of all arts and of most of the devices of this now confused world. We were on our way to see the first columns, prototypes of the Doric order, chiselled by man.

The custodian—there is one, now that twenty centuries of war and rapine and storms have wreaked themselves upon this temple

—would not permit us to take our luncheon into its guarded precincts; on a fragment of the old steps, amid the weeds we drank our red Capri wine; not the usual compound manufactured at Naples, but the last bottle of pure Capri to be found on the island, so help the soul of the landlady at the hotel there; ate one of those imperfectly nourished Italian chicken's orphan birds, owning the pitiful legs with which the *table d'hote* frequenters in Italy are so familiar, and blessed the government for the care, tardy as it is, of its grandest monument of antiquity.

When I looked out of the port-hole of the steamer early in the morning, we were near the volcanic Lipari islands and islets, a group of seventeen altogether; which serve as chimneys and safety-valves to this part of the world. One of the small ones is of recent creation, at least it was heaved up about two thousand years ago, and I fancy that a new one may pop up here any time. From the time of the Trojan war all sorts of races and adventurers have fought for the possession of these coveted islands, and the impartial earthquake has shaken them all off in turn. But for the mist, we should have clearly seen Stromboli, the ever-active volcano, but now we can only say we saw it. We are near it, however, and catch its outline, and listen for the groans of lost souls which the credulous crusaders used to hear issuing from its depths. It was at that time the entrance of purgatory; we read in the guide-book that the crusaders implored the monks of Cluny to intercede for the deliverance of those confined there, and that therefore Odilo of Cluny instituted the observance of All Souls'

Day.

The climate of Europe still attends us, and our first view of Sicily is through the rain. Clouds hide the coast and obscure the base of Ætna (which is oddly celebrated in America as an assurance against loss by fire); but its wide fields of snow, banked up high above the clouds, gleam as molten silver—treasure laid up in heaven—and give us the light of the rosy morning.

Rounding the point of Faro, the *locale* of Charybdis and Scylla, we come into the harbor of Messina and take shelter behind the long, curved horn of its mole. Whoever shunned the beautiful Scylla was liable to be sucked into the strong tide Charybdis; but the rock has lost its terror for moderns, and the current is no longer dangerous. We get our last dash of rain in this strait, and there is sunny weather and blue sky at the south. The situation of Messina is picturesque; the shores both of Calabria and Sicily are mountainous, precipitous and very rocky; there seems to be no place for vegetation except by terracing. The town is backed by lofty circling mountains, which form a dark setting for its white houses and the string of outlying villages. Mediaeval forts cling to the slopes above it.

No sooner is the anchor down than a fleet of boats surrounds the steamer, and a crowd of noisy men and boys swarms on board, to sell us muscles, oranges, and all sorts of merchandise, from a hair-brush to an under-wrapper. The Sunday is hopelessly broken into fragments in a minute. These lively traders use the English language and its pronouns with great freedom. The boot-

black smilingly asks: “You black my boot?”

The vender of under-garments says: “I gif you four franc for dis one. I gif you for dese two a seven franc. No? What you gif?”

A bright orange-boy, we ask, “How much a dozen?”

“Half franc.”

“Too much.”

“How much you give? Tast him; he ver good; a sweet orange; you no like, you no buy. Yes, sir. Tak one. This a one, he sweet no more.”

And they were sweet no more. They must have been lemons in oranges’ clothing. The flattering tongue of that boy and our greed of tropical color made us owners of a lot of them, most of which went overboard before we reached Alexandria, and would make fair lemonade of the streak of water we passed through.

At noon we sail away into the warm south. We have before us the beautiful range of Aspromonte, and the village of Reggio bear which in 1862 Garibaldi received one of his wounds, a sort of inconvenient love-pat of fame. The coast is rugged and steep. High up is an isolated Gothic rock, pinnacled and jagged. Close by the shore we can trace the railway track which winds round the point of Italy, and some of the passengers look at it longingly; for though there is clear sky overhead, the sea has on an ungenerous swell; and what is blue sky to a stomach that knows its own bitterness and feels the world sinking away from under it?

We are long in sight of Italy, but Sicily still sulks in the clouds and Mount Ætna will not show itself. The night is bright and

the weather has become milder; it is the prelude to a day calm and uninteresting. Nature rallies at night, however, and gives us a sunset in a pale gold sky with cloud-islands on the horizon and palm-groves on them. The stars come out in extraordinary profusion and a soft brilliancy unknown in New England, and the sky is of a tender blue—something delicate and not to be enlarged upon. A sunset is something that no one will accept second-hand.

On the morning of December 1st., we are off Crete; Greece we have left to the north, and are going at ten knots an hour towards great hulking Africa. We sail close to the island and see its long, high barren coast till late in the afternoon. There is no road visible on this side, nor any sign of human habitation, except a couple of shanties perched high up among the rocks. From this point of view, Crete is a mass of naked rock lifted out of the waves. Mount Ida crowns it, snow-capped and gigantic. Just below Crete spring up in our geography the little islands of Gozo and Antigozo, merely vast rocks, with scant patches of low vegetation on the cliffs, a sort of vegetable blush, a few stunted trees on the top of the first, and an appearance of grass which has a reddish color.

The weather is more and more delightful, a balmy atmosphere brooding on a smooth sea. The chill which we carried in our bones from New York to Naples finally melts away. Life ceases to be a mere struggle, and becomes a mild enjoyment. The blue tint of the sky is beyond all previous comparison delicate, like

the shade of a silk, fading at the horizon into an exquisite grey or nearly white. We are on deck all day and till late at night, for once enjoying, by the help of an awning, real winter weather with the thermometer at seventy-two degrees.

Our passengers are not many, but selected. There are a German baron and his sparkling wife, delightful people, who handle the English language as delicately as if it were glass, and make of it the most *naïve* and interesting form of speech. They are going to Cairo for the winter, and the young baroness has the longing and curiosity regarding the land of the sun, which is peculiar to the poetical Germans; she has never seen a black man nor a palm-tree. In charge of the captain, there is an Italian woman, whose husband lives in Alexandria, who monopolizes the whole of the ladies' cabin, by a league with the slatternly stewardess, and behaves in a manner to make a state of war and wrath between her and the rest of the passengers. There is nothing bitterer than the hatred of people for each other on shipboard. When I afterwards saw this woman in the streets of Alexandria I had scarcely any wish to shorten her stay upon this earth. There are also two tough-fibered and strong-brained dissenting ministers from Australia, who have come round by the Sandwich Islands and the United States, and are booked for Palestine, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. Speaking of Aden, which has the reputation of being as hot as Constantinople is wicked, one of them tells the story of an American (the English have a habit of fastening all their dubious anecdotes upon "an

American") who said that if he owned two places, one in Aden and the other in H–, he would sell the one in Aden. These ministers are distinguished lecturers at home—a solemn thought, that even the most distant land is subjected to the blessing of the popular lecture.

Our own country is well represented, as it usually is abroad, whether by appointment or self-selection. It is said that the oddest people in the world go up the Nile and make the pilgrimage of Palestine. I have even heard that one must be a little cracked who will give a whole winter to high Egypt; but this is doubtless said by those who cannot afford to go. Notwithstanding the peculiarities of so many of those one meets drifting around the East (as eccentric as the English who frequent Italian *pensions*) it must be admitted that a great many estimable and apparently sane people go up the Nile—and that such are even found among Cook's "personally conducted."

There is on board an American, or a sort of Irish-American more or less naturalized, from Nebraska, a raw-boned, hard-featured farmer, abroad for a two-years' tour; a man who has no guide-book or literature, except the Bible which he diligently reads. He has spent twenty or thirty years in acquiring and subduing land in the new country, and without any time or taste for reading, there has come with his possessions a desire to see that old world about which he cared nothing before he breathed the vitalizing air of the West. That he knew absolutely nothing of Europe, Asia, or Africa, except the little patch called Palestine,

and found a day in Rome too much for a place so run down, was actually none of our business. He was a good patriotic American, and the only wonder was that with his qualification he had not been made consul somewhere.

But a more interesting person, in his way, was a slender, no-blooded, youngish, married man, of the vegetarian and vegetable school, also alone, and bound for the Holy Land, who was sick of the sea and otherwise. He also was without books of travel, and knew nothing of what he was going to see or how to see it. Of what Egypt was he had the dimmest notion, and why we or he or anyone else should go there. What do you go up the Nile for? we asked. The reply was that the Spirit had called him to go through Egypt to Palestine. He had been a dentist, but now he called himself an evangelist. I made the mistake of supposing that he was one of those persons who have a call to go about and convince people that religion is one part milk (skimmed) and three parts water—harmless, however, unless you see too much of them. Twice is too much. But I gauged him inadequately. He is one of those few who comprehend the future, and, guided wholly by the Spirit and not by any scripture or tradition, his mission is to prepare the world for its impending change. He is *en rapport* with the vast uneasiness, which I do not know how to name, that pervades all lands. He had felt our war in advance. He now feels a great change in the air; he is illuminated by an inner light that makes him clairvoyant. America is riper than it knows for this change. I tried to have him definitely define it, so

that I could write home to my friends and the newspapers and the insurance companies; but I could only get a vague notion that there was about to be an end of armies and navies and police, of all forms of religion, of government, of property, and that universal brotherhood is to set in.

The evangelist had come aboard on an important and rather secret mission; to observe the progress of things in Europe; and to publish his observations in a book. Spiritualized as he was, he had no need of any language except the American; he felt the political and religious atmosphere of all the cities he visited without speaking to any one. When he entered a picture gallery, although he knew nothing of pictures, he saw more than any one else. I suppose he saw more than Mr. Ruskin sees. He told me, among other valuable information, that he found Europe not so well prepared for the great movement as America, but that I would be surprised at the number who were in sympathy with it, especially those in high places in society and in government. The Roman Catholic Church was going to pieces; not that he cared any more for this than for the Presbyterian—he, personally, took what was good in any church, but he had got beyond them all; he was now only working for the establishment of the truth, and it was because he had more of the truth than others that he could see further.

He expected that America would be surprised when he published his observations. "I can give you a little idea," he said, "of how things are working." This talk was late at night, and by

the dim cabin lamp. “When I was in Rome, I went to see the head-man of the Pope. I talked with him over an hour, and I found that he knew all about it!”

“Good gracious! You don’t say so!”

“Yes, sir. And he is in full sympathy. But he dare not say anything. He knows that his church is on its last legs. I told him that I did not care to see the Pope, but if he wanted to meet me, and discuss the infallibility question, I was ready for him.”

“What did the Pope’s head-man say to that?”

“He said that he would see the Pope, and see if he could arrange an interview; and would let me know. I waited a week in Rome, but no notice came. I tell you the Pope don’t dare discuss it.”

“Then he didn’t see you?”

“No, sir. But I wrote him a letter from Naples.”

“Perhaps he won’t answer it.”

“Well, if he doesn’t, that is a confession that he can’t. He leaves the field. That will satisfy me.”

I said I thought he would be satisfied.

The Mediterranean enlarges on acquaintance. On the fourth day we are still without sight of Africa, though the industrious screw brings us nearer every moment. We talk of Carthage, and think we can see the color of the Libyan sand in the yellow clouds at night. It is two o’clock on the morning of December the third, when we make the Pharos of Alexandria, and wait for a pilot.

CHAPTER II.—
WITHIN THE PORTALS

EAGERNESS to see Africa brings us on deck at dawn. The low coast is not yet visible. Africa, as we had been taught, lies in heathen darkness. It is the policy of the Egyptian government to make the harbor difficult of access to hostile men-of-war, and we, who are peacefully inclined, cannot come in till daylight, nor then without a pilot.

The day breaks beautifully, and the Pharos is set like a star in the bright streak of the East. Before we can distinguish land, we see the so-called Pompey's Pillar and the light-house, the palms, the minarets, and the outline of the domes painted on the straw-color of the sky—a dream-like picture. The curtain draws up with Eastern leisure—the sun appears to rise more deliberately in the Orient than elsewhere; the sky grows more brilliant, there are long lines of clouds, golden and crimson, and we seem to be looking miles and miles into an enchanted country. Then ships and boats, a vast number of them, become visible in the harbor, and as the light grows stronger, the city and land lose something of their beauty, but the sky grows more softly fiery till the sun breaks through. The city lies low along the flat coast, and seems at first like a brownish white streak, with fine lines of masts, palm-trees, and minarets above it.

The excitement of the arrival in Alexandria and the novelty of everything connected with the landing can never be repeated. In one moment the Orient flashes upon the bewildered traveler; and though he may travel far and see stranger sights, and penetrate the hollow shell of Eastern mystery, he never will see again at once such a complete contrast to all his previous experience. One strange, unfamiliar form takes the place of another so rapidly that there is no time to fix an impression, and everything is so *bizarre* that the new-comer has no points of comparison. He is launched into a new world, and has no time to adjust the focus of his observation. For myself, I wished the Orient would stand off a little and stand still so that I could try to comprehend it. But it would not; a revolving kaleidoscope never presented more bewildering figures and colors to a child, than the port of Alexandria to us.

Our first sight of strange dress is that of the pilot and the crew who bring him off—they are Nubians, he is a swarthy Egyptian. "How black they are," says the Baroness; "I don't like it." As the pilot steps on deck, in his white turban, loose robe of cotton, and red slippers, he brings the East with him; we pass into the influence of the Moslem spirit. Coming into the harbor we have pointed out to us the batteries, the palace and harem of the Pasha (more curiosity is felt about a harem than about any other building, except perhaps a lunatic asylum), and the new villas along the curve of the shore. It is difficult to see any ingress, on account of the crowd of shipping.

The anchor is not down before we are surrounded by rowboats, six or eight deep on both sides, with a mob of boatmen and guides, all standing up and shouting at us in all the broken languages of three continents. They are soon up the sides and on deck, black, brown, yellow, in turbans, in tarbooshes, in robes of white, blue, brown, in brilliant waist-shawls, slippered, and bare-legged, bare-footed, half-naked, with little on except a pair of cotton drawers and a red fez, eager, big-eyed, pushing, yelping, gesticulating, seizing hold of passengers and baggage, and fighting for the possession of the traveler's goods which seem to him about to be shared among a lot of pirates. I saw a dazed traveler start to land, with some of his traveling-bags in one boat, his trunk in a second, and himself in yet a third, and a *commissionaire* at each arm attempting to drag him into two others. He evidently couldn't make up his mind, which to take.

We have decided upon our hotel, and ask for the *commissionaire* of it. He appears. In fact there are twenty or thirty of him. The first one is a tall, persuasive, nearly naked Ethiop, who declares that he is the only Simon Pure, and grasps our handbags. Instantly, a fluent, business-like Alexandrian pushes him aside—"I am the *commissionaire*"—and is about to take possession of us. But a dozen others are of like mind, and Babel begins. We rescue our property, and for ten minutes a lively and most amusing altercation goes on as to who is the representative of the hotel. They all look like pirates from the Barbary coast, instead of guardians of peaceful travelers. Quartering an orange,

I stand in the center of an interesting group, engaged in the most lively discussion, pushing, howling and fiery gesticulation. The dispute is finally between two:

"I Hotel Europe!"

"I Hotel Europe; he no hotel."

"He my brother, all same me."

"He! I never see he before," with a shrug of the utmost contempt.

As soon as we select one of them, the tumult subsides, the enemies become friends and cordially join in loading our luggage. In the first five minutes of his stay in Egypt the traveler learns that he is to trust and be served by people who haven't the least idea that lying is not a perfectly legitimate means of attaining any desirable end. And he begins to lose any prejudice he may have in favor of a white complexion and of clothes. In a decent climate he sees how little clothing is needed for comfort, and how much artificial nations are accustomed to put on from false modesty.

We begin to thread our way through a maze of shipping, and hundreds of small boats and barges; the scene is gay and exciting beyond expression. The first sight of the colored, pictured, lounging, waiting Orient is enough to drive an impressionable person wild; so much that is novel and picturesque is crowded into a few minutes; so many colors and flying robes, such a display of bare legs and swarthy figures. We meet flat boats coming down the harbor loaded with laborers, dark, immobile

groups in turbans and gowns, squatting on deck in the attitude which is the most characteristic of the East; no one stands or sits —everybody squats or reposes cross-legged. Soldiers are on the move; smart Turkish officers dart by in light boats with half a dozen rowers; the crew of an English man-of-war pull past; in all directions the swift boats fly, and with their freight of color, it is like the thrusting of quick shuttles, in the weaving of a brilliant carpet, before our eyes.

We step on shore at the Custom-House. I have heard travelers complain of the delay in getting through it. I feel that I want to go slowly, that I would like to be all day in getting through —that I am hurried along like a person who is dragged hastily through a gallery, past striking pictures of which he gets only glimpses. What a group this is on shore; importunate guides, porters, coolies. They seize hold of us, We want to stay and look at them. Did ever any civilized men dress so gaily, so little, or so much in the wrong place? If that fellow would untwist the folds of his gigantic turban he would have cloth enough to clothe himself perfectly. Look! that's an East Indian, that's a Greek, that's a Turk that's a Syrian-Jew? No, he's Egyptian, the crook-nose is not uncommon to Egyptians, that tall round hat is Persian, that one is from Abys—there they go, we haven't half seen them! We leave our passports at the entrance, and are whisked through into the baggage-room, where our guide pays a noble official three francs for the pleasure of his chance acquaintance; some nearly naked coolie-porters, who bear long cords, carry off our

luggage, and before we know it we are in a carriage, and a rascally guide and interpreter—Heaven knows how he fastened himself upon us in the last five minutes—is on the box and apparently owns us? (It took us half a day and liberal backsheesh to get rid of the evil-eyed fellow) We have gone only a little distance when half a dozen of the naked coolies rush after us, running by the carriage and laying hold of it, demanding backsheesh. It appears that either the boatman has cheated them, or they think he will, or they havn't had enough. Nobody trusts anybody else, and nobody is ever satisfied with what he gets, in Egypt. These blacks, in their dirty white gowns, swinging their porter's ropes and howling like madmen, pursue us a long way and look as if they would tear us in pieces. But nothing comes of it. We drive to the Place Mehemet Ali, the European square,—having nothing Oriental about it, a square with an equestrian statue of Mehemet Ali, some trees and a fountain—surrounded by hotels, bankers' offices and Frank shops.

There is not much in Alexandria to look at except the people, and the dirty bazaars. We never before had seen so much nakedness, filth and dirt, so much poverty, and such enjoyment of it, or at least indifference to it. We were forced to strike a new scale of estimating poverty and wretchedness. People are poor in proportion as their wants are not gratified. And here are thousands who have few of the wants that we have, and perhaps less poverty. It is difficult to estimate the poverty of those fortunate children to whom the generous sun gives a warm

color for clothing, who have no occupation but to sit in the same, all day, in some noisy and picturesque thoroughfare, and stretch out the hand for the few paras sufficient to buy their food, who drink at the public fountain, wash in the tank of the mosque, sleep in street-corners, and feel sure of their salvation if they know the direction of Mecca. And the Mohammedan religion seems to be a sort of soul-compass, by which the most ignorant believer can always orient himself. The best-dressed Christian may feel certain of one thing, that he is the object of the cool contempt of the most naked, opthalmic, flea-attended, wretched Moslem he meets. The Oriental conceit is a peg above ours—it is not self-conscious.

In a fifteen minutes walk in the streets the stranger finds all the pictures that he remembers in his illustrated books of Eastern life. There is turbaned Ali Baba, seated on the hindquarters of his sorry donkey, swinging his big feet in a constant effort to urge the beast forward; there is the one-eyed calender who may have arrived last night from Bagdad; there is the water-carrier, with a cloth about his loins, staggering under a full goat-skin—the skin, legs, head, and all the members of the brute distended, so that the man seems to be carrying a drowned and water-soaked animal: there is the veiled sister of Zobeide riding a grey donkey astride, with her knees drawn up, (as all women ride in the East), entirely enveloped in a white garment which covers her head and puffs out about her like a balloon—all that can be seen of the woman are the toes of her pointed yellow slippers

and two black eyes; there is the seller of sherbet, a waterish, feeble, insipid drink, clinking his glasses; and the veiled woman in black, with hungry eyes, is gliding about everywhere. The veil is in two parts, a band about the forehead, and a strip of black which hangs underneath the eyes and terminates in a point at the waist; the two parts are connected by an ornamented cylinder of brass, or silver if the wearer can afford it, two and a half inches long and an inch in diameter. This ugly cylinder between the restless eyes, gives the woman an imprisoned, frightened look. Across the street from the hotel, upon the stone coping of the public square, is squatting hour after hour in the sun, a row of these forlorn creatures in black, impassive and waiting. We are told that they are washerwomen waiting for a job. I never can remove the impression that these women are half stifled behind their veils and the shawls which they draw over the head; when they move their heads, it is like the piteous dumb movement of an uncomplaining animal.

But the impatient reader is waiting for Pompey's Pillar. We drive outside the walls, though a thronged gateway, through streets and among people wretched and picturesque to the last degree. This is the road to the large Moslem cemetery, and to-day is Thursday, the day for visiting the graves. The way is lined with coffee-shops, where men are smoking and playing at draughts; with stands and booths for the sale of fried cakes and confections; and all along, under foot, so that it is difficult not to tread on them, are private markets for the sale of dates, nuts, raisins,

wheat, and doora; the bare-legged owner sits on the ground and spreads his dust-covered untempting fare on a straw mat before him. It is more wretched and forlorn outside the gate than within. We are amid heaps of rubbish, small mountains of it, perhaps the ruins of old Alexandria, perhaps only the accumulated sweepings of the city for ages, piles of dust, and broken pottery. Every Egyptian town of any size is surrounded by these—the refuse of ages of weary civilization.

What a number of old men, of blind men, ragged men—though rags are no disgrace! What a lot of scrawny old women, lean old hags, some of them without their faces covered—even the veiled ones you can see are only bags of bones. There is a derweesh, a naked holy man, seated in the dirt by the wall, reading the Koran. He has no book, but he recites the sacred text in a loud voice, swaying his body backwards and forwards. Now and then we see a shrill-voiced, handsome boy also reading the Koran with all his might, and keeping a laughing eye upon the passing world. Here comes a novel turn-out. It is a long truck-wagon drawn by one bony-horse. Upon it are a dozen women, squatting about the edges, facing each other, veiled, in black, silent, jolting along like so many bags of meal. A black imp stands in front, driving. They carry baskets of food and flowers, and are going to the cemetery to spend the day.

We pass the cemetery, for the Pillar is on a little hillock overlooking it. Nothing can be drearier than this burying-ground —unless it may be some other Moslem cemetery. It is an

uneven plain of sand, without a spear of grass or a green thing. It is covered thickly with ugly stucco, oven-like tombs, the whole inconceivably shabby and dust covered; the tombs of the men have head-stones to distinguish them from the women. Yet, shabby as all the details of this crumbling cheap place of sepulture are, nothing could be gayer or more festive than the scene before us. Although the women are in the majority, there are enough men and children present, in colored turbans, fezes, and gowns, and shawls of Persian dye, to transform the graveyard into the semblance of a parterre of flowers. About hundreds of the tombs are seated in a circle groups of women, with their food before them, and the flowers laid upon the tomb, wailing and howling in the very excess of dry-eyed grief. Here and there a group has employed a "welee" or holy man, or a boy, to read the Koran for it—and these Koran-readers turn an honest para by their vocation. The women spend nearly the entire day in this sympathetic visit to their departed friends—it is a custom as old as history, and the Egyptians used to build their tombs with a visiting ante-chamber for the accommodation of the living. I should think that the knowledge that such a group of women were to eat their luncheon, wailing and roosting about one's tomb every week, would add a new terror to death.

The Pillar, which was no doubt erected by Diocletian to his own honor, after the modest fashion of Romans as well as Egyptians, is in its present surroundings not an object of enthusiasm, though it is almost a hundred feet high, and the

monolith shaft was, before age affected it, a fine piece of polished Syenite. It was no doubt a few thousand years older than Diocletian, and a remnant of that oldest civilization; the base and capital he gave it are not worthy of it. Its principal use now is as a surface for the paint-brushes and chisels of distinguished travelers, who have covered it with their precious names. I cannot sufficiently admire the *naïveté* and self-depreciation of those travelers who paint and cut their names on such monuments, knowing as they must that the first sensible person who reads the same will say, "This is an ass."

We drive, still outside the walls, towards the Mahmoodéeh canal, passing amid mounds of rubbish, and getting a view of the desert-like country beyond. And now heaves in sight the unchanged quintessence of Orientalism—there is our first camel, a camel in use, in his native setting and not in a menagerie. There is a line of them, loaded with building-stones, wearily shambling along. The long bended neck apes humility, but the supercilious nose in the air expresses perfect contempt for all modern life. The contrast of this haughty "stuck-up-ativeness" (it is necessary to coin this word to express the camel's ancient conceit) with the royal ugliness of the brute, is both awe-inspiring and amusing. No human royal family dare be uglier than the camel. He is a mass of bones, faded tufts, humps, lumps, splay-joints and callosities. His tail is a ridiculous wisp, and a failure as an ornament or a fly-brush. His feet are simply big sponges. For skin covering he has patches of old buffalo robes, faded and with the hair

worn off. His voice is more disagreeable than his appearance. With a reputation for patience, he is snappish and vindictive. His endurance is over-rated—that is to say he dies like a sheep on an expedition of any length, if he is not well fed. His gait moves every muscle like an ague. And yet this ungainly creature carries his head in the air, and regards the world out of his great brown eyes with disdain. The Sphinx is not more placid. He reminds me, I don't know why, of a pyramid. He has a resemblance to a palm-tree. It is impossible to make an Egyptian picture without him. What a Hapsburg lip he has! Ancient, royal? The very poise of his head says plainly, "I have come out of the dim past, before history was; the deluge did not touch me; I saw Menes come and go; I helped Shoofoo build the great pyramid; I knew Egypt when it hadn't an obelisk nor a temple; I watched the slow building of the pyramid at Sakkara. Did I not transport the fathers of your race across the desert? There are three of us; the date-palm, the pyramid, and myself. Everything else is modern. Go to!"

Along the canal, where lie dahabeëhs that will by and by make their way up the Nile, are some handsome villas, palaces and gardens. This is the favorite drive and promenade. In the gardens, that are open to the public, we find a profusion of tropical trees and flowering shrubs; roses are decaying, but the blossoms of the yellow acacia scent the air; there are Egyptian lilies; the plant with crimson leaves, not native here, grows as high as the arbutilon tree; the red passion-flower is in bloom, and morning-glories cover with their running vine the tall and slender

cypresses. The finest tree is the sycamore, with great gnarled trunk, and down-dropping branches. Its fruit, the sycamore fig, grows directly on the branch, without stem. It is an insipid fruit, sawdust-y, but the Arabs like it, and have a saying that he who eats one is sure to return to Egypt. After we had tried to eat one, we thought we should not care to return. The interior was filled with lively little flies; and a priest who was attending a school of boys taking a holiday in the grove, assured us that each fig had to be pierced when it was green, to let the flies out, in order to make it eatable. But the Egyptians eat them, flies and all.

The splendors of Alexandria must be sought in books. The traveler will see scarcely any remains of a magnificence which dazzled the world in the beginning of our era. He may like to see the mosque that marks the site of the church of St. Mark, and he may care to look into the Coptic convent whence the Venetians stole the body of the saint, about a thousand years ago. Of course we go to see that wonder of our childhood, Cleopatra's Needles, as the granite obelisks are called that were brought from Alexandria and set up before a temple of Caesar in the time of Tiberius. Only one is standing, the other, mutilated, lies prone beneath the soil. The erect one stands near the shore and in the midst of hovels and incredible filth. The name of the earliest king it bears is that of Thothmes III., the great man of Egypt, whose era of conquest was about 1500 years before St. Mark came on his mission to Alexandria.

The city which has had as many vicissitudes as most cities,

boasting under the Cæsars a population of half a million, that had decreased to 6,000 in 1800, and has now again grown to over two hundred thousand, seems to be at a waiting point; the merchants complain that the Suez Canal has killed its trade. Yet its preeminence for noise, dirt and shabbiness will hardly be disputed; and its bazaars and streets are much more interesting, perhaps because it is the meeting-place of all races, than travelers usually admit.

We had scarcely set foot in our hotel when we were saluted and waited for by dragomans of all sorts. They knocked at our doors, they waylaid us in the passages; whenever we emerged from our rooms half a dozen rose up, bowing low; it was like being a small king, with obsequious attendants waiting every motion. They presented their cards, they begged we would step aside privately for a moment and look at the bundle of recommendations they produced; they would not press themselves, but if we desired a dragoman for the Nile they were at our service. They were of all shades of color, except white, and of all degrees of oriental splendor in their costume. There were Egyptians, Nubians, Maltese, Greeks, Syrians. They speak well all the languages of the Levant and of Europe, except the one in which you attempt to converse with them. I never made the acquaintance of so many fine fellows in the same space of time. All of them had the strongest letters of commendation from travelers whom they had served, well-known men of letters and of affairs. Travelers give these endorsements as freely as they sign applications for

government appointments at home.

The name of the handsome dragoman who walked with us through the bazaars was, naturally enough, Ahmed Abdallah. He wore the red fez (tarboosh) with a gay kuffia bound about it; an embroidered shirt without collar or cravat; a long shawl of checked and bright-colored Beyrout silk girding the loins, in which was carried his watch and heavy chain; a cloth coat; and baggy silk trousers that would be a gown if they were not split enough to gather about each ankle. The costume is rather Syrian than Egyptian, and very elegant when the materials are fine; but with a suggestion of effeminacy, to Western eyes.

The native bazaars, which are better at Cairo, reveal to the traveler, at a glance, the character of the Orient; its cheap tinsel, its squalor, and its occasional richness and gorgeousness. The shops on each side of the narrow street are little more than good-sized wardrobes, with room for shelves of goods in the rear and for the merchant to sit cross-legged in front. There is usually space for a customer to sit with him, and indeed two or three can rest on the edge of the platform. Upon cords stretched across the front hang specimens of the wares for sale. Wooden shutters close the front at night. These little cubbies are not only the places of sale but of manufacture of goods. Everything goes on in the view of all the world. The tailor is stitching, the goldsmith is blowing the bellows of his tiny forge, the saddler is repairing the old donkey-saddles, the shoemaker is cutting red leather, the brazier is hammering, the weaver sits at his little loom with the

treadle in the ground—every trade goes on, adding its own clatter to the uproar.

What impresses us most is the good nature of the throng, under trying circumstances. The street is so narrow that three or four people abreast make a jam, and it is packed with those moving in two opposing currents. Through this mass comes a donkey with a couple of panniers of soil or of bricks, or bundles of scraggly sticks; or a camel surges in, loaded with building-joists or with lime; or a Turkish officer, with a gaily caparisoned horse impatiently stamping; a porter slams along with a heavy box on his back; the water-carrier with his nasty skin rubs through; the vender of sweetmeats finds room for his broad tray; the orange-man pushes his cart into the throng; the Jew auctioneer cries his antique brasses and more antique raiment. Everybody is jostled and pushed and jammed; but everybody is in an imperturbable good humor, for no one is really in a hurry, and whatever is, is as it always has been and will be. And what a cosmopolitan place it is. We meet Turks, Greeks, Copts, Egyptians, Nubians, Syrians, Armenians, Italians; tattered derweeshes, "welees" or holy Moslems, nearly naked, presenting the appearance of men who have been buried a long time and recently dug up; Greek priests, Jews, Persian Parsees, Algerines, Hindoos, negroes from Darfoor, and flat-nosed blacks from beyond Khartoom.

The traveler has come into a country of holiday which is perpetual. Under this sun and in this air there is nothing to do

but to enjoy life and attend to religion five times a day. We look into a mosque; In the cool court is a fountain for washing; the mosque is sweet and quiet, and upon its clean matting a row of Arabs are prostrating themselves in prayer towards the niche that indicates the direction of Mecca. We stroll along the open streets encountering a novelty at every step. Here is a musician a Nubian playing upon a sort of tambour on a frame; a picking, feeble noise he produces, but he is accompanied by the oddest character we have seen yet. This is a stalwart, wild-eyed son of the sand, coal-black, with a great mass of uncombed, disordered hair hanging about his shoulders. His only clothing is a breech-cloth and a round shaving-glass bound upon his forehead; but he has hung about his waist heavy strings of goats' hoofs, and those he shakes, in time to the tambour, by a tremulous motion of his big hips as he minces about. He seems so vastly pleased with himself that I covet knowledge of his language, in order to tell him that he looks like an idiot.

Near the Fort Napoleon, a hill by the harbor, we encounter another scene peculiar to the East. A yellow-skinned, cunning-eyed conjurer has attracted a ring of idlers about him, who squat in the blowing dust, under the blazing sun, and patiently watch his antics. The conjurer himself performs no wonders, but the spectators are a study of color and feature. The costumes are brilliant red, yellow, and white. The complexions exhaust the possibilities of human color. I thought I had seen black people in South Carolina; but I saw a boy just now standing in a doorway

who would have been invisible but for his white shirt; and here is a fat negress in a bright yellow gown and kerchief, whose jet face has taken an incredible polish; only the most accomplished boot-black could raise such a shine on a shoe; tranquil enjoyment oozes out of her. The conjurer is assisted by two mites of children, a girl and a boy (no clothing wasted on them), and between the three a great deal of jabber and whacking with cane sticks is going on, but nothing is performed except the taking of a long snake from a bag and tying it round the little girl's neck. Paras are collected, however, and that is the main object of all performances.

A little further on, another group is gathered around a storyteller, who is reeling off one of the endless tales in which the Arab delights; love-adventures, not always the most delicate but none the less enjoyed for that, or the story of some poor lad who has had a wonderful career and finally married the Sultan's daughter. He is accompanied in his narrative by two men thumping upon darabooka drums, in a monotonous, sleepy fashion, quite in accordance however with the everlasting leisure that pervades the air. Walking about are the venders of sweets, and of greasy cakes, who carry tripods on which to rest their brass trays, and who split the air with their cries.

It is color, color, that makes all this shifting panorama so fascinating, and hides the nakedness, the squalor, the wretchedness of all this unconcealed poverty; color in flowing garments, color in the shops, color in the sky. We have come to the land of the sun.

At night when we walk around the square we stumble over bundles of rags containing men who are asleep, in all the corners, stretched on doorsteps, laid away on the edge of the sidewalk. Opposite the hotel is a *casino*, which is more Frank than Egyptian. The musicians are all women and Germans or Bohemians; the waiter-girls are mostly Italian; one of them says she comes from Bohemia, and has been in India, to which she proposes to return. The *habitués* are mostly young Egyptians in Frank dress except the tarboosh, and Italians, all effeminate fellows. All the world of loose living and wandering meets here. Italian is much spoken. There is little that is Oriental here, except it may be a complaisance toward anything enervating and languidly wicked that Europe has to offer. This cheap concert is, we are told, all the amusement at night that can be offered the traveler, by the once pleasure-loving city of Cleopatra, in the once brilliant Greek capital in which Hypatia was a star.

CHAPTER III.—
EGYPT OF TO-DAY

EGYPT has excellent railways. There is no reason why it should not have. They are made without difficulty and easily maintained in a land of no frosts; only where they touch the desert an occasional fence is necessary against the drifting sand. The rails are laid, without wooden sleepers, on iron saucers, with connecting bands, and the track is firm and sufficiently elastic. The express train travels the 131 miles to Cairo in about four and a half hours, running with a punctuality, and with Egyptian drivers and conductors too, that is unique in Egypt. The opening scene at the station did not promise expedition or system.

We reach the station three quarters of an hour before the departure of the train, for it requires a longtime—in Egypt, as everywhere in Europe—to buy tickets and get baggage weighed. The officials are slower workers than our treasury-clerks. There is a great crowd of foreigners, and the baggage-room is piled with trunks of Americans, 'boxes' of Englishmen, and chests and bundles of all sorts. Behind a high counter in a smaller room stand the scales, the weigher, and the clerks. Piles of trunks are brought in and dumped by the porters, and thrust forward by the servants and dragomans upon the counter, to gain them preference at the scales. No sooner does a dragoman get in his

trunk than another is thrust ahead of it, and others are hurled on top, till the whole pile comes down with a crash. There is no system, there are neither officials nor police, and the excited travelers are free to fight it out among themselves. To venture into the *mêlée* is to risk broken bones, and it is wiser to leave the battle to luck and the dragomans. The noise is something astonishing. A score or two of men are yelling at the top of their voices, screaming, scolding, damning each other in polyglot, gesticulating, jumping up and down, quivering with excitement. This is your Oriental repose! If there were any rule by which passengers could take their turns, all the trunks could be quickly weighed and passed on; but now in the scrimmage not a trunk gets to the scales, and a half hour goes by in which no progress is made and the uproar mounts higher.

Finally, Ahmed, slight and agile, handing me his cane, kuffia and watch, leaps over the heap of trunks on the counter and comes to close quarters with the difficulty. He succeeds in getting two trunks upon the platform of the scales, but a traveler, whose clothes were made in London, tips them off and substitutes his own. The weighers stand patiently waiting the result of the struggle. Ahmed hurls off the stranger's trunk, gives its owner a turn that sends him spinning over the baggage, and at last succeeds in getting our luggage weighed. He emerges from the scrimmage an exhausted man, and we get our seats in the carriage just in time. However, it does not start for half an hour.

The reader would like to ride from Alexandria to Cairo, but he

won't care to read much about the route. It is our first experience of a country living solely by irrigation—the occasional winter showers being practically of no importance. We pass along and over the vast shallows of Lake Mareotis, a lake in winter and a marsh in summer, ride between marshes and cotton-fields, and soon strike firmer ground. We are traveling, in short, through a Jersey flat, a land black, fat, and rich, without an elevation, broken only by canals and divided into fields by ditches. Every rod is cultivated, and there are no detached habitations. The prospect cannot be called lively, but it is not without interest; there are ugly buffaloes in the coarse grass, there is the elegant white heron, which travelers insist is the sacred ibis, there are some doleful-looking fellaheen, with donkeys, on the bank of the canal, there is a file of camels, and there are shadoofs. The shadoof is the primitive method of irrigation, and thousands of years have not changed it. Two posts are driven into the bank of the canal, with a cross-piece on top. On this swings a pole with a bucket of leather suspended at one end, which is outweighed by a ball of clay at the other. The fellah stands on the slope of the bank and, dipping the bucket into the water, raises it and pours the fluid into a sluice-way above. If the bank is high, two and sometimes three shadoofs are needed to raise the water to the required level. The labor is prodigiously hard and back-straining, continued as it must be constantly. All the fellaheen we saw were clad in black, though some had a cloth about their loins. The workman usually stands in a sort of a recess in the bank, and

his color harmonizes with the dark soil. Any occupation more wearisome and less beneficial to the mind I cannot conceive. To the credit of the Egyptians, the men alone work the shadoof. Women here tug water, grind the corn, and carry about babies, always; but I never saw one pulling at a shadoof pole.

There is an Arab village! We need to be twice assured that it is a village. Raised on a slight elevation, so as to escape high water, it is still hardly distinguishable from the land, certainly not in color. All Arab villages look like ruins; this is a compacted collection of shapeless mud-huts, flat-topped and irregularly thrown together. It is an aggregation of dog-kennels, baked in the sun and cracked. However, a clump of palm-trees near it gives it an air of repose, and if it possesses a mosque and a minaret it has a picturesque appearance, if the observer does not go too near. And such are the habitations of nearly all the Egyptians.

Sixty-five miles from Alexandria, we cross the Rosetta branch of the Nile, on a fine iron bridge—even this portion of the Nile is a broad, sprawling river; and we pass through several respectable towns which have an appearance of thrift—Tanta especially, with its handsome station and a palace of the Khedive. At Tanta is held three times a year a great religious festival and fair, not unlike the old fair of the ancient Egyptians at Bubastis in honor of Diana, with quite as many excesses, and like that, with a gramme of religion to a pound of pleasure. "Now," says Herodotus, "when they are being conveyed to the city Bubastis, they act as follows: —for men and women embark together, and great numbers of

both sexes in every barge: some of the women have castanets on which they play, and the men play on the flute during the whole voyage; and the rest of the women and men sing and clap their hands together at the same time." And he goes on to say that when they came to any town they moored the barge, and the women chaffed those on shore, and danced with indecent gestures; and that at the festival more wine was consumed than all the rest of the year. The festival at Tanta is in honor of a famous Moslem saint whose tomb is there; but the tomb is scarcely so attractive as the field of the *fête*, with the story-tellers and the jugglers and booths of dancing girls.

We pass decayed Benha with its groves of Yoosef-Effendi oranges—the small fruit called Mandarin by foreigners, and preferred by those who like a slight medicinal smell and taste in the orange; and when we are yet twenty miles from Cairo, there in the south-west, visible for a moment and then hidden by the trees, and again in sight, faintly and yet clearly outlined against the blue sky, are two forms, the sight of which gives us a thrill. They stand still in that purple distance in which we have seen them all our lives. Beyond these level fields and these trees of sycamore and date-palm, beyond the Nile, on the desert's edge, with the low Libyan hills falling off behind them, as delicate in form and color as clouds, as enduring as the sky they pierce, the Pyramids of Geezeh! I try to shake off the impression of their solemn antiquity, and imagine how they would strike one if all their mystery were removed. But that is impossible.

The imagination always prompts the eye. And yet I believe that standing where they do stand, and in this atmosphere, they are the most impressive of human structures. But the pyramids would be effective, as the obelisk is not, out of Egypt.

Trees increase in number; we have villas and gardens; the grey ledges of the Mokattam hills come into view, then the twin slender spires of the Mosque of Mohammed Ali on the citadel promontory, and we are in the modern station of Cairo; and before we take in the situation are ignominiously driven away in a hotel-omnibus. This might happen in Europe. Yes; but then, who are these in white and blue and red, these squatters by the wayside, these smokers in the sun, these turbaned riders on braying donkeys and grumbling dromedaries; what is all this fantastic masquerade in open day? Do people live in these houses? Do women peep from these lattices? Isn't that gowned Arab conscious that he is kneeling and praying out doors? Have we come to a land where all our standards fail and people are not ashamed of their religion?

CHAPTER IV.—CAIRO

O CAIRO! Cairo! Masr-el-Kaherah, The Victorious! City of the Caliphs, of Salah-e'-deen, of the Memlooks! Town of mediaeval romance projected into a prosaic age! More Oriental than Damascus, or Samarcand. Vast, sprawling city, with dilapidated Saracenic architecture, pretentious modern barrack-palaces, new villas and gardens, acres of compacted, squalid, unsunned dwellings. Always picturesque, lamentably dirty, and thoroughly captivating.

Shall we rhapsodize over it, or attempt to describe it? Fortunately, writers have sufficiently done both. Let us enjoy it. We are at Shepherd's. It is a caravansary through which the world flows. At its *table d'hote* are all nations; German princes, English dukes and shopkeepers, Indian officers, American sovereigns; explorers, *savants*, travelers; they have come for the climate of Cairo, they are going up the Nile, they are going to hunt in Abyssinia, to join an advance military party on the White Nile; they have come from India, from Japan, from Australia, from Europe, from America.

We are in the Frank quarter called the Ezbekeëh, which was many years ago a pond during high water, then a garden with a canal round it, and is now built over with European houses and shops, except the square reserved for the public garden. From the old terrace in front of the hotel, where the traveler

used to look on trees, he will see now only raw new houses and a street usually crowded with passers and rows of sleepy donkeys and their voluble drivers. The hotel is two stories only, built round a court, damp in rainy or cloudy weather (and it is learning how to rain as high up the Nile as Cairo), and lacking the comforts which invalids require in the winter. It is kept on an ingenious combination of the American and European plans; that is, the traveler pays a fixed sum per day and then gets a bill of particulars, besides, which gives him all the pleasures of the European system. We heard that one would be more Orientally surrounded and better cared for at the Hotel du Nil; and the Khedive, who tries his hand at everything, has set up a New Hotel on the public square; but, somehow, one enters Shepherd's as easy as he goes into a city gate.

They call the house entirely European. But there are pelicans walking about in the tropical garden; on one side is the wall of a harem, a house belonging to the Khedive's mother, a harem with closed shutters, but uninteresting, because there is no one in it, though ostriches are strutting in its paved court; in the rear of the house stretches a great grove of tall date-palms standing in a dusty, *débris*-strown field—a lazy wind is always singing through their tops, and a sakiya (a cow-impelled water-wheel) creaks there day and night; we never lock the doors of our rooms; long-gowned attendants are always watching in the passages, and, when we want one, in default of bells, we open the door and clap the hands. All this, with a juggler performing before the house;

dragomans and servants and merchants in Oriental costume; the monotonous strumming of an Arab band in a neighboring *cafe*, bricklayers on the unfinished house opposite us, working in white night-gowns and turbans, who might be mistaken at a distance for female sleepwalkers; and from a minaret not far away, the tenor-voiced muezzins urging us in the most musical invitation ever extended to unbelievers, to come to prayer at daylight—this cannot be called European.

An end of the dinner-table, however, is occupied by a loud party of young Englishmen, a sprinkling of dukes and earls and those attendants and attentive listeners of the nobility who laugh inordinately when my lord says a good thing, and are encouraged when my lord laughs loudly at a sally of theirs and declares, "well, now, that's very good;" a party who seem to regard Cairo as beyond the line of civilization and its requirements. They talk loud, roar in laughing, stare at the ladies, and light their cigars before the latter have withdrawn. My comrade notices that they call for champagne before fish; we could overlook anything but that. Some travelers who are annoyed at their boisterousness speak to the landlord about them, without knowing their rank—supposing that one could always tell an earl by his superior manners. These young representatives of England have demanded that the Khedive shall send them on their hunting-tour in Africa, and he is to do so at considerable cost; and it is said that he pays their hotel bills in Cairo. The desire of the Khedive to stand well with all the European powers

makes him an easy prey to any nobleman who does not like to travel in Egypt at his own expense. (It ought to be added that we encountered on the Nile an Englishman of high rank who had declined the Khedive's offer of a free trip).

Cairo is a city of vast distances, especially the new part which is laid out with broad streets, and built up with isolated houses having perhaps a garden or a green court; open squares are devoted to fountains and flower-beds. Into these broad avenues the sun pours, and through them the dust swirls in clouds; everything is covered with it; it imparts its grey tint to the town and sifts everywhere its impalpable powder. No doubt the health of Cairo is greatly improved and epidemics are lessened, by the destruction of the pestilent old houses and by running wide streets through the old quarters of twisting lanes and sunless alleys. But the wide streets are uninteresting, and the sojourner in the city likes to escape out of their glare and dust into the cool and shady recesses of the old town. And he has not far to go to do so. A few minutes walk from the Ezbekeëh brings one into a tangle like the crossing paths of an ants nest, into the very heart of the smell and color of the Orient, among people among shops, in the presence of manners, habits, costumes, occupations, centuries old, into a life in which the western man recognizes nothing familiar.

Cairo, between the Mokattam hill of limestone and the Nile, covers a great deal of ground—about three square miles—on which dwell somewhere from a third to a half of a million of

people. The traveler cannot see its stock-sights in a fortnight, and though he should be there months he will find something novel in the street-life daily, even though he does not, as Mr. Lane has so admirably done, make a study of the people. And "life" goes on in the open streets, to an extent which always surprises us, however familiar we may be with Italian habits. People eat, smoke, pray, sleep, carry on all their trades in sight of the passers by—only into the recesses of the harem and the faces of the women one may not look. And this last mystery and reserve almost outweighs the openness of everything else. One feels as if he were in a masquerade; the part of the world which is really most important—womankind—appears to him only in shadow and flitting phantasm. What danger is he in from these wrapped and veiled figures which glide by, shooting him with a dark and perhaps wicked eye; what peril is he in as he slips through these narrow streets with their masked batteries of latticed windows! This Eastern life is all open to the sun; and yet how little of its secrets does the stranger fathom. I seem to feel, always, in an Eastern town, that there is a mask of duplicity and concealment behind which the Orientals live; that they habitually deceive the traveler in his "gropings after truth."

The best way of getting about Cairo and its environs is on the donkey. It is cheap and exhilarating. The donkey is easily mounted and easily got off from; not seldom he will weaken in his hind legs and let his rider to the ground—a sinking operation which destroys your confidence in life itself.

Sometimes he stumbles and sends the rider over his head. But the *good* donkey never does either. He is the best animal, of his size and appearance, living. He has the two qualities of our greatest general, patience and obstinacy. The *good* donkey is easy as a rocking-chair, sure-footed as a chamois; he can thread any crowd and stand patiently dozing in any noisy thoroughfare for hours. To ride him is only a slight compromise of one's independence in walking. One is so near the ground, and so absent-mindedly can he gaze at what is around him, that he forgets that there is anything under him. When the donkey, in the excitement of company on the open street and stimulated by the whacks and cries of his driver, breaks into the rush of a gallop, there is so much flying of legs and such a general flutter that the rider fancies he is getting over the ground at an awful rate, running a breakneck race; but it does not appear so to an observer. The rider has the feeling of the swift locomotion of the Arab steed without its danger or its expense. Besides, a long-legged man, with a cork hat and a flying linen "duster," tearing madly along on an animal as big as a sheep, is an amusing spectacle.

The donkey is abused, whacked, beaten till he is raw, saddled so that all the straps gall him, hard-ridden, left for hours to be assailed by the flies in the street, and ridiculed by all men. I wish we could know what sort of an animal centuries of good treatment would have made of him. Something no doubt quite beyond human deserts; as it is, he is simply indispensable in Eastern life. And not seldom he is a pet; he wears jingling bells

and silver ornaments around his neck; his hair is shaved in spots to give him a variegated appearance, and his mane and tail are dyed with henna; he has on an embroidered cloth bridle and a handsome saddle, under which is a scarlet cloth worked with gold. The length and silkiness of his ears are signs of his gentle breeding. I could never understand why he is loaded with such an enormous saddle; the pommel of it rising up in front of the rider as big as a half-bushel measure. Perhaps it is thought well to put this mass upon his back so that he will not notice or mind any additional weight.

The donkey's saving quality, in this exacting world, is inertia. And, yet, he is not without ambition. He dislikes to be passed on the road by a fellow; and if one attempts it, he is certain to sheer in ahead of him and shove him off the track. "Donkey jealous one anoder," say the drivers.

Each donkey has his driver or attendant, without whose presence, behind or at the side, the animal ceases to go forward. These boys, and some of them are men in stature, are the quickest-witted, most importunate, good-natured vagabonds in this world. They make a study of human nature, and accurately measure every traveler the moment he appears. They are agile to do errands, some of them are better guides than the professionals, they can be entrusted with any purchases you may make, they run, carrying their slippers in their hand, all day beside the donkey, and get only a pittance of pay. They are however a jolly, larkish set, always skylarking with each other, and are not unlike

the newspaper boys of New York; now and then one of them becomes a trader or a dragoman and makes his fortune.

If you prefer a carriage, good vehicles have become plenty of late years, since there are broad streets for driving; and some very handsome equipages are seen, especially towards evening on the Shoobra road, up and down which people ride and drive to be seen and to see, as they do in Central or Hyde parks. It is *en règle* to have a sais running before the carriage, and it is the "swell thing" to have two of them. The running sais before a rapidly driven carriage is the prettiest sight in Cairo. He is usually a slender handsome black fellow, probably a Nubian, brilliantly dressed, graceful in every motion, running with perfect ease and able to keep up his pace for hours without apparent fatigue. In the days of narrow streets his services were indispensable to clear the way; and even now he is useful in the frequented ways where every one walks in the middle of the street, and the chattering, chaffing throngs are as heedless of anything coming as they are of the day of judgment. In red tarboosh with long tassel, silk and gold embroidered vest and jacket, colored girdle with ends knotted and hanging at the side, short silk trousers and bare legs, and long staff, gold-tipped, in the hand, as graceful in running as Antinous, they are most elegant appendages to a fashionable turnout. If they could not be naturalized in Central Park, it might fill some of the requirements of luxury to train a patriot from the Green Isle to run before the horses, in knee-breeches, flourishing a shillalah. Faith, I think he would clear the way.

Especially do I like to see the sais coming down the wind before a carriage of the royal harem. The outriders are eunuchs, two in front and two behind; they are blacks, dressed in black clothes, European cut, except the tarboosh. They ride fine horses, English fashion, rising in the saddle; they have long limbs, lank bodies, cruel, weak faces, and yet cunning; they are sleek, shiny, emasculated. Having no sex, you might say they have no souls. How can these anomalies have any virtue, since virtue implies the opportunity of its opposite? These semblances of men seem proud enough of their position, however, and of the part they play to their masters, as if they did not know the repugnance they excite. The carriage they attend is covered, but the silken hangings of the glass windows are drawn aside, revealing the white-veiled occupants. They indeed have no constitutional objections to being seen; the thin veil enhances their charms, and the observer who sees their painted faces and bright languishing eyes, no doubt gives them credit for as much beauty as they possess; and as they flash by, I suppose that every one, is convinced that he has seen one of the mysterious Circassian or Georgian beauties.

The minute the traveler shows himself on the hotel terrace, the donkey-boys clamor, and push forward their animals upon the sidewalk; it is no small difficulty to select one out of the tangle; there is noise enough used to fit out an expedition to the desert, and it is not till the dragoman has laid vigorously about him with his stick that the way is clear. Your nationality is known at a

glance, and a donkey is instantly named to suit you—the same one being called, indifferently, "Bismarck" if you are German, "Bonaparte" if you are French, and "Yankee Doodle" if you are American, or "Ginger Bob" at a venture.

We are going to Boulak, the so-called port of Cairo, to select a dahabeëh for the Nile voyage. We are indeed only getting ready for this voyage, and seeing the city by the way. The donkey-boys speak English like natives—of Egypt. The one running beside me, a handsome boy in a long cotton shirt, is named, royally, Mahmoud Hassan.

"Are you the brother of Hassan whom I had yesterday?"

"No. He, Hassan not my brother; he better, he friend. Breakfast, lunch, supper, all together, all same; all same money. We friends."

Abd-el-Atti, our dragoman, is riding ahead on his grey donkey, and I have no difficulty in following his broad back and short legs, even though his donkey should be lost to sight in the press. He rides as Egyptians do, without stirrups, and uses his heels as spurs. Since Mohammed Abd-el-Atti Effendi first went up the Nile, it is many years ago now, with Mr. Wm. C. Prime, and got his name prominently into the Nile literature, he has grown older, stout, and rich; he is entitled by his position to the distinction of "Effendi." He boasts a good family, as good as any; most of his relatives are, and he himself has been, in government employ; but he left it because, as he says, he prefers one master to a thousand. When a boy he went

with the embassy of Mohammed Ali to England, and since that time he has traveled extensively as courier in Europe and the Levant and as mail-carrier to India. Mr. Prime described him as having somewhat the complexion and features of the North American Indian; it is true, but he has a shrewd restless eye, and very mobile features, quick to image his good humor or the reverse, breaking into smiles, or clouding over upon his easily aroused suspicion. He is a good study of the Moslem and the real Oriental, a combination of the easy, procrastinating fatalism, and yet with a tindery temper and an activity of body and mind that we do not usually associate with the East. His prejudices are inveterate, and he is an unforgiving enemy and a fast, self-sacrificing friend. Not to be driven, he can always be won by kindness. Fond of money and not forgetting the last piastre due him, he is generous and lavish to a fault. A devout Moslem, he has seen too much of the world not to be liberalized. He knows the Koran and the legendary history of the Arabs, and speaks and writes Arabic above the average. An exceedingly shrewd observer and reader of character, and a mimic of other's peculiarities, he is a good *raconteur*, in his peculiar English, and capital company. It is, by the way, worth mentioning what sharp observers all these Eastern people become, whose business it is to study and humor the whims and eccentricities of travelers. The western man who thinks that the Eastern people are childlike or *effete*, will change his mind after a few months acquaintance with the shrewd Egyptians. Abd-el-Atti has a good deal of influence

and even authority in his sphere, and although his executive ability is without system, he brings things to pass. Wherever he goes, however, there is a ripple and a noise. He would like to go to Nubia with us this winter, he says, "for shange of air."

So much is necessary concerning the character who is to be our companion for many months. No dragoman is better known in the East; he is the sheykh of the dragomans of Cairo, and by reason of his age and experience he is hailed on the river as the sultan of the Nile. He dresses like an Englishman, except his fez.

The great worry of the voyager in Egypt, from the moment he lands, is about a dragoman; his comfort and pleasure depend very much upon a right selection. The dragoman and the dahabeëh interest him more than the sphinx and the great pyramids. Taking strangers up the Nile seems to be the great business of Egypt, and all the intricacies and tricks of it are slowly learned. Ignorant of the language and of the character of the people, the stranger may well be in a maze of doubt and perplexity. His gorgeously attired dragoman, whose recommendations would fit him to hold combined the offices of President of the American Bible Society and caterer for Delmonico, often turns out to be ignorant of his simplest duties, to have an inhabited but uninhabitable boat, to furnish a meagre table, and to be a sly knave. The traveler will certainly have no peace from the importunity of the dragomans until he makes his choice. One hint can be given: it is always best in a Moslem country to take a Moslem dragoman.

We are on our way to Boulak. The sky is full of white light.

The air is full of dust; the streets are full of noise color, vivid life and motion. Everything is flowing, free, joyous. Naturally people fall into picturesque groups, forming, separating, shifting like scenes on the stage. Neither the rich silks and brilliant dyes, nor the tattered rags, and browns and greys are out of place; full dress and nakedness are equally *en régie*. Here is a grave, long-bearded merchant in full turban and silk gown, riding his caparisoned donkey to his shop, followed by his pipe-bearer; here is a half-naked fellah seated on the rear of his sorry-eyed beast, with a basket of greens in front of him; here are a group of women, hunched astride their donkeys, some in white silk and some in black, shapeless in their balloon mantles, peeping at the world over their veils; here a handsome sais runs ahead of a carriage with a fat Turk lolling in it, and scatters the loiterers right and left; there are porters and beggars fast asleep by the roadside, only their heads covered from the sun; there are lines of idlers squatting in all-day leisure by the wall, smoking, or merely waiting for tomorrow.

As we get down to Old Boulak the Saturday market is encountered. All Egyptian markets occupy the street or some open place, and whatever is for sale here, is exposed to the dust and the sun; fish, candy, dates, live sheep, doora, beans, all the doubtful and greasy compounds on brass trays which the people eat, nuts, raisins, sugar-cane, cheap jewelry. It is difficult to force a way through the noisy crowd. The donkey-boy cries perpetually, to clear the way, take care, "*shimalak!*" to

the left, "*yemenak!*" to the right, *ya! riglak!* look out for your left leg, look out for your right leg, make way boy, make way old woman; but we joggle the old woman, and just escape stepping on the children and babies strewn in the street, and tread on the edge of mats spread on the ground, upon which provisions are exposed (to the dust) for sale. In the narrow, shabby streets, with dilapidated old balconies meeting overhead, we encounter loaded camels, donkeys with double panniers, hawkers of vegetables; and dodge through, bewildered by color and stunned by noise. What is it that makes all picturesque? More dirt, shabbiness, and nakedness never were assembled. That fellow who has cut armholes in a sack for holding nuts, and slipped into it for his sole garment, would not make a good figure on Broadway, but he is in place here, and as fitly dressed as anybody. These rascals will wear a bit of old carpet as if it were a king's robe, and go about in a pair of drawers that are all rags and strings, and a coarse towel twisted about the head for turban, with a gay *insouciance* that is pleasing. In fact, I suppose that a good, well-fitting black or nice brown skin is about as good as a suit of clothes.

But O! the wrinkled, flabby-breasted old women, who make a pretence of drawing the shawl over one eye; the naked, big-stomached children with spindle legs, who sit in the sand and never brush away the circle of flies around each gummy eye! The tumble-down houses, kennels in which the family sleep, the poverty of thousands of years, borne as if it were the only lot of life! In spite of all this, there is not, I venture to say, in the world

beside, anything so full of color, so gay and *bizarre* as a street in Cairo. And we are in a squalid suburb.

At the shore of the swift and now falling Nile, at Boulak, are moored, four or five deep, the passenger dahabeëhs, more than a hundred of them, gay with new paint and new carpets, to catch the traveler. There are small and large, old and new (but all looking new); those that were used for freight during the summer and may be full of vermin, and those reserved exclusively for strangers. They can be hired at from sixty pounds to two hundred pounds a month; the English owner of one handsomely furnished wanted seven hundred and fifty pounds for a three-months' voyage. The Nile trip adds luxury to itself every year, and is getting so costly that only Americans will be able to afford it.

After hours of search we settle upon a boat that will suit us, a large boat that had only made a short trip, and so new that we are at liberty to christen it; and the bargaining for it begins. That is, the bargaining revolves around that boat, but glances off as we depart in a rage to this or that other, until we appear to me to be hiring half the craft on the river. We appear to come to terms; again and again Abd-el-Atti says, "Well, it is finish," but new difficulties arise.

The owners were an odd pair: a tall Arab in soiled gown and turban, named Ahmed Aboo Yoosef, a mild and wary Moslem; and Habib Bagdadli, a furtive little Jew in Frank dress, with a cast in one of his pathetic eyes and a beseeching look, who spoke bad French fluently. Aboo Yoosef was ready to come to terms,

but Bagdadli stood out; then Bagdadli acquiesced but Aboo made conditions. Ab-del-Atti alternately coaxed and stormed; he pulled the Arab's beard; and he put his arm round his neck and whispered in his ear.

"Come, let us to go, dis Jews make me mad. I can't do anything with dis little Jews."

Our dragoman's greatest abhorrence is a Jew. Where is this one from? I ask.

"He from Algiers." The Algerian Jews have a bad reputation.

"*No, no, monsieur, pas Algiers*;" cries the little Jew, appealing to me with a pitiful look; "I am from Bagdad." In proof of this there was his name—Habib Bagdadli.

The bargaining goes on, with fine gesticulation, despairing attitudes, tones of anger and of grief, violent protestations and fallings into apathy and dejection. It is Arab against Arab and a Jew thrown in.

"I will have this boat, but I not put you out of the way on it;" says Abd-el-Atti, and goes at it again.

My sympathies are divided. I can see that the Arab and the Jew will be ruined if they take what we offer. I know that we shall be ruined if we give what they ask. This pathetic-eyed little Jew makes me feel that I am oppressing his race; and yet I am quite certain that he is trying to overreach us. How the bargain is finally struck I know not, but made it seems to be, and clinched by Aboo reluctantly pulling his purse from his bosom and handing Abd-el-Atti a napoleon. That binds the bargain; instead of the hirer

paying something, the lessor gives a pledge.

Trouble, however, is not ended. Certain alterations and additions are to be made, and it is nearly two weeks before the evasive couple complete them. The next day they offer us twenty pounds to release them. The pair are always hanging about for some mitigation or for some advance. The gentle Jew, who seems to me friendless, always excites the ire of our dragoman; "Here comes dis little Jews," he exclaims as he encounters him in the street, and forces him to go and fulfil some neglected promise.

The boat is of the largest size, and has never been above the Cataract; the owners guarantee that it can go, and there is put in the contract a forfeit of a hundred pounds if it will not. We shall see afterwards how the owners sought to circumvent us. The wiles of the Egyptians are slowly learned by the open-minded stranger.

CHAPTER V.—IN THE BAZAAR

OUR sight-seeing in Cairo is accomplished under the superintendence of another guide and dragoman, a cheerful, willing, good-natured and careful Moslem, with one eye. He looks exactly like the one-eyed calender of the story; and his good eye has a humorous and inquiring twinkle in it. His name is Hassan, but he prefers to be called Hadji, the name he has taken since he made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

A man who has made the pilgrimage is called "the hhâgg," a woman "the hhâggeh."—often spelled and pronounced "hadj" and "hadjee." It seems to be a privilege of travelers to spell Arabic words as they please, and no two writers agree on a single word or name. The Arabs take a new name or discard an old one as they like, and half a dozen favorite names do duty for half the inhabitants. It is rare to meet one who hasn't somewhere about him the name of Mohammed, Ahmed, Ali, Hassan, Hosayn, or Mahmoud. People take a new name as they would a garment that strikes the fancy.

"You like go bazaar?" asks Hadji, after the party is mounted on donkeys in front of the hotel.

"Yes, Hadji, go by the way of the Mooskee."

The Mooskee is the best known street in Cairo, and the only one in the old part of the town that the traveler can find unaided. It runs straight, or nearly so, a mile perhaps, into the most densely

built quarters, and is broad enough for carriages. A considerable part of it is roofed lightly over with cane or palm slats, through which the sun sifts a little light, and, being watered, it is usually cool and pleasant. It cannot be called a good or even road, but carriages and donkeys pass over it without noise, the wheels making only a smothered sound: you may pass through it many times and not discover that a canal runs underneath it. The lower part of it is occupied by European shops. There are no fine shops in it like those in the Ezbekeëh, and it is not interesting like the bazaars, but it is always crowded. Probably no street in the world offers such a variety of costumes and nationalities, and in no one can be heard more languages. It is the main artery, from which branch off the lesser veins and reticulations leading into the bazaars.

If the Mooskee is crowded, the bazaars are a jam. Different trades and nationalities have separate quarters, articles that are wanted are far apart, and one will of necessity consume a day in making two or three purchases. It is an achievement to find and bargain for a piece of tape.

In one quarter are red slippers, nothing but red slippers, hundreds of shops hung with them, shops in which they are made and sold; the yellow slippers are in another quarter, and by no chance does one merchant keep both kinds. There are the silk bazaars, the gold bazaars, the silver bazaars, the brass, the arms, the antiquity, the cotton, the spice, and the fruit bazaars. In one quarter the merchants and manufacturers are all Egyptians, in

another Turks, in another Copts, or Algerines, or Persians, or Armenians, or Greeks, or Syrians, or Jews.

And what is a bazaar? Simply a lane, narrow, straight or crooked, winding, involved, interrupted by a fountain, or a mosque, intersected by other lanes, a *congeries* of lanes, roofed with matting it may be, on each side of which are the little shops, not much bigger than a dry-goods box or a Saratoga trunk. Frequently there is a story above, with hanging balconies and latticed windows. On the ledge of his shop the merchant, in fine robes of silk and linen, sits cross-legged, probably smoking his chibook. He sits all day sipping coffee and gossipping with his friends, waiting for a customer. At the times of prayer he spreads his prayer-carpet and pursues his devotions in sight of all the world.

This Oriental microcosm called a bazaar is the most characteristic thing in the East, and affords most entertainment; in these cool recesses, which the sun only penetrates in glints, is all that is shabby and all that is splendid in this land of violent contrasts. The shops are rude, the passages are unpaved dirt, the matting above hangs in shreds, the unpainted balconies are about to tumble down, the lattice-work is grey with dust; fleas abound; you are jostled by an unsavory throng may be; run against by loaded donkeys; grazed by the dripping goat-skins of the water-carriers; beset by beggars; followed by Jews offering old brasses, old cashmeres, old armor; squeezed against black backs from the Soudan; and stunned by the sing-song cries of a dozen callings.

But all this is nothing. Here are the perfumes of Arabia, the colors of Paradise. These narrow streets are streams of glancing color; these shops are more brilliant than any picture—but in all is a softened harmony, the ancient art of the East.

We are sitting at a corner, pricing some pieces of old brass and arms. The merchant sends for tiny cups of coffee and offers cigarettes. He and the dragoman are wrangling about the price of something for which five times its value is asked. Not unlikely it will be sold for less than it is worth, for neither trader nor traveler has any idea of its value. Opposite is a shop where three men sit cross-legged, making cashmere shawls by piecing old bits of India scarfs. Next shop is occupied only by a boy who is reading the Koran in a loud voice, rocking forwards and backwards. A stooping seller of sherbet comes along clinking his glasses. A vender of sweetmeats sets his tray before us. A sorry beggar, a dwarf, beseeches in figurative language.

"What does he want, Hadji?"

"He say him hungry, want piece bread; O, no matter for he."

The dragomans never interpret anything, except by short cuts. What the dwarf is really saying, according to Mr. Lane, is, "For the sake of God! O ye charitable. I am seeking from my lord a cake of bread. I am the guest of God and the Prophet."

As we cannot content him by replying in like strain, "God enrich thee," we earn his blessing by a copper or two.

Across the street is an opening into a nest of shops, gaily hung with embroideries from Constantinople, silks from Broussa

and Beyrout, stuffs of Damascus; a Persian rug is spread on the mastabah of the shop, swords and inlaid pistols with flint locks shine amid the rich stuffs. Looking down this street, one way, is a long vista of bright color, the street passing under round arches through which I see an old wall painted in red and white squares, upon which the sun falls in a flood of white light. The street in which we are sitting turns abruptly at a little distance, and apparently ends in a high Moorish house, with queer little latticed windows, and balconies, and dusty recesses full of mystery in this half light; and at the corner opposite that, I see part of a public fountain and hear very distinctly the "studying" of the school over it.

The public fountain is one of the best institutions of Cairo as well as one of the most ornamental. On the street it is a rounded Saracenic structure, highly ornamented in carved marble or stucco, and gaily painted, having in front two or three faucets from which the water is drawn. Within is a tank which is replenished by water brought in skins from the Nile. Most of these fountains are charitable foundations, by pious Moslems who leave or set apart a certain sum to ensure the yearly supply of so many skins of water. Charity to the poor is one of the good traits of the Moslems, and the giving of alms and the building of fountains are the works that will be rewarded in Paradise.

These fountains, some of which are very beautiful, are often erected near a mosque. Over them, in a room with a vaulted roof and open to the street by three or four arches with pillars,

is usually a boys' school. In this room on the floor sit the master and his scholars. Each pupil has before him his lesson written on a wooden tablet, and this he is reading at the top of his voice, committing it to memory, and swaying incessantly backwards and forwards—a movement that is supposed to assist the memory. With twenty boys shouting together, the noise is heard above all the clamor of the street. If a boy looks off or stops his recitation, the stick of the schoolmaster sets him going again.

The boys learn first the alphabet, then the ninety-nine epithets of God, and then the Koran, chapter by chapter. This is the sum of human knowledge absolutely necessary; if the boy needs writing and arithmetic he learns them from the steelyard weigher in the market; or if he is to enter any of the professions, he has a regular course of study in the Mosque El Ezher, which has thousands of students and is the great University of the East.

Sitting in the bazaar for an hour one will see strange sights; wedding and funeral processions are not the least interesting of them. We can never get accustomed to the ungainly camel, thrusting his huge bulk into these narrow limits, and stretching his snake neck from side to side, his dark driver sitting high up in the dusk of the roof on the wooden saddle, and swaying to and fro with the long stride of the beast. The camel ought to be used in funeral processions, but I believe he is not.

We hear now a chanting down the dusky street. Somebody is being carried to his tomb in the desert outside the city. The procession has to squeeze through the crowd. First come

a half dozen old men, ragged and half blind, harbingers of death, who move slowly, crying in a whining tone, "There is no deity but God; Mohammed is God's apostle; God bless and save him." Then come two or three schoolboys singing in a more lively air verses of a funeral hymn. The bier is borne by friends of the deceased, who are relieved occasionally by casual passengers. On the bier, swathed in grave-clothes, lies the body, with a Cashmere shawl thrown over it. It is followed by female hired mourners, who beat their breasts and howl with shrill and prolonged ululations. The rear is brought up by the female mourners, relations—a group of a dozen in this case—whose hair is dishevelled and who are crying and shrieking with a perfect abandonment to the luxury of grief. Passengers in the street stop and say, "God is most great," and the women point to the bier and say, "I testify that there is no deity but God."

When the funeral has passed and its incongruous mingling of chanting and shrieking dies away, we turn towards the gold bazaar. All the goldsmiths and silversmiths are Copts; throughout Egypt the working of the precious metals is in their hands. Descended from the ancient Egyptians, or at least having more of the blood of the original race in them than others, they have inherited the traditional skill of the ancient workers in these metals. They reproduce the old jewelry, the barbarous ornaments, and work by the same rude methods, producing sometimes the finest work with the most clumsy tools.

The gold-bazaar is the narrowest passage we have seen. We

step down into its twilight from a broader street. It is in fact about three feet wide, a lane with an uneven floor of earth, often slippery. On each side are the little shops, just large enough for the dealer and his iron safe, or for a tiny forge, bellows and anvil. Two people have to make way for each other in squeezing along this alley, and if a donkey comes through he monopolizes the way and the passengers have to climb upon the mastabahs either side. The mastabah is a raised seat of stone or brick, built against the front of the shop and level with its floor, say two feet and a half high and two feet broad. The lower shutter of the shop turns down upon the mastabah and forms a seat upon which a rug is spread. The shopkeeper may sit upon this, or withdraw into his shop to make room for customers, who remove their shoes before drawing up their feet upon the carpet. Sometimes three or four persons will crowd into this box called a shop. The bazaar is a noisy as well as a crowded place, for to the buzz of talk and the cries of the itinerant venders is added the clang of the goldsmiths' hammers; it winds down into the recesses of decaying houses and emerges in another direction.

We are to have manufactured a bracelet of gold of a pattern as old as the Pharaohs, and made with the same instruments that the cunning goldsmiths used three thousand years ago. While we are seated and bargaining for the work, the goldsmith unlocks his safe and shows us necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and earrings in the very forms, *bizarre* but graceful, of the jewelry of which the Israelites spoiled the Egyptian women. We see just such

in the Museum at Boulak; though these are not so fine as the magnificent jewelry which Queen Aah-hotep, the mother of Amosis, attempted to carry with her into the under-world, and which the scientific violators of her tomb rescued at Thebes.

In the shop opposite to us are squeezed in three Egyptian women and a baby, who have come to spend the day in cheapening some bit of jewelry. There is apparently nothing that the Cairo women like so much as shopping—at least those who are permitted to go out at all—and they eke out its delights by consuming a day or two in buying one article. These women are taking the trade leisurely, examining slowly and carefully the whole stock of the goldsmith and deliberating on each bead and drop of a necklace, glancing slily at us and the passers-by out of their dark eyes meantime. They have brought cakes of bread for lunch, and the baby is publicly fed as often as he desires. These women have the power of sitting still in one spot for hours, squatting with perfect patience in a posture that would give a western woman the cramp for her lifetime. We are an hour in bargaining with the goldsmith, and are to return late in the afternoon and see the bracelet made before our eyes, for no one is expected to trust his fellow here.

Thus far the gold has only been melted into an ingot, and that with many precautions against fraud. I first count out the napoleons of which the bracelet is to be made. These are weighed. A fire is then kindled in the little forge, the crucible heated, and I drop the napoleons into it, one by one. We all

carefully watch the melting to be sure that no gold is spilled in the charcoal and no base metal added. The melted mass is then run into an ingot, and the ingot is weighed against the same number of napoleons that compose it. And I carry away the ingot.

When we return the women are still squatting in the shop in the attitude of the morning. They show neither impatience nor weariness; nor does the shopkeeper. The baby is sprawled out in his brown loveliness, and the purchase of a barbarous necklace of beads is about concluded. Our goldsmith now removes his outer garment, revealing his fine gown of striped silk, pushes up his sleeves and prepares for work. His only-tools are a small anvil, a hammer and a pair of pincers. The ingot is heated and hammered, and heated and hammered, until it is drawn out into an even, thick wire. This is then folded in three to the required length, and twisted, till the gold looks like molasses candy; the ends are then hammered together, and the bracelet is bent to its form. Finally it is weighed again and cleaned. If the owner wishes he can have put on it the government stamp. Gold ornaments that are stamped, the goldsmith will take back at any time and give for them their weight in coin, less two per cent.

On our way home we encounter a wedding procession; this is the procession conducting the bride to the house of the bridegroom; that to the bath having taken place two days before. The night of the day before going to the bridegroom is called the "Night of henna." The bride has an entertainment at her own house, receives presents of money, and has her hands and her

feet dyed with henna. The going to the bridegroom is on the eve of either Monday or Friday. These processions we often meet in the streets of Cairo; they wander about circuitously through the town making all the noise and display possible. The procession is a rambling affair and generally attended by a rabble of boys and men.

This one is preceded by half a dozen shabbily dressed musicians beating different sorts of drums and blowing hautboys, each instrument on its own hook; the tune, if there was one, has become discouraged, and the melody has dropped out; thump, pound, squeak, the music is more disorganized than the procession, and draggles on in noisy dissonance like a drunken militia band at the end of a day's "general training."

Next come some veiled women in black; and following them are several small virgins in white. The bride walks next, with a woman each side of her to direct her steps. This is necessary, for she is covered from head to feet with a red cashmere shawl hanging from a sort of crown on the the top of her head. She is in appearance, simply a red cone. Over her and on three sides of her, but open in front, is a canopy of pink silk, borne on poles by four men. Behind straggle more musicians, piping and thumping in an independent nonchalance, followed by gleeful boys. One attendant sprinkles rose-water on the spectators, and two or three others seem to have a general direction of the course of the train, and ask backsheesh for it whenever a stranger is met.

The procession gets tired occasionally and sits down in the

dust of the road to rest. Sometimes it is accompanied by dancers and other performers to amuse the crowd. I saw one yesterday which had halted by the roadside, all the women except the bride squatting down in patient resignation. In a hollow square of spectators, in front, a male dancer was exhibiting his steps. Holding a wand perpendicularly before him with both hands, he moved backwards and forwards, with a mincing gait, exhibiting neither grace nor agility, but looking around with the most conceited expression I ever saw on a human face. Occasionally he would look down at his legs with the most approving glance, as much as to say, "I trust, God being great, that you are taking particular notice of those legs; it seems to me that they couldn't be improved." The fellow enjoyed his dancing if no one else did, and it was impossible to get him to desist and let the procession move on. At last the *cortege* made a *detour* round the man who seemed to be so popular with himself, and left him to enjoy his own performance.

Sometimes the expense of this *zeffeh*, or bridal procession, is shared by two parties, and I have seen two brides walking under the same canopy, but going to different husbands. The public is not excluded from an interest in these weddings. The house of a bridegroom, near the Mooskee, was illuminated a night or two before the wedding, colored lanterns were hung across the street, and story-tellers were engaged to recite in front of the house. On the night of the marriage there was a crowd which greatly enjoyed the indelicate songs and stories of the hired performers. Late in

the evening an old woman appeared at a window and proclaimed that the husband was contented with his wife.

An accompaniment of a bridal procession which we sometimes saw we could not understand. Before the procession proper, walked another, preceded by a man carrying on his head a high wooden cabinet, with four legs, the front covered with pieces of looking-glass and bits of brass; behind him were musicians and attendants, followed by a boy on horseback, dressed richly in clothes too large for him and like a girl's. It turned out to be a parade before circumcision, the friends of the lad having taken advantage of the bridal ceremony of a neighbor to make a display. The wooden case was merely the sign of the barber who walked in the procession and was to perform the operation.

"I suppose you are married?" I ask Hadji when the procession has gone by.

"Yes, sir, long time."

"And you have never had but one wife?"

"Have one. He quite nuff for me."

"How old was she when you married her?"

"Oh, I marry he, when he much girl! I tink he eleven, maybe twelve, not more I tink."

Girls in Egypt are marriageable at ten or eleven, and it is said that if not married before they are fourteen they have an excellent chance of being old maids. Precocious to mature, they are quick to fall away and lose their beauty; the laboring classes especially

are ugly and flabby before eighteen. The low mental, not to say physical, condition of Egyptian women is no doubt largely due to these early marriages. The girl is married and is a mother before she has an opportunity to educate herself or to learn the duties of wife or mother, ignorant of how to make a home pleasant and even of housekeeping, and when she is utterly unfit to have the care and training of a child. Ignorant and foolish, and, as Mr. Lane says, passionate, women and mothers can never produce a great race. And the only reform for Egypt that will give it new vitality and a place in the world must begin with the women.

The Khedive, who either has foresight or listens to good advice, issued a firman some years ago forbidding the marriage of girls under fifteen. It does not seem to be respected either in city or country; though I believe that it has some influence in the city, and generally girls are not married so young in Cairo as in the country. Yet I heard recently in this city of a man of sixty who took a wife of twelve. As this was not his first wife, it could not be said of him, as it is said of some great geniuses, that he struck twelve the first time.

CHAPTER VI.—
MOSQUES AND TOMBS

WHAT we in Cairo like most to do, is to do nothing in the charming winter weather—to postpone the regular and necessary sight-seeing to that limbo to which the Arabs relegate everything —*bookra*, that is, tomorrow. Why not as well go to the Pyramids or to Heliopolis or to the tombs of the Memlooks tomorrow! It is to be the same fair weather; we never plan an excursion, with the proviso, "If it does not rain." This calm certainty of a clear sky adds twenty-five per cent, to the value of life.

And yet, there is the Sirocco; that enervating, depressing south wind, when all the sands of the hot desert rise up into the air and envelope everything in grit and gloom. I have been on the Citadel terrace when the city was only dimly outlined in the thick air, and all the horizon and the sky were veiled in dust as if by a black Scotch mist. We once waited three days after we had set a time to visit the Pyramids, for the air to clear. The Sirocco is bad enough in the town, the fine dust penetrates the closed recesses of all apartments; but outside the city it is unbearable. Indeed any wind raises the sand disagreeably; and dust is the great plague of Egypt. The streets of Cairo, except those that are sprinkled, are seldom free from clouds of it. And it is an ancient dust. I suppose the powdered dead of thousands of years are blowing about in

the air.

The desert makes itself apparent even in Cairo. Not only is it in the air, but it lies in wait close to the walls and houses, ready to enter at the gates, sifting in through every crevice. Only by constant irrigation can it be driven back. As soon as we pass beyond the compact city eastward, we enter the desert, unless we follow the course of some refreshing canal. The drive upon it is a favorite one on summer nights. I have spoken of the desert as hot; but it is always cool at night; and it is the habit of foreigners who are detained in Cairo in the summer to go every night to the desert to cool off.

The most conspicuous object in Cairo, from all points, is the Citadel, built on a bold spur of the Mokattam range, and the adjoining Mosque of Mohammed Ali in which that savage old reformer is buried. The mosque is rather Turkish than Saracenic, and its two slender minarets are much criticised. You who have been in Constantinople are familiar with the like slight and graceful forms in that city; they certainly are not so rich or elegant as many of the elaborately carved and more robust minarets of Cairo which the genius of the old architects reared in the sun-burst of Saracenic architecture; but they are very picturesque and effective in their position and especially against a poetic evening sky.

When Salah-e'-deen robbed the pyramids to build the Citadel, he doubtless thought he was erecting a fortification that would forever protect his city and be an enduring home for the Sultans

of Egypt. But Mohammed Ali made it untenable as a fort by placing a commanding battery on the Mokattam ledge; and now the Citadel (by which I mean all the group of buildings) useless as a fort (except to overawe the city) and abandoned as a palace, is little more than a ghost-walk of former splendors. There are barracks in it; recruits are drilling in its squares; the minister-of-war occupies some of its stately apartments; the American General Stone, the chief officer of the Khedive's army, uses others; in some we find the printing presses and the bureaus of the engineers and the typographical corps; but vast halls and chambers of audience, and suites of apartments of the harem, richly carved and gilded, are now vacant and echo the footsteps of sentries and servitors. And they have the shabby look of most Eastern architecture when its first freshness is gone.

We sat in the room and on the platform where Mohammed Ali sat when the slaughter of the Memlooks was going on; he sat motionless, so it is reported, and gave no other sign of nervousness than the twisting of a piece of paper in his hands. And yet he must have heard the cries under his window, and, of course, the shots of the soldiers on the walls who were executing his orders. We looked down from the balcony into the narrow, walled lane, with its closed gates, in which the five hundred Memlooks were hemmed in and massacred. Think of the nerve of the old Turk, sitting still without changing countenance while five hundred, or more, gallant swash-bucklers were being shot in cool blood under his window! Probably he would not have been

so impassive if he had seen one of the devoted band escape by spurring his horse through a break in the wall and take a fearful flying leap upon the rubbish below.

The world agrees to condemn this treacherous and ferocious act of Mohammed Ali and, generally, I believe, to feel grateful to him for it. Never was there a clan of men that needed exterminating so much as the Memlooks. Nothing less would have suited their peculiarities. They were merely a band of robbers, black-mailers, and freebooters, a terror to Egypt. Dislodged from actual power, they were still greatly to be dreaded, and no ruler was safe who did not obey them. The term Memlook means "a white male slave," and is still so used. The Memlooks, who originally were mostly Circassian white slaves, climbed from the position of favorites to that of tyrants. They established a long dynasty of sultans, and their tombs yonder at the edge of the desert are among the most beautiful specimens of the Saracenic architecture. Their sovereignty was overthrown by Sultan Selim in 1517, but they remained a powerful and aristocratic band which controlled governors, corrupted even Oriental society by the introduction of monstrous vices, and oppressed the people. I suppose that in the time of the French invasion they may have been joined by bold adventurers of many nations. Egypt could have no security so long as any of them remained. It was doubtless in bad taste for Mohammed Ali to extend a friendly invitation to the Memlooks to visit him, and then murder them when they were caught in his trap; he finally

died insane, and perhaps the lunacy was providentially on him at that time.

In the Citadel precincts is a hall occupied by the "parliament" of the Khedive, when it is in session; a parliament whose members are selected by the Viceroy from all over Egypt, in order that he may have information of the state of the country, but a body that has no power and certainly not so much influence in the state as the harem has. But its very assemblage is an innovation in the Orient, and it may lead in time to infinite gab, to election briberies and multitudinous legislation, the accompaniments of the highest civilization. We may yet live to see a member of it rise to enquire into the expenses of the Khedive's numerous family.

The great Mosque of Mohammed Ali is in the best repair and is the least frequented of any in Cairo. Its vast, domed interior, rich in materials and ambitious in design, is impressive, but this, like all other great mosques, strikes the Western man as empty. On the floor are beautiful rugs; a tawdry chandelier hangs in the center, and the great spaces are strung with lanterns. No one was performing ablution at the handsome fountain in the marble-paved court; only a single worshipper was kneeling at prayer in all the edifice. But I heard a bird singing sweetly in the airy height of the dome.

The view from the terrace of the mosque is the finest in Egypt, not perhaps in extent, but certainly in variety and objects of interest; and if the atmosphere and the light are both favorable,

it is the most poetic. From it you command not only the city and a long sweep of the Nile, with fields of living green and dark lines of palms, but the ruins and pyramids of slumberous old Memphis, and, amid the yellow sands and backed by the desolate Libyan hills, the dreamy pyramids of Geezeh. We are advised to get this view at sunset, because then the light is soft and all the vast landscape has color. This is good advice so far as the city at our feet is concerned, with its hundreds of minarets and its wide expanse of flat roofs, palm-tops and open squares; there is the best light then also on the purple Mokattam hills; and the tombs of the Memlooks, north of the cemetery, with their fairy domes and exquisite minarets and the encompassing grey desert, the whole bathed in violet light, have a beauty that will linger with one who has once seen them forever. But looking beyond the Nile, you have the sun in your face. I should earnestly entreat the stranger to take this view at sunrise. I never saw it myself at that hour, being always otherwise engaged, but I am certain that the Pyramids and the Libyan desert would wake at early morning in a glow of transcendent beauty.

We drive out the gate or Bab e' Nasr beyond the desolate Moslem cemetery, to go to the tombs of the Circassian Memlook Sultans. We pass round and amid hills of rubbish, dirt, and broken pottery, the dumpings of the city for centuries, and travel a road so sandy that the horses can scarcely drag the heavy carriage through it. The public horses of Cairo are sorry beasts and only need a slight excuse for stopping at any time. There

is nothing agreeable about the great Moslem cemetery; it is a field of sand-heaps, thickly dotted with little oven-shaped stucco tombs. They may be pleasanter below ground; for the vault into which the body is put, without a coffin, is high enough to permit its occupant to sit up, which he is obliged to do, whether he is able to sit up or not, the first night of his stay there, in order to answer the questions of two angels who come to examine him on his religious practices and views.

The Tombs of the Sultans, which are in the desert, are in fact vast structures,—tombs and mosques united—and are built of parti-colored stone. They are remarkable for the beautiful and varied forms of their minarets and for their aërial domes; the latter are covered with the most wonderful arabesque carving and tracing. They stand deserted, with the sand drifting about them, and falling to rapid decay. In the interiors are still traces of exquisite carving and color, but much of the ornamentation, being of stucco on rude wooden frames, only adds to the appearance of decay. The decay of finery is never respectable.

It is not correct, however, to speak of these mosque-tombs as deserted. Into all of them have crept families of the poor or of the vicious. And the business of the occupants, who call themselves guardians, is to extract backsheesh from the visitor. Spinning, knitting, baking, and all the simple household occupations go on in the courts and in the gaunt rooms; one tomb is used as a grist-mill. The women and girls dwelling there go unveiled; they were tattooed slightly upon the chin and the forehead, as

most Egyptian women are; some of the younger were pretty, with regular features and handsome dark eyes. Near the mosques are lanes of wretched homes, occupied by as wretched people. The whole mortal neighborhood swarms (life out of death) with children; they are as thick as jars at a pottery factory; they are as numerous as the flies that live on the rims of their eyes and noses; they are as naked, most of them, as when they were born. The distended condition of their stomachs testify that they have plenty to eat, and they tumble about in the dirt, in the full enjoyment of this delicious climate. People can afford to be poor when nature is their friend.

CHAPTER VII.—
MOSLEM WORSHIP.—
THE CALL TO PRAYER

I SHOULD like to go once to an interesting city where there are no sights. That city could be enjoyed; and conscience—which never leaves any human being in peace until it has nagged him into a perfect condition morally, and keeps punching him about frivolous little details of duty, especially at the waking morning hour—would not come to insert her thumb among the rosy fingers of the dawn.

Perhaps I do not make myself clear about conscience. Conscience is a kind of gastric juice that gnaws upon the very coatings of a person's moral nature, if it has no indigestible sin to feed on. Of course I know that neither conscience nor gastric juice has a thumb. And, to get out of these figures, all I wish to say is, that in Cairo, when the traveler is aware of the glow of the morning stealing into his room, as if the day were really opened gently (not ripped and torn open as it is in our own cold north) by a rosy-fingered maiden, and an atmosphere of sweet leisure prevails, then Conscience suggests remorselessly: "To-day you must go to the Pyramids," or, "You must take your pleasure in a drive in the Shoobra road," or "You must explore dirty Old Cairo and its Coptic churches," or "You must visit the mosques,

and see the Howling Derweeshes."

But for this Conscience, I think nothing would be so sweet as the coming of an eastern morning. I fancy that the cool wind stirring in the palms is from the pure desert. It may be that these birds, so melodiously singing in the garden, are the small green birds who eat the fruits and drink the waters of Paradise, and in whose crops the souls of martyrs abide until Judgment. As I lie quite still, I hear the call of a muezzin from a minaret not far off, the voice now full and clear and now faint, as he walks around the tower to send his entreaty over the dark roofs of the city. I am not disturbed by this early call to the unconverted, for this is not my religion. With the clamor of morning church bells in Italy it is different; for to one born in New England, Conscience is in the bells.

Sometimes at midnight I am dimly conscious of the first call to prayer, which begins solemnly:

"Prayer is better than sleep."

But the night calls are not obligatory, and I do not fully wake. The calls during the night are long chants, that of the daytime is much shorter. Mr. Lane renders it thus:

"God is most Great" (four times repeated). "I testify that there is no deity but God" (twice). "I testify that Mohammed is God's Apostle" (twice). "Come to prayer" (twice). "Come to security" (twice). "God is most Great" (twice). "There is no deity but God."

The muezzin whom I hear when the first faint light appears

in the east, has a most sonorous and sweet tenor voice, and his chant is exceedingly melodious. In the perfect hush of that hour his voice fills all the air, and might well be mistaken for a sweet entreaty out of heaven. This call is a long one, and is in fact a confession and proclamation as well as a call to prayer. It begins as follows:

"[I extol] the perfection of God, the Existing forever and ever" (three times): "the perfection of God, the Desired, the Existing, the Single, the Supreme: the perfection of God, the One, the Sole: the perfection of Him who taketh to Himself, in his great dominion, neither female companion nor male partner, nor any like unto Him, nor any that is disobedient, nor any deputy, nor any equal, nor any offspring. His perfection [be extolled]: and exalted be His name. He is a Deity who knew what hath been before it was, and called into existence what hath been; and He is now existing, as He was [at the first]. His perfection [be extolled]: and exalted be His name."

And it ends: "O God, bless and save and still beatify the beatified Prophet, our lord Mohammed. And may God, whose name be blessed and exalted, be well pleased with thee, O our lord El-Hassan, and with thee, O our lord El-Hoseyn, and with thee, O Aboo-Farrâg, O Sheykh of the Arabs, and with all the favorites ['.he welees'. of God. Amen."

The mosques of Cairo are more numerous than the churches in Rome; there are about four hundred, many of them in ruins, but nearly all in daily use. The old ones are the more interesting

architecturally, but all have a certain attraction. They are always open, they are cool quiet retreats out of the glare of the sun and the noise of the street; they are democratic and as hospitable to the beggar in rags as to the pasha in silk; they offer water for the dusty feet of the pilgrim and a clean mat on which to kneel; and in their hushed walls, with no images to distract the mind and no ritual to rely on, the devout worshipper may feel the presence of the Unseen. At all hours you will see men praying there or reading the Koran, unconscious of any observers. Women I have seen in there occasionally, but rarely, at prayer; still it is not uncommon to see a group of poor women resting in a quiet corner, perhaps sewing or talking in low voices. The outward steps and open courts are refuges for the poor, the friendless, the lazy, and the tired. Especially the old and decaying mosques, do the poor frequent. There about the fountains, the children play, and under the stately colonnades the men sleep and the women knit and sew. These houses of God are for the weary as well as for the pious or the repentant.

The mosques are all much alike. We enter by a few or by a flight of steps from the street into a large paved court, open to the sky, and surrounded by colonnades. There is a fountain in the center, a round or octagonal structure of carved stone, usually with a fanciful wooden roof; from faucets in the exterior, water runs into a surrounding stone basin about which the worshippers crouch to perform the ablutions before prayer. At one side of the court is the entrance to the mosque, covered by a curtain.

Pushing this aside you are in a spacious room lighted from above, perhaps with a dome, the roof supported by columns rising to elegant arches. You will notice also the peculiar Arabic bracketing-work, called by architects "pendentive," fitting the angles and the transitions from the corners below to the dome. In decaying mosques, where the plaster has fallen, revealing the round stick frame-work of this bracketing, the perishable character of Saracenic ornament is apparent.

The walls are plain, with the exception of gilded texts from the Koran. Above, on strings extending across the room are little lamps, and very often hundreds of ostrich eggs are suspended. These eggs are almost always seen in Coptic and often in Greek churches. What they signify I do not know, unless the ostrich, which can digest old iron, is a symbol of the credulity that can swallow any tradition. Perhaps her eggs represent the great "cosmic egg" which modern philosophers are trying to teach (if we may be allowed the expression) their grandmothers to suck.

The stone pavement is covered with matting and perhaps with costly rugs from Persia, Smyrna, and Tunis. The end towards Mecca is raised a foot or so; in it is the prayer niche, towards which all worshippers turn, and near that is the high pulpit with its narrow steps in front; a pulpit of marble carved, or of wood cut in bewildering arabesque, and inlaid with pearl.

The oldest mosque in Cairo is Ahmed ebn e' Tooloon, built in 879 A.D., and on the spot where, according to a tradition (of how high authority I do not know), Abraham was prevented from

offering up his son by the appearance of a ram. The modern name of this hill is, indeed, Kalat-el-Kebsh, the Citadel of the Ram. I suppose the tradition is as well based as is the belief of Moslems that it was Ishmael and not Isaac whose life was spared. The center of this mosque is an open court, surrounded by rows of fine columns, five deep on the East side; and what gives it great interest is the fact that the columns all support *pointed arches*, and exceedingly graceful ones, with a slight curve of the horse-shoe at the base. These arches were constructed about three centuries before the introduction of the pointed arch into Europe; their adoption in Europe was probably one of the results of the Crusades.

In this same court I saw an old Nebk tree, which grows on the spot where the ark of Noah is said to have rested after its voyage. This goes to show, if it goes to show anything, that the Flood was "general" enough to reach Egypt.

The mosque of Sultan Hassan, notwithstanding its ruined and shabby condition, is the finest specimen of pure Arabic architecture in the city; and its lofty and ornamented porch is, I think, as fine as anything of its kind in the world. One may profitably spend hours in the study of its exquisite details. I often found myself in front of it, wondering at the poetic invention and sensitiveness to the beautiful in form, which enabled the builders to reach the same effects that their Gothic successors only produced by the aid of images and suggestions drawn from every department of nature.

We ascend the high steps, pass through some dilapidated parts of the building, which are inhabited, and come to the threshold. Here the Moslem removes his shoes, or street-slippers, and carries them in his hand. Over this sill we may not step, shod as we are. An attendant is ready, however, with big slippers which go on over our shoes. Eager, bright little boys and girls put them on for us, and then attend us in the mosque, keeping a close watch that the slippers are not shuffled off. When one does get off, leaving the unholy shoe to touch the ground, they affect a sort of horror and readjust it with a laugh. Even the children are beginning to feel the general relaxation of bigotry. To-day the heels of my shoes actually touch the floor at every step, a transgression which the little girl who is leading me by the hand points out with a sly shake of the head. The attention of this pretty little girl looks like affection, but I know by sad experience that it means "backsheesh." It is depressing to think that her natural, sweet, coquettish ways mean only that. She is fierce if any other girl seeks to do me the least favor, and will not permit my own devotion to her to wander.

The mosque of Sultan Hassan was built in the fourteenth century, and differs from most others. Its great, open court has a square recess on each side, over which is a noble arch; the east one is very spacious, and is the place of prayer. Behind this, in an attached building, is the tomb of Hassan; lights are always burning over it, and on it lies a large copy of the Koran.

When we enter, there are only a few at their devotions,

though there are several groups enjoying the serenity of the court; picturesque groups, all color and rags! In a far corner an old man is saying his prayers and near him a negro, perhaps a slave, also prostrates himself. At the fountain are three or four men preparing for devotion; and indeed the prayers begin with the washing. The ablution is not a mere form with these soiled laborers—though it does seem a hopeless task for men of the color of these to scrub themselves. They bathe the head, neck, breast, hands and arms, legs and feet; in fact, they take what might be called a fair bath in any other country. In our sight this is simply a wholesome "wash"; to them it is both cleanliness and religion, as we know, for Mr. Lane has taught us what that brown man in the blue gown is saying. It may help us to understand his acts if we transcribe a few of his ejaculations.

When he washes his face, he says:—"O God whiten my face with thy light, on the day when thou shalt whiten the faces of thy favorites; and do not blacken my face, on the day when Thou shalt blacken the faces of thine enemies." Washing his right arm, he entreats:—"O God, give me my book in my right hand; and reckon with me with an easy reckoning." Passing his wetted hand over his head under his raised turban, he says:—"O God, cover me with thy mercy, and pour down thy blessing upon me; and shade me under the shadow of thy canopy, on the day when there shall be no shade but its shade."

One of the most striking entreaties is the prayer upon washing the right foot:—"O God, make firm my feet upon the Sirat, on

the day when feet shall slip upon it."

"Es Sirât" is the bridge, which extends over the midst of Hell, finer than a hair and sharper than the edge of a sword, over which all must pass, and from which the wicked shall fall into Hell.

In these mosques order and stillness always reign, and the devotions are conducted with the utmost propriety, whether there are single worshippers, or whether the mosque is filled with lines of gowned and turbaned figures prostrating themselves and bowing with one consent. But, much stress as the Moslems lay upon prayer, they say that they do not expect to reach Paradise by that, or by any merit of their own, but only by faith and forgiveness. This is expressed frequently both in prayers and in the sermons on Friday. A sermon by an Imam of a Cairo mosque contains these implorings:—"O God! unloose the captivity of the captives, and annul the debts of the debtors; and make this town to be safe and secure, and blessed with wealth and plenty, and all the towns of the Moslems, O Lord of the beings of the whole earth. And decree safety and health to us and to all travelers, and pilgrims, and warriors, and wanderers, upon thy earth, and upon thy sea, such as are Moslems, O Lord of the beings of the whole world. O Lord, we have acted unjustly towards our own souls, and if Thou do not forgive us and be merciful unto us, we shall surely be of those who perish. I beg of God, the Great, that He may forgive me and you, and all the people of Mohammed, the servants of God."

CHAPTER VIII.—THE PYRAMIDS

THE ancient Egyptians of the Upper Country excavated sepulchres for their great dead in the solid rocks of the mountain; the dwellers in the lower country built a mountain of stone in which to hide the royal mummy. In the necropolis at Thebes there are the vast rock-tombs of the kings; at Sakkara and Geezeh stand the Pyramids. On the upper Nile isolated rocks and mountains cut the sky in pyramidal forms; on the lower Nile the mountain ranges run level along the horizon, and the constructed pyramids relieve the horizontal lines which are otherwise unbroken except by the palms.

The rock-tombs were walled up and their entrances concealed as much as possible, by a natural arrangement of masses of rock; the pyramids were completely encased and the openings perfectly masked. False passages, leading through gorgeously carved and decorated halls and chambers to an empty pit or a blind wall, were hewn in the rock-tombs, simply to mislead the violator of the repose of the dead as to the position of the mummy. The entrance to the pyramids is placed away from the center, and misleading passages run from it, conducting the explorer away from the royal sarcophagus. Rock-tomb and pyramid were for the same purpose, the eternal security of the mummy.

That purpose has failed; the burial-place was on too grand a

scale, its contents were too tempting. There is no security for any one after death but obscurity; to preserve one's body is to lose it. The bones must be consumed if they would be safe, or else the owner of them must be a patriot and gain a forgotten grave. There is nothing that men so enjoy as digging up the bones of their ancestors. It is doubtful if even the Egyptian plunderers left long undisturbed the great tombs which contained so much treasure; and certainly the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Saracens, left comparatively little for the scientific grave-robbers of our excellent age. They did, however, leave the tombs, the sarcophagi, most of the sculptures, and a fair share of the preserved dead.

But time made a pretty clean sweep of the mummy and nearly all his personal and real property. The best sculptures of his tomb might legally be considered in the nature of improvements attaching themselves to the realty, but our scientists have hacked them off and carried them away as if they were personal estate. We call the Arabs thieves and ghouls who prowl in the the tombs in search of valuables. But motive is everything; digging up the dead and taking his property, tomb and all, in the name of learning and investigation is respectable and commendable. It comes to the same thing for the mummy, however, this being turned out of house and home in his old age. The deed has its comic aspect, and it seems to me that if a mummy has any humor left in his dried body, he must smile to see what a ludicrous failure were his costly efforts at concealment and repose. For

there is a point where frustration of plans may be so sweeping as to be amusing; just as the mummy himself is so ghastly that his aspect is almost funny.

Nothing more impresses the mind with the antiquity of Egypt than its vast cemeteries, into which the harvests of the dead have been gathered for so many thousands of years. Of old Memphis, indeed, nothing remains except its necropolis, whose monuments have outlasted the palaces and temples that were the wonder of the world. The magnificence of the city can be estimated by the extent of its burial-ground.

On the west side of the Nile, opposite Cairo, and extending south along the edge of the desert, is a nearly continuous necropolis for fifteen miles. It is marked at intervals by pyramids. At Geezeh are three large and several small ones; at Abooseer are four; at Sakkara are eleven; at Dashoor are four. These all belonged to the necropolis of Memphis. At Geezeh is the largest, that of Cheops or Shoofoo, the third king of the fourth dynasty, reigning at Memphis about 4235 B.C., according to the chronology of Mariette Bey, which every new discovery helps to establish as the most probably correct. This pyramid was about four hundred and eighty feet high, and the length of a side of its base was about seven hundred and sixty-four feet; it is now four hundred and fifty feet high and its base line is seven hundred and forty-six feet. It is big enough yet for any practical purpose. The old pyramid at Sakkara is believed to have been built by Ouenephes, the fourth king of the first dynasty, and to be the

oldest monument in the world. Like the mounds of the Chaldeans, it is built in degrees or stages, of which there are five. Degraded now and buried at the base in its own rubbish, it rises only about one hundred and ninety feet above the ground.

It is a drive of two hours from Cairo to the Pyramids of Geezeh, over a very good road; and we are advised to go by carriage. Hadji is on the seat with the driver, keeping his single twinkling eye active in the service of the howadji. The driver is a polished Nubian, with a white turban and a white gown; feet and legs go bare. You wouldn't call it a stylish turnout for the Bois, but it would be all right if we had a gorgeous sais to attract attention from ourselves.

We drive through the wide and dusty streets of the new quarter. The barrack-like palace, on the left of abroad place, is the one in which the Khedive is staying just now, though he may be in another one to-night. The streets are the same animated theater-like scenes of vivid color and picturesque costume and indolent waiting on Providence to which we thought we should never become accustomed, but which are already beginning to lose their novelty. The fellaheen are coming in to market, trudging along behind donkeys and camels loaded with vegetables or freshly cut grass and beans for fodder. Squads of soldiers in white uniform pass; bugle notes are heard from Kasr e' Neel, a barrack of troops on the river. Here, as in Europe, the great business most seriously pursued is the drilling of men to stand straight, handle arms, roll their eyes, march with a thousand

legs moving as one, and shoot on sight other human beings who have learned the same tricks. God help us, it is a pitiful thing for civilized people.

The banks of the Nile here above Boolak are high and steep. We cross the river on a fine bridge of iron, and drive over the level plain, opposite, on a raised and winding embankment. This is planted on each side with lebbekh and sycamore trees. Part of the way the trees are large and the shade ample; the roots going down into moist ground. Much of the way the trees are small and kept alive by constant watering. On the right, by a noble avenue are approached the gardens and the palace of Gezeereh. We pass by the new summer palace of Geezeh. Other large ones are in process of construction. If the viceroy is measured for a new suit of clothes as often as he orders a new palace, his tailors must be kept busy. Through the trees we see green fields, intersected with ditches, wheat, barley, and beans, the latter broad-sown and growing two to three feet high; here and there are lines of palms, clumps of acacias; peasants are at work or asleep in the shade; there are trains of camels, and men plowing with cows or buffaloes. Leaving the squalid huts that are the remains of once beautiful Geezeh, the embankment strides straight across the level country.

And there before us, on a rocky platform a hundred feet higher than the meadows, are the pyramids, cutting the stainless blue of the sky with their sharp lines. They master the eye when we are an hour away, and as we approach they seem to recede, neither

growing larger nor smaller, but simply withdrawing with a grand reserve.

I suppose there are more "emotions" afloat about the pyramids than concerning any other artificial' objects. There are enough. It becomes constantly more and more difficult for the ordinary traveler to rise to the height of these accumulated emotions, and it is entirely impossible to say how much the excitement one experiences on drawing near them results from reading and association, and how much is due to these simple forms in such desolate surroundings. But there they stand, enduring standards, and every visitor seems inclined to measure his own height by their vastness, in telling what impression they produce upon *him*. They have been treated sentimentally, off-handedly, mathematically, solemnly, historically, humorously. They yield to no sort of treatment. They are nothing but piles of stone, and shabby piles at that, and they stand there to astonish people. Mr. Bayard Taylor is entirely right when he says that the pyramids are and will remain unchanged and unapproachably impressive however modern life may surge about them, and though a city should creep about their bases.

Perhaps they do not appear so gigantic when the visitor is close to them as he thought they would from their mass at a distance. But if he stands at the base of the great pyramid, and casts his eye along the steps of its enormous side and up the dizzy height where the summit seems to pierce the solid blue, he will not complain of want of size. And if he walks around one, and walks from one

to another wading in the loose sand and under a midday sun, his respect for the pyramids will increase every moment.

Long before we reach the ascent of the platform we are met by Arab boys and men, sellers of antiquities, and most persistent beggars. The antiquities are images of all sorts, of gods, beasts, and birds, in pottery or in bronze, articles from tombs, bits of mummy-cloth, beads and scarabæi, and Roman copper coins; all of them at least five thousand years old in appearance.

Our carriage is stuck in the sand, and we walk a quarter of a mile up the platform, attended by a rabble of coaxing, imploring, importunate, half-clad Bedaween. "Look a here, you take dis; dis ver much old, he from mummy; see here, I get him in tomb; one shillin; in Cairo you get him one pound; ver sheap. You no like? No anteeka, no money. How much?"

"One penny."

"Ah," ironically, "ket'-ther khâyrak (much obliged). You take him sixpence. Howadji, say, me guide, you want go top pyramid, go inside, go Sphinkee, allée tomba?"

Surrounded by an increasing swarm of guides and antiquity-hawkers, and beset with offers, entreaties, and opportunities, we come face to face with the great pyramid. The ground in front of it is piled high with its *debris*. Upon these rocks, in picturesque attitudes, some in the shade and some in the sun, others of the tribe are waiting the arrival of pyramid climbers; in the intense light their cotton garments and turbans are like white paint, brilliant in the sun, ashy in the shadow. All the shadows are

sharp and deep. A dark man leaning on his spear at the corner of the pyramid makes a picture. At a kiosk near by carriages are standing and visitors are taking their lunch. But men, carriages, kiosk, are dwarfed in this great presence. It is, as I said, a shabby pile of stone, and its beauty is only that of mathematical angles; but then it is so big, it casts such a shadow; we all beside it are like the animated lines and dots which represent human beings in the etchings of Callot.

To be rid of importunities we send for the sheykh of the pyramid tribe. The Bedaween living here have a sort of ownership of these monuments, and very good property they are. The tribe supports itself mainly by tolls levied upon visitors. The sheykh assigns guides and climbers, and receives the pay for their services. This money is divided among the families; but what individuals get as backsheesh or by the sale of antiquities, they keep. They live near by, in huts scarcely distinguishable from the rocks, many of them in vacant tombs, and some have shanties on the borders of the green land. Most of them have the appearance of wretched poverty, and villainous faces abound. But handsome, intelligent faces and finely developed forms are not rare, either.

The Sheykh, venerable as Jacob, respectable as a New England deacon, suave and polite as he traditionally should be, wears a scarf of camel's hair and a bright yellow and black kuffia, put on like a hood, fastened about the head by a cord and falling over the shoulders. He apportioned his guides to take us up the pyramid and to accompany us inside. I had already

sent for a guide who had been recommended to me in the city, and I found Ali Gobree the frank, manly, intelligent, quiet man I had expected, handsome also, and honesty and sincerity beaming from his countenance. How well-bred he was, and how well he spoke English. Two other men were given me; for the established order is that two shall pull and one shall push the visitor up. And it is easier to submit to the regulation than to attempt to go alone and be followed by an importunate crowd.

I am aware that every one who writes of the pyramids is expected to make a scene of the ascent, but if I were to romance I would rather do it in a fresher field. The fact is that the ascent is not difficult, unless the person is very weak in the legs or attempts to carry in front of himself a preposterous stomach. There is no difficulty in going alone; occasionally the climber encounters a step from three to four feet high, but he can always flank it. Of course it is tiresome to go up-stairs, and the great pyramid needs an "elevator"; but a person may leisurely zig-zag up the side without great fatigue. We went straight up at one corner; the guides insisting on taking me by the hand; the boosting Arab who came behind earned his money by grunting every time we reached a high step, but he didn't lift a pound.

We stopped frequently to look down and to measure with the eye the mass on the surface of which we were like flies. When we were a third of the way up, and turned from the edge to the middle, the height to be climbed seemed as great as when we started. I should think that a giddy person might have unpleasant

sensations in looking back along the corner and seeing no resting-place down the sharp edges of the steps short of the bottom, if he should fall. We measure our ascent by the diminishing size of the people below, and by the widening of the prospect. The guides are perfectly civil, they do not threaten to throw us off, nor do they even mention backsheesh. Stopping to pick out shells from the nummulitic limestone blocks or to try our glasses on some distant object, we come easily to the summit in a quarter of an hour.

The top, thirty feet square, is strewn with big blocks of stone and has a flag-staff. Here ambitious people sometimes breakfast. Arabs are already here with koollehs of water and antiquities. When the whole party arrives the guides set up a perfunctory cheer; but the attempt to give an air of achievement to our climbing performance and to make it appear that we are the first who have ever accomplished the feat, is a failure. We sit down upon the blocks and look over Egypt, as if we were used to this sort of thing at home.

All that is characteristic of Egypt is in sight; to the west, the Libyan hills and the limitless stretch of yellow desert sand; to the north, desert also and the ruined pyramid of Abooroâsh; to the south, that long necropolis of the desert marked by the pyramids of Abooseér, Sakkarah, and Dashoor; on the east, the Nile and its broad meadows widening into the dim Delta northward, the white line of Cairo under the Mokattam hills, and the grey desert beyond. Egypt is a ribbon of green between two deserts. Canals

and lines of trees stripe the green of the foreground; white sails flicker southward along the river, winging their way to Nubia; the citadel and its mosque shine in the sun.

An Arab offers to run down the side of this pyramid, climb the second one, the top of which is still covered with the original casing, and return in a certain incredible number of minutes. We decline, because we don't like to have a half-clad Arab thrust his antics between us and the contemplation of dead yet mighty Egypt. We regret our refusal afterwards, for there is nothing people like to read about so much as feats of this sort. Humanity is more interesting than stones. I am convinced that if Martha Rugg had fallen off the pyramid instead of the rock at Niagara Falls, people would have looked at the spot where she fell, and up at the stairs she came bobbing down, with more interest than at the pyramid itself. Nevertheless, this Arab, or another did, while we were there, climb the second pyramid like a monkey; he looked only a black speck on its side.

That accidents sometimes happen on the pyramids, I gather from the conversation of Hadji, who is full of both information and philosophy to-day.

"Sometime man, he fool, he go up. Man say, 'go this way.' Fool, he say, 'let me lone.' Umbrella he took him, threw him off; he dead in hundred pieces."

As to the selling of Scarabæi to travelers, Hadji inclines to the side of the poor:—"Good one, handsome one,—one pound. Not good for much—but what to do? Gentleman he want it; man he

want the money."

For Murray's' Guide-Book he has not more respect than guides usually have who have acted as interpreters in the collection of information for it. For "interpret" Hadji always says "spell."

"When the Murray come here I spell it to the man, the man to Murray and him put it down. He don't know anything before. He told me, what is this? I told him what it is. Something," with a knowing nod, "be new after Murray. Look here, Murray very old now."

Hadji understands why the cost of living has gone up so much in Egypt. "He was very sheap; now very different, dearer —because plenty people. I build a house, another people build a house, and another people he build a house. Plenty men to work, make it dear." I have never seen Hadji's dwelling, but it is probably of the style of those that he calls—when in the street we ask him what a specially shabby mud-wall with a ricketty door in it is—"a brivate house."

About the Great Pyramid has long waged an archaeological war. Years have been spent in studying it, measuring it inside and outside, drilling holes into it, speculating why this stone is in one position and that in another, and constructing theories about the purpose for which it was built. Books have been written on it, diagrams of all its chambers and passages, with accurate measurements of every stone in them, are printed. If I had control of a restless genius who was dangerous to the peace of society, I

would set him at the Great Pyramid, certain that he would have occupation for a lifetime and never come to any useful result. The interior has peculiarities, which distinguish it from all other pyramids; and many think that it was not intended for a sepulchre mainly; but that it was erected for astronomical purposes, or as a witness to the true north, east, south, and west, or to serve as a standard of measure; not only has the passage which descends obliquely three hundred and twenty feet from the opening into the bed-rock, and permits a view of the sky from that depth, some connection with the observation of Sirius and the fixing of the Sothic year; not only is the porphyry sarcophagus that is in the King's Chamber, secure from fluctuations of temperature, a fixed standard of measure; but the positions of various stones in the passages (stones which certainly are stumbling-blocks to everybody who begins to think why they are there) are full of a mystic and even religious signification. It is most restful, however, to the mind to look upon this pyramid as a tomb, and that it was a sepulchre like all the others is the opinion of most scholars.

Whatever it was, it is a most unpleasant place to go into. But we wanted one idea of' Cimmerian darkness, and the sensation of being buried alive, and we didn't like to tell a lie when asked if we had been in, and therefore we went. You will not understand where we went without a diagram, and you never will have any idea of it until you go. We, with a guide for each person, light candles, and slide and stumble down an incline; we crawl up an

incline; we shuffle along a level passage that seems interminable, backs and knees bent double till both are apparently broken, and the torture of the position is almost unbearable; we get up the Great Gallery, a passage over a hundred and fifty feet long, twenty-eight high, and seven broad, and about as easy to ascend as a logging-sluice, crawl under three or four portcullises, and emerge, dripping with perspiration and covered with dust, into the king's chamber, a room thirty-four feet long, seventeen broad, and nineteen high. It is built of magnificent blocks of syenite, polished and fitted together perfectly, and contains the lidless sarcophagus.

If it were anywhere else and decently lighted, it would be a stylish apartment; but with a dozen torches and candles smoking in it and heating it, a lot of perspiring Arabs shouting and kicking up a dust, and the feeling that the weight of the superincumbent mass was upon us, it seemed to me too small and confined even for a tomb. The Arabs thought they ought to cheer here as they did on top; we had difficulty in driving them all out and sending the candles with them, in order that we might enjoy the quiet and blackness of this retired situation. I suppose we had for once absolute night, a room full of the original Night, brother of Chaos, night bottled up for four or five thousand years, the very night in which old Cheops lay in a frightful isolation, with all the portcullises down and the passages sealed with massive stones.

Out of this blackness the eye even by long waiting couldn't get a ray; a cat's eye would be invisible in it. Some scholars think

that Cheops never occupied this sarcophagus. I can understand his feeling if he ever came in here alive. I think he may have gone away and put up "to let" on the door.

We scrambled about a good deal in this mountain, visited the so-called Queen's Chamber, entered by another passage, below the King's, lost all sense of time and of direction, and came out, glad to have seen the wonderful interior, but welcoming the burst of white light and the pure air, as if we were being born again. To remain long in that gulf of mortality is to experience something of the mystery of death.

Ali Gobree had no antiquities to press upon us, but he could show us some choice things in his house, if we would go there. Besides, his house would be a cool place in which to eat our lunch. We walked thither, a quarter of a mile down the sand slope on the edge of the terrace. We had been wondering where the Sphinx was, expecting it to be as conspicuous almost as the Pyramids. Suddenly, turning a sand-hill, we came upon it, the rude lion's body struggling out of the sand, the human head lifted up in that stiff majesty which we all know.

So little of the body is now visible, and the features are so much damaged that it is somewhat difficult to imagine what impression this monstrous union of beast and man once produced, when all the huge proportions stood revealed, and color gave a startling life-likeness to that giant face. It was cut from the rock of the platform; its back was patched with pieces of sandstone to make the *contour*; its head was solid. It was

approached by flights of stairs descending, and on the paved platform where it stood were two small temples; between its paws was a sort of sanctuary, with an altar. Now, only the back, head and neck are above the drifting sand. Traces of the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt which crowned the head are seen on the forehead, but the crown has gone. The kingly beard that hung from the chin has been chipped away. The vast wig—the false mass of hair that encumbered the shaven heads of the Egyptians, living or dead—still stands out on either side the head, and adds a certain dignity. In spite of the broken condition of the face, with the nose gone, it has not lost its character. There are the heavy eyebrows, the prominent cheek-bones, the full lips, the poetic chin, the blurred but on-looking eyes. I think the first feeling of the visitor is that the face is marred beyond recognition, but the sweep of the majestic lines soon becomes apparent; it is not difficult to believe that there is a smile on the sweet mouth, and the stony stare of the eyes, once caught, will never be forgotten.

The Sphinx, grossly symbolizing the union of physical and intellectual force, and hinting at one of those recondite mysteries which we still like to believe existed in the twilight of mankind, was called Hor-em-Khoo ("the Sun in his resting-place"), and had divine honors paid to it as a deity.

This figure, whatever its purpose, is older than the Pyramid of Cheops. It has sat facing the east, on the edge of this terrace of tombs, expecting the break of day, since a period that is lost in the dimness of tradition. All the achievements of the race, of

which we know anything, have been enacted since that figure was carved. It has seen, if its stony eyes could see, all the procession of history file before it. Viewed now at a little distance or with evening shadows on it, its features live again, and it has the calmness, the simple majesty that belong to high art. Old writers say that the face was once sweet and beautiful. How long had that unknown civilization lasted before it produced this art?

Why should the Sphinx face the rising sun? Why does it stand in a necropolis like a sleepy warden of the dead who sleep? Was it indeed the guardian of those many dead, the mighty who slept in pyramids, in rock-hewn tombs, in pits, their bodies ready for any pilgrimage; and does it look to the east expecting the resurrection?

Not far from the Sphinx is a marvelous temple of syenite, which the sand almost buries; in a well in one of its chambers was found the splendid red-granite statue of Chephren, the builder of the second pyramid, a piece of art which succeeding ages did not excel. All about the rock plateau are tombs, and in some of them are beautiful sculptures, upon which the coloring is fresh. The scenes depicted are of common life, the occupations and diversions of the people, and are without any religious signification. The admirable sculptures represent no gods and no funeral mysteries; when they were cut the Egyptian theology was evidently not constructed.

The residence of our guide is a tomb, two dry chambers in the rock, the entrance closed by a wooden door. The rooms are

large enough for tables and chairs; upon the benches where the mummies have lain, are piled antique fragments of all sorts, set off by a grinning skull or a thigh-bone; the floor is covered with fine yellow sand. I don't know how it may have seemed to its first occupant, but we found it an excellent luncheon place, and we could sleep there calmly and securely, when the door was shut against the jackals—though I believe it has never been objected to a tomb that one couldn't sleep in it. While we sip our coffee Ali brings forth his antique images and scarabæi. These are all genuine, for Ali has certificates from most of the well-known Egyptologists as to his honesty and knowledge of antiquities. We are looking for genuine ones; those offered us at the pyramids were suspicious. We say to Ali:—

"We should like to get a few good scarabæi; we are entirely ignorant of them; but we were sent to you as an honest man. You select half a dozen that you consider the best, and we will pay you a fair price; if they do not pass muster in Cairo you shall take them back."

"As you are a friend of Mr. Blank," said Ali, evidently pleased with the confidence reposed in him, "you shall have the best I have, for about what they cost me."

The Scarabæus is the black beetle that the traveler will constantly see tumbling about in the sand, and rolling up balls of dirt as he does in lands where he has not so sounding a name. He was sacred to the old Egyptians as an emblem of immortality, because he was supposed to have the power of self-

production. No mummy went away into the shades of the nether world without one on his breast, with spread-wings attached to it. Usually many scarabæi were buried with the mummy—several hundreds have been found in one mummy-case. They were cut from all sorts of stones, both precious and common, and made of limestone, or paste, hardened, glazed and baked. Some of them are exquisitely cut, the intaglio on the under side being as clean, true, and polished as Greek work. The devices on them are various; the name of a reigning or a famous king, in the royal oval, is not uncommon, and an authentic scarabæus with a royal name is considered of most value. I saw an insignificant one in soft stone and of a grey color, held at a hundred pounds; it is the second one that has ever been found with the name of Cheops on it. The scarabæi were worn in rings, carried as charms, used as seals; there are large coarse ones of blue pottery which seem to have been invitations to a funeral, by the inscriptions on them.

The Scarabæus is at once the most significant and portable *souvenir* of ancient Egypt that the traveler can carry away, and although the supply was large, it could not fill the demand. Consequently antique scarabæi are now manufactured in large quantities at Thebes, and in other places, and distributed very widely over the length of Egypt; the dealers have them with a sprinkling of the genuine; almost every peasant can produce one from his deep pocket; the women wear them in their bosoms.

The traveler up the Nile is pretty sure to be attacked with the fever of buying Scarabæi; he expects to happen upon one of great

value, which he will get for a few piastres. It is his intention to do so. The Scarabæus becomes to him the most beautiful and desirable object in the world. He sees something fascinating in its shape, in its hieroglyphics, however ugly it may be to untaught eyes.

Ali selected our scarabæi. They did not seem to us exactly the antique gems that we had expected to see, and they did not give a high idea of the old Egyptian art. But they had a mysterious history and meaning; they had shared the repose of a mummy perhaps before Abraham departed from Ur. We paid for them. We paid in gold. We paid Ali for his services as guide. We gave him backsheesh on account of his kindness and intelligence, besides. We said good-bye to his honest face with regret, and hoped to see him again.

It was not long before we earnestly desired to meet him. He was a most accomplished fellow, and honesty was his best policy. There isn't a more agreeable Bedawee at the Pyramids; and yet Ali is a modern Egyptian, just like his scarabæi, all the same. The traveler who thinks the Egyptians are not nimble-witted and clever is likely to pay for his knowledge to the contrary. An accumulated experience of five thousand years, in one spot, is not for nothing.

We depart from the pyramids amid a clamor of importunity; prices have fallen to zero; antiquities old as Pharaoh will be given away; "backsheesh, backsheesh, O Howadji;" "I havn't any bread to *mangere*, I have six children; what is a piastre for eight

persons?" They run after us, they hang upon the carriage, they follow us a mile, begging, shrieking, howling, dropping off one by one, swept behind by the weight of a copper thrown to them.

The shadows fall to the east; there is a lovely light on the plain; we meet long lines of camels, of donkeys, of fellaheen returning from city and field. All the west is rosy; the pyramids stand in a purple light; the Sphinx casts its shade on the yellow sand; its expectant eyes look beyond the Nile into the mysterious East.

CHAPTER IX.—
PREPARATIONS FOR A VOYAGE

WE are giving our minds to a name for our dahabeëh. The owners have desired us to christen it, and the task is getting heavy. Whatever we are doing; guiding a donkey through the mazes of a bazaar; eating oranges at the noon breakfast; watching the stream of color and fantastic apparel, swaying camels and dashing harem-equipage with running saïses and outriding eunuchs, flowing by the hotel; following a wedding procession in its straggling parade, or strolling vacantly along, knocked, jostled, evaded by a dozen races in a dozen minutes and lost in the whirl, color, excitement of this perpetual masquerade, we are suddenly struck with, "what *shall* we call that boat?"

We want a name that is characteristic of the country and expressive of our own feelings, poetic and not sentimental, sensible and not common-place. It seems impossible to suggest a good name that is not already borne by a dahabeëh on the river—names such as the Lotus, the Ibis, the Gazelle, Cleopatra, Zenobia, names with an Eastern flavor. And we must have not only a name for the boat, but a motto or device for our pennant, or "distinguisher flag," as the dragoman calls the narrow fifty feet long strip of bunting that is to stream from the forward yard. We carry at the stern the flag of our country, but we float our

individuality in the upper air. If we had been a bridal party we should of course have taken some such device as that of a couple who went up the river under the simple but expressive legend of "Nestle-down," written on their banner.

What would *you* name a Nile dahabeëh?

The days go all too rapidly for us to catch the shifting illusions about us. It is not so much what we see of the stated sights that can be described, but it is the atmosphere in which we live that makes the strangeness of our existence. It is as if we had been born into another world. And the climate is as strange as the people, the costumes, the habits, the morals. The calendar is bewitched. December is a mixture of September and July. Alas, yes. There are the night-fogs of September, and the mosquitoes of July. You cannot tell whether the season is going backwards or forwards. But for once you are content to let Providence manage it, at least so long as there is a north wind, and you forget that the sky has any shade other than blue.

And the prophecy of the poet is realized. The nights are filled with music, and the cares that infest the day are invariably put off till tomorrow, in this deliciously procrastinating land. Perhaps, however, Mr. Longfellow would not be satisfied with the music; for it seems to be the nasal daughter of Lassitude and Monotony, ancient gods of the East. Two or three strings stretched over a sounding skin and a parchment drum suffice to express the few notes that an Arab musician commands; harmony does not enter into his plan. Yet the people are fond of what they consider

music. We hear on all sides at night the picking of strings, the throb of the darabooka and the occasional outburst of a wailing and sentimental strain. Like all barbarous music, this is always minor. When the performers are sailors or common strollers, it is doubtless exactly the same music that delighted the ancient Egyptians; even the instruments are the same, and the method of clapping the hands in accentuation of the music is unchanged.

There is a *café chantant* on one side of the open, tree-grown court of a native hotel, in the Ezbekeëh where one may hear a mongrel music, that is not inexpressive of both the morals and the mixed condition of Cairo to-day. The instruments of the band are European; the tunes played are Egyptian. When the first strain is heard we say that it is strangely wild, a weird and plaintive minor; but that is the whole of it. The strain is repeated over and over again for a half hour, as if it were ground out of a coffee-mill, in an iteration sufficient to drive the listener insane, the dissolute scraping and thumping and barbarous dissonance never changing nor ending. From time to time this is varied with singing, of the nasal, fine-tooth-comb order, with the most extraordinary attempts at shakes and trills, and with all the agony of a moonlit cat on a house-top. All this the grave Arabs and young Egyptian rakes, who sit smoking, accept with entire satisfaction. Later in the evening dancing begins and goes on with the strumming, monotonous music till at least the call for morning prayer.

In the handsome Ezbekeëh park or garden, where there are shady walks and some fine sycamores and banyans to be seen, a

military band plays every afternoon, while the foreigners of both sexes, and Egyptian men promenade. Of course no Egyptian lady or woman of respectability is ever seen in so public a place. In another part of the garden, more retired, a native band is always playing at nightfall. In this sheltered spot, under the lee of some gigantic rock and grotto-work are tables and chairs, and a divan for the band. This rock has water pleasantly running through it, but it must have been struck by somebody besides Moses, for beer is brought out of its cool recesses, as well. Rows of men of all colors and costumes may be seen there, with pipe and mug and coffee cup; and on settees more elevated and next the grotto, are always sitting veiled women, in outer wrappers of black silk, sometimes open enough to show an underskirt of bright color and feet in white slippers. These women call for beer or something stronger, and smoke like the men; they run no risk in being in this publicity, for they have nothing to lose here or elsewhere. Opposite them on a raised divan, not unlike a roomy bedstead, sits the band.

It is the most disreputable of bands. Nothing in the whole East so expressed to me its fagged-out dissoluteness as this band and its performances. It is a sleepy, nonchalant band, as if it had been awake all the previous night; some of its members are blear-eyed, some have one eye, some have two; they are in turbans, in tarbooshes, in gowns of soiled silk, of blue cotton, of white drilling. It is the feeblest band; and yet it is subject to spurts of bacchantic fervor. Sometimes all the instruments are striving

together, and then only one or two dribble the monotonous refrain; but somehow, with all the stoppings to light cigarettes and sip coffee, the tune is kept groaning on, in a minor that is as wild as the desert and suggestive of sin.

The instruments are as African as the music. There is the *darabooka*, a drum made of an earthen or wooden cylinder with a flaring head, over which is stretched a parchment; the *tar*, a kind of tambourine; *kemengeh*, a viol of two strings, with a cocoa-nut sounding-body; the *kanoon*, an instrument of strings held on the knees, and played with the fingers; the *'.od*, a sort of guitar with seven double strings; played with a plectrum, a slip of vultures' feather held between the thumb and finger; and the *nay*, a reed-flute blown at the end.

In the midst of the thumbing and scraping, a rakish youth at the end, is liable, at any moment, to throw back his head and break out in a soft womanish voice, which may go no farther than a nasal *yah, ah, m-a-r-r*, that appears to satisfy his yearnings; or it may expand into a droning song, "*Ya benat Iskendereeyeh,*" like that which Mr. Lane renders:—

> "O ye damsels of Alexandria!
> Your walk over the furniture is alluring:
> Ye wear the Kashmeer shawl with embroidered work,
> And your lips are sweet as sugar."

Below the divan sit some idlers or supernumeraries, who, as inclination moves them, mark the rhythm by striking the palms

of the hands together, or cry out a prolonged *ah-yah*, but always in a forgetful, uninterested manner, and then subside into silence, while the picking and throbbing of the demoralized tune goes on. It is the "devilish iteration" of it, I think, that steals away the senses; this, and some occult immorality in the debased tune, that blots virtue out of the world. Yet there is something comic in these blinking owls of the night, giving sentimental tongue to the poetic imagery of the Eastern love-song—"for a solitary gazelle has taken away my soul":—

> "The beloved came to me with a vacillating gait;
> And her eyelids were the cause of my intoxication.
> I extended my hand to take the cup;
> And was intoxicated by her eyes.
> O thou in the rose-colored dress!
> O thou in the rose-colored dress!
> Beloved of my heart! remain with me."

Or he pipes to the "dark-complexioned, and with two white roses":—

> "O damsel! thy silk shirt is worn out, and thine arms have become visible,
> And I fear for thee, on account of the blackness of thine eyes.
> I desire to intoxicate myself, and kiss thy cheeks,
> And do deeds that Antar did not."

To all of which the irresponsible chorus, swaying its head,

responds *O! y-a-a-a-h!* And the motley audience sips and smokes; the veiled daughters of sin flash invitation from their kohl-stained eyes; and the cool night comes after the flaring heat of the day; and all things are as they have been for thousands of years. It is time to take you to something religious.

The Howling Derweeshes are the most active religionists in the East; I think they spend more force in devotion than the Whirling Derweeshes, though they are probably not more meritorious. They exceed our own western "Jumpers," and by contrast make the worship of our dancing Shakers tame and worldly. Of all the physical manifestations of religious feeling there is none more warming than the *zikr* of these devotees. The derweeshes are not all wanderers, beggars, saints in patched garments and filthy skin; perhaps the most of those who belong to one of the orders pursue some regular occupation; they are fishermen, laborers in the fields, artisans, and water-carriers, and only occasionally join in the ceremonies, processions and *zikrs* of their faith. I have seen a laborer drop into the ring, take his turn at a *zikr*, and drop out again, very much as the western man happens in and takes a hand in a "free fight," and then retires.

This mosque at which the Howling Derweeshes perform is circular, and large enough to admit a considerable number of spectators, who sit, or stand against the wall. Since the exercise is one of the sights of the metropolis, and strangers are expected, it has a little the air of a dress-parade, and I could not but fear that the devotion lost somewhat of its singleness of purpose. When we

enter, about forty men stand in an oblong ring facing each other; the ring is open towards the *mehhrab*, or niche which marks the direction of Mecca. In the opening stands the Sheykh, to direct the performance; and at his left are seated the musicians.

The derweeshes have divested themselves of turbans, fezes, outer gowns and slippers, which lie in a heap in the middle of the circle, an indistinguishable mass of old clothes, from which when the owners come to draw they cannot fail to get as good as they deposited. The ceremony begins with a little uneasiness on the part of the musical instruments; the sheykh bows his head and brings the palms of his hands together; and the derweeshes, standing close together, with their hands straight at their sides, begin slowly to bow and to sway to the right in a compound motion which is each time extended. The *daraboo-ka* is beaten softly and the *'.od* is picked to a slow measure. As the worshippers sway, they chant, *La ilaha illa-llah* ("There is no deity but God") in endless repetition, and imperceptibly quickening the enunciation as they bow more rapidly. The music gets faster, and now and again one of the roguish boys who is thumping the drum breaks out into vocal expression of his piety or of his hilarity. The circle is now under full swing, the bowings are lower and much more rapid, and the ejaculation has become merely *Allah, Allah, Allah*, with a strong stress on the final syllable.

The peculiarities of the individual performers begin to come out. Some only bow and swing in a perfunctory manner; others

throw their strength into the performance, and their excitement is evinced by the working of the face and the rolling of the eyes. Many of them have long hair, which has evidently known neither scissors nor comb for years, and is matted and twisted in a hopeless tangle. One of the most conspicuous and the least clad, a hairy man of the desert, is, exactly in apparel and features, like the conventional John the Baptist. His enormous shock of faded brown hair is two feet long and its ends are dyed yellow with henna. When he bends forward his hair sweeps the floor, and when he throws his head back the mass whips over with a *swish* through the air. The most devout person, however, is a negro, who puts all the fervor of the tropics into his exercise. His ejaculations are rolled out with extraordinary volume, and his black skin shines with moisture; there is, too, in his swaying and bowing, an *abandon*, a laxity of muscles, and a sort of jerk that belong only to his sympathetic race.

The exercise is every moment growing more rapid, but in regular increments, as the music hastens—five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes—until there is a very high pressure on, the revolutions of the cylinder are almost one in two seconds, and the piston moves quicker and quicker. The music, however, is not louder, only more intense, and now and then the reed-flute executes a little obligato, a plaintive strain, that steals into the frenzy like the note of a lost bird, sweet as love and sad as death. The performers are now going so rapidly that they can only ejaculate one syllable, *'.ah, 'lah, 'lah*, which is aspirated in

a hoarse voice every time the head is flung forward to the floor. The hands are now at liberty, and swing with the body, or are held palm to palm before the face. The negro cannot longer contain himself but breaks occasionally into a shrill "hoo!" He and two or three others have "the power," and are not far from an epileptic fit.

There is a limit, however, to the endurance of the body; the swaying has become so rapid that it is difficult to distinguish faces, and it is impossible for the performers to repeat even a syllable of the name of *Allah*, all they can do is to push out from the depths of the lungs a vast hoarse aspiration of *la-a-h*, which becomes finally a gush exactly like the cut-off of a steam engine, short and quick.

The end has nearly come; in vain the cymbals clang, in vain the drum is beaten harder, and the horn calls to quicker work. The limit is reached, and while the reed expresses its plaintive fear, the speed slackens, the steam puffs are slower, and with an irregular *hoo!* from the colored brother, the circle stands still.

You expect to see them sink down exhausted. Not a bit of it. One or two having had enough of it, take their clothes and withdraw, and their places are filled by others and by some very sensible-looking men, trades-people evidently. After a short rest they go through the same or a similar performance, and so on for an hour and a half, the variations being mainly in the chanting. At the end, each derweesh affectionately embraces the Sheykh, kisses his hand without servility, resumes his garments

and quietly withdraws. They seem to have enjoyed the exercise, and certainly they had plenty of it. I should like to know what they think of us, the infidel spectators, who go to look at their religious devotions as if they were a play.

That derweesh beggar in a green turban is by that token a shereef, or descendant of the Prophet. No one but a shereef is allowed to wear the green turban. The shereefs are in all ranks of society, many of them wretched paupers and in the most menial occupations; the title is inherited from either parent and the representatives of the race have become common. Some who are entitled to the green turban wear the white instead, and prefer to be called Sevd (master or lord) instead of Shereef. Such a man is Seyd Sadat, the most conspicous representative of the family of the Prophet in Cairo. His ancestors for a long period were the trustees of the funds of all the great mosques of Cairo, and consequently handled an enormous revenue and enjoyed great power. These millions of income from the property of the mosques the Khedive has diverted to his own purposes by the simple process of making himself their trustee. Thus the secular power interferes every few centuries, in all countries, with the accumulation of property in religious houses. The strict Moslems think with the devout Catholics, that it is an impious interference.

Seyd Sadat lives in the house that his family have occupied for over eight centuries! It is perhaps the best and richest specimen of Saracenic domestic architecture now standing in the East. This house, or collection of houses and disconnected rooms opening

upon courts and gardens, is in some portions of it in utter decay; a part, whose elegant arches and marvelous carvings in stone, with elaborate hanging balconies and painted recesses, are still studies of beauty, is used as a stable. The inhabited rooms of the house are tiled two-thirds of the way to the lofty ceilings; the floors are of variegated marbles, and the ceilings are a mass of wood in the most intricate arabesque carving, and painted in colors as softly blended as the hues of an ancient camels' hair shawl. In one of these gorgeous apartments, the furniture of which is not at all in keeping with the decorations (an incongruity which one sees constantly in the East—shabbiness and splendor are indissolubly married), we are received by the Descendant with all the ceremony of Eastern hospitality. Seated upon the divan raised above the fountain at one end of the apartment, we begin one of those encounters of compliments through an interpreter, out of which the traveler always comes beaten out of sight. The Seyd is a handsome intelligent man of thirty-five, sleek with good living and repose, and a master of Oriental courtesy. His attire is all of silk, the blue color predominating; his only ornament is a heavy gold chain about the neck. We frame long speeches to the Seyd, and he appears to reply with equal verboseness, but what he says or what is said to him we never know. The Eastern dragoman is not averse to talking, but he always interprets in a sort of short-hand that is fatal to conversation. I think the dragomans at such interviews usually translate you into what they think you ought to say, and give you such a reply as they think will be good for you.

"Say to his lordship that we thank him for the honor of being permitted to pay our respects to a person so distinguished."

"His excellency (who has been talking two minutes) say you do him too much honor."

"We were unwilling to leave Cairo without seeing the residence of so celebrated a family."

"His excellency (who has now got fairly going) feels in deep the visit of strangers so distinguish."

"It is a great pleasure also to us to see an Arab house so old and magnificent."

"His excellency (who might have been reciting two chapters of the Koran in the interval) say not to mention it; him sorry it is not more worth you to see."

The attendants bring sherbet in large and costly cups, and chibooks elegantly mounted, and the conversation flounders along. The ladies visit the harem above, and we look about the garden and are shown into room after room, decorated in endless variety and with a festivity of invention and harmony of color which the moderns have lost. The harem turns out to be, like all ordinary harems, I think, only mysterious on the outside. We withdraw with profuse thanks, frittered away through our dragoman, and "His excellency say he hope you have pleasant voyage and come safe to your family and your country." About the outer court, and the door where we mount our donkeys, are many idlers in the sun, half beggars, half attendants, all of whom want backsheesh, besides the regular servants who expect a fee in

proportion to the "distinguish" of the visitor. They are probably not unlike the clients of an ancient Roman house, or the retainers of a baronial lord of the middle ages.

If the visitor, however, really desires to see the antiquities of the Christian era, he will ride out to Old Cairo, and mouse about among the immense rubbish heaps that have been piled there since Fostat (as the ancient city was called) was reduced to ashes, more than seven hundred years ago, by a fire which raged nearly two months. There is the ruined mosque of Amer, and there are the quaint old Coptic convents and churches, built about with mud walls, and hidden away amid mounds of rubbish. To these dust-filled lanes and into these mouldering edifices the antiquarian will gladly go. These churches are the land of the flea and the home of the Copt. Anything dingier, darker, dirtier, doesn't exist. To one of them, the Sitt Miriam, Church of Our Lady, we had the greatest difficulty in getting admission. It is upstairs in one of the towers of the old Roman gateway of Babylon. It is a small church, but it has five aisles and some very rich wood-carving and stone-mosaics. It was cleaner than the others because it was torn to pieces in the process of renovation. In these churches are hung ostrich eggs, as in the mosques, and in many of them are colored marbles, and exquisite mosaics of marble, mother-of-pearl, and glass. Aboo Sirgeh, the one most visited, has a subterranean chapel which is the seat of an historical transaction that may interest some minds. There are two niches in the wall, and in one of them, at the time of the

Flight into Egypt, the Virgin Mary rested with the Child, and in the other St. Joseph reposed. That is all.

A little further on, by the river bank, opposite the southern end of the island of Rhoda, the Moslems show you the spot where little Moses lay in his little basket, when the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe (for Pharaoh hadn't a bath-tub in his house) and espied him. The women of the Nile do to-day exactly what Pharaoh's daughter and her maidens did, but there are no bulrushes at this place now, and no lad of the promise of Moses is afloat.

One can never have done with an exploration of Cairo, with digging down into the strata of overlying civilizations, or studying the shifting surface of its Oriental life. Here, in this Old Cairo, was an ancient Egyptian town no doubt; the Romans constructed here massive walls and towers; the followers of St. Mark erected churches; the friends of Mohammed built mosques; and here the mongrel subjects of the Khedive, a mixture of ancient Egyptian, conquering Arabian, subject Nubian, enslaved Soudan, inheritors of all civilizations and appropriators of none, kennel amid these historic ash-heaps, caring neither for their past nor their future. But it is drawing towards the middle of December; there are signs that warn us to be off to the south. It may rain. There are symptoms of chill in the air, especially at night, and the hotel, unwarmed, is cheerless as a barn, when the sun does not shine. Indeed, give Cairo the climate of London in November and everybody would perish in a week. Our preparations drift

along. It is always "tomorrow." It requires a week to get the new name of the boat printed on a tin. The first day the bargain for it is made; the work is to be finished *bookra*, tomorrow. Next day the letters are studied. The next the tin is prepared. The next day is Friday or Wednesday or some other day in which repose is required. And the next the workman comes to know what letters the howadji desires to have upon the tin, and how big a sign is required.

Two other necessary articles remain to be procured; rockets and other fire-works to illuminate benighted Egypt, and medicines. As we were not taking along a physician and should find none of those experimenting people on the Nile, I did not see the use of carrying drugs. Besides we were going into the one really salubrious region of the globe. But everybody takes medicines; you must carry medicines. The guide-book gives you a list of absolutely essential, nasty drugs and compounds, more than you would need if you were staying at home in an artificial society, with nothing to do but take them, and a physician in every street.

I bought chunks of drugs, bottles of poisons, bundles of foul smells and bitter tastes. And then they told me that I needed balances to weigh them in. This was too much. I was willing to take along an apothecary's shop on this pleasure excursion; I was not willing to become an apothecary. No, I said, if I am to feed out these nauseous things on the Nile, I will do it generously, according to taste, and like a physician, never stinting

the quantity. I would never be mean about giving medicine to other people. And it is not difficult to get up a reputation for generosity on epsom salts, rhubarb and castor oil.

We carried all these drugs on the entreaty of friends and the druggist, who said it would be very unsafe to venture so far without them. But I am glad we had them with us. The knowledge that we had them was a great comfort. To be sure we never experienced a day's illness, and brought them all back, except some doses that I was able to work off upon the crew. There was a gentle black boy, who had been stolen young out of Soudan, to whom it was a pleasure to give the most disagreeable mixtures; he absorbed enormous doses as a lily drinks dew, and they never seemed to harm him. The aboriginal man, whose constitution is not weakened by civilization, can stand a great amount of doctor's stuff. The Nile voyager is earnestly advised to carry a load of drugs with him; but I think we rather overdid the business in castor-oil; for the fact is that the people in Nubia fairly swim in it, and you can cut the cane and suck it whenever you feel like it.

By all means, go drugged on your pleasure voyage. It is such a cheerful prelude to it, to read that you will need blue-pills, calomel, rhubarb, Dover's powder, James's powder, carbolic acid, laudanum, quinine, sulphuric acid, sulphate of zinc, nitrate of silver, ipecacuanha, and blistering plaster. A few simple directions go with these. If you feel a little unwell, take a few blue pills, only about as many as you can hold in your hand; follow these with a little Dover's powder, and then repeat, if you feel

worse, as you probably will; when you rally, take a few swallows of castor-oil, and drop into your throat some laudanum; and then, if you are alive, drink a dram of sulphuric acid. The consulting friends then generally add a little rice-water and a teaspoonful of brandy.

In the opinion of our dragoman it is scarcely reputable to go up the Nile without a store of rockets and other pyrotechnics. Abd-el-Atti should have been born in America. He would enjoy a life that was a continual Fourth of July. He would like his pathway to be illuminated with lights, blue, red, and green, and to blaze with rockets. The supreme moment of his life is when he feels the rocket-stick tearing out of his hand. The common fire-works in the Mooskee he despised; nothing would do but the government-made, which are very good. The passion of some of the Egyptians for fire-arms and gunpowder is partially due to the prohibition. The government strictly forbids the use of guns and pistols and interdicts the importation or selling of powder. On the river a little powder and shot are more valued than money.

We had obtained permission to order some rockets manufactured at the government works, and in due time we went with Abd-el-Atti to the bureau at the citadel to pay for them. The process was attended with all that deliberation which renders life so long and valuable in the East.

We climbed some littered and dusty steps, to a roof terrace upon which opened several apartments, brick and stucco chambers with cement floors, the walls whitewashed, but yellow

with time and streaked with dirt. These were government offices, but office furniture was scarce. Men and boys in dilapidated gowns were sitting about on their heels smoking. One of them got up and led the way, and pulling aside a soiled curtain showed us into the presence of a bey, a handsomely dressed Turk, with two gold chains about his neck, squatting on a ragged old divan at one end of the little room; and this divan was absolutely all the furniture that this cheerless closet, which had one window obscured with dust, contained. Two or three officers were waiting to get the bey's signature to papers, and a heap of documents lay beside him, with an inkhorn, on the cushions. Half-clad attendants or petitioners shuffled in and out of the presence of this head of the bureau. Abd-el-Atti produced his papers, but they were not satisfactory, and we were sent elsewhere.

Passing through one shabby room after another, we came into one dimmer, more stained and littered than the others. About the sides of the room upon low divans sat, cross-legged, the clerks. Before each was a shabby wooden desk which served no purpose, however, but to hold piles of equally shabby account books. The windows were thick with dust, the floor was dirty, the desks, books, and clerks were dirty. But the clerks were evidently good fellows, just like those in all government offices—nothing to do and not pay enough to make them uneasy to be rich. They rolled cigarettes and smoked continually; one or two of them were casting up columns of figures, holding the sheet of paper

in the left hand and calling each figure in a loud voice (as if a little doubtful whether the figure would respond to that name); and some of them wrote a little, by way of variety. When they wrote the thin sheet of paper was held in the left hand and the writing done upon the palm (as the Arabs always write); the pen used was a blunt reed and the ink about as thick as tar. The writing resulting from these unfavorable conditions is generally handsome.

Our entry and papers were an event in that office, and the documents became the subject of a general conversation. Other public business (except the cigarettes) was suspended, and nearly every clerk gave his opinion on the question, whatever it was. I was given a seat on a rickety divan, coffee was brought in, the clerks rolled cigarettes for me and the business began to open; not that anybody showed any special interest in it, however. On the floor sat two or three boys, eating their dinner of green bean leaves and some harmless mixture of grease and flour; and a cloud of flies settled on them undisturbed. What service the ragged boys rendered to the government I could not determine. Abd-el-Atti was bandying jocularities with the clerks, and directing the conversation now and then upon the rockets.

In course of time a clerk found a scrap of paper, daubed one side of it with Arabic characters, and armed with this we went to another office and got a signature to it. This, with the other documents, we carried to another room much like the first, where the business appeared to take a fresh start; that is, we

sat down and talked; and gradually induced one official after another to add a suggestion or a figure or two. Considering that we were merely trying to pay for some rockets that were ready to be delivered to us, it did seem to me that almost a whole day was too much to devote to the affair. But I was mistaken. The afternoon was waning when we went again to the Bey. He was still in his little "cubby," and made room for me on the divan. A servant brought coffee. We lighted cigarettes, and, without haste, the bey inked the seal that hung to his gold chain, wet the paper and impressed his name in the proper corner. We were now in a condition to go to the treasury office and pay.

I expected to see a guarded room and heavily bolted safes. Instead of this there was no treasury apartment, nor any strong box. But we found the "treasury" walking about in one of the passages, in the shape of an old Arab in a white turban and faded yellow gown. This personage fished out of his deep breast-pocket a rag of a purse, counted out some change, and put what we paid him into the same receptacle. The Oriental simplicity of the transaction was pleasing. And the money ought to be safe, for one would as soon think of robbing a derweesh as this yellow old man.

The medicine is shipped, the rockets are on board, the crew have been fitted out with cotton drawers, at our expense, (this garment is an addition to the gown they wear), the name of the boat is almost painted, the flags are ready to hoist, and the dahabeëh has been taken from Boulak and is moored above the

drawbridge. We only want a north wind.

CHAPTER X.—ON THE NILE

WE have taken possession of our dahabeëh, which lies moored under the bank, out of the current, on the west side of the river above the bridge. On the top of the bank are some structures that seem to be only mounds and walls of mud, but they are really "brivate houses," and each one has a wooden door, with a wooden lock and key. Here, as at every other rod of the river, where the shore will permit, the inhabitants come to fill their water-jars, to wash clothes, to bathe, or to squat on their heels and wait for the Nile to run dry.

And the Nile is running rapidly away. It sweeps under the arches of the bridge like a freshet, with a current of about three miles an hour. Our *sandal* (the broad clumsy row-boat which we take in tow) is obliged to aim far above its intended landing-place when we cross, and four vigorous rowers cannot prevent its drifting rapidly down stream. The Nile is always in a hurry on its whole length; even when it spreads over flats for miles, it keeps a channel for swift passage. It is the only thing that is in a hurry in Egypt; and the more one sees it the stronger becomes the contrast of this haste with the flat valley through which it flows and the apathetic inhabitants of its banks.

We not only have taken possession of our boat, but we have begun housekeeping in it. We have had a farewell dinner-party on board. Our guests, who are foreigners, declare that they did not

suppose such a dinner possible in the East; a better could not be expected in Paris. We admit that such dinners are not common in this hungry world out of New York. Even in New York the soup would not have been made of lentils.

We have passed a night under a mosquito net, more comfortably than on shore to be sure, but we are anxious to get into motion and change the mosquitoes, the flies, the fleas of Cairo for some less rapacious. It is the seventeenth of December. We are in the bazaars, buying the last things, when, at noon we perceive that the wind has shifted. We hasten on board. Where is the dragoman! "Mohammed Effendi Abd-el-Atti goin' bazaar come directly," says the waiter. At half-past two the stout dragoman slides off his donkey and hastens on board with all the speed compatible with short legs, out of breath, but issuing a storm of orders like a belated captain of a seventy-two. He is accompanied by a black boy bearing the name of our dahabeëh, rudely painted on a piece of tin, the paint not yet dry. The dragoman regards it with some pride, and well he may, for it has cost time and trouble. No Arab on the river can pronounce the name, but they all understand its signification when the legend attached to it is related, and having a similar tale in the Koran, they have no objection to sail in a dahabeëh called the RIP VAN WINKLE.

The name has a sort of appropriateness in the present awakening of Egypt to modern life, but exactly what it is we cannot explain.

We seat ourselves on deck to watch the start. There is as much noise and confusion as if the boat were on fire. The moment has come to cast off, when it is discovered that two of the crew are absent, no doubt dallying in some coffee-house. We cannot wait, they must catch us as they can. The stake is pulled up; the plank is drawn in; the boat is shoved off from its sand bed with grunting and yah-hoo-ing, some of the crew in the water, and some pushing with poles; the great sail drops down from the yard and the corner is hauled in to a wild chorus, and we take the stream. For a moment it seems as if we should be carried against the bridge; but the sail is large, the wind seizes us, and the three-months' voyage has begun.

We are going slowly but steadily, perhaps at the rate of three or four miles an hour, past the receding city, drawing away from the fleet of boats and barges on the shore and the multitudinous life on its banks. It is a scene of color, motion, variety. The river is alive with crafts of all sorts, the shores are vocal with song, laughter, and the unending "chaff" of a river population. Beyond, the spires and domes of the city are lovely in the afternoon light. The citadel and the minarets gleam like silver against the purple of the Mokattam hills. We pass the long white palace of the Queen-mother; we are abreast the isle of Rhoda, its yellow palace and its ancient Nilometer. In the cove at Geezeh are passenger-dahabeëhs, two flying the American flag, with which we exchange salutes as we go. The people on their decks are trying with a telescope to make out the device on our pennant

at the yard-arm. It affords occupation for a great many people at different times during the voyage. Upon a white ground is a full sun, in red; following it in red letters is the legend *Post Nubila Phobus*; it is the motto on the coat of arms of the City of Hartford. Here it signifies that we four Hartford people, beginning this voyage, exchange the clouds of New England for the sun of Egypt. The flag extends beyond the motto in a bifurcated blue streamer.

Flag, streamer and sail take the freshening north wind. A smaller sail is set aft. The reïs crouches on the bow, watching the channel; the steersman, a grave figure, pushes slowly back and forth the long iron handle of the tiller at the stern; the crew, waiting for their supper, which is cooking near the mast, begin to sing, one taking the solo and the others striking in with a minor response; it is not a song but a one-line ejaculation, followed by a sympathetic and barbaric assent in chorus.

The shores glide past like that land of the poet's dream where "it is always afternoon"; reposeful and yet brilliant. The rows of palms, the green fields, the lessening minarets, the groups of idlers in flowing raiment, picturesque in any attitudes they assume, the depth of blue above and the transparent soft air—can this be a permanent condition, or is it only the scene of a play?

In fact, we are sailing not only away from Europe, away from Cairo, into Egypt and the confines of mysterious Africa; we are sailing into the past. Do you think our voyage is merely a thousand miles on the Nile? We have committed ourselves to a

stream that will lead us thousands of years backwards in the ages, into the depths of history. When we loosed from Cairo we let go our hold upon the modern. As we recede, perhaps we shall get a truer perspective, and see more correctly the width of the strip of time which we call "our era." There are the pyramids of Geezeh watching our departure, lifting themselves aloft in the evening sky; there are the pyramids of Sakkara, sentinels of that long past into which we go.

It is a splendid start, for the wind blows steadily and we seem to be flying before it. It is probable that we are making five miles an hour, which is very well against such a current. Our dahabeëh proves to be an excellent sailer, and we have the selfish pleasure of passing boat after boat, with a little ripple of excitement not enough to destroy our placid enjoyment. It is much pleasanter to lift your hat to the travelers on a boat that you are drawing ahead of than it is to those of one that is dropping your boat astern.

The Nile voyage is so peculiar, and is, in fact, such a luxurious method of passing a winter, that it may be well to say a little more concerning our boat. It is about one hundred and twenty feet long, and eighteen broad in the center, with a fiat bottom and no keel; consequently it cannot tack or sail contrary to the wind. In the bow is the cook's "cubby" with the range, open to the weather forward. Behind it stands the mast, some forty feet high, and on the top of it is lashed the slender yard, which is a hundred feet long, and hangs obliquely. The enormous triangular sail stretches the length of the yard and its point is hauled down

to the deck. When it is shifted, the rope is let go, leaving the sail flapping, the end of the yard is carried round the mast and the sail is hauled round in the opposite direction, with an amount of pulling, roaring, jabbering, and chorusing, more than would be necessary to change the-course of an American fleet of war. The flat, open forward deck is capable of accommodating six rowers on a side. It is floored over now, for the sweeps are only used in descending.

Then comes the cabin, which occupies the greater part of the boat, and makes it rather top-heavy and difficult of management in an adverse wind. First in the cabin are the pantry and dragoman's room; next a large saloon, used for dining, furnished with divans, mirrors, tables, and chairs, and lighted by large windows close together. Next are rows of bedrooms, bathroom etc; a passage between leads to the after or lounging cabin, made comfortable with divans and Eastern rugs. Over the whole cabin runs the deck, which has sofas and chairs and an awning, and is good promenading space. The rear portion of it is devoted to the steersman, who needs plenty of room for the sweep of the long tiller. The steering apparatus is of the rudest. The tiller goes into a stern-post which plays in a hole big enough for four of it, and creakingly turns a rude rudder.

If you are familiar with the Egyptian temple you will see that our dahabeëh is built on this plan. If there is no pylon, there is the mast which was always lashed to it. Then comes the dromos of sphinxes, the forward deck, with the crew sitting along the low

bulwarks; the first cabin is the hall of columns, or *vestibulum*; behind it on each side of the passage are various chambers; and then comes the *adytum* or sanctuary—the inner cabin. The deck is the flat roof upon which wound the solemn processions; and there is a private stairway to the deck just as there was always an inner passage to the roof from one of the small chambers of the temple.

The boat is manned by a numerous company whose appearance in procession would excite enthusiasm in any American town. Abd-el-Atti has for companion and clerk his nephew, a young Egyptian, (employed in the telegraph office) but in Frank dress, as all government officials are required to be.

The reïs, or captain, is Hassan, Aboo Seyda, a rather stately Arab of sixty years, with a full turban, a long gown of blue cotton, and bare-footed. He walks the deck with an ease and grace that an actor might envy; there is neither stiffness nor strut in it; it is a gait of simple majesty which may be inherited from generations of upright ancestors, but could never be acquired. Hassan is an admirable figure-head to the expedition, but he has no more pluck or authority than an old hen, and was of not much more use on board than a hen would be in a chicken-hatching establishment.

Abdel Hady Hassed, the steersman, is a Nubian from the First Cataract, shiny black in color, but with regular and delicate features. I can see him now, with his turban set well back on his head, in a loose, long-sleeved, brown garment, and without

stockings or slippers, leaning against his tiller and looking straight ahead with unchanging countenance. His face had the peculiarity, which is sometimes seen, of appearing always to have a smile on it. He was born with that smile; he will die with it. An admirable person, who never showed the least excitement. That man would run us fast on a sand-bank, put us on a rock in plain sight, or let his sail jibe, without changing a muscle of his face, and in the most agreeable and good-natured manner in the world. And he never exhibited the least petulance at his accidents. I hope he will be rewarded for the number of hours he patiently stood at that tiller. The reïs would take the helm when Abdel wanted to say his prayers or to eat his simple meals; but, otherwise, I always found him at his post, late at night or in the early morning, gazing around on Egypt with that same stereotyped expression of pleasure.

The cook, Hasaneyn Mahrowan (the last name has an Irish sound, but the first is that of the sacred mosque where is buried the head of the martyr El Hoseyn) is first among his craft, and contrives to produce on his little range in the bow a dinner that would have made Raineses II. a better man. He is always at his post, like the steersman, and no matter what excitement or peril we may be in, Hasaneyn stirs his soup or bastes his chicken with perfect *sang froid*. The fact is that these Orientals have got a thousand or two thousand years beyond worry, and never feel any responsibility for what others are doing.

The waiter, a handsome Cairene, is the perfection of a trained

servant, who understands signs better than English. Hoseyn Ali also rejoices in a noble name. Hasan and Hoseyn are, it is well known, the "two lords of the youths of the people of Paradise, in Paradise"; they were grandsons of the Prophet. Hoseyn was slain at the battle of the Plain of Karbalà. Hoseyn is the most smartly dressed fellow on board. His jacket and trousers are of silk; he wears a gay kuffia about his fez and his waist is girded with a fine Cashmere shawl. The fatal defect in his dress is that the full trowsers do not quite meet the stockings. There is always some point of shabbiness or lack of finish in every Oriental object.

The waiter's lieutenant is an Abyssinian boy who rejoices in the name of Ahman Abdallah (or, "Slave of God"); and the cook's boy is Gohah ebn Abdallah ("His father slave of God"). This is the poetical way of putting their condition; they were both slaves of Abd-el-Atti, but now, he says, he has freed them. For Gohah he gave two napoleons when the lad was new. Greater contrast could not be between two colored boys. Ahman is black enough, but his features are regular and well made, he has a bright merry eye, and is quick in all his intuitions, and intellectually faithful to the least particular. He divines the wants of his masters by his quick wit, and never neglects or forgets anything. Gohah is from the Soudan, and a perfect Congo negro in features and texture of skin—lips protruding and nose absolutely level with his cheeks; as faithful and affectionate as a Newfoundland dog, a mild, gentle boy. What another servant would know through his sharpened interest, Gohah comprehends by his affections.

I have described these persons, because they are types of the almost infinite variety of races and tribes in Egypt. Besides these there are fourteen sailors, and no two of the same shade or with similar features. Most of them are of Upper Egypt, and two or three of them are Nubians, but I should say that all are hopelessly mixed in blood. Ahmed, for instance, is a Nubian, and the negro blood comes out in him in his voice and laugh and a certain rolling antic movement of the body. Another sailor has that flush of red under dark in the face which marks the quadroon. The dress of the crew is usually a gown, a pair of drawers, and a turban. Ahmed wears a piece of Turkish toweling round his head. The crew is an incongruous lot altogether; a third of them smoke hasheesh whenever they can get it; they never obey an order without talking about it and suggesting something different; they are all captains in fact; they are rarely quiet, jabbering, or quarreling, or singing, when they are not hauling the sail, hoisting us from a sandbar, or stretched on deck in deep but not noiseless slumber. You cannot but like the good-natured rascals.

An irresponsible, hard-working, jolly, sullen, contradictory lot of big children, who, it is popularly reported, need a *koorbag* (a whip of hippopotamus hide) to keep them in the way of industry and obedience. It seems to me that a little kindness would do better than a good deal of whip. But the kindness ought to have begun some generations back. The koorbag is the legitimate successor of the stick, and the Egyptians have been ruled by the

stick for a period of which history reports not to the contrary. In the sculptures on the earliest tombs, laborers are driven to their tasks with the stick. Sailors on the old Nile boats are menaced with the stick. The overseer in the field swings the stick. Prisoners and slaves are marshalled in line with the stick. The stick is to-day also the one visible and prevalent characteristic of the government of Egypt. And I think that it is a notion among the subject classes, that a beating is now and then good for them. They might feel neglected without it. I cannot find that Egypt was ever governed in any other way than on the old plan of force and fear.

If there is anything that these officers and sailors do not understand, it is the management of a Nile boat. But this is anticipating. Just now all goes as merrily as a colored ball. The night is soft, the moon is half full; the river spreads out in shining shallows; the shores are dim and show lines of feathery palms against the sky; we meet or pass white sails which flash out of the dimness and then vanish; the long line of pyramids of Sakkara is outlined beyond the palms; now there is a light on shore and a voice or the howling of a dog is heard; along the bank by the ruins of old Memphis a jackal runs barking in the moonlight. By half-past nine we are abreast the pyramids of Dashoor. A couple of dahabeëhs are laid up below for the night, and the lights from their rows of cabin windows gleam cheerfully on the water.

We go right on, holding our way deeper and deeper into this enchanted country. The night is simply superb, such a wide

horizon, such brilliancy above! Under the night, the boat glides like a phantom ship; it is perfectly steady, and we should not know we were in motion but for the running ripple at the sides. By this lulling sound we sleep, having come, for once in the world, into a country of tranquillity, where nothing need ever be done till tomorrow, for tomorrow is certain to be like to-day.

When we came on deck at eight o'clock in the morning after "flying" all night as on birds' wings, we found that we had made thirty-five miles, and were almost abreast of the False Pyramid of Maydoom, so called because it is supposed to be built about a rock; a crumbled pyramid but curiously constructed, and perhaps older than that of Cheops. From a tomb in the necropolis here came the two life-size and striking figures that are in the Boulak Museum at Cairo. The statues, carved in calcareous limestone, represent two exceedingly respectable and intelligent looking persons, who resemble each other enough to be brother and sister; they were probably alive in the third dynasty. They sit up now, with hands on knees, having a bright look on their faces as if they hadn't winked in five thousand years, and were expecting company.

I said we were "flying" all night. This needs qualification. We went aground three times and spent a good part of the night in getting off. It is the most natural thing in navigation. We are conscious of a slight grating, then a gentle lurch, not enough to disturb a dream, followed, however, by a step on deck, and a jabber of voices forward. The sail is loosed; the poles are taken

from the rack and an effort is made to shove off by the use of some muscle and a good deal of chorus; when this fails, the crew jump overboard and we hear them splashing along the side. They put their backs to the boat and lift, with a grunting "*Euh-h'e, euh-h'e*" which changes into a rapid "halee, halee, halee," as the boat slides off; and the crew scramble on board to haul tight the sail, with an emphatic "Yah! Moham*med*, Yah! Moham*med*."

We were delayed some hours altogether, we learn. But it was not delay. There can be no delay on this voyage; for there is no one on board who is in any haste. Are we not the temporary owners of this boat, and entirely irresponsible for any accident, so that if it goes down with all on board, and never comes to port, no one can hold us for damages?

The day is before us, and not only the day, but, Providence permitting, a winter of days like it. There is nothing to be done, and yet we are too busy to read even the guide-book. There is everything to be seen; it is drifting past us, we are gliding away from it. It is all old and absolutely novel. If this is laziness that is stealing over us, it is of an alert sort. In the East, laziness has the more graceful title of resignation; but we have not come to that condition even; curiosity is constantly excited, and it is a sort of employment to breathe this inspiring air.

We are spectators of a pageant that never repeats itself; for although there is a certain monotony in the character of the river and one would think that its narrow strips of arable land would soon be devoid of interest, the scenes are never twice alike.

The combinations vary, the desert comes near and recedes, the mountains advance in bold precipices or fall away; the groups of people, villages, trees, are always shifting.

And yet, in fact, the scenery changes little during the day. There are great reaches of river, rapidly flowing, and wide bends across which we see vessels sailing as if in the meadows. The river is crowded all day with boats, pleasure dahabeëhs, and trading vessels uncouth and picturesque. The passenger dahabëeh is long, handsomely painted, carries an enormous sail on its long yard, has a national flag and a long streamer; and groups of white people sit on deck under the awning; some of them are reading, some sketching, and now and then a man rises and discharges his shot-gun at a flock of birds a half a mile beyond its range.

The boats of African traders are short, high-pooped, and have the rudder stepped out behind. They usually carry no flag, and are dirty and lack paint, but they carry a load that would interest the most *blasé* European. Those bound up-stream, under full sail, like ourselves, are piled with European boxes and bales, from stem to stern; and on top of the freight, in the midst of the freight, sitting on it, stretched out on it, peeping from it, is another cargo of human beings, men, women and children, black, yellow, clothed in all the hues of heaven and the rags of earth. It is an impassive load that stares at us with incurious, unwinking eyes.

The trading boats coming down against the current, are even more strange and barbarous. They are piled with merchandise,

but of a different sort. The sails and yards are down, and the long sweeps are in motion, balanced on outriggers, for the forward deck is filled, and the rowers walk on top of the goods as they move the oars to and fro. How black the rowers are! How black everybody on board is! They come suddenly upon us, like those nations we have read of, who sit in great darkness. The rowers are stalwart fellows whose basalt backs shine in the sun as they bend to the oar; in rowing they walk towards the cabin and pull the heavy oars as they step backwards, and every sweep is accompanied by the burst of a refrain in chorus, a wild response to a line that has been chanted by the leader as they stepped forwards. The passengers sit immoveable in the sun and regard us with a calmness and gravity which are only attainable near the equatorial regions, where things approach an equilibrium.

Sometimes we count nearly one hundred dahabeëhs in sight, each dipping or veering or turning in the sun its bird-wing sail —the most graceful in the world. A person with fancies, who is watching them, declares that the triangular sails resemble quills cut at the top for pens, and that the sails, seen over the tongue of land of a long bend ahead, look like a procession of goose quills.

The day is warm enough to call out all the birds; flocks of wild geese clang overhead, and companies of them, ranks on ranks, stand on the low sand-dunes; there are pelicans also, motionless in the shallow water near the shore, meditating like a derweesh on one leg, and not caring that the thermometer does mark 740. Little incidents entertain us. We like to pass the Dongola, flying

"Ohio" from its yard, which took advantage of our stopping for milk early in the morning to go by us. We overhaul an English boat and have a mildly exciting race with her till dark, with varying fortune, the boats being nearly a match, and the victory depending upon some trick or skill on the part of the crew. All the party look at us, in a most unsympathetic manner, through goggles, which the English always put on whenever they leave the twilight of England. I do not know that we have any right to complain of this habit of wearing wire eye-screens and goggles; persons who have it mean no harm by it, and their appearance is a source of gratification to others. But I must say that goggles have a different effect in different lights. When we were sailing slowly past the Englishman, the goggles regarded us with a feeble and hopeless look. But when the Englishman was, in turn, drawing ahead of us, the goggles had a glare of "Who the devil are you?" Of course it was only in the goggles. For I have seen many of these races on the Nile, and passengers always affect an extreme indifference, leaving all demonstrations of interest to the crews of the boats.

The two banks of the river keep all day about the same relative character—the one sterile, the other rich. On the east, the brown sand licks down almost to the water; there is only a strip of green; there are few trees, and habitations only at long intervals. Only a little distance back are the Mokattam hills, which keep a rarely broken and level sky-line for two hundred and fifty miles south of Cairo.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.