FIELD HENRY MARTYN

FROM EGYPT TO JAPAN

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Содержание

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CHAPTER I

CROSSING THE MEDITERRANEAN – ALEXANDRIA – CAIRO – THE PYRAMIDS

On the Bosphorus there are birds which the Turks call "lost souls," as they are never at rest. They are always on the wing, like stormy petrels, flying swift and low, just skimming the waters, yet darting like arrows, as if seeking for something which they could not find on land or sea. This spirit of unrest sometimes enters into other wanderers than those of the air. One feels it strongly as he comes to the end of one continent, and "casts off" for another; as he leaves the firm, familiar ground, and sails away to the distant and the unknown.

So felt a couple of travellers who had left America to go around the world, and after six months in Europe, were now to push on to the farthest East. It was an autumn afternoon near the close of the year 1875, that they left Constantinople, and sailed down the Marmora, and through the Dardanelles, between the Castles of Europe and Asia, whose very names suggested the continents that they were leaving behind, and set their faces towards Africa.

They could not go to Palestine. An alarm of cholera in Damascus had caused a *cordon sanitaire* to be drawn along the Syrian coast; and though they might get in, they could not so easily get away; or would be detained ten days in a Lazaretto before they could pass into Egypt; and so they were obliged at the last moment to turn from the Holy Land, and sail direct for Alexandria; touching, however, at Mitylene and Scio; and passing a day at Smyrna and at Syra. With these detentions the voyage took nearly a week, almost as long as to cross the Atlantic.

But it was not without its compensations. There was a motley company in the cabin, made up of all nations and all religions: English and Americans, French and Germans and Russians, Greeks and Turks, Christians and Mohammedans. There was a grand old Turk, who was going out to be a judge in Mecca, and was travelling with his harem, eight women, who were carefully screened from the observation of profane eyes. And there were other Mussulmans of rank, gentlemen in manners and education, who would be addressed as Effendis or Beys, or perhaps as Pashas, who did not hesitate to spread their small Persian carpets in the cabin or on the deck at any hour, and kneel and prostrate themselves, and say their prayers.

Besides these, the whole forward part of the ship was packed with pilgrims (there were four hundred of them) going to Mecca: Turks in white turbans and baggy trousers; and Circassians in long overcoats, made of undressed sheepskins, with tall, shaggy hats, like the bear-skin shakos of Scotch grenadiers. Some of them had their belts stuck thick with knives and pistols, as if they expected to have to fight their way to the tomb of the Prophet. Altogether they were not an attractive set, and yet one could not view, without a certain respect, a body of men animated by a strong religious feeling which impelled them to undertake this long pilgrimage; it requires three months to go and return. Nor could one listen quite unmoved as at different hours of the day, at sunrise, or midday, or sunset, the muezzin climbed to the upper deck, and in a wailing voice called the hour of prayer, and the true believers, standing up, rank on rank, turned their faces towards Mecca, and reverently bowed themselves and worshipped.

On the afternoon of the sixth day we came in sight of a low-lying coast, with not a hill or elevation of any kind rising above the dreary waste, the sea of waters breaking on a sea of sand.

The sun sinking in the west showed the lighthouse at Alexandria, but as the channel is narrow and intricate, ships are not allowed to enter after sunset; and so we lay outside all night, but as soon as the morning broke, steamed up and entered the harbor. Here was the same scene as at Constantinople – a crowd of boats around the ship, and boatmen shouting and yelling, jumping over one another in their eagerness to be first, climbing on board, and rushing on every unfortunate traveller as if they would tear him to pieces. But they are not so terrible as they appear, and so it always comes to pass, that whether "on boards or broken pieces of the ship," all come safe to land.

In spite of this wild uproar, it was not without a strange feeling of interest that we first set foot in Africa. A few days before we had touched the soil of Asia, on the other side of the Bosphorus – the oldest of the continents, the cradle of the human race. And now we were in Africa – in Egypt, the land of the Pharaohs, out of which Moses led the Israelites; the land of the Pyramids, the greatest monuments of ancient civilization.

As soon as one comes on shore, he perceives that he is in a different country. The climate is different, the aspects of nature are different, the people are different, the very animals are different. Caravans of camels are moving slowly through the streets, and outside of the city, coming up to its very walls, as if threatening to overwhelm it, is the "great and terrible" desert, a vast and billowy plain, whose ever-drifting sands would speedily bury all the works of man, if they were not kept back from destruction by the waters of the Nile, which is at once the creator and preserver of Egypt.

Alexandria, although founded by Alexander the Great, whose name it bears, and therefore more than two thousand years old – and although in its monuments, Cleopatra's Needle and Pompey's Pillar, it carries back the mind to the last of the Ptolemies, the proud daughter of kings, and to her Roman lovers and conquerors – has yet in many parts quite a modern aspect, and is almost a new city. It has felt, more than most places in the East, the influence of European civilization. Commerce is returning to its ancient seats along the Mediterranean, and the harbor of Alexandria is filled with a forest of ships, that reminds one of New York or Liverpool.

But as it becomes more European, it is less Oriental; and though more prosperous, is less picturesque than other parts of Egypt; and so, after a couple of days, we left for Cairo, and now for the first time struck the Nile, which reminds an American traveller of the Missouri, or the lower Mississippi. It is the same broad stream of turbid, yellow waters, flowing between low banks. This is the Great River which takes its rise in the heart of Africa, beyond the equator, at a point so remote that, though the Valley of the Nile was four thousand years ago the seat of the greatest empire of antiquity, yet to this day the source of the river is the problem of geographers. Formerly it was a three days' journey from Alexandria to Cairo, but the railroad shortens it to a ride of four hours, in which we crossed both branches of the Nile. Just at noon we came in sight of the Pyramids, and in half an hour were driving through the streets of the capital of Egypt.

We like Cairo, after two or three weeks, much better than Constantinople. It has another climate and atmosphere; and is altogether a gayer and brighter city. The new quarter occupied by foreigners is as handsomely built as any European city. The streets are wide and well paved, like the new streets and boulevards of Paris. We are at the "Grand New Hotel," fronting on the Ezbekieh gardens, a large square, filled with trees, with kiosks for music, and other entertainments. Our windows open on a broad balcony, from which we can hear the band playing every afternoon, while around us is the city, with its domes and minarets and palm trees.

The great charm of Egypt is the climate. It is truly the Land of the Sun. We landed on the first day of December, but we cannot realize that this is winter. The papers tell us that it is very cold in New York, and that the Hudson river is frozen over; but here every thing is in bloom, as in mid-summer, and I wear a straw hat to protect me from the heat of the sun. But it is not merely the warmth, but the exquisite purity of the atmosphere, that makes it so delicious. The great deserts on both sides drink up every drop of moisture, and every particle of miasm that is exhaled from the decaying vegetation of the Valley of the Nile, and send back into these streets the very air of Paradise.

Having thus the skies of Italy, and a much more balmy air, it is not strange that Egypt attracts travellers from France, and England, and America. It is becoming more and more a resort not only for invalids, but for that wealthy class who float about the world to find the place where they can pass existence with the most of languid ease. Many come here to escape the European winters, and to enjoy the delicious climate, and they are from so many countries, that Cairo has become a cosmopolitan city. As it is on the road to India, it is continually visited by English officers and civilians, going or returning. Of late years it has become a resort also for Americans. A number of our army officers have taken service under the Khedive, who rendezvous chiefly at this New Hotel, so that with the travellers of the same country, we can talk across the table of American affairs, as if we were at Newport or Saratoga. Owing to the influx of so many foreigners, this Hotel and "Shepheard's" seem like small colonies of Europeans. Hearing only English, or French, or German, one might believe himself at one of the great hotels in Switzerland, or on the Rhine. A stranger who wishes to pass a winter in Cairo, need not die of ennui for want of the society of his countrymen.

Besides these officers in the army, the only Americans here in official positions, are the Consul General Beardsley, and Judge Batcheller, who was appointed by our Government to represent the United States in the Mixed Court lately established in Egypt. Both these gentlemen are very courteous to their countrymen, while giving full attention to their duties. As we have sometimes had abroad consuls and ministers of whom we could not be proud, it is something to be able to say, that those here now in official position are men of whom we need not be ashamed as representatives of our country.

Another household which should not be overlooked, since it gives an American a home feeling in Cairo, is that of the American Mission. This has been here some years, and so won the favor of the government, that the former Viceroy gave it a site for its schools, which proved so valuable that the present Khedive has recently bought it back, by giving a new site and £7000 into the bargain. The new location is one of the best in Cairo, near the Ezbekieh square, and here with the proceeds of the sale, and other funds contributed for the object, the Mission is erecting one of the finest buildings for such purposes in the East, where their chapel and schools, in which there are now some five hundred children, will be under one roof.

This Mission School some years ago was the scene of a romantic incident. An Indian prince, then living in England, was on his way to India, with the body of his mother, who had died far from her country, but with the prejudices of a Hindoo strong in death, wished her body to be taken back to the land of her birth. While passing through Cairo, he paid a visit to the American Mission, and was struck with the face of a young pupil in the girls' school, and after due inquiry proposed to the missionaries to take her as his wife. They gave their consent, and on his return they were married, and he took her with him to England. This was the Maharajah Dhuleep Sing, a son of old Runjeet Sing, the Lion of Lahore, who raised up a race of warriors, that after his death fought England, and whose country, the Punjaub, the English annexed to their Indian dominions; and here, as in other cases, removed a pretender out of the way by settling a large pension on the heir to the throne. Thus the Maharajah came into the possession of a large revenue from the British government, amounting, I am told, to some £30,000 a year. Having been from his childhood under English pupilage, he has been brought up as a Christian, and finds it to his taste to reside in England, where he is able to live in splendor, and is a great favorite at court. His choice of a wife proved a most happy one, as the modest young pupil of Cairo introduced into his English home, with the natural grace of her race, for she is partly of Arab descent, the culture and refinement learned in a Mission school. Nor does he forget what he owes to the care of those who watched over her in her childhood, but sends a thousand pounds every year to the school in grateful acknowledgment of the best possible gift it could make to him, that of a noble Christian wife.

Besides this foreign society, there is also a resident society which, to those who can be introduced to it, is very attractive. The government of the Khedive has brought into his service some

men who would be distinguished in any European court or capital. The most remarkable of these is Nubar Pasha, long the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Judge Batcheller kindly took me to the house of the old statesman, who received us cordially. On hearing that I was on my way around the world, he exclaimed, "Ah, you Americans! You are true Bedouins!" I asked him what was the best guide-book to Egypt? He answered instantly, "The Bible." It was delightful to see his enthusiasm for Egypt, although he is not an Egyptian. He is not an Arab, nor a Turk, nor even a Mussulman; but an Armenian by birth and by religion. His uncle, Nubar Pasha, came over with Mehemet Ali, whose prime minister he was for forty years; and his nephew, who inherits his name, inherits also the traditions of that great reign. Though born on the other side of the Mediterranean, he is in heart an Egyptian. He loves the country of his adoption, and all his thoughts and his political ambition are for its greatness and prosperity. He has lived here so long that he sometimes speaks of himself playfully as "one of the antiquities of Egypt." "Of the first dynasty?" we ask. "Yes, of the time of Menes." I do not believe he could exist anywhere else. He loves not only the climate, but even the scenery of Egypt, which is more charming to his eyes than the hills and vales of Scotland or the mountains of Switzerland. "But you must admit," I said, "that it has a great monotony." "No," he replied, "in Lombardy there is monotony; but Egypt is immensity, infinity, eternity. The features of the landscape may be the same, but the eye never wearies." Surely *his* eye never does, for it is touched with a poetic vision; he sees more than meets the common eye; every passing cloud changes the lights and shadows; and to him there is more of beauty in the sunset flashing through the palm groves, as the leaves are gently stirred by the evening wind, than in all the luxuriance of tropical forests. Even if we did not quite share his enthusiasm, we could not but be charmed by the pictures which were floating before his mind's eye, and by the eloquence of his description. As he loves the country, so he loves the people of Egypt. Poor and helpless as they are, they have won upon his affection; he says "they are but children;" but if they have the weakness of children, they have also their simplicity and trustfulness; and I could see that his great ambition was to break up that system of forced labor which crushes them to the earth, and to secure to them at least some degree of liberty and of justice.

With all its newness and freshness this city retains its Oriental character. Indeed Grand Cairo is said to be the most Oriental of cities except Damascus. It has four hundred thousand inhabitants, and in its ancient portions has all the peculiar features of the East. Not only is the city different from Constantinople, but the people are different; they are another race, and speak another language. Turks and Arabs are as different as Englishmen and Frenchmen.

We are entertained every time that we go out of doors, with the animated and picturesque life of the streets. There are all races and all costumes, and all modes of locomotion. There are fine horses and carriages. I feel like Joseph riding in Pharaoh's chariot, when we take a carriage to ride out to Shoobra, one of the palaces of the Khedive, with syces dressed in white running before to herald our royal progress, and shout to the people to get out of our way. But one who prefers a more Oriental mode of riding, can mount a camel, or stoop to a donkey, for the latter are the smallest creatures that ever walked under the legs of a man, and if the rider be very tall, he will need to hold up his feet to keep them from dangling on the ground. Yet they are hardy little creatures, and have a peculiar amble which they keep up all day. They are very useful for riding, especially in some parts of the city where the streets are too narrow to allow a carriage to pass.

The donkey-men are very sharp, like their tribe in all parts of the world. The Arabs have a great deal of natural wit, which might almost entitle them to be called the Irish of the East. They have picked up a few words of English, and it is amusing to hear them say, with a most peculiar accent, "All right," "Very good," "Go ahead." They seem to know everybody, and soon find out who are their best customers. I cannot go down the steps without a dozen rushing toward me, calling out "Doctor, want a donkey?" One of them took me on my weak side the first day by saying that the name of his animal was "Yankee Doodle," and so I have patronized that donkey ever since, and a tough little beast

he is, scudding away with me on his back at a great rate. His owner, a fine looking Arab, dressed in a loose blue gown and snowy turban, runs barefooted behind him, to prick him up, if he lags in his speed, or if perchance he goes too fast, to seize him by the tail, and check his impetuosity. We present a ludicrous spectacle when thus mounted, setting out for the bazaars, where our experience of Constantinople is repeated.

Of course the greatest sight around Cairo is the Pyramids. It is an event in one's life to see these grandest monuments of antiquity. The excursion is now very easy. They are eight miles from Cairo, and it was formerly a hard day's journey to go there and back, as one could only ride on a donkey or a camel, and had to cross the river in boats; and the country was often inundated, so that one had to go miles around. But the Khedive, who does everything here, has changed all that. He has built an iron bridge over the Nile, and a broad road, raised above the height of the annual inundations, so as never to be overflowed, and lined with trees, the rapid-growing acacia, so that one may drive through a shaded avenue the whole way. A shower which had fallen the night before we went (a very rare thing in Egypt at this season) had laid the dust and cooled the air, so that the day was perfect, and we drove in a carriage in an hour and a half from our hotel to the foot of the Pyramids. The two largest of these are in sight as soon as one crosses the Nile, but though six miles distant they seem quite near. Yet at first, and even when close to them, they hardly impress the beholder with their real greatness. This is owing to their pyramidal form, which, rising before the eye like the slope of a hill, does not strike the senses or the imagination as much as smaller masses which rise perpendicularly. One can hardly realize that the Pyramid of Cheops is the largest structure in the world – the largest probably ever reared by human hands. But as it slopes to the top, it does not present its full proportions to the eye, nor impress one so much as some of the Greek temples with their perpendicular columns, or the Gothic churches with their lofty arches, and still loftier towers, soaring to heaven. Yet the Great Pyramid is higher than them all, higher even than the spire of the Cathedral at Strasburg; while in the surface of ground covered, the most spacious of them, even St. Peter's at Rome, seems small in comparison. It covers eleven acres, a space nearly as large as the Washington Parade Ground in New York; and is said by Herodotus to have taken a hundred thousand men twenty years to build it. Pliny agrees in the length of time, but says the number of workmen employed was over three hundred thousand!

But mere figures do not give the best impression of height; the only way to judge of the Great Pyramid is to see it and to ascend it. One can go to the top by steps, but as these steps are blocks of stone, many of which are four feet high, it is not quite like walking up stairs. One could hardly get up at all but with the help of the Arabs, who swarm on the ground, and make a living by selling their services. Four of them set upon me, seizing me by the hands, and dragging me forward, and with pulling and pushing and "boosting," urged on by my own impatience – for I would not let them rest a moment – in ten minutes we were at the top, which they thought a great achievement, and rubbed down my legs, as a groom rubs down a horse after a race, and clapped me on the back, and shouted "All right," "Very good." I felt a little pride in being the first of our party on the top, and the last to leave it.

These Arab guides are at once very troublesome and very necessary. One cannot get along without them, and yet they are so importunate in their demands for backsheesh that they become a nuisance. They are nominally under the orders of a Sheik, who charges two English shillings for every traveller who is assisted to the top, but that does not relieve one from constant appeals going up and down. I found it the easiest way to get rid of them to give somewhat freely, and thus paid three or four times the prescribed charge before I got to the bottom. No doubt I gave far too much, for they immediately quoted me to the rest of the party, and held me up as a shining example. I am afraid I demoralized the whole tribe, for some friends who went the next day were told of an American who had been there the day before, who had given "beautiful backsheesh." The cunning fellows, finding I was an easy subject, followed me from one place to another, and gave me no peace even when wandering among the tombs, or when taking our lunch in the Temple of the Sphinx, but

at every step clamored for more; and when I had given them a dozen times, an impudent rascal came up even to the carriage, as we were ready to drive away, and said that two or three shillings more would "make all serene!" – a phrase which he had caught from some strolling American, and which he turns to good account.

But one would gladly give any sum to get rid of petty annoyances, and to be able to look around him undisturbed. Here we are at last on the very summit of the Great Pyramid, and begin to realize its immensity. Below us men look like mice creeping about, and the tops of trees in the long avenue show no larger than hot-house plants. The eye ranges over the valley of the Nile for many miles – a carpet of the richest green, amid which groups of palms rise like islands in a sea. To the east beyond the Nile is Cairo, its domes and minarets standing out against the background of the Mokattam hills, while to the west stretches far away the Libyan desert.

Overlooking this broad landscape, one can trace distinctly the line of the overflow of the Nile. Wherever the waters come, there is greenness and fertility; at the point where they cease, there is barrenness and desolation. It is a perpetual struggle between the waters and the sands, like that which is always going on in human history between barbarism and civilization.

In the Pyramids the two things which impress us most are their vast size and their age. As we stand on the top, and look down the long flight of steps which leads to the valley below, we find that we are on the crest of a mountain of stone. Some idea of the enormous mass imbedded in the Great Pyramid may be gathered from the fact, ascertained by a careful computation (estimating its weight at seven millions of tons, and considering it a solid mass, its chambers and passages being as far as discovered but 1/2000th of the whole), that these blocks of stone, placed end to end, would make a wall a foot and a half broad, and ten feet high around England, a distance of 883 miles – a wall that would shut in the island up to the Scottish border.

And the Pyramids are not only the greatest, but the oldest monuments of the human race, the most venerable structures ever reared by the hand of man. They are far older than any of the monuments of Roman or Grecian antiquity. They were a marvel and a mystery then as much as they are to-day. How *much* older cannot be said with certainty. Authorities are not fully agreed, but the general belief among the later chronologists is that the Great Pyramid was built about two thousand one hundred and seventy years before the time of Christ, and the next in size a century later. Thus both have been standing about four thousand years. Napoleon was right therefore when he said to his soldiers before the battle fought with the Mamelukes under the shadow of the Pyramids, "From those heights forty centuries behold you." This disposes of the idea which some have entertained, that they were built by the children of Israel when they were in Egypt; for according to this they were erected two hundred years before even the time of Abraham. Jacob saw them when he came down into Egypt to buy corn; and Joseph showed them to his brethren. The subject Hebrews looked up to them in the days of their bondage. Moses saw them when he was brought up in the court of Pharaoh, and they disappeared from the view of the Israelites only when they fled to the Red Sea. They had been standing a thousand years when Homer sang of the siege of Troy; and here came Herodotus the father of history, four hundred years before Christ, and gazed with wonder, and wrote about them as the most venerable monuments of antiquity, with the same curious interest as Rawlinson does to-day. So they have been standing century after century, while the generations of men have been flowing past, like the waters of the Nile.

We visited the Great Pyramid again on our return from Upper Egypt, and explored the interior, but reserve the description to another chapter.

CHAPTER II

ON THE NILE

At last we are on the Nile, floating as in a dream, in the finest climate in the world, amid the monuments and memories of thousands of years. Anything more delightful than this climate for winter cannot be imagined. The weather is always the same. The sky is always blue, and we are bathed in a soft, delicious atmosphere. In short, we seem to have come, like the Lotus-eaters, to "a land where it is always afternoon." In such an air and such a mood, we left Cairo to make the voyage to which we had been looking forward as an event in our lives.

To travellers who desire to visit Egypt, and to see its principal monuments, without taking more time than they have at command, it is a great advantage that there is now a line of steamers on the Nile. The boats belong to the Khedive, but are managed by Cook & Son, of London, the well-known conductors of excursions in Europe and the East. They leave Cairo every fortnight, and make the trip to the First Cataract and back in twenty days, thus comprising the chief objects of interest within a limited time. Formerly there was no way to go up the Nile except by chartering a boat, with a captain and crew for the voyage. This mode of travel had many charms. The kind of boat – called a *dahabeeah*– was well fitted for the purpose, with a cabin large enough for a single family, or a very small party, and an upper deck covered with awnings; and as it spread its three-cornered lateen sail to the wind, it presented a pretty and picturesque object, and the traveller floated along at his own sweet will. This had only the drawback of taking a whole winter. But to leisurely tourists, who like to do everything thoroughly, and so take but one country in a year; or learned Egyptologists, who wish, in the intervals of seeing monuments, to make a special study of the history of Egypt; or invalids, who desire only to escape the damps and fogs of Britain, or the bitter cold of the Northern States of America – nothing can be imagined more delightful. There is a class of overworked men for whom no medicine could be prescribed more effectual than a winter idled away in this soothing, blissful rest. Nowhere in the world can one obtain more of the *dolce far niente*, than thus floating slowly and dreamily on the Nile. But for those of us who are wandering over all the earth, crossing all the lands and seas in the round world, this slow voyaging will not answer.

Nor is it necessary. One can see Egypt – not of course minutely, but sufficiently to get a general impression of the country – in a much less time. It must be remembered that this is not like other countries which lie four-square, presenting an almost equal length and breadth, but in shape is a mere line upon the map, being a hundred times as long as it is broad. To be exact, Egypt from the apex of the Delta – that is from Cairo – to the First Cataract, nearly six hundred miles, is all enclosed in a valley, which, on an average, is only six miles wide, the whole of which may be seen from the deck of a steamer, while excursions are made from day to day to the temples and ruins. It is a mistake to suppose that one sees more of these ruins on a boat because he is so much longer about it, when the extra time consumed is not spent at Denderah or Thebes, but floating lazily along with a light wind, or if the wind be adverse, tied up to a bank to await a change. In a steamer the whole excursion is well divided, ample time being allowed to visit every point of interest, as at Thebes, where the boat stops three days. As soon as one point is done, it moves on to another. In this way no time is lost, and one can see as much in three weeks as in a dahabeeah in three months.

Our boat carried twenty-seven passengers, of whom more than half were Americans, forming a most agreeable company. All on deck, we watched with interest the receding shores, as we sailed past the island of Rhoda, where, according to tradition, the infant Moses was found in the bulrushes; and where the Nilometer, a pillar planted in the water ages ago, still marks the annual risings and fallings

of the great river of Egypt. The Pyramids stood out clear against the western sky. That evening we enjoyed the first of a series of glorious sunsets on the Nile. Our first sail was very short – only to Sakkara, a few miles above Cairo, where we lay to for the night, the boat being tied up to the bank, in the style of a steamer on the Mississippi.

Early the next morning our whole company hastened ashore, where a large array of donkeys was waiting to receive us. These had been sent up from Cairo the night before. My faithful attendant was there with "Yankee Doodle," and claimed me as his special charge. We were soon mounted and pricking over what we should call "bottom lands" in the valleys of our Western rivers, the wide plain being relieved only by the palm groves, and rode through an Arab village, where we were pursued by a rabble rout of ragged children. The dogs barked, the donkeys brayed, and the children ran. Followed by such a retinue, we approached the Pyramids of Sakkara, which stand on the same plateau as those of Ghizeh, and are supposed to be even older in date. Though none of them are equal to the Great Pyramid, they belong to the same order of Cyclopean architecture, and are the mighty monuments of an age when there were giants in the earth.

There is a greater wonder still in the Tombs of the Sacred Bulls, which were long buried beneath the sands of the desert, but have been brought to light by a modern explorer, but which I will not describe here, as I shall speak of them again in illustration of the religious ideas of the Egyptians.

Near the Pyramids of Sakkara is the site of Memphis, the capital of ancient Egypt, of whose magnificence we have the most authentic historic accounts, but of which hardly a trace remains. We galloped our donkeys a long distance that we might pass over the spot where it stood, but found only great mounds of earth, with here and there a few scattered blocks of granite, turned up from the soil, to tell of the massive structures that are buried beneath. The chief relic of its former glory is a statue of Rameses the Great, one of the most famous of the long line of the Pharaohs – a statue which was grand enough to be worthy of a god – being some fifty feet high, but which now lies stretched upon the earth, with its face downward, all its fine proportions completely buried in a little pond – or rather puddle – of dirty water! At certain seasons of the year, when the Nile subsides, the features are exposed, and one may look upon a countenance "whose bend once did awe the world;" but at present, seeing only the back, and that broken, it has no appearance or shape of anything, and might be a king, or queen, or crocodile. What a bitter satire is it on all human pride, that this mighty king and conqueror, the Napoleon of his day – who made nations tremble – now lies prone on the earth, his imperial front buried in the slime and ooze of the Nile! That solitary stone is all that is left of a city of temples and palaces, which are here entombed, and where now groves of palms wave their tasselled plumes, like weeping willows over the sepulchre of departed greatness.

Our next excursion was to the remains of a very remote antiquity on the other side of the Nile – the Rock-Tombs of Beni-Hassan – immense caverns cut in the side of a mountain, in which were buried the great ones of Egypt four thousand years ago. Many of them are inscribed with hieroglyphics, and decorated with frescoes and bas-reliefs, in which we recognize not only the appearance of the ancient Egyptians, but even of the animals which were familiar in that day, such as the lion, the jackal, and the gazelle, and more frequently the beasts of burden – bulls and donkeys; but in none do we discover the horse, nor, what is perhaps even more remarkable in a country surrounded by deserts – the camel.

In the King's tomb, or sepulchral chamber, a room some forty feet square, hollowed out of the solid rock, the vaulted roof is supported by Doric pillars, which shows that the Greeks obtained many of their ideas of architecture in Egypt, as well as of philosophy and religion.

As we continue our course up the river, we observe more closely the features of the valley of the Nile. It is very narrow and is abruptly bounded by barren and ragged mountains. Between these barriers the river winds like a serpent from side to side, now to the east, and now to the west, but inclining more to the range of Eastern or Arabian hills, leaving the greater breadth of fertility on the western bank. Here is the larger number of villages; here is the railroad which the Khedive has built

along the valley, beside which runs the long line of telegraph poles, that sign of civilization, keeping pace with the iron track, and passing beyond it, carrying the electric cord to the upper Nile, to Nubia and Soudan. The Khedive, with that enterprise which marks his administration, has endeavored to turn the marvellous fertility of this valley to the most profitable uses. He has encouraged the culture of cotton, which became very extensive during our civil war, and is still perhaps the chief industry of the country. Next to this is the growth of the sugar-cane: he has expended millions in the erection of great manufactories of sugar, whose large white walls and tall chimneys are the most conspicuous objects at many points along the Nile.

Now, as thousands of years ago, the great business of the people is *irrigation*. The river does everything. It fertilizes the land; it yields the crops. The only thing is to bring the water to the land at the seasons when the river does not overflow. This is done by a very simple and rude apparatus, somewhat like an old-fashioned well-sweep, by which a bucket is lowered into the river, and as it is swung up the water is turned into a trench which conducts it over the land. This is the *shadoof*, the same which was used in the time of Moses. There is another method by which a wheel is turned by an ox, lifting up a series of buckets attached to a chain, but this is too elaborate and expensive for the greater part of the poor people who are the tillers of the soil.

We pass a great number of villages, but, larger and smaller, all present the same general features. At a distance they have rather a pretty effect, as they are generally embowered in palm trees, out of which sometimes peers the white minaret of a mosque. But a nearer approach destroys all the picturesqueness. The houses are built of unburnt brick, dried in the sun. They are mere huts of mud – as wretched habitations as an Irish hovel or an Indian wigwam. The floor is the earth, where all sexes and ages sit on the ground, while in an enclosure scarcely separate from the family, sheep and goats, and dogs and asses and camels, lie down together.

The only pretty feature of an Arab village is the *doves*. Where these Africans got their fondness for birds, I know not, but their mud houses are surmounted – and one might almost say *castellated*– with dove-cotes, which of course are literally "pigeon-holed," and stuck round with branches, to seem like trees, and these rude aviaries are alive with wings all day long. It was a pretty and indeed a touching sight to see these beautiful creatures, cooing and fluttering above, presenting such a contrast, in their airy flights and bright plumage, to the dark and sad human creatures below.

But if the houses of the people are so mean and poor, their clothing is still worse, consisting generally of but one garment, a kind of sack of coarse stuff. The men working at the *shadoof* on the river brink have only a strip of cloth around their loins. The women have a little more *dress* than the men, though generally barefoot and bareheaded – while carrying heavy jars of water on their heads. The children have the merest shred of a garment, a clout of rags, in such tatters that you wonder how it can hold together, while many are absolutely naked.

This utter destitution would entail immense suffering, and perhaps cause the whole race to die out, but for the climate, which is so mild that it takes away in a great degree the need of shelter and raiment, which in other countries are necessary to human existence.

This extreme poverty is aggravated by one disease, which is almost universal. The bright sun, glaring on the white sands, produces an inflammation of the eyes, which being neglected, often ends in blindness. I have seen more men in Egypt with one eye, or with none, than in all Europe.

It might be supposed that a people, thus reduced by poverty and smitten by disease, would be crushed out of all semblance of humanity. And yet this Arab race is one which has a strong tenacity of life. Most travellers judge them harshly, because they are disgusted by the unceasing cry for *backsheesh*, which is the first word that a stranger hears as he lands in Egypt, and the last as he leaves it. But even this (although it is certainly a nuisance and a pest) might be regarded with more merciful judgment, if it were considered that it is only the outward sign of an internal disease; that general beggary means general poverty and general misery.

Leaving this noisy crowd, which gathers about us in every village that we enter, it is easy to find different specimens of Arab character, which engage our interest and compel our respect. One cannot look at these men without admiring their physique. They remind me much of our American Indians. Like them, they are indolent, unless goaded to work by necessity, and find nothing so pleasant as to sit idly in the sun. But when they stand up they have an attitude as erect as any Indian chief, and a natural dignity, which is the badge of their race. Many a man who has but a single garment to cover him, will wrap it about him as proudly as any Spanish cavalier would toss his cloak over his shoulders, and stalk away with a bold, free stride, as if, in spite of centuries of humiliation, he were still the untamed lord of the desert. Their old men are most venerable in appearance. With their long beards, white turbans, and flowing garments, they might stand for the picture of Old Testament patriarchs. The women too (who do not cover their faces as much as those in lower Egypt), though coarsely and meanly dressed, yet as they walk with their water-jars on their heads, stand more erect than the fashionable ladies of our cities. I see them every day coming to fill their "pitchers" precisely as Rebecca and Rachel came three thousand years ago, and if I should approach one, saying, Give me to drink, (which I might well do, for the water of the Nile – though containing so much sediment, that it needs to be filtered – is as soft and sweet as that of our own Croton), she would let down her jar from her head just as Rebecca let down her jar for the servant of Abraham, when he came to ask her in marriage for his master's son Isaac.

The children too, though often naked, and if clothed at all, always in rags, yet have fine olive complexions, and dazzling teeth, and those bright eyes which are the sign of a degree of native intelligence.

Nor can I refuse to say a word for the poor donkey-boy. Many years ago a Scotchman in the Cape Colony, South Africa, who was accustomed to make long journeys in the bush, wrote a little poem, depicting the joys of that solitary life, which began,

"Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent bush-boy by my side."

The donkey-boy is never silent, he is always singing or calling to his donkey, urging him forward with stick and voice; yet who could wish a more patient or faithful attendant, who, though on foot, trots by your side from morning to night, the slave of your caprice, taking meekly all your rebukes, perhaps undeserved, and content at last with a pittance for his service?

So have I had a little girl as a water-carrier, running close to my saddle all day long, keeping up with the donkey's pace, and carrying a small jar of water on her head, to wash my hands and face, or assuage my thirst, thankful at last for a few piastres as her reward.

We reached Assiout, the capital of Upper Egypt, early Sunday morning, and laid up for the day. While our boat's company were preparing to go on shore to see the town, I mounted a donkey and started off to find the American Mission, which is at work among the Copts, who claim to be the descendants of the ancient Egyptians. I arrived at the chapel in time to hear a sermon and an address to the Sunday-school. As the services were in Arabic, I could not understand what was said, but I could perceive at once the earnestness of the speakers, and the close attention of the hearers. After the sermon there was a baptism. The congregation was a very respectable one both in numbers and appearance. There were perhaps two hundred present, all decently, although some were very poorly clad, and presented a striking contrast to the ragged and dirty people around them. In the quiet and orderly worship, and the songs that were sung, which were Arabic words to American tunes, there was much to make one think of home. There was nothing to distinguish the congregation except the Oriental turbans and dress, and the fact that the women sat apart from the men, separated by a screen, which shows that the seclusion of women is not confined to the Mohammedans. It is an Oriental custom, and is observed by the Copts as well as the Moslems. I am told that even among Christian

families here, it is not considered quite "the thing" for women to go abroad and show impertinent curiosity, and that ladies of good position, who are as intelligent as most Orientals, have never seen the Nile, but two miles distant! Such is the power of fashion even in Africa. In the church are several men of wealth, who give freely of their means, as well as use their influence, for its support. The Copts are nominal Christians, although, like most of the Christian sects of the East, they are very ignorant and very superstitious. But they have not the fanatical hatred to Christianity of the Mussulmans. They acknowledge the authority of the Bible, and are thus more open to argument and persuasion. Besides this congregation, the mission has some dozen schools in the surrounding country. In the town itself, besides the schools for the poorest children, it has a boarding-school for those of a better class, an academy which is the beginning of a college, and half a dozen young men are preparing for the ministry. The field is a very hopeful one, and I was assured that the success of the mission was limited only by the means at its disposal.

After visiting the schools, Rev. Mr. Strang accompanied me through the town. It has over twenty-five thousand inhabitants, and is the point of departure for the caravans which cross the Great Desert to Darfour and the far interior of Africa, returning laden with ivory and ostrich feathers, as in the days of King Solomon. We saw in an open square, or market-place, some hundred camels, that, as they lay wearily on the earth, looked as if they might have made the long journey over the trackless sands. Laborers were at work, with no respect for the day, for Friday is the Mohammedan Sabbath; and my friend pointed out, where a number of workmen were building a house, the "taskmaster" sitting on the top of the wall to overlook them, as in the days of the Bible. As we returned by an old portal in the city walls, we found a number of long-bearded and venerable men, who were "sitting in the gate" as "elders" to administer justice. The city gate is the place of honor and of justice now, as it was thousands of years ago.

In the mountain behind the town are a great number of tombs, like those of Beni-Hassan, vast chambers hewn out of the rock ages ago for burial places. We walked along by these silent memorials of the mighty dead, to the summit, from which is one of the most beautiful views of the valley of the Nile. Below the plain is spread out for many miles, well watered like the garden of the Lord, the emerald green coming up to the very foot of the barren hills. But there it ceases instantly, giving place to the desert.

These contrasts suggest some comparisons between the scenery and the climate of Egypt, and our own country. Whoever breathes this balmy air, and looks up to this cloudless sky, must feel that the Lord of all the earth has been bountiful to Egypt. As we read of the winter storms now raging over half of Europe, we bless the more kindly skies that are over us now. But after a few weeks of this dreamy, languid life, one begins to feel the want of something else to stir his blood. He finds that nature in Egypt, like the works of man, like the temples and the pyramids, is a sublime monotony. The landscapes are all the same. There are four or five grand features, the river, the valley, the hills that enclose it, and beyond the boundless desert, and over all the burning sun and sky. These are the elements that enter into every landscape. There is no change, no variety. Look where you will, there is no vision in the distance of lofty peaks dark with pines, or white with snow, no torrents leaping down the mountain side (the *silence* of Egypt is one of the things that most oppress me), no brooks that run among the hills, no winding paths along their banks that invite the stranger to lose himself in their shade. I see indeed hills on either horizon, but they are barren and desolate. On all this double range, for six hundred miles, there is not a single green thing – not a tree, not a shrub, not a blade of grass, not even a rock covered with moss, only a waste of sand and stone. If you climbed those hills yonder across the valley you would look off upon a boundless plain of sand that stretches to the Red Sea; while behind where we stand is the Libyan Desert, which is only an arm of the Great Sahara, that crosses almost the whole of the continent. In all this waste the valley of the Nile is the one narrow strip of fertility. And even this is parched and burnt up to the very water's edge. Hence the monotony of vegetation. There is not a forest in all Egypt, only the palm groves, which are planted like garden

flowers, but no tangled wild wood, no lofty elms, no broad-spreading oaks that cast their grateful shadow on the burning plains. All that variety of nature, with which in other lands she beguiles the weary heart of man, is wanting here. It is indeed the land of the sun, and in that is at once its attraction and its terror, as the fiery orb beats down upon it, withering man and beast, and turning the earth into a desert.

Seeing this monotony of nature, and feeling this monotony of life, one begins to pine after awhile, for a return to the scenes more varied, though more wild and rugged, of his own more northern clime. We hear much of the beauty of a "cloudless sky." It is indeed a relief for a few weeks to those who escape from wintry storms, from bitter winds and blinding snow. But who would have sunshine *forever*? The light and warmth are better when softened and subdued by clouds that intercept the overpowering rays. But here the clouds are few, and they do not "return after the rain," for there *is* no rain. In Lower Egypt there is what may be called a rainy season. In the Delta, as the clouds roll up from the Mediterranean, there is sometimes a sound of abundance of rain. But in Upper Egypt it may be said that it never rains. In Assiout it has rained but three times in ten years! Of course the heat is sometimes fearful. Now it is mid-winter, and the air is comparatively cool and bracing, but in midsummer it reaches 110 and 112 degrees in the shade! For days and nights together the heat is so intense that not a leaf stirs in the palm groves. Not only is there not a drop of rain – there is not a breath of air. This it is to have a "cloudless sky"! Gladly then would our friend exchange for half the year the climate of Egypt for that of America. How refreshing it would be to him to see, just for once, great masses of black clouds gathering over the Arabian Hills, to see the lightnings flash as he has seen them in his native Ohio, and to hear the thunder-peals rolling across the valley from mountain to mountain, and at last dying away on the Libyan desert.

Think of this, ye who shiver in your winter storms at home, and sigh for Egypt. Take it all in all, would you make the exchange?

CHAPTER III

THE TEMPLES OF EGYPT – DID MOSES GET HIS LAW FROM THE EGYPTIANS?

In the distribution of the monuments of Egypt, it is a curious fact that the Pyramids are found almost wholly in Lower Egypt, and the great Temples in Upper Egypt. It was not till we had been a week on the Nile, that we had our first sight of the latter at Denderah. We have since spent three days at Thebes, the great centre of historical interest, and have made a regular campaign of sight-seeing, starting on excursions every morning, and thus have explored the ruins on both sides of the river – for Thebes, like many other great cities – like London and Paris – was built on two sides of a river, but one much greater than the Thames or the Seine, yet not so great but that it was spanned by a bridge (at least this is inferred from some ancient sculptures and inscriptions), over which poured a population such as pours over London Bridge to-day. The site seems made for a great capital, for here the mountains retire from the river, sweeping round in a circuit of some fifty miles, leaving a broad plain to be filled with human habitations. Here four thousand years ago was built a city greater than that on the banks of the Tigris or the Euphrates, than Nineveh or Babylon. Here was the centre of power and dominion for two continents – not only for Africa, but for Asia – to which flocked the multitudinous nations of Assyria and Arabia and Persia and the farthest East, as well as the tribes of Ethiopia – as two thousand years later all the peoples of the earth flocked to Rome. It is easy, from historical records and monumental inscriptions, to form some idea of the glory of this capital of the ancient world. We can imagine the tumult and the roar of this more ancient Rome, when the chariots of mighty kings, and the tread of armies returning victorious from distant wars, thundered through her hundred gates.

Then did the kings of Egypt rear temples and palaces and statues and obelisks worthy of all that greatness. Then were built the most gigantic temples ever raised by the hand of man – as much surpassing in vastness and grandeur those reared centuries afterward by the Greeks, as the latter surpass anything by the moderns. The temples of Thebes – including Luxor and Karnac, which are parts of one city – are as much grander than the Parthenon, as the Parthenon is grander than the Madeleine at Paris, which is a feeble attempt to copy it.

We have now been a week – beginning with Denderah – studying these ruins, and may give certain general impressions. We do not attempt any detailed description, which must necessarily be inadequate, since neither words nor figures convey an idea of them, any more than they do of the Alps. What would be thought of an avenue nearly two miles long, lined with over twelve hundred colossal sphinxes? Yet such was the avenue from Luxor to Karnac – an approach worthy to lead to the temple of the gods. What can we say of a forest of columns, each twelve feet in diameter, stretching out in long colonnades; of the massive walls covered with bas-reliefs; and obelisks in single shafts of granite, of such height and weight that it is the wonder of modern engineering how they could be cut from the side of the hills, and be brought a hundred and forty miles, and erected on their firm bases.

But this temple – or rather cluster of temples and palaces – was not, like the temple of Solomon, finished in a single reign. Karnac was not the work of one man, or of one generation. It was twenty-five hundred years in building, successive kings and dynasties adding to the mighty whole, which was to represent all the glory of Egypt.

The general impression of these temples – and the same is true of the Egyptian statues and sculptures – is one of grandeur rather than beauty. They seek to overpower the senses by mere size. Sometimes they overdo the matter. Thus in the temples at Karnac the columns seem to me too large

and too much crowded for the best effect. Ordinary trees may be planted in a dense grove, but great, broad-spreading oaks or elms require space around them; and if these columns were a little more *spaced*– to use a printer's word – the architectural effect would be still grander. So in the Egyptian sculpture, everything is colossal. In the granite lions and sphinxes there is always an aspect of power in repose which is very impressive, and strikes one with awe. But in any lighter work, such as frescoes and bas-reliefs, there is a total absence of delicacy and grace. Nothing can be more stiff. They sometimes have a rude force of drawing, but beauty they have none. That was born in Greece. All the sculptures on all the temples of Egypt are not worth – except as historical monuments – the friezes of the Parthenon.

One thing else has struck me much as to the plan of these temples, viz.: that we see in them the types and models of much that has been reproduced in various forms of ecclesiastical architecture. One has but to observe with some care the construction of these vast basilicas, to see how many features of Jewish, and even of Christian and Moslem architecture, have been adopted from still older temples and an earlier religion. Thus in the temple at Edfoo there is first the vast enclosure surrounding the whole, and then within the walls an outer court open to the sky, corresponding to the Court of the Gentiles in the Temple at Jerusalem, to the Court of the Fountains leading to the Mosques, and the cloister surrounding the approaches to old abbeys and cathedrals. One might find a still closer resemblance in forms of worship, in the vestments of priests, in the altars, and in the burning of incense, etc., a parallel which scholars have often traced.

And now of all this magnificence and glory of the ancient capital of Egypt, what remains? Only these vast ruins of temples and palaces. The "plain of Thebes" is still here, but deserted and silent. A few columns and statues rise above the plain to mark where the city stood, but the city itself is gone as much as the people who inhabited it four thousand years ago. A few miserable mud huts are built against the walls of mighty temples, and the ploughman drives his team over the dust of the city of a hundred gates. I saw a fellah ploughing with a cow and a camel yoked together, and a couple of half-naked Arabs raising water with their *shadoof* between the Memnon (the statue which was said to sing when its stony lips were touched by the rising of the sun) and its brother statue – the two great Colossi, between which ran the Royal street to Luxor. Was there ever a more complete and utter desolation? In the temple called the Rameseum once stood the largest statue that ever was known – that of Rameses the Great (the same who had a statue at Memphis, for he erected monuments to himself everywhere), cut out of a single block of granite brought from the First Cataract, and weighing nearly nine hundred tons! On this was inscribed, as Herodotus writes, who saw it twenty-three hundred years ago: "I am the king of kings: if any man wish to know how great I am, and where I lie, let him surpass one of my works!" What a comment on the emptiness of human ambition, that this colossal statue, which was to last to the end of the world, was long ago pulled down by a later conqueror, Cambyses, the Persian, and now lies on its back, with its nose knocked off, and eyes put out, and all its glory in the dust!

In studying the figures and the inscriptions on the walls of temples, there are many things which throw light on the manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians. Here is a scene of hunting, or of fishing, or of feasting. Here are the different trades, which show the skill of the people in the mechanic arts, and many scenes which give us an insight into their domestic life. These have been the subjects of two learned and most interesting works by Wilkinson, which open the very interior of ancient Egypt to our modern eyes. They show a very high degree of civilization – of skill in all the useful arts, a skill fully equal in many things, and in some greatly superior, to that of our own day. Wendell Phillips, in his famous lecture on "The Lost Arts," finds many of his illustrations in ancient Egypt. I could not but think that this furnished a very effective answer to those advocates of evolution, who hold that mankind sprung from animals, and have gradually developed to their present state. How much progress have the Egyptians made in four thousand years? Here the race has gone backward, so that there is certainly no inherent tendency in our nature to advance.

But I was less interested in studying the domestic life of the ancient Egyptians, than their religious ideas. Herodotus says that the Egyptians were a very religious people, excelling all others in the honors paid to their gods; and this we can well believe, seeing the temples that they reared for their worship. But what were the gods they adored, and what sort of worship did they render, and how did all this act on the life and character of the people? Here we obtain a less exalted estimate of the ancient Egyptians. The remains which they have left, while they illustrate the greatness of the empire, which four thousand years ago had its seat in the valley of the Nile, do not give a high idea of its Religion. The land was wholly given to idolatry. The Egyptians had as many gods as the Greeks and Romans, only baser and lower, indicating baser and lower ideas. They made gods, not only of the sun, moon, and stars, but of beasts and birds and reptiles – of the apis and the ibis – of the serpent and the crocodile.

At Sakkara we visited one of the most stupendous mausoleums that we have seen in Egypt – one which Herodotus described, but which for centuries was so buried by the sands of the desert that its very site was not known until brought to light by the researches of Mariette Bey, who has done so much to restore the monuments of ancient Egypt. The approach to it was by an avenue of sphinxes, which led to a vast subterranean gallery – twenty feet wide and high – and leading two thousand feet, more than a third of a mile, under the earth. This long, vaulted passage is hewn in the solid rock – out of which open on either side a series of chambers or recesses, like side chapels – each containing a sarcophagus, 15 × 8 feet. These tombs, hollowed out of the solid granite, are so huge and massive that we wonder how they ever could have been got there. Yet these great sarcophagi – fit for the burial places of a long line of kings – were not for the Pharaohs or the Ptolemies, but for the Sacred Bulls! Thirty of these sarcophagi have been found, and on the walls are tablets which record the birth, and death, and burial of each one of these sacred beasts. These were the gods of Egypt, mother of the arts, and civilizer of the earth! This great repository of dead divinities is a colossal monument, at once of the architectural skill of the ancient Egyptians, and of their degrading superstition.

This single fact is enough to answer those who would imply, if they do not quite dare to assert, that the inspiration of the Books of Moses was derived from the Egyptians. It is a favorite theory of certain writers that Moses, being brought up in Egypt, here obtained both the Law and the Religion which he gave to the Israelites. No doubt he did learn much from a country that was at that time the most civilized in the world. He was brought up in a court, and enjoyed every advantage of a royal education. He was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." And it detracts not at all from his inspiration, to suppose that he may have been instructed to embody in his new and better code whatever was excellent in the older system, and had been approved by the experience of centuries. The ceremonial laws – such as those of purification – may have been adopted from the Egyptians. But these are the mere fringes of the garment of the great Lawgiver. As soon as we open the Hebrew Scriptures, we find traces of a wisdom such as the Egyptians never knew. The very first sentence – "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" – scatters the fables of Isis and Osiris, and substitutes for the troop of heathen deities the worship of One Living and True God. This single declaration marks a stupendous advance in the religious faith and worship of mankind.

The same first principle appears as the corner-stone of the law given on Mount Sinai: "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The second law of the first table breaks in pieces the images of the gods of the Egyptians: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth." This was spoken to a people that had just come out of a country where they worshipped beasts and birds and reptiles, and where the walls of the temples were covered with the images of all kinds of foul and creeping things.

In this age of the world, and among civilized nations, we cannot understand the passion for idolatry. Yet it is one of the most universal and ineradicable instincts of a half barbarous people. They

see tokens of an unseen power in the forces of nature, in clouds and winds, in lightning and tempest, and they torment themselves with all imaginable terrors, from which they seek relief and protection in bowing down to gods of wood and stone.

The Israelites coming out of Egypt, were out of the house of bondage in one sense, but they were in it in another. They were continually relapsing into idolatry. The golden calf of Aaron was but an imitation of the sacred bulls of Egypt. Often they pined for the products of the fertile valley of the Nile. With nothing but the burning sands beneath their feet, they might well long for the shade of the palm tree and for its delicious fruit, and they said, Why hath this man Moses brought us up to die in this wilderness? It required forty years of wandering, and that a whole generation should leave their bones to whiten the sands of the desert, before their children could be wholly alienated from the worship of false gods. So not only with the Israelites, but with all nations of men, ages of fiery discipline have been necessary to bring back the race to this first article of our faith: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth."

We might follow the comparison through all the tables of the law, to show how absurd is the pretence that what Moses taught to the Israelites he first learned from the Egyptians. Tell us, ye learned antiquaries, where on all these temples, and in all the records which they have left us, is there any trace of the Ten Commandments?

And yet Egypt is connected very intimately, in history at least, with the birth of our religion. No other country, except Palestine, figures so largely in the Bible. Abraham went down into Egypt. Here came the sons of Jacob to buy corn, and found Joseph ruling in the house of Pharaoh. And hither centuries later fled the virgin mother with her child from the wrath of Herod, fulfilling the prediction, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

But Religion – the Divine wisdom which at once instructs and saves mankind – came not from the valley of the Nile. Abraham and Jacob and Moses saw the Pyramids standing just as we see them now, but they did not point them to the true God. That knowledge came from a higher source. "History," says Bunsen, "was born on that night when Moses, with the law of God in his heart, led the people of Israel out of Egypt." And not History only, but Religion then came to a new birth, that was to be the herald of new and better hopes, and of a higher civilization than was known to the ancient world.

CHAPTER IV

THE EGYPTIAN DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE

The valley of the Nile is one vast sepulchre. Tombs and temples! Temples and tombs! This is the sum of the monuments which ancient Egypt has left us. Probably no equal portion of the earth's surface was ever so populous, at once with the living and the dead. It is but a narrow strip of territory – a line of green between two deserts; and yet on this mere *ribbon* of Africa lived the millions that made one of the most populous and powerful of ancient empires. They were fed by the marvellous fertility of the Nile valley, till they stood upon it almost as thick as the ranks of corn that waved around them: and here, when life was ended, they found a resting-place in the bosom of the earth that nourished them, on which they slept as children on a mother's breast. This strip of earth, long and narrow like a grave, has been the sepulchre of nations. Here the myriads of Egypt's ancient reigns – from the time of Menes – through the long line of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies – the generations that built the Pyramids and those that came after – laid themselves down to sleep in the great valley. Thus the very dust of Egypt was made up of the dust of ancient Egyptians.

But this was only the lot of the common people, to mingle their dust with common clay – their tomb the common earth, their end to be exhaled into the common air, or to reappear in other natural forms, living in plants, blooming in flowers, or in broad-leaved palms, casting a shadow on the earth from which they sprung. But for her great ones, more enduring monuments were reared to guard their dust and perpetuate their names. No people, ancient or modern, ever lavished so much on these sacred and pious memorials. They expended more on the tombs of the dead than on the houses of the living, for they reasoned that the latter were but temporary dwellings, while the former were everlasting habitations. The kings of Egypt cared more for great tombs than great palaces, and they reared such mausoleums as the earth never saw before. The Pyramids were their tombs, and the mountains were hollowed into royal sepulchres. The rock tombs of Beni-Hassan are cut in the side of the hills. The barren mountain that looks off upon the great Libyan desert, is honeycombed with vast and silent halls of the dead. At Thebes the traveller, ascending from the Nile, winds his way among hills of sand into a valley of desolation. The summits around are not covered with pines like our own darkly wooded hills, nor do even the rocks gather moss – but all is bare and desolate. The desert has overflowed the earth like a sea, and not a shrub nor a blade of grass has survived the universal deluge. Yet here where not a living thing can be found, has been discovered underground the most remarkable series of tombs which exists. A whole mountain is pierced with deep excavations. Passages open into its rocky sides, running many hundred feet into the bowels of the earth, and branching off into recesses like side chapels. These Halls of Death are like kings' palaces, with stately chambers broad and high, whose sides and ceilings are covered with hieroglyphics and illustrative symbols.

A fact so remarkable as this, that the architecture of a great empire which has built the most colossal structures in the world, has this tomblike character, must have a meaning. The Egyptians were a very religious people. They were not a gay and thoughtless race, like some of their Asiatic and European neighbors. There is something grave even in their faces, as seen in ancient statues and monuments. Their very architecture had this heavy and solemn character. These colossal temples, these silent sphinxes, seem oppressed with some great mystery which they cannot reveal. These tombs show that the Egyptian mind was full of the idea of death, and of another life. The Egyptians were not Atheists, nor Sadducees. They believed devoutly in God, and in a life to come.

How strongly the idea of another life had taken hold of the Egyptian mind is evident from the symbols in their religion. The symbol most frequently employed is that of the *scarabæus*– or beetle –

the image of which appears everywhere, which by analogy teaches that life, in passing through death, may be born to a new life. The beetle lays its eggs in the slime of the Nile; it buries them in mud, which it works into a ball, and rolls over and over, back to the edge of the desert, and buries in sand. There its work is ended: nature does the rest. Out of this grave comes in time a resurrection, and life is born of death. The ostrich eggs hung up in mosques, have the same symbolical meaning. The ostrich buries its eggs in the sand, and nature, that kind mother which watches over all life, gives them being. Thus is conveyed the same idea as in the analogy of the chrysalis and the butterfly.

Studying the religious faith of the Egyptians a little more closely, we see that they believed not only in the immortality of the soul, but in the resurrection of the body. The doctrine taught by Paul, was long before taught by the priests of Egypt. Their tombs were not merely memorials of those who had ceased to live, but resting-places for the bodies of those whose spirits were absent but would some day return. For this, bodies were embalmed with religious care; they were buried in tombs hewn out of the solid rock, laid away in Pyramids, or in caverns hollowed out of the heart of the mountains. There, embedded in the eternal rocks, locked up with the bars of the everlasting hills, it seemed that their remains would rest secure till the morning of the resurrection day.

Further, they believed not only in immortality and in resurrection, but also in retribution. The soul that was to pass into another life, was to go into it to be judged. There it was to be called to account for the deeds done in the body. Even the funeral rites indicated how strong was the belief of a judgment to come for all who departed this life. After the bodies were embalmed, they were borne in solemn procession to the Nile (most of the tombs being on the western bank), or to a sacred lake, across which they were to be ferried. (Did not this suggest to later Roman mythologists the river Styx, and the boatman Charon who conveyed departed souls to the gloomy shades of Pluto?) As the funeral procession arrived at the borders of the lake, it paused till certain questions were answered, on which it depended whether the dead might receive burial: or should be condemned to wander in darkness three thousand years. If it passed this ordeal, it moved forward, not to its everlasting repose, but to the Hall of Judgment, where Osiris sits upon his throne as the judge of all mankind. This scene is constantly represented in sculptures, in bas-reliefs, and in frescoes on the walls of tombs. In one of them a condemned wretch is driven away in the shape of a pig! (Was it here that Pythagoras, who studied in Egypt, obtained his doctrine of the transmigration of souls?) Before Osiris is the scribe, the recording angel, who keeps a faithful record of the deeds done in the body. A long line of judges – forty-two in number – sit arrayed as the final arbiters of his fate – each with his question, on the answer to which may depend the destiny of the departed soul.

The "Book of the Dead" (copies of which are still found wrapped up with mummies: several are in the British Museum) gives the answers to be made to these searching questions, and also the prayers to be offered, and the hymns that are to be sung, as the soul enters the gloomy shades of the under-world.

In this Egyptian doctrine of a future life there are Christian ideas. Some indeed will say that Egypt gave rather than received; that she was the mother of all learning and all wisdom in the ancient world; that the Greeks obtained their philosophy from her (for Plato as well as Pythagoras studied in Egypt); that the Eleusinian mysteries came from Africa; that Moses here found what he taught the Hebrews; and that even the Christian mysteries and the Christian faith came from the banks of the Nile.

There is certainly much food for reflection in this reappearance of certain religious ideas in different countries and under different forms. But there is a contrast as well as a resemblance. While the Hebrews learned so much from the Egyptians, it is very remarkable that they did *not* imbibe that strong faith in the reality of the invisible world, which lies at the foundation of religion. One would suppose that the Israelites, coming out of Egypt, would be full of these thoughts, and of the hopes and fears of a life to come. Yet in all the books of Moses, rarely, if ever, are these motives addressed to the Hebrews. The German critics argue from this that the Hebrews did not believe in another life.

The late Dr. Edward Robinson, the distinguished Hebrew scholar, said that he could not find that doctrine in the Old Testament. Without admitting such an extreme view, it is certainly remarkable that that idea is much less prominent in the Old Testament than in the New. It is not Moses, but Christ who has brought life and immortality to light.

But the Egyptian doctrine of a future life, while very curious and interesting as a study of ancient belief, is utterly unsatisfying. The ideas are detached and fragmentary, and wholly without evidence or authority; they are merely the crude fancies of mythology, and not the precise teachings of Revelation. And so in all the tombs and temples of Egypt there is nothing which can relieve the doubts of a troubled mind, or the sorrows of a heavy heart.

I have had some sober thoughts while floating on the bosom of the Nile. We cannot but see the world through our own eyes and through our moods of mind. To those who have left their dead beyond the sea, foreign travel has many sad and lonely hours. The world seems cold and empty, and even the most religious mind is apt to be haunted with gloomy thoughts. This is not a mood of mind peculiar to atheists and unbelievers. Many devout men, in seasons of mental depression, are tortured with doubts whether, after all, their religious faith is not a delusion and a dream.

And so many dark and bitter questionings come to me here in this land of sepulchres. I have come to Egypt to learn something of the wisdom of the Egyptians. Tell me then, ye tombs and temples and pyramids, about God; tell me about the life to come! But the Pyramids speak not; and the Sphinx still looks towards the East, to watch for the rising sun, but is voiceless and mute. This valley of the Nile speaks of nothing but death. From end to end its rock-ribbed hills are filled with tombs. Yet what do they all teach the anxious and troubled heart of man? Nothing! All these hills are silent. Not a sound, or even an echo, comes from these dark sepulchres. No voice of hope issues out of the caverns hollowed in the bosom of the hills. The hard granite of the tombs itself is not more deaf to the cry of human anguish, or the voice of supplication.

I turn from the monuments of man to nature. I stand on the bank of the Great River, and ask if it brings not some secret out of the heart of Africa? Tell me, ye night winds, blowing from African deserts; tell me, ye stars shining in the African heaven (this sky of Egypt is so pure and clear that the stars seem higher and more distant from this lower world), what light can ye throw on this great mystery of death? And the stars twinkle, but speak not, and the palm trees quiver in the night wind, but give no answer; and the great Nile flows on silently to the sea, as life flows on to eternity. Nature is dumb; the great secret is not revealed.

For the revelation of that secret we turn not to Egypt, but to Jerusalem. While the Egyptians groped darkly after the truth, how do these dim shadows, these poor emblems and analogies, set forth by contrast the clearer and better truth of revelation! All that is written on the tombs of Egypt; all that is carved in stone, or written in hieroglyphics on ancient sarcophagi; all that is built in temples and pyramids; is not worth that one saying of our Lord, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

We spent Christmas day at Thebes, where a number of English boats had drawn up to the landing to keep the day, so dear to the hearts of Englishmen throughout the world. On Christmas eve they were decorated with palm branches, and at night were lighted up with Chinese lanterns, while row-boats were floating about, the Arab boatmen singing their wild, plaintive melodies.

Christmas brought a scene, if not so picturesque, yet far more sweet and tender. It had been our good fortune to meet there Rev. Dr. Potter of New York, the rector of Grace Church. He was going up the Nile with Miss Wolfe, of Madison square. They were on two dahabeeahs, but kept company, and anchored every night together. On Christmas day there was a service on board Miss Wolfe's boat, which was attended by all the English parties. It was held on the upper deck, which was spread with carpets and covered with an awning on the top and sides to protect us from the sun. Whether it was the strange scene, occurring in a distant part of the world, or sad memories which were recalled by these anniversary days, seldom has a service touched me more. It was very sweet to hear the old, old

prayers – some of them almost as old as Christianity itself – to which we had so often listened in other lands, and to join with the little company in the Christmas hymn:

"Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild;
God and man are reconciled."

Dr. Potter read the service in his clear, rich voice, following it with a sermon which was quite extempore and brief, but so simple and so appropriate to the day that it went to every heart. And when at the close was celebrated the communion, we all felt how pleasant it was in such a place, so far from home, in a country surrounded by the ruins of the temples of old idolatries, to join in the worship of Him who on this day was born to be the Light and the Hope of the world. Better is this than all that Egypt can teach us about a life to come.

And so we turn from these great temples and tombs, which only mock our hopes, to Him who has passed through the grave, and lighted the way for us to follow Him. Let scholars dispute the first intent of the words, yet nothing in the Old Testament or the New, more distinctly expresses what I rest upon than this: "I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God!"

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGION OF THE PROPHET

In a review of the faiths of Egypt, one cannot overlook that which has ruled in the land for more than a thousand years, and still rules, not only in Egypt, but over a large part of Asia and Africa. We arrived in Cairo a few days too late to witness the departure of the pilgrims for Mecca. Once in the year there is a gathering of the faithful for a journey which is the event of their lives. The spectacle is one of the most picturesque in the East, as a long procession, mounted on camels, many of which are richly caparisoned, files through the streets of the city, amid the admiring gaze of the whole population, and takes the way of the desert. Slowly it moves Eastward to the Red Sea, and passing around it, turns South to the heart of the Arabian Peninsula.

A caravan of pilgrims crossing the desert to visit the birthplace of the prophet, is a proof that religious enthusiasm still lives even in this unbelieving age. Perhaps the Moslem spirit is not so bigoted here as at Constantinople. The Turk, with his heavy stolid nature, is a more obstinate religionist than the Arab. And yet Mohammed was not a Turk; he was an Arab, and the faith which he taught still fires the heart of his race.

In one view Cairo may be considered the capital of Islam, as it is the seat of the great University, from which its priests go forth to all parts of the Mohammedan world. This University is nine hundred years old – older than Oxford, and still flourishes with as much vigor as in the palmy days of the Arabian conquest. A visit to it is the most interesting sight in Cairo. There I saw collected together – not one hundred or two hundred students, such as are found in our Theological Seminaries in America – but ten thousand! As one expressed it, "there were two acres of turbans," assembled in a vast inclosure, with no floor but a pavement, and with a roof over it, supported by four hundred columns, and at the foot of every column a teacher, surrounded by pupils, who sat at his feet precisely as Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel. As we entered there rose a hum of thousands of voices, reciting the Koran. These students are not only from Egypt, but from all parts of Africa, from Morocco to Zanzibar. They come from far up the Nile, from Nubia and Soudan; and from Darfour beyond the Great Desert, and from the western coast of Africa. Asia too is largely represented in students both from Western Asia, from Turkey, Arabia, and Persia; and from Central Asia, from Khiva and Bokhara, and Turkistan and Afghanistan, and the borders of China. They come without staff or scrip. There is no endowment to support them; no Students' Fund or Education Board. They live on the charities of the faithful, and when their studies are ended, those who are to be missionaries on this continent mount their camels, and joining a caravan, cross the Desert, and are lost in the far interior of Africa.

This strange sight has set me a-thinking, and the more I think, the more the wonder grows. A religion that supports great universities from generation to generation; and that sends forth caravans, that are like armies, on long pilgrimages, is not dead; it is full of life, and can bring into the field tremendous forces to uphold its empire in the East. What is the secret of its power, by which it lives on from century to century, and seems as if it could not but by annihilating die? There is no question of more interest to the historical student; and no one which it is more necessary to understand in order to form some just idea of the great Eastern War which is already looming above the horizon. A full recognition of that which is good in Islam, and of that which gives it power, would prevent many mistakes in forecasting the future, although it might abate the sanguine confidence of our missionary friends in the speedy triumph of Christianity over its hereditary foe.

First of all, we must recognize the fact of its existence as one of the great religions of the world. The number of its adherents is variously estimated at from a hundred and fifty to a hundred and eighty

millions. It holds but a corner of Europe, but extends its empire over a large part of Asia and Africa. The whole of Africa which is not Pagan, is Moslem. In Asia Islam disputes the sway of Hindooism in India, where the Queen has more Moslem subjects than the Sultan himself, and of Buddhism in the islands of the Malayan Archipelago. Over so large a part of the earth's surface is extended the wide dominion of the Prophet. His followers number one-tenth, perhaps one-eighth, or even one-sixth part of the human race.

Nor is this dominion a merely nominal thing. On the contrary, the true believers are strong believers. It may well be doubted, whether among the nations nominally Christian the mass of the people really believe with half the firmness and the fervor of Mussulmans. The Moslems are as sincere, and in their way as devout, as the adherents of any religion on the face of the globe. No one can enter the mosque of St. Sophia, and see the worshippers turning their faces towards Mecca, not only kneeling but prostrating themselves, touching the pavement with their foreheads, and repeating, in a low, mournful tone, passages from the Koran, without feeling that these men really believe. Those prostrate forms, those wailing voices, are not the signs of hypocrisy, but of a faith that, however mistaken, is at least sincere. In their own minds they are in the presence of the Highest, and offer worship to the unseen God. Indeed they are more than believers, they are zealots, carrying their faith to fanaticism. A body so vast in number, composed of such fierce religionists, is certainly a great power in the political and military, as well as religious, forces, that are yet to contend for the mastery of the Eastern world.

Nor is this power inactive in spreading its faith; it is full of missionary zeal. Max Müller divides all the religions of the world into proselytizing and non-proselytizing. Mohammedanism belongs to the former class as much as Christianity. The days are past when the followers of the Prophet swept over large parts of Asia and Africa, converting tribes and nations by the sword. And yet even at the present day it keeps up a Propaganda as vigorous as that of the Catholics at Rome. Its university here is training ten thousand young apostles. Moslem missionaries preach the Koran, and make proselytes, in all parts of India. But the chief field of their labors is in Africa, where they have penetrated far into the interior, and converted numerous tribes to the faith. It is difficult to obtain accurate statistics in regard to the spread of Islam in Africa. Livingstone thought the reports greatly exaggerated. That is quite possible, and yet, making every allowance, there can be no doubt that it has obtained a success much greater than that of Christian missions.

A religion which has such a foundation on the solid earth, holding nations and empires in its wide dominion; and which has such a history, stretching over twelve centuries; is a subject worthy the closest attention of scholars. Its history is not unlike that of Christianity itself, in the feebleness of its beginning and the greatness of its results. It started in an obscure corner of the world – in the deserts of Arabia – and rapidly conquered the East, overrunning all the adjacent parts of Asia and Africa, and extending along the Mediterranean to the Straits of Gibraltar, and thence crossed into Spain, where it maintained itself for eight hundred years against all the power of Europe to expel it. Such conquests show a prodigious vitality – a vitality not yet exhausted, as it still holds the half of Asia and Africa. A faith which commands the allegiance of so large a part of mankind must have some elements of truth to give it such tremendous power. Perhaps we can find the key in the character of its Founder, and in the faith which he taught.

A great deal has been written about the life of Mohammed, but even yet his character is imperfectly understood. Perhaps we cannot fully understand it, for there are in it contradictions which perplex the most patient and candid student. By many he is dismissed at once as a vulgar impostor, a sort of Joe Smith, who invented monstrous lies, and by stoutly sticking to them got others to believe in them, and as soon as he rallied a few followers about him, compelled neighboring tribes to accept his faith by the unsparing use of the sword.

This is an easy way to get rid of a difficult historical question, but unfortunately it does not explain the facts. It is by that sort of cheap reasoning that Gibbon undertakes to explain the rapid

spread of Christianity. But if Mohammed had been a cunning impostor, his first claim would have been to work miracles, which on the contrary he never claimed at all, but distinctly repudiated. Nor was he a greedy mercenary; he was a poor man; his followers relate with pride how he mended his own clothes, and even pegged his own shoes. But he combined every element of the visionary and the enthusiast. He had that vivid imagination that conceives strongly of things invisible to the natural sense, to which "things that are not become as things that are," and that ardent temperament that kindles at the sight of these unseen realities. Perhaps this temperament was connected with his bodily constitution; from his youth he was subject to epileptic fits, and his revelations were accompanied with convulsions. Such things are found in other religions. They are quite common in the history of devout and passionate Romanists. Nor are they unknown even among Protestants, who profess to be more sober and rational. Among the Methodists, at camp-meetings, a very frequent effect of religious emotion has been that strong men were so prostrated that they fell to the ground and became as dead, and when they recovered, retained impressions never to be effaced, as if they had seen things which it was not lawful to utter. The revelations of Mohammed were all accompanied by these "physical manifestations." Sometimes the angel spoke to him as one man to another; at other times something within his bosom sounded like a bell, which he said "rent him in pieces." At such times he fell to the ground and foamed at the mouth, or his eyes turned red, and he streamed with perspiration, and roared like a camel, in his struggle to give utterance to the revelation of God. This does not look like imposture, but like insanity. The constitution of such a man is a psychological study.

This natural ardor was inflamed by long seclusion. From his youth he loved solitude. Like the old prophets, he withdrew from the world to be alone with God. Like Elijah, he hid himself in a cave. Every year, during the month of Ramadan, he retired to a cave in Mount Hera, three miles from Mecca, to give himself up to religious contemplation; and there, it is said, amid spasmodic convulsions, he had his first vision, in which the angel Gabriel appeared to him.

This explanation of a mind half disordered, subject to dreams and visions and fanatical illusions, is much more rational than that of supposing in him an artful design to impose a new religion on his countrymen. Like other enthusiasts, he became the victim of his own illusions. His imagination so wrought upon him that he came to accept his visions as Divine revelations. In this he was not playing a part; he was not the conscious hypocrite. No doubt he believed himself what he wished others to believe. Indeed he made them believe, by the very sincerity and intensity of his own convictions.

Mohammedanism may be considered as a system of theology, and as a system of morality. The former seems to have been derived largely from Judaism. Mohammed belonged to the tribe of the Koreishites, who claimed to be descended from Abraham through Ishmael. His family were the keepers of the Caaba, or holy place of Mecca, where is the black stone which was brought from heaven, and the spring Zemzem, which sprang up in the desert to save the life of Hagar and her child. Thus he was familiar from his earliest years with the traditions of the patriarchs.

When a boy of fourteen he made a journey with his uncle into Syria, where he may have learned more of the ancient faith. Much is said of his becoming acquainted with a Nestorian bishop or monk, from whom he is supposed to have learned something of Christianity. But he could not have learned *much*, for his views of it were always extremely vague. It is doubtful whether he ever saw the New Testament, or had any knowledge of it other than that derived from some apocryphal books. There is no trace in the Koran of the sublime doctrines of the Gospel, or even of its moral precepts. Although Mohammed professed great reverence for Jesus, whom with Moses he considers the greatest of prophets next to himself, yet his ideas of the Religion which He taught were of the most indefinite kind.

But one thing he did learn, which was common to Judaism and Christianity – that there is but one God. The Monotheism of the Hebrews took the stronger hold of him, from its contrast to the worship around him, which had degenerated into gross idolatry. The tribes of Arabia had become as base idolaters as the Canaanites. Even the holy Caaba was filled with idols, and the mission of

the prophet – as he regarded it – was to restore the worship of the One Living and True God. His first burst of prophetic fire and prophetic wrath was a fierce explosion against idolatry, and it was a moment of triumph when he was able to walk through the Caaba, and see the idols dashed in pieces.

Here then is the first and last truth of Islam, the existence of one God. The whole is comprehended in this one saying, "God is God, and Mohammed is his prophet."

With the homage due to God, is the respect due to His revealed will. Moslems claim for the Koran what many Christians do not claim for the Bible – a literal and verbal inspiration. Every word is Divine.

And not only is the unity of God the cardinal truth, but it is vital to salvation. In this respect Islam is a Religion. It is not a mere philosophy, the acceptance or rejection of which is a matter of indifference. It is not merely a system of good morals – it is a Divine code for the government of mankind, whose acceptance is a matter of life and death – of salvation or damnation.

The doctrine of *retribution* is held by the Moslems in its most rigid form – more rigid indeed than in the Christian system: for there is no atonement for sin. The judgment is inexorable; it is absolute and eternal. Before their eyes ever stands the Day of Judgment – the Dies Iræ – when all men shall appear before God to receive their doom.

But in that last day, when unbelievers shall be destroyed, the followers of the prophet shall be saved. They can go to the tribunal of their Maker without trembling. One day riding outside the walls of Constantinople, we approached a cemetery just as a funeral procession drew near, bearing the form of the dead. We stopped to witness the scene. The mourners gathered around the place where the body was laid, and then the ulema approached the grave, and began *an address to the dead*, telling her (it was a woman) not to be afraid when the angel came to call her to judgment, but to appear before the bar of the Almighty, and answer without fear, for that no follower of the prophet should perish.

The religious observances of the Moslems are very strict. As God is the sole object of worship, so the great act of Religion is communion with Him. Five times a day the voice of the muezzin calls them to prayer. The frequent ablutions were perhaps derived from the Jewish law. Fasting is imposed with a severity almost unknown in the Christian world. The most rigid Catholics hardly observe the forty days of Lent as the Moslems do the month of Ramadan. Almsgiving is not only recommended, but required. Every true believer is commanded to give one-tenth of his income to charity.

As to the moral results of Mohammedanism, it produces some excellent effects. It inculcates the strictest temperance. The Koran prohibits the use of wine, even though wine is one of the chief products of the East. In this virtue of total abstinence the Moslems are an example to Christians.

So in point of integrity; the honesty of the Turk is a proverb in the East, compared with the lying of Christians. Perhaps this comes in part not only from his religion, but from the fact that he belongs to the conquering race. Tyrants and masters do not need to deceive, while falsehood and deceit are the protection of slaves. Subject races, which have no defence before the law, or from cruel masters, seek it in subterfuge and deception. But this claim of integrity may be pushed too far. However it may be in Asia Minor, among simple-minded Turks, who have not been "spoiled by coming in contact with Christians," those who have to do with Turks in the bazaars of Constantinople, are compelled to confess, that if they do not tell lies, they tell very big truths. However, as between the Turk and the Greek, in point of honesty, it is quite possible that those who know them both would give the preëminence to the former.

Whatever the weakness of Mohammedanism, it does not show itself in *that sort* of vices. His very pride makes the Mussulman scorn these meaner sins. His religion, as it lifts him up with self-esteem, produces an effect on his outward bearing. He has an air of independence which is unmistakable. I think I never saw a Mussulman that was afraid to look me in the face. He has none of the sneaking servility that we see in some races. This is a natural consequence of his creed, according to which God is so great that no man is great in his sight. Islam is at once a theocracy and a democracy. God is sole Lawgiver and King, before whom all men stand on the same level. Hence men of all

nations and races fraternize together. In Constantinople blacks and whites, the men of Circassia and the men of Ethiopia, walk arm in arm, and stand on the level of absolute equality.

This democratic spirit is carried everywhere. There is no caste in Islam, not even in India, where it is at perpetual war with the castes of Hindooism. So as it spreads in the interior of Africa, it raises the native tribes to a degree of manliness and self-respect which they had not known before. It "levels up" the African race. Our missionaries in Liberia, who come in contact with certain Moslem tribes from the interior, such as the Mandingoes, will testify that they are greatly superior to those farther South, on the Gold Coast, the Ashantees and the people of Dahomey, who have filled the world with horror by their human sacrifices. All this disappears before the advance of Islam. It breaks in pieces the idols; it destroys devil worship and fetichism and witchcraft, and puts an end to human sacrifices. Thus it renders a service to humanity and civilization.

So far Islam is a pretty good religion – not so good indeed as Christianity, but better than any form of Paganism. It has many elements of truth, derived chiefly from Judaism. So far as Mohammed followed Moses – so far as the Koran followed the Old Testament – they uttered only the truth, and truth which was fundamental. The unity of God is the foundation of religion. It is not only a truth, but the greatest of truths, the first condition of any right religious worship. In declaring this, Mohammed only proclaimed to the Arabs what Moses had proclaimed to the Hebrews: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." But he repeated it with great vehemence and effect, wielding it as a battle-axe to break in pieces the idols of the heathen. And so far – as against idolatry – Islam has served a great purpose in history. But there its utility ends. It teaches indeed that there is but one God. But what a God is that which it presents to our worship! "This God is not our God." The Mohammedan idea of God is very different from the Christian idea of a Father in heaven. It is the idea of the Awful, the Invisible – grand indeed, yet cold and distant and far away, like the stars on the desert, or in the Arctic night, "wildly, spiritually bright," shining with a glittering splendor, but lofty and inaccessible, beyond the cries of human agony or despair. This view of God is so limited and partial as to produce the effect of positive error. In a just religious system there must be included the two ideas of God and man; and these in their proper relation to each other. Exclusive contemplation of either leads astray. When man fastens on the idea of one God, he plants himself on a rock. But he must not bow himself upon the rock, and clasp it so as to forget his own separate individuality, lest the mighty stone roll over upon him and crush him. This the Mussulman does. He dwells so on the idea of God, that his own existence is not only lost sight of, but annihilated. The mind, subdued in awe, is at length overpowered by what it beholds. Man is nothing in that awful presence, as his life is but a point in the Divine eternity.

It cannot be denied that the idea of God, and God alone, may produce some grand effects on human character. It inspires courage. If God be for us, who can be against us? That God *is* for him, the Mussulman never doubts; and this confidence inspires him in danger, and on the field of battle, so that he fights with desperation. But if the fortune of war be against him, who so well as the devout Mussulman knows how to suffer and to die? He murmurs not; but bows his head, saying "God is great," and submits to his fate. Thus his creed carried out to its logical consequence ends in fatalism. He believes so absolutely in God, that the decrees of the Almighty become a fixed fate, which the will of man is impotent to resist. All this comes from an imperfect idea of God. Here Islam is defective, just where Christianity is complete.

There is nothing in Mohammedanism that brings God down to earth, within the range of human sympathy or even of human conception. There is no incarnation, no Son of God coming to dwell among men, hungry and weary, bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, suffering in the garden, and dying on the cross.

The Mussulman does not feel his need of such help. In his prayers there is no acknowledgment of sin, no feeling of penitence, no confession of unworthiness. He knows not how poor and weak he

is, with a religion in which there is no Saviour and Redeemer, no Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, no Holy Spirit to help our infirmities, to strengthen our weaknesses.

So with Moslem morality; if we scan it closely, we find it wanting in many virtues. Some writers give the most elevated ideas of it. Says Chambers' Cyclopædia: "Aside from the domestic relations, the ethics of the Mohammedan religion are of the highest order. Pride, calumny, revenge, avarice, prodigality, and debauchery, are condemned throughout the Koran; while trust in God, submission to His will, patience, modesty, forbearance, love of peace, sincerity, frugality, benevolence, liberality, are everywhere insisted upon."

This is very high praise. But mark the exception: "Aside from the domestic relations." That exception takes out of the system a whole class of virtues, and puts a class of vices in their place. Here is the great crime of Islam against humanity – its treatment of woman. We will not charge against it more than belongs to it. The seclusion of woman is not a Mohammedan custom so much as an Oriental one, and one of a very ancient date. When Abraham sent a servant to find a wife for Isaac, and he returned bringing Rebekah, as the caravan drew near home, and Isaac went out to meditate at eventide, as soon as Rebekah saw him in the distance, she lighted off from her camel and "veiled herself." Polygamy too existed before Mohammed: it existed among the patriarchs. It is claimed that Mohammed repressed it, limiting a man to four wives, although he far exceeded the number himself. Gibbon, who never misses an opportunity of making a point against the Bible, says: "If we remember the seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines of the wise Solomon, we shall applaud the modesty of the Arabian who espoused no more than seventeen or fifteen wives." But this pretence of self-restraint is a mockery. It is notorious that Mohammed was a man of the grossest licentiousness; and the horrible and disgusting thing about it is that he grew more wicked as he grew older; and while trying to put restraint upon others put none upon himself. He punished licentiousness with a hundred stripes, and adultery with death, and yet he was a man of unbounded profligacy, and to make it worse, pleaded a Divine revelation to justify it!

This example of the prophet has had its influence on all the generations of his followers. It has trailed the slime of the serpent over them all. Any one who has been in a Mohammedan country must have felt that the position of woman is a degradation. One cannot see them gliding through the streets of Cairo or Constantinople, with their faces veiled as if it were a shame to look on them, and passing swiftly as if indeed it were a sin for them to be seen abroad, without a feeling of pity and indignation.

And in what a position are such women at home, if it can be called a home, where there is no family, no true domestic life! The wife of a Mohammedan – the mother of his children – is little better than a slave. She is never presented to his friends – indeed you could not offer a greater insult to a Turk than to ask after his wife! Of course there is no such thing as society where women are not allowed to appear. Such a society as that of London or Paris, composed of men eminent in government, in science and literature – a society refined and elevated by the presence of women of such education and manners and knowledge of the world as to be the fit companions of such men – could not possibly exist in Constantinople.

But the degradation of woman is not the only crime to be charged to Islam. In fit companionship with it is cruelty. Mohammed had many virtues, but he had no mercy. He was implacable toward his enemies. He massacred his prisoners, not from hard necessity, but with a fierce delight. Fanaticism extinguished natural compassion, and he put his enemies to death with savage joy. In this his followers have "bettered his instructions." The Turks are cruel, perhaps partly by nature, but partly also because any tender sympathies of nature are kept down by a fiery zeal. Their religion does not make them merciful. When a people have become possessed with the idea that they are the people of God, and that others are outcasts, they become insensible to the sufferings of those outside of the consecrated pale.

In the Greek Revolution the people of Scio joined in the rebellion. A Turkish army landed on the island, and in two months put 23,000 of the inhabitants to the sword, without distinction of age

or sex; 47,000 were sold into slavery, and 5,000 escaped to Greece. In four months the Christian population was reduced from 104,000 to 2,000.

What the Turks are in Europe and Asia, the Arabs are in Africa. The spread of Mohammedanism is a partial civilization of some heathen tribes. But, alas, the poor natives come in contact with "civilization" and "religion" in another way – in the Arab slave-hunters, who, though they are Mohammedans, and devoutly pray toward Mecca, are the most merciless of human beings. One cannot read the pages of Livingstone without a shudder at the barbarities practised on defenceless natives, which have spread terror and desolation over a large part of the interior of Africa.

These cruel memories rise up to spoil the poetry and romance which some modern writers have thrown about the religion of the prophet. They disturb my musings, when awed or touched by some features of Moslem faith; when I listen to the worship in St. Sophia, or witness the departure of pilgrims for Mecca. Whatever Oriental pomp or splendor may still survive in its ancient worship, at its heart the system is cold, and hard, and cruel; it does not acknowledge the brotherhood of man, but exalts the followers of the prophet into a caste, who can look down on the rest of mankind with ineffable scorn. Outside of that pale, man is not a brother, but an enemy – an enemy not to be won by love, but to be conquered and subdued, to be made a convert or a slave. Not only does the Koran not bid mercy to be shown to unbelievers, but it offers them, as the only alternatives, conversion, or slavery, or death.

Needs it any argument to show how impossible is good government under a creed in which there is no recognition of justice and equality? I think it is Macaulay who says that the worst Christian government is better than the best Mohammedan government. Wherever that religion exists, there follow inevitably despotism and slavery, by which it crushes man, as by its polygamy and organized licentiousness, it degrades and crushes woman. Polygamy, despotism, and slavery form the trinity of woes which Mohammedanism has caused to weigh for ages, like a nightmare, on the whole Eastern world. Such a system is as incompatible with civilization as with Christianity, and sooner or later must pass away, unless the human race is to come to a standstill, or to go backward.

But when and how? I am not sanguine of any speedy change. Such changes come slowly. We expect too much and too soon. In an age of progress we think that all forms of ignorance and superstition must disappear before the advance of civilization. But the *vis inertiæ* opposes a steady resistance. It has been well said, "We are told that knowledge is power, but who has considered the power of ignorance?" How long it lives and how hard it dies! We hear much of the "waning crescent," but it wanes very slowly, and it sometimes seems as if the earth itself would grow old and perish before that waning orb would disappear from the heavens. Christian Missions make no more impression upon Islam than the winds of the desert upon the cliffs of Mount Sinai.

I do not look for any great change in the Mohammedan world, except in the train of political changes. That religion is so bound up with political power, that until that is destroyed, or terribly shaken, there is little hope of a general turning to a better faith. War and Revolution are the fiery chariots that must go before the Gospel, to herald its coming and prepare its way. Material forces may open the door to moral influences; the doctrines of human freedom and of human brotherhood may be preached on battle plains as well as in Christian temples. When the hard iron crust of Islam is broken up, and the elements begin to melt with fervent heat, the Eastern world may be moulded into new forms. Then will the Oriental mind be brought into an impressible state, in which argument and persuasion can act upon it; and it may yield to the combined influence of civilization and Christianity. The change will be slow. It will take years; it may take centuries. But sooner or later the fountains of the great deep will be broken up. That cold, relentless system must pass away before the light and warmth of that milder faith which recognizes at once the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

In that coming age there may be other pilgrimages and processions going up out of Egypt. "The dromedaries shall come from far." But then, if a caravan of pilgrims issues from Cairo, to cross the

desert, to seek the birthplace of the founder of its religion, it will not turn South to Mecca, but North to Bethlehem, asking with the Magi of old, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him."

CHAPTER VI

MODERN EGYPT AND THE KHEDIVE

Egypt is a country with a long past, as we found in going up the Nile; may we not hope, also, with a not inglorious future? For ages it was sunk so low that it seemed to be lost from the view of the world. No contrast in history could be greater than that between its ancient glory and its modern degradation. Its revival dates from about the beginning of the present century, and, strange to say, from the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon, which incidentally brought to the surface a man whose rise from obscurity, and whose subsequent career, were only less remarkable than his own. When Napoleon landed in Egypt at the head of a French army of invasion, among the forces gathered to oppose him was a young Albanian, who had crossed over from Greece at the head of three hundred men. This was Mehemet Ali, who soon attracted such attention by his daring and ability, that a few years after the French had been driven out, as the country was still in a distracted state, which required a man of vigor and capacity, he was made Pasha of Egypt – a position which he retained from that time (1806) until his death in 1850. Here he had new dangers, which he faced with the same intrepidity. That which first made his name known to the world as a synonym of resolute courage and implacable revenge, was the massacre of the Mamelukes. These had long been the real masters of Egypt – a terror to every successive government, as were the Janissaries to the Sultan in Constantinople. Mehemet Ali had been but five years in power, when, finding that he was becoming too strong for them, they plotted to destroy him. He learned of the conspiracy just in time, and at once determined to "fight fire with fire;" and, inviting them to the Citadel of Cairo for some public occasion, suddenly shut the gates, and manning the walls with his troops, shot them down in cold blood. Only one man escaped by leaping his horse from the wall. This savage butchery raised a cry of horror throughout Europe, and Mehemet Ali was regarded as a monster of treachery and of cruelty. It is impossible to justify such a deed by any rules of civilized warfare. But this, it is said, was not civilized warfare; it was simply a plot of assassination on one side, forestalled by assassination on the other. I do not justify such reasoning. And yet I could not but listen with interest to Nubar Pasha (the most eloquent talker, as well as the most enlightened statesman, of Egypt), as he defended the conduct of his hero. He, indeed, has a hereditary allegiance to Mehemet Ali, which he derived from his uncle, the prime minister. Said he: "The rule of the Mamelukes was anarchy of the worst kind; it was death to Egypt, and IT IS RIGHT TO KILL DEATH." The reasoning is not very different from that by which Mr. Froude justifies Cromwell's putting the garrison of Drogheda to the sword. Certainly in both cases, in Egypt as in Ireland, the end was peace. From that moment the terror of Mehemet Ali's name held the whole land in awe; and from one end of the valley of the Nile to the other, there was perfect security. "Every tree planted in Egypt," said Nubar Pasha, "is due to him; for till then the people in the country did not dare to plant a tree, for the Mamelukes or the wandering Bedouins came and pitched their tents under its shade, and then robbed the village." But now every wandering tribe that hovered on the borders of the desert, was struck with fear and dread, and did not dare to provoke a power which knew no mercy. Hence the plantations of palms which have sprung up around the Arab villages, and the beautiful avenues of trees which have been planted along the roads.

It is not strange that such a man soon became too powerful, not only for the Mamelukes, but for Turkey. The Sultan did not like it that one of his subjects had "grown so great," and tried more than once to remove him. But the servant had become stronger than his master, and would not be removed. He raised a large army, to which he gave the benefit of European discipline, and in the latter part of his life invaded Syria, and swept northward to Damascus and Aleppo, and was only prevented from

marching to Constantinople by the intervention of foreign powers. It seems a pity now that France and England interfered. The Eastern question might have been nearer a solution to-day, if the last blow to the Grand Turk had been given by a Moslem power. But at least this was secured, that the rule of Egypt was confirmed in the family of Mehemet Ali, and the Viceroy of Egypt became as fixed and irremovable as the Sultan himself.

Mehemet Ali died in 1850, and was succeeded by his son Ibrahim Pasha, who inherited much of his father's vigor. Ismail Pasha, the present Khedive, is the son of Ibrahim Pasha, and grandson of Mehemet Ali. Thus he has the blood of warriors in his veins, with which he has inherited much of their proud spirit and indomitable will.

No ruler in the East at the present moment attracts more of the attention of Europe. I am sorry to go away from Cairo without seeing him. I have had two opportunities of being presented, though not by any seeking or suggestion of my own. But friends who were in official positions had arranged it, and the time was fixed twice, but in both cases I had to leave on the day appointed, once to go up the Nile, and the other to embark at Suez. I cannot give therefore a personal description of the man, but can speak of him only from the reports of others, among whom are some who see him often and know him well. The Khedive has many American officers in his service, some of them in high commands (General Stone is at the head of the army), and these are necessarily brought into intimate relations with him. These officers I find without exception very enthusiastic in their admiration. This is quite natural. They are brought into relations with him of the most pleasant kind. He wants an army, and they organize it for him. They discipline his troops; if need be, they fight his battles. As they minister to his desire for power, and for military display, he gives them a generous support. And so both parties are equally pleased with each other.

But making full allowance for all these prepossessions in his favor, there are certain things in which not only they, but all who know the present ruler of Egypt, agree, and which therefore may be accepted without question, which show that he has a natural force of mind and character which would be remarkable in any man, and in one of his position are still more extraordinary. Though living in a palace, and surrounded by luxury, he does not pass his time in idleness, but gives himself no rest, hardly taking time for food and sleep. I am told that he is "the hardest-worked man in Egypt." He rises very early, and sees his Ministers before breakfast, and supervises personally every department of the Government to such extent indeed as to leave little for others to do, so that his Ministers are merely his secretaries. He is the government. Louis XIV. could not more truly say, "I am the State," than can the Khedive of Egypt, so completely does he absorb all its powers.

Such activity seems almost incredible in an Oriental. It would be in a Turk. But Ismail Pasha boasts that "he has not a drop of Turkish blood in his veins." It is easy to see in his restless and active mind the spirit of that fierce old soldier, Mehemet Ali, though softened and disciplined by an European education.

This may be a proof of great mental energy, but it is not necessarily of the highest wisdom. The men who accomplish most in the world, are those who use their brains chiefly to plan, and who know how to choose fit instruments to carry out their plans, and do not spend their strength on petty details which might be done quite as well, or even better, by others.

The admirers of the Khedive point justly to what he has done for Egypt. Since he came into power, the Suez Canal has been completed, and is now the highway for the commerce of Europe with India; great harbors have been made or improved at Alexandria, at Port Said, and at Suez; canals for irrigation have been dug here and there, to carry over the country the fertilizing waters of the Nile; and railroads have been cut across the Delta in every direction, and one is already advanced more than two hundred miles up the Nile. These are certainly great public works, which justly entitle the Khedive to be regarded as one of the most enlightened of modern rulers.

But while recognizing all this, there are other things which I see here in Egypt which qualify my admiration. I cannot praise without reserve and many abatements. The Khedive has attempted

too much, and in his restless activity has undertaken such vast enterprises that he has brought his country to the verge of bankruptcy. Egypt, like Turkey, is in a very bad way. She has not indeed yet gone to the length of repudiation. From this she has been saved for the moment by the sale of shares of the Suez Canal to England for four millions sterling. But this is only a temporary relief, it is not a permanent cure for what is a deep-seated disease. The financial troubles of Egypt are caused by the restless ambition of the Khedive to accomplish in a few years the work of a century; and to carry out in an impoverished country vast public works, which would task the resources of the richest country in Europe. The Khedive has the reputation abroad of being a great ruler, and he certainly shows an energy that is extraordinary. But it is not always a well regulated energy. He does too much. He is a man of magnificent designs, and projects public works with the grandeur of a Napoleon. This would be very well if his means were at all equal to his ambition. But his designs are so vast that they would require the capital of France or Great Britain, while Egypt is a very poor country. It has always of course the natural productiveness of the valley of the Nile, but beyond that it has nothing; it has no accumulated wealth, no great capitalists, no large private fortunes, no rich middle class, from which to draw an imperial revenue. With all that can be wrung from the miserable fellahs, taxed to the utmost limit of endurance, still the expenses outrun enormously the income.

It is true that Egypt has much more to show for her money than Turkey. If she has gone deeply in debt, and contracted heavy foreign loans, she can at least point to great public works for the permanent good of Egypt; although in the construction of some of these she has anticipated, if not the wants of the country, at least its resources for many years to come.

For example, at the First Cataract, I found men at work upon a railroad that is designed to extend to Khartoum, the capital of Soudan, and the point of junction of the Blue and the White Nile! In the latter part of its course to this point, it is to cross the desert; as it must still farther, if carried eastward, as projected, to Massowah on the Red Sea! These are gigantic projects, but about as necessary to the present commerce of Egypt as would be a railway to the very heart of Africa.

But all the money has not gone in this way. The Khedive has had the ambition to make of Egypt a great African Empire, by adding to it vast regions in the interior. For this he has sent repeated expeditions up the Nile, and is in a continual conflict with his barbarous neighbors, and has at last got into a serious war with Abyssinia.

But even this is not all. Not satisfied with managing the affairs of government, the Khedive, with that restless spirit which characterizes him, is deeply involved in all sorts of private enterprises. He is a speculator on a gigantic scale, going into every sort of mercantile adventure. He is a great real estate operator. He owns whole squares in the new parts of Cairo and Alexandria, on which he is constantly building houses, besides buying houses built by others. He builds hotels and opera houses, and runs steamboats and railroads, like a royal Jim Fisk. The steamer on which we crossed the Mediterranean from Constantinople to Alexandria, belonged to the Khedive, and the railroad that brought us to Cairo, and the hotel in which we were lodged, and the steamer in which we went up the Nile.

Nor is he limited in his enterprises to steamers and railroads. He is a great cotton and sugar planter. He owns a large part of the land in Egypt, on which he has any number of plantations. His immense sugar factories, on which he has expended millions of pounds, may be seen all along the valley of the Nile; and he exports cotton by the shipload from the port of Alexandria.

A man who is thus "up to his eyes" in speculation, who tries to do everything himself, must do many things badly, or at least imperfectly. He cannot possibly supervise every detail of administration, and his agents have not the stimulus of a personal interest to make the most of their opportunity. I asked very often, when up the Nile, if these great sugar factories which I saw *paid*, and was uniformly answered "No;" but that they *would* pay in private hands, if managed by those who had a personal stake in saving every needless expense, and increasing every possible source of income. But the Khedive is cheated on every side, and in a hundred ways. And even if there were not actual fraud, the

system is one which necessarily involves immense waste and loss. Here in Cairo I find it the universal opinion that almost all the Khedive's speculations have been gigantic failures, and that they are at the bottom of the trouble which now threatens the country.

Such is the present financial condition of the Khedive and of Egypt. I couple the two together; although an attempt is made to distinguish them, and we hear that although Egypt is nearly bankrupt, yet that the Khedive is personally "the richest man in the world!" But the accounts are so mixed that it is very difficult to separate them. There is no doubt that the Khedive has immense possessions in his hands; but he is, at the same time, to use a commercial phrase, enormously "extended;" he is loaded with debt, and has to borrow money at ruinous rates; and if his estate were suddenly wound up, and a "receiver" appointed to administer upon it, it is extremely doubtful what would be the "assets" left.

Such an administrator has appeared. Mr. Cave has just come out from England, to try and straighten out the Khedive's affairs. But he has a great task before him. Wise heads here doubt whether his mission will come to anything, whether indeed he will be allowed to get at the "bottom facts," or to make anything more than a superficial examination, as the basis of a "whitewashing report" which may bolster up Egyptian credit in Paris and London.

But if he does come to know "the truth and the whole truth," then I predict that he will either abandon the case in despair, or he will have to recommend to the Khedive, as the only salvation for him, a more sweeping and radical reform than the latter has yet dreamed of. It requires some degree of moral courage to talk to a sovereign as to a private individual; to speak to him as if he were a prodigal son who had wasted his substance in riotous living; to tell him to moderate his desires, and restrain his ambition, and to live a quiet and sober life; and to "live within his means." But this he must do, or it is easy to see where this brilliant financiering will end.

If Mr. Cave can persuade the Khedive to restrain his extravagance; to stop building palaces (he has now more than he can possibly use); and to give up, once for all, as the follies of his youth, his grand schemes of annexing the whole interior of Africa, as he has already annexed Nubia and Soudan; and to "back out" as gracefully as he can (although it is a very awkward business), of his war with Abyssinia; and then to follow up the good course he has begun with his Suez Canal shares, by selling all his stock in every commercial company (for one man must not try to absorb all the industry of a kingdom); if he can persuade him to sell all the railways in Egypt; and to sell every steamship on the Mediterranean, except such as may be needed for the use of the government; and every boat on the Nile except a yacht or two for his private pleasure; to sell all his hotels and theatres; his sugar factories and cotton plantations; and abandoning all his private speculations, to be content with being simply the ruler of Egypt, and attending to the affairs of government, which are quite enough to occupy the thoughts of "a mind capacious of such things;" then he may succeed in righting up the ship. Otherwise I fear the Khedive will follow the fate of his master the Sultan.

But impending bankruptcy is not the worst feature in Egypt. There is something more rotten in the State than bad financial management. It is the want of justice established by law, which shall protect the rights of the people. At present, liberty there is none; the government is an absolute despotism, as much as it was three thousand years ago. The system under which the Israelites groaned, and for which God brought the plagues upon Egypt, is in full force to-day. The Khedive has obtained great credit abroad by the expeditions of Sir Samuel Baker and others up the Nile, which were said to be designed to break up the slave trade. But what signifies destroying slavery in the interior of Africa, when a system still more intolerable exists in Egypt itself? It is not called slavery; it is simply *forced labor*, which, being interpreted, means that when the Khedive wants ten thousand men to dig a canal or build a railroad, he sends into the requisite number of villages, and "conscripts" them *en masse*, just as he conscripts his soldiers (taking them away from their little farms, perhaps, at the very moment when their labor is most needed), and sets them to work for himself, under taskmasters, driving them to work under the goad of the lash, or, if need be, at the point of the bayonet. For this labor, thus cruelly exacted, they receive absolutely nothing – neither pay *nor food*. A man who has

constructed some of the greatest works of Modern Egypt, said to me, as we were riding over the Delta, "I built this railroad. I had under me twenty thousand men – all forced labor. In return for their labor, I gave them —*water*!" "But surely you paid them wages?" "No." "But at least you gave them food?" "No." "But how did they live?" "The women worked on the land, and brought them bread and rice." "But suppose they failed to bring food, what became of the workmen?" "They starved." And not only were they forced to work without pay and without food, but were often required to furnish their own tools. Surely this is making bricks without straw, as much as the Israelites did. Such a system of labor, however grand the public works it may construct, can hardly excite the admiration of a lover of free institutions.

On all who escape this forced labor, the *taxation* is fearful. The hand of the government is as heavy upon them as in the ancient days. To one who was telling me of this – and no man knows Egypt better – I said, "Why, the government takes half of all that the country yields." "Half?" he answered, "*It takes all.*" To the miserable fellahs who till the soil it leaves only their mud hovels, the rags that scarcely hide their nakedness, and the few herbs and fruits that but just keep soul and body together. Every acre of ground in Egypt is taxed, and every palm tree in the valley of the Nile. What would our American farmers say to a tax of twelve dollars an acre on their land, and of from twenty-five to fifty cents on every apple tree in their orchards? Yet this enormous burden falls, not on the rich farmers of New England, or New York, or Ohio, but on the miserable fellahs of Egypt, who are far more destitute than the negroes of the South. Yet in the midst of all this poverty and wretchedness, in these miserable Arab villages the tax gatherer appears regularly, and the tax, though it be the price of blood, is remorselessly exacted. If anybody refuses, or is unable to pay, no words are wasted on him, he is immediately bastinadoed till his cries avail – not with the officers of the law, who know no mercy, but with his neighbors, who yielding up their last penny, compel the executioner to let go his hold.

Such is the Egyptian Government as it presses on the people. While its hand is so heavy in ruinous taxations, the administration of justice is pretty much as it was in the time of the Pharaohs. It has been in the hands of a set of native officials, who sometimes executed a rude kind of justice on the old principle of strict retaliation, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," but commonly paid no regard to the merits of a case, but decided it entirely by other considerations. In matters where the Government was concerned, no private individual had any chance whatever. The Khedive was the source of all authority and power, a central divinity, of whom every official in the country was an emanation, before whom no law or justice could stand. In other matters judges decided according to their own pleasure – their like or dislike of one or the other of the parties – or more often according to their interest, for they were notoriously open to bribes. Thus in the whole land of Egypt justice there was none. In every Arab village the sheik was a petty tyrant, who could bastinado the miserable fellahs at his will.

This rough kind of government answered its purpose – or at least there was no one who dared to question it – so long as they had only their own people to rule over. But when foreigners came to settle in Egypt, they were not willing to be subjected to this Oriental justice. Hence arose a system of Consular Courts, by which every question which concerned a foreigner was argued and decided before a mixed tribunal, composed of the Consul of the country and a native judge. This seemed very fair, but in fact it only made confusion worse confounded. For naturally the Consul sided with his own countryman (if he did not, he would be considered almost a traitor), his foreign prejudices came into play; and so what was purely a question of law, became a political question. It was not merely a litigation about property between A and B, but a matter of diplomatic skill between France (or any other foreign power) and Egypt; and as France was the stronger, she was the more likely to succeed. Hence the foreigner had great advantages over the native in these Consular Courts, and if in addition the native judge was open to a bribe, and the foreigner was willing to give it, the native suitor, however wronged, was completely at his mercy.

Such was the state of things until quite recently. But here at least there has been a reform in the introduction of a new judicial system, which is the greatest step forward that has been taken within half a century.

The man who was the first to see what was the radical vice of the country, the effectual hindrance to its prosperity, was Nubar Pasha. He had the sagacity to see that the first want of Egypt was not more railroads and steamboats, but simple justice – the protection of law. How clearly he saw the evil, was indicated by a remark which I once heard him make. He said: "The idea of justice does not exist in the Oriental mind. We have governors and judges, who sit to hear causes, and who decide them after the Oriental fashion – that is, they will decide in favor of a friend against an enemy, or more commonly in favor of the man who can pay the largest bribe; but to sit patiently and listen to evidence, and then decide according to abstract justice, is something not only foreign to their customs, but of which they have absolutely no idea – they cannot conceive of it." He saw that a feeling of insecurity was at the bottom of the want of confidence at home and abroad; and that to "establish justice" was the first thing both to encourage native industry, and to invite the capital of France and England to expend itself in the valley of the Nile. To accomplish this has been his single aim for many years. He has set himself to do away with the old Oriental system complicated by the Consular Courts, and to introduce the simple administration of justice, by which there should be one law for natives and foreigners, for the rich and the poor, for the powerful and the weak.

To inaugurate such a policy, which was a virtual revolution, the initiative must be taken by Egypt. But how could the Khedive propose a change which was a virtual surrender of his own absolute power? He could no longer be absolute *within the courts*: and to give up this no Oriental despot would consent, for it was parting with the dearest token of his power over the lives and fortunes of his subjects. But the Khedive was made to see, that, if he surrendered something, he gained much more; that it was an immense advantage to himself and his country to be brought within the pale of European civilization; and that this could not be until it was placed under the protection of European law.

But Egypt was not the only power to be consulted. The change could only be made by treaty with other countries, and Egypt was not an independent State, and had no right to enter into negotiations with foreign powers without the consent of the Porte. To obtain this involved long and tedious delays at Constantinople. And last of all, the foreign States themselves had to be persuaded into it, for of course the change involved the surrender of their consular jurisdiction; and all were jealous lest it should be giving up the rights of their citizens. To persuade them to the contrary was a slow business. Each government considered how it would affect its own subjects. France especially, which had had great advantages under the old Consular Courts, was the last to give its consent to the new system. It was only a few days before the New Year, at which it was to be inaugurated, that the National Assembly, after a debate lasting nearly a week, finally adopted the measure by a majority of three to one, and thus the great judicial reform, on which the wisest statesman of Egypt had so long fixed his heart, was consummated.

The change, in a word, is this. The old Consular Courts are abolished, and in their place are constituted three courts – one at Cairo, one at Alexandria, and one at Ismailia – each composed of seven judges, of whom a majority are nominated by the foreign powers which have most to do with Egypt: France, England, Germany, Austria, Russia, and the United States. In the selection of judges, as there are three benches to be filled, several are taken from the smaller states of Europe. There is also a higher Court of Appeal constituted in the same way.

The judges to fill these important positions have already been named by the different governments, and so far as the *personnel* of the new courts is concerned, leave nothing to be desired. They are all men of reputation in their own countries, as having the requisite legal knowledge and ability, and as men of character, who will administer the law in the interest of justice, and that alone. The United States is represented by Judge Barringer at Alexandria, and Judge Batcheller at Cairo – both of whom will render excellent service to Egypt, and do honor to their own country.

The law which these courts are to administer, is not Moslem law (until now the supreme law of Egypt was the Koran, as it still is in Turkey), nor any kind of Oriental law – but European law. Guided by the same intelligence which framed the new judicial system, Egypt has adopted the Code Napoleon. The French language will be used in the courts for the European judges, and the Arabic for the native.

In administering this law, these courts are supreme; they cannot be touched by the Government, or their decisions annulled; for *they are constituted by treaty*, and any attempt to interfere with them would at once be resented by all the foreign powers as a violation of a solemn compact, and bring down upon Egypt the protest and indignation of the whole civilized world.

The change involved in the introduction of such a system can hardly be realized by Europeans or Americans. It is the first attempt to inaugurate a reign of law in Egypt, or perhaps in any Oriental country. It is a breakwater equally against the despotism of the central power, and the meddlesomeness of foreign governments, acting through the Consular Courts. For the first time the Khedive is himself put under law, and has some check to his power over the lives and property of his subjects. Indeed we may say that it is the first time in the history of Egypt that there has been one law for ruler and people – for the Khedive and the fellah, for the native-born and for the stranger within their gates.

The completion of such a system, after so much labor, has naturally been regarded with great satisfaction by those who have been working for it, and its inauguration on the first of the year was an occasion of congratulation. On that day the new judges were inducted into office, and after taking their official oaths they were all entertained at the house of Judge Batcheller, where was present also Mr. Washburne, our Minister at Paris, and where speeches were made in English, French, German, and Arabic, and the warmest wishes expressed both by the foreign and native judges, that a system devised with so much care for the good of Egypt, might be completely successful. Of course it will take time for the people to get accustomed to the new state of things. They are so unused to any form of justice that at first they hardly know what it means, and will be suspicious of it, as if it were some new device of oppression. They have to be educated to justice, as to everything else. By and bye they will get some new ideas into their heads, and we may see a real administration of justice in the valley of the Nile. That it may realize the hopes of the great man by whom it has been devised, and "establish justice" in a country in which justice has been hitherto unknown, will be the wish of every American.

This new judicial system is the one bright spot in the state of Egypt, where there is so much that is dark. It is the one step of real progress to be set over against all the waste and extravagance, the oppression and tyranny. Aside from that I cannot indulge in any rose-colored views. I cannot go into ecstasies of admiration over a government which has had absolute control of the country for so many years, and has brought it to the verge of ruin.

And yet these failures and disasters, great as they are, do not abate my interest in Egypt, nor in that remarkable man who has at present its destinies in his hands. I would not ask too much, nor set up an unreasonable standard. I am not so foolish as to suppose that Egypt can be a constitutional monarchy like England; or a republic like America. This would be carrying republicanism to absurdity. I am not such an enthusiast for republican institutions, as to believe that they are the best for all peoples, whatever their degree of intelligence. They would be unsuited to Egypt. The people are not fit for them. They are not only very poor, but very ignorant. There is no middle class in Egypt in which to find the materials of free institutions. Republican as I am, I believe that *the best possible government for Egypt is an enlightened despotism*; and my complaint against the government of the Khedive is, not that he concentrates all power in himself, but that he does not use it wisely – that his government unites, with many features of a civilized state, some of the very worst features of Oriental tyranny.

But with all that is dark in the present state of this country, and sad in the condition of its people, I believe that Egypt has a great future before it; that it is to rise to a new life, and become

a prosperous State of the modern world. The Nile valley has a great part yet to play in the future civilization of Africa, as an avenue of access to the interior – to those central highlands where are the Great Lakes, which are the long-sought sources of the Nile; and from which travellers and explorers, merchants and missionaries, may descend on the one hand to the Niger, and to the Western Coast; or, on the other, to those vast regions which own the rule of the Sultan of Zanzibar. I watch with interest every Expedition up the Nile, if so be it is an advance, not of conquest, but of peaceful commerce and civilization.

Perhaps the Khedive will rise to the height of the emergency, and bring his country out of all its difficulties, and set it on a new career of prosperity. He has great qualities, great capacity and marvellous energy. Has he also the gift of political wisdom?

Never had a ruler such an opportunity. He has a part to act – if he knows how to act it well – which will give him a name in history greater than any of the old kings of Egypt, since to him it is given to reconstruct a kingdom, and to lead the way for the regeneration of a continent. If only he can see that his true interest lies, not in war, but in peace, not in conquering all the tribes of Africa, and annexing their territory, but in developing the resources of his own country, and in peaceful commerce with his less civilized neighbors, he will place himself at the head of a continent, and by the powerful influence of his example, and of his own prosperous State, become not only the Restorer of Egypt, but the Civilizer of Africa.

CHAPTER VII

MIDNIGHT IN THE HEART OF THE GREAT PYRAMID

Our last night in Cairo we spent in riding out to Ghizeh by moonlight, and exploring the interior of the Great Pyramid. We had already been there by day, and climbed to the top, but did not then go inside. There is no access but by a single narrow passage, four feet wide and high, which slopes at a descending angle, so that one must stoop very low while he slides down an inclined plane, as if he were descending into a mine by a very small shaft. There is not much pleasure in crouching and creeping along such a passage, with a crowd of Arab guides before and behind, lighting the darkness with their torches, and making the rocky cavern hideous with their yells. These creatures fasten on the traveller, pulling and pushing, smoking in his face, and raising such a dust that he cannot see, and is almost choked, and keeping up such a noise that he cannot hear, and can hardly think. One likes a little quiet and silence, a little chance for meditation, when he penetrates the sepulchre of kings, where a Pharaoh was laid down to rest four thousand years ago. So I left these interior researches, on our first visit to the Pyramid, to the younger members of our party, and contented myself with clambering up its sides, and looking off upon the desert and the valley of the Nile, with Cairo in the distance.

But on our trip up the Nile, I read the work of Piazzi Smyth, the Astronomer Royal of Scotland, "Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid," and had my curiosity excited to see again a structure which was not only the oldest and greatest in the world, but in which he thought to have discovered the proofs of a divine revelation. Dr. Grant of Cairo, who had made a study of the subject, and had spent many nights in the heart of the Pyramid, taking accurate measurements, kindly offered to accompany us; and so we made up a party of those who had come down the Nile – an Episcopal clergyman from New England, a Colonel from the United States Army, a lady from Cambridge, Mass., and a German lady and her daughter who had been with us for more than two months, and my niece and myself. It was to be our last excursion together, as we were to part on the morrow, and should probably never all meet again.

At half-past eight o'clock we drove away from the Ezbekieh square in Cairo. It was one of those lovely nights found only in Egypt. The moon, approaching the full, cast a soft light on everything – on the Nile, as we crossed the long iron bridge, and on the palms, waving gently in the night wind. We rode along under the avenue of trees planted by old Mehemet Ali, keeping up an animated conversation, and getting a great deal of information about Egypt. It was two hours before we reached the Pyramid. Of course the Arabs, who had seen the carriages approaching along the road, and who like vultures, discern their prey from a great distance, were soon around us, offering their services. But Dr. Grant, whose experience had taught him whom to seek, sent for the head man, whom he knew, who had accompanied him in his explorations, and bade him seek out a sufficient number of trusty guides for our party, and keep off the rest.

While the sheik was seeking for his retainers, we strolled away to the Sphinx, which looked more strange and weird than ever in the moonlight. How many centuries has he sat there, crouching on the desert, and looking towards the rising sun. The body is that of a recumbent lion. The back only is seen, as the giant limbs, which are stretched out sixty feet in front, are wholly covered by the sand. But the mighty head still lifts its unchanged brow above the waste, looking towards the East, to see the sun rise, as it has every morning for four thousand years.

On our return to the Pyramid, Dr. Grant pointed out the "corner sockets" of the original structure, showing how much larger it was when first built, and as it stood in the time of the Pharaohs. It is well known that it has been mutilated by the successive rulers of Egypt, who have stripped off its

outer layers of granite to build palaces and mosques in Cairo. This process of spoliation, continued for centuries, has reduced the size of the Pyramid *two acres*, so that now it covers but eleven acres of ground, whereas originally it covered thirteen. Outside of all this was a pavement of granite, extending forty feet from the base, which surrounded the whole.

By the time we had returned, the sheik was on hand with his swarthy guides around him, and we prepared to enter the Pyramid. It was not *intended* to be entered. If it had been so designed – as it is the largest building in the world – it would have had a lofty gateway in keeping with its enormous proportions, like the temples of Upper Egypt. But it is not a temple, nor a place for assembly or for worship, nor even a lofty, vaulted place of burial, like the tombs of the Medici in Florence, or other royal mausoleums. Except the King's and Queen's chambers (which are called chambers by courtesy, not being large enough for ordinary bedrooms in a royal palace, but more like a hermit's rocky cell), the whole Pyramid is one mass of stone, as solid as the cliff of El Capitan in the Yo Semite valley. The only entrance is by the narrow passage already described; and even this was walled up so as to be concealed. If it were intended for a tomb, whoever built it sealed it up, that its secret might remain forever inviolate; and that the dead might slumber undisturbed until the Judgment day. It was only by accident that an entrance was discovered. About a thousand years ago a Mohammedan ruler, conceiving the idea that the Pyramid had been built as a storehouse for the treasures of the kings of Egypt, undertook to break into it, and worked for months to pierce the granite sides, but was about to give it up in despair, when the accidental falling of a stone led to the discovery of the passage by which one now gains access to the interior.

In getting into the Pyramid one must stoop to conquer. But this stooping is nothing to the bodily prostrations he has to undergo to get into some passages of the temples and underground tombs. Often one has not only to crouch, but to crawl. Near the Pyramid are some tombs, the mouths of which are so choked up with sand that one has actually to forego all use of hands and knees. I threw myself in despair on the ground, and told the guides to drag me in by the heels. As one lies prone on the earth, he cannot help feeling that this horizontal posture is rather ridiculous for one who is in the pursuit of knowledge. I could not but think to what a low estate I had fallen. Sometimes one feels indeed, as he is thus compelled to "lick the dust," as if the curse of the serpent were pronounced upon him, "On thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

We had trusted to the man in authority to protect us from the horde of Arabs; but nothing could keep back the irrepressible camp-followers, who flocked after us, and when we got into the King's chamber, we found we had twenty-four! With such a bodyguard, each carrying a lighted candle, we took up our forward march, or rather our forward *stoop*, for no man can stand upright in this low passage. Thus bending one after another, like a flock of sheep, we vanished from the moonlight. Dr. Grant led the way, and, full of the wonders of the construction of the Pyramid, he called to me, as he disappeared down its throat, to look back and see how that long tube – longer and larger than any telescope that ever was made – pointed towards the North Star. But stars and moon were soon eclipsed, and we were lost in the darkness of this labyrinth. The descent is easy, indeed it is too easy, for the sides of the passage are of polished limestone, smooth as glass, and the floor affords but a slight hold for the feet, so that as we bent forward, we found it difficult to keep our balance, and might have fallen from top to bottom if we had not had the strong arms of our guides to hold us up. With such a pair of crutches to lean upon, we slid down the smooth worn pavement till we came to a huge boulder, a granite portcullis, which blocked our way, around which a passage had been cut. Creeping around this, pulled and hauled by the Arabs, who lifted us over the dangerous places, we were shouldered on to another point of rock, and now began our ascent along a passage as slippery as that before. Here again we should have made poor progress alone, with our boots which slipped at every moment on the smooth stones, but for the Arabs, whose bare feet gave them a better hold, and who held us fast.

And now we are on a level and move along a very low passage, crouching almost on our hands and knees, till we raise our heads and stand in the Queen's Chamber – so called for no reason that we know but that it is smaller than the King's.

Returning from this, we find ourselves at the foot of the Grand Gallery, or, as it might be called, Grand Staircase (as in its lofty proportions it is not unlike one of the great staircases in the old palaces of Genoa and Venice), which ascends into the heart of the Pyramid. This is a magnificent hall, 157 feet long, 28 feet high, and 7 feet wide. But the ascent as before is over smooth and polished limestone, to climb which is like climbing a cone of ice. We could not have got on at all but for the nimble Arabs, whose bare feet enabled them to cling to the slippery stone like cats, and who, grasping us in their naked arms, dragged us forward by main force. The ladies shrank from this kind of assistance, as they were sometimes almost embraced by these swarthy creatures. But there was no help for it. This kind of bodily exercise, passive and active, soon brought on an excessive heat. We were almost stifled. Our faces grew red; I tore off my cravat to keep from choking. Still, like a true American, I was willing to endure anything if only I got ahead, and felt rewarded when we reached the top of the Grand Gallery, and instead of looking *up*, looked *down*.

From this height we creep along another passage till we reach the object of our climbing, in the lofty apartment called the King's Chamber. This is the heart of the Great Pyramid – the central point for which apparently it was built, and where, if anywhere, its secret is to be found. At one end lies the sarcophagus (if such it was; if the Pyramid was designed to be a tomb) in which the great Cheops was buried. It is now tenantless, except by such fancies as travellers choose to fill it withal. I know not what sudden freak of fancy took me just then, perhaps I thought, How would it seem to be a king even in his tomb? and instantly I threw myself down at full length within the sarcophagus, and lay extended, head thrown back, and hands folded on my breast, lying still, as great Cheops may have lain, when they laid him in his royal house of death. It was a soft bed of dust, which, as I sank in it, left upon my whole outward man a *marked* impression. It seemed very like ordinary dust, settled from the clouds raised by the Arabs in their daily entrances to show the chamber to visitors. But it was much more poetical to suppose that it was the mouldering dust of Cheops himself, in which case even the mass that clung to my hair might be considered as an anointing from the historic past. From this I was able to relieve myself, after I reached home that night, by a plentiful application of soap and water; but alas, my gray travelling suit bore the scars of battle, the "dust of conflict," much longer, and it was not till we left Suez that a waiter of the ship took the garment in hand, and by a vigorous beating exorcised the stains of Egypt, so that Pharaoh and his host – or his dust – were literally cast into the Red Sea.

And now we were all in the King's Chamber, our party of eight, with three times the number of Arabs. The latter were at first quite noisy, after their usual fashion, but Dr. Grant, who speaks Arabic, hushed them with a peremptory command, and they instantly subsided, and crouched down by the wall, and sat silent, watching our movements. One of the party had brought with him some magnesium wire, which he now lighted, and which threw a strong glare on the sides and on the ceiling of the room, which, whether or not intended for the sepulchre of kings, is of massive solidity – faced round with red granite, and crossed above with enormous blocks of the same rich dark stone. With his subject thus illuminated, Dr. Grant pointed out with great clearness those features of the King's Chamber which have given it a scientific interest. The sarcophagus, which is an oblong chest of red granite, in his opinion, as in that of Piazzi Smyth, is not a sarcophagus at all; indeed it looks quite as much like a huge bath-tub as a place of burial for one of the Pharaohs. He called my attention to the fact that it could not have been introduced into the Pyramid by any of the known passages. It must, therefore, have been built in it. It is also a singular fact that it has no cover, as a sarcophagus always has. No mummy was ever found in it so far as we have any historic record. Piazzi Smyth, in his book, which is full of curious scientific lore, argues that it was not intended for a tomb, but for a fixed standard of measures, such as was given to Moses by Divine command. It is certainly a

remarkable coincidence, if nothing more, that it is of the exact size of the Ark of the Covenant. But without giving too much importance to real or supposed analogies and correspondences, we must acknowledge that there are many points in the King's Chamber which make it a subject of curious study and of scientific interest; and which seem to show that it was constructed with reference to certain mathematical proportions, and had a design beyond that of being a mere place of burial.

After we had had this scientific discussion, we prepared for a discussion of a different kind – that of the lunch which we had brought with us. A night's ride sharpens the appetite. As the only place where we could sit was the sarcophagus itself, we took our places in it, sitting upon its granite sides. An Arab who knew what we should want, had brought a pitcher of water, which, as the heat was oppressive, was most grateful to our lips, and not less acceptable to remove the dust from our eyes and hands. Thus refreshed, we relished our oranges and cakes, and the tiny cups of Turkish coffee.

To add to the weirdness of the scene, the Arabs asked if we would like to see them perform one of their native dances? Having our assent, they formed in a circle, and began moving their bodies back and forth, keeping time with a strange chant, which was not very musical in sound, as the dance was not graceful in motion. It was quickly over, when, of course, the hat was passed instantly for a contribution.

The Colonel proposed the health of Cheops! Poor old Cheops! What would he have said to see such a party disturbing the place of his rest at such an hour as this? I looked at my watch; it was midnight – an hour when the dead are thought to stir uneasily in their graves. Might he not have risen in wrath out of his sarcophagus to see these frivolous moderns thus making merry in the place of his sepulture? But this midnight feast was not altogether gay, for some of us thought how we should be "far away on the morrow." For weeks and months we had been travelling together, but this excursion was to be our last. We were taking our parting feast – a fact which gave it a touch of sadness, as the place and the hour gave it a peculiar interest.

And now we prepared to descend. I lingered in the chamber to the last, waiting till all had gone – till even the last attendant had crawled out and was heard shouting afar off – that I might for a moment, at least, be alone in the silence and the darkness in the heart of the Pyramid; and then, crouching as before, followed slowly the lights that were becoming dimmer and dimmer along the low and narrow passage. Arrived at the top of the Grand Gallery, I waited with a couple of Arabs till all our party descended, and then lighting a magnesium wire, threw a sudden and brilliant light over the lofty walls.

It was one o'clock when we emerged from our tomb to the air and the moonlight, and found our carriages waiting for us. The moon was setting in the West as we rode back under the long avenue of trees, and across the sacred Nile. It was three o'clock when we reached our hotel, and bade each other good-night and good-bye. Early in the morning two of us were to leave for India on our way around the world, and others were to turn their faces towards the Holy Land and Italy. But however scattered over Europe and America, none of us will ever forget our Midnight in the Heart of the Great Pyramid.

In recalling this memory of Egypt, my object is not merely to furnish a poetical and romantic description, but to invite the attention of the most sober readers to what may well be a study and an instruction. This Pyramid was the greatest of the Seven Wonders of the World in the time of the Greeks, and it is the only one now standing on the earth. May it not be that it contains some wisdom of the ancients that is worthy the attention of the boastful moderns; some secret and sacred lore which the science of the present day may well study to reveal? It may be (as Piazzi Smyth argues in his learned book) that we who are now upon the earth have "an inheritance in the Great Pyramid;" that it was built not merely to swell the pride of the Pharaohs, and to be the wonder of the Egyptians; but for our instruction, on whom the ends of the world are come. Without giving our adhesion in advance to any theory, there are certain facts, clearly apparent, which give to this structure more than a monumental interest. For thousands of years it had been supposed to have been built for a

royal tomb – for that and that only. So perhaps it was – and perhaps not. At any rate a very slight observation will show that it was built also for other purposes. For example:

Observe its geographical position. It stands at the apex of the Delta of the Nile, and Piazzi Smyth claims, in the centre of the habitable globe! He has a map in which its point is fixed *in* Africa, yet between Europe and Asia, and which shows that it stands in the exact centre of the land surface of the whole world. This, if it be an accident, is certainly a singular one.

Then it is exactly on the thirtieth parallel of latitude, and it stands four-square, its four sides facing exactly the four points of compass – North, South, East, and West. Now the chances are a million to one that this could not occur by accident. There is no need to argue such a matter. It was certainly done by design, and shows that the old Egyptians knew how to draw a meridian line, and to take the points of compass, as accurately as the astronomers of the present day.

Equally evident is it that they were able to measure the solar year as exactly as modern astronomers. Taking the sacred cubit as the unit of measure there are in each side of the Pyramid just 365¼ cubits, which gives not only the number of days in the year, but the six hours over!

That it was built for astronomical purposes, seems probable from its very structure. Professor Proctor argues that it was erected for purposes of astrology! Never was there such an observatory in the world. Its pinnacle is the loftiest ever placed in the air by human hands. It seems as if the Pyramid were built like the tower of Babel, that its top might "touch heaven." From that great height one has almost a perfect horizon, looking off upon the level valley of the Nile. It is said that it could not have been ascended because its sides were covered with polished stone. But may there not have been a secret passage to the top? It is hard to believe that such an elevation was not made use of by a people so much given to the study of the stars as were the ancient Egyptians. In some way we would believe that the priests and astrologers of Egypt were able to climb to that point, where they might sit all night long looking at the constellations through that clear and cloudless sky; watching Orion and the Pleiades, as they rose over the Mokattam hills on the other side of the Nile, and set behind the hills of the Libyan desert.

There is another very curious fact in the Pyramid, that the passage by which it is entered points directly to the North Star, and yet not to the North Star that now is, but to Alpha Draconis, which was the North Star four thousand years ago. This is one way in which the age of the Pyramid is determined, for it is found by the most exact calculations that 2170 years before Christ, a man placed at the bottom of that passage, as at the bottom of a well, and looking upward through that shaft, as if he were looking through the great telescope of Lord Rosse, would fix his eye exactly on the North Star – the pole around which was revolving the whole celestial sphere. As is well known, this central point of the heavens changes in the lapse of ages, but that star will come around to the same point in 25,800 years more, when, if the Pyramid be still standing, the observers of that remote period can again look upward and see Alpha Draconis on his throne, and mark how the stars "return again" to their places in the everlasting revolutions of the heavens.

As to the measurement of *time*, all who have visited astronomical observatories know the extreme and almost infinite pains taken to obtain an even temperature for clocks. The slightest increase of temperature may elongate the pendulum, and so affect the duration of a second, and this, though it be in a degree so infinitesimal as to be almost inappreciable, yet becomes important to the accuracy of computations, when a unit has to be multiplied by hundreds of millions, as it is in calculating the distances of the heavenly bodies. To obviate this difficulty, astronomical clocks are sometimes placed in apartments under ground, closed in with thick walls (where even the door is rarely opened, but the observations are made through a glass window), so that it cannot be affected by the variations of temperature of the outer world. But here, in the heart of this mountain of stone, the temperature is preserved at an absolute equilibrium, so that there is no expansion by heat and no contraction by cold. What are all the observatories of Greenwich, and Paris and Pulkowa, to such a rock-built citadel as the Great Pyramid?

But not only was the Pyramid designed to stand right in its position towards the earth and the heavenly bodies; but also, and perhaps chiefly (so argues Prof. Smyth) was it designed for metrological (not met*eo*rological) purposes – to furnish an exact standard of weights and measures. The unit of lineal measure used in the Pyramid he finds to correspond not to the English *foot*, nor to the French *metre*, but to the Hebrew *sacred cubit*. This is certainly a curious coincidence, but may it not prove simply that the latter was derived from the former? Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and may have brought from the Valley of the Nile weights and measures, as well as customs and laws.

But this cubit itself, wherever it came from, has some very remarkable correspondences. French and English mathematicians and astronomers have had great difficulty to fix upon an exact standard of lineal measure. Their method has been to take some length which had an exact relation to one of the unchangeable spaces or distances of the globe itself. Thus the English inch is one five hundred millionth part of the axis of the earth. But Prof. Smyth finds in the Great Pyramid a still better standard of measure. The cubit contains twenty-five of what he calls "Pyramid inches," and fifty of these are just equal to one ten-millionth part of the earth's axis of rotation! He finds in the Pyramid a greater wonder still in a measure for determining the distance of the earth from the sun, which is the unit for calculating the distances of the heavenly bodies! That which scientific expeditions have been sent into all parts of the earth within the last two years to determine by more accurate observations of the transit of Venus, is more exactly told in the Great Pyramid erected four thousand years ago!

It is a very fascinating study to follow this learned professor in his elaborate calculations. He seems to think the whole of the exact sciences contained in the Great Pyramid. The vacant chest of red granite in the King's Chamber, over which Egyptologists have puzzled so much, is to him as the very ark of the Lord. That which has been supposed to be a sarcophagus, with no other interest than as having once held a royal mummy, he holds not to be the tomb of Cheops, or of any of the kings of Egypt, but a sacred coffer intended to serve as a standard of weights and measures for all time to come. He thinks it accomplishes perfectly the arithmetical feat of squaring the circle! – the height being to the circumference of the base, as the radius is to the circumference of a circle.

But the Great Pyramid has, to Professor Smyth, more than a scientific – it has a religious interest. He is a Scotchman, and not only a man of science, but one who believes, with all the energy of his Scotch nature, in a Divine revelation; and as might be supposed, he connects this monument of scientific learning with One who is the source of all wisdom and knowledge. However great may have been the wisdom of the Egyptians, he does not believe that they had a knowledge of geodesy and astronomy greater than the most learned scientific men of our day. He has another explanation, that the Great Pyramid was built by the guidance of Him who led the Israelites out of Egypt, and who, as he shone upon their path in the desert, now shines by this lighthouse and signal tower upon the blindness and ignorance of the world. He believes that the Pyramid was constructed by Divine inspiration just as much as the Jewish Tabernacle; that as Moses was commanded to fashion everything according to the pattern showed to him in the Mount, so some ancient King of Egypt, working under Divine inspiration, builded better than he knew, and wrought into enduring stone, truths which he did not perhaps himself understand, but which were to be revealed in the last time, and to testify to a later generation the manifold wisdom of God. As to its age he places it somewhere between the time of Noah and the calling of Abraham. Dr. Grant even thinks it was built before the death of Noah! But mankind could hardly have multiplied in the earth in the lifetime of even the oldest of the patriarchs, so as to be capable of building such monuments. The theory is that it was not built by an Egyptian architect. There is a tradition mentioned in Herodotus of a shepherd who came from a distant country, from the East, who had much to do with the building of the Pyramid, and was regarded as a heavenly visitant and director. Prof. Smyth thinks it probable, that this visitor was Melchisedek! He even gives the Pyramid a prophetic character, and thinks that the different passages and chambers are designed to be symbolical of the different economies through which God educates the race. The entrance at

first *descends*. That may represent the gradual decadence of mankind to the time of the Flood, or to the exodus of the Israelites. Then the passage begins to *ascend*, but slowly and painfully, which represents the Jewish Dispensation, when men were struggling towards the light. After a hundred and twenty-seven feet of this stooping and creeping upward, there is a sudden enlargement, and the low passage rises up into the Grand Gallery, just as the Mosaic economy, after groping through many centuries, at last bursts into the full glory of the Christian Dispensation.

Believing in its inspired character, he finds in every part of this wonderful structure signs and symbols. Taking it as an emblem of Christian truth, where is the chief corner-stone? Not at the base, but at the top – the apex! At the bottom, there are four stones which are equal – no one of which is above another – the *chief* corner-stone therefore must be the capstone!

It will be perceived that this is a very original and very sweeping theory; that it overturns all our ideas of the Great Pyramid; that it not only turns Cheops out of it, but turns Science and Revelation together into it. We may well hesitate before accepting it in its full extent, and yet we must acknowledge our indebtedness to Prof. Smyth. He has certainly given a new interest to this hoary monument of the past. Scientific men who reject his theory are still deeply interested in the facts which he brings to light, which they recognize as very extraordinary, and which show a degree of scientific knowledge which not only they did not believe to exist among the Egyptians, but which hardly exists in our day.

So much as this we may freely concede, that the Pyramid has a scientific value, if not a sacred character; that it is full of the wisdom of the Egyptians, if not of the inspiration of the Almighty; and that it is a storehouse of ancient knowledge, even if it be not the very Ark of the Covenant, in which the holiest mysteries are enshrined!

Leaving out what may be considered fanciful in the speculations of the Scotch astronomer, there is yet much in the facts he presents worthy the consideration of the man of science, as well as the devout attention of the student of the Bible, and which, if duly weighed, will at once enlarge our knowledge and strengthen our faith.

Such are the lessons that we derive from even our slight acquaintance with the Great Pyramid; and so, as we looked back that night, and saw it standing there in the moonlight, its cold gray summit, its "chief corner-stone," pointing upwards to the clear unclouded firmament, it seemed to point to something above the firmament – to turn our eyes and thoughts to Heaven and to God.

CHAPTER VIII

LEAVING EGYPT – THE DESERT

We left Cairo the next morning. Our departure from Egypt was not exactly like that of the Israelites, though we came through the land of Goshen, and by the way of the Red Sea. We did not flee away at night, nor hear the rush of horses and chariots behind us. Indeed we were very reluctant to flee at all; we did not like to go away, for in those five or six weeks we had grown very fond of the country, to which the society of agreeable travelling companions lent an additional charm.

But the world was all before us, and necessity bade us depart. It was the 6th of January, the beginning of the feast of Bairam, the Mohammedan Passover. The guns of the Citadel ushered in the day, observed by all devout Mussulmans, which commemorates the sacrifice by Abraham – not of Isaac, but of *Ishmael*, for the Arabs, who are descendants of Ishmael, have no idea of his being set aside by the other son of the Father of the Faithful. On this day every family sacrifices the paschal lamb (which explains the flocks of sheep which we had seen for several days in the streets of the city), and sprinkles its blood upon the lintels and doorposts of their houses, that the angel of death may pass them by. The day is one of general rejoicing and festivity. The Khedive gives a grand reception to all the foreign representatives at his palace of Gezireh, at which I had been invited to be present. But from this promised pleasure I had to tear myself away, to reach the steamer at Suez on which we were to embark the next day for India. But if we missed the Khedive, we had at least a compensation, for as we were at the station, who should appear but Nubar Pasha! He had just resigned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which took a load off his shoulders, and felt like a boy out of school, and was now going off to a farm which he has a few miles from Cairo, to have a holiday. He immediately came to us and took a seat in the same carriage, and we sat together for an hour, listening to his delightful conversation, as he talked of Egypt with a patriot's love and a poet's enthusiasm. There is no man who more earnestly wishes its prosperity, and it would be well for the Khedive if he were always guided by such advisers. At the station his servants met him with one of those beautiful white donkeys, so much prized in the East, and as he rode away waving his hand to us, we felt that we were parting from one of the wisest and wittiest men whom it had been our good fortune to meet in all our travels.

At Zagazig, the railroad from Cairo unites with that from Alexandria. Here we stopped to dine, and while waiting, a special train arrived with Mr. Cave, who has come out from London to try and put some order into the financial affairs of Egypt. If he succeeds, he will deserve to be ranked very high as a financier. He was going on to Ismailia to meet M. de Lesseps, that they might go through the Suez Canal together.

And now we leave behind us the rich land of Goshen, where Joseph placed his father Jacob and his brethren, with their flocks and herds; we leave the fertile meadows and the palm groves. We are on the track of the Israelites; we have passed Rameses, the first station in their march, and entered the desert, that "great and terrible wilderness" in which they wandered forty years. We enter it, not on camels or horses, but drawn by a steed of fire. A railway in the desert! This is progress indeed. There is something very imposing to the imagination in the idea of an iron track laid in the pathless sands, over which long trains move swifter than "the swift dromedaries," and carrying burdens greater than the longest caravans. These are the highways of civilization, which may yet carry it into the heart of Africa. Here, too, are the great ships, passing through the Suez Canal, whose tall masts are outlined against the horizon, as they move slowly from sea to sea.

And now we are approaching the border line between Asia and Africa. It is an invisible line; no snow-capped mountains divide the mighty continents which were the seats of the most

ancient civilization; no sea flows between them: the Red Sea terminates over seventy miles from the Mediterranean; even the Suez Canal does not divide Asia and Africa, for it is wholly in Egypt. Nothing marks where Africa ends and Asia begins, but a line in the desert, covered by drifting sands. And yet there is something which strangely touches the imagination, as we move forward in the twilight, with the sun behind us, setting over Africa, and before us the black night coming on over the whole continent of Asia.

So would I take leave of Africa – in the Night and in the Desert. Byron closes his Childe Harold with an apostrophe to the Ocean, his Pilgrim ending his wanderings on the shore. The Desert is like the Sea: it fills the horizon, and shuts out the sight of "busy cities far away," leaving one on the boundless plain, as on the Ocean – alone with the Night. Perhaps I may be indulged in some quiet musings here, before we embark on the Red Sea, and seek a new world in India.

But what can one say of the desert? The subject seems as barren as its own sands. *Life* in the desert? There is *no* life; it is the very realm of death, where not a blade of grass grows, nor even an insect's wing flutters over the mighty desolation; the only objects in motion, the clouds that flit across the sky, and cast their shadows on the barren waste below; and the only sign that man has ever passed over it, the bleaching bones that mark the track of caravans.

But as we look, behold "a wind cometh out of the North," and stirring the loose sand, whirls it into a column, which moves swiftly towards us like a ghost, as if it said: "I am the spirit of the desert; man, wherefore comest thou here? Pass on. If thou invadest long my realm of solitude and silence, I will make thy grave." We shall not linger, but only "tarry for a night," to question a little the mystery that lies hidden beneath these drifting sands.

We look again, and we see shadowy forms coming out of the whirlwind – great actors in history, as well as figures of the imagination. The horizon is filled with moving caravans and marching armies. Ancient conquerors pass this way for centuries from Asia into Africa, and back again, the wave of conquest flowing and reflowing from the valley of the Tigris to the valley of the Nile. As we leave the Land of Goshen, we hear behind us the tramp of the Israelites beginning their march; and as the night closes in, we see in another quarter of the horizon the wise men of the East coming from Arabia, following their guiding star, which leads them to Bethlehem, where Christ was born.

And so the desert which was "dead" becomes "alive;" a whole living world starts up from the sands, and glides into view, appearing suddenly like Arab horsemen, and then vanishing as if it had not been, and leaving no trace in the sands any more than is left by a wreck that sinks in the ocean. But like the sea, it has its passing life, which has a deep human interest. And not only is there a life of the desert, but a literature which is the expression of that life – a history and a poetry, which take their color from these peculiar forms of nature – and even a music of the desert, sung by the camel-drivers, to the slow movement of the caravan, its plaintive cadence keeping time to the tinkling of the bells.

It has been one of the problems of physical geographers: What was the *use* of deserts in the economy of nature? A large part of Africa is covered by deserts. The Libyan Desert reaches to the Sahara, which stretches across the continent. All this seems an utterly waste portion of the earth's surface. The same question has been raised in regard to the sea: Why is it that three-fourths of the globe are covered by water? Perhaps the same answer may be given in both cases. These vast spaces may be the generators and purifiers of the air we breathe – the renovators of our globe's atmosphere.

And the desert has its beauty as well as its utility. It is not all a dead level, a boundless monotony, but is billowy like the sea, with great waves of sand cast up by the wandering winds. The color, of course, is always the same, for there is no green thing to relieve the yellow sand. But nature sometimes produces great effects with few materials. This monotony of color is touched with beauty by the glow of sunset, as the light of day fades over the wide expanse. Sunrise and sunset on the desert have all the simple but grand effects of sunrise and sunset on the ocean. What painter that has visited Egypt has not tried to put on canvas that after-glow on the Nile, which is alike his wonder and his despair? Egypt is one of the favorite countries sought by European artists, who seek to catch that marvellous color

which is the effect of its atmosphere. They find many a subject in the desert. With the accessories of life, few as they are, it presents many a scene to attract a painter's eye, and furnishes full scope to his genius. A great artist finds ample material in its bare and naked outlines, relieved by a few solitary figures – the Arab and his tent, or the camel and his rider. Perhaps the scene is simply a few palm trees beside a spring, under whose shade a traveller has laid him down to rest from the noon-tide heat, and beside him are camels feeding! But here is already a picture. With what effect does Gérome give the Prayer in the Desert, with the camel kneeling on the sands, and his rider kneeling beside him, with his face turned towards Mecca; or Death in the Desert, where the poor beast, weary and broken, is abandoned to die, yet murmurs not, but has a look of patience and resignation that is most pathetic, as the vultures are seen hovering in the air, ready to descend on their prey!

A *habitat* so peculiar as the desert must produce a life as peculiar. It is of necessity a lonely life. The dweller in tents is a solitary man, without any fixed ties, or local habitation. Whoever lives on the desert must live alone, or with few companions, for there is nothing to support existence. It must be also a nomadic life. If the Arab camps, with his flocks and herds, in some green spot beside a spring, yet it is only for a few days, for in that time his sheep and cattle have consumed the scanty herbage, and he must move on to some new resting-place. Thus the life of the desert is a life always in motion. The desert has no settled population, no towns or villages, where men are born, and grow up, and live and die. Its only "inhabitants" are "strangers and pilgrims," that come alone or in caravans, and pitch their tents, and tarry for a night, and are gone.

Such a life induces peculiar habits, and breeds a peculiar class of virtues and vices. Nomadic tribes are almost always robbers, for they have to fight for existence, and it is a desperate struggle. But, on the other hand, their solitary life as well as the command of the prophet, has taught them the virtue of hospitality. Living alone, they feel at times the sore need of the presence of their kind, and welcome the companionship even of strangers. An Arab sheik may live by preying on travellers, but if a wanderer on the desert approaches his tent and asks shelter and protection, he gives it freely. Even though the old chief be a robber, the stranger sleeps in peace and safety, and his entertainer is rewarded by the comfort of seeing a human face and hearing a human voice.

To traverse spaces so vast and so desolate would not be possible were it not for that faithful beast of burden which nature has provided. Horses may be used by the Bedouins on their marauding expeditions, but they keep near the borders of the desert, where they can make a dash and fly; but on the long journey across the Great Sahara, by which the outer world communicates with the interior of Africa, no beast could live but the camel, which is truly the ship of the desert. Paley might find an argument for design in the peculiar structure of the camel for its purpose; in its stomach, that can carry water for days, and its foot, which is not small like that of the horse, but broad, to keep the huge animal from sinking in the sands. It serves as a snow-shoe, and bears up both the beast and his rider. Then it is not hard like a horse's hoof, that rings so sharp on the pavement, but soft almost like a lion's paw. And tall as the creature is, he moves with a swinging gait, that is not unpleasant to one accustomed to it, and as he comes down on his soft foot, the Arab mother sits at ease, and her child is lulled to rest almost as if rocked in a cradle.

Thus moving on in these slow and endless marches, what so natural as that the camel-riders should beguile their solitude with song? The lonely heart relieves itself by pouring its loves and its sorrows into the air; and hence come those Arabian melodies, so wild and plaintive and tender, which constitute the music of the desert. Some years since a symphony was produced in Paris, called "The Desert," which created a great sensation, deriving its peculiar charm from its unlikeness to European music. It awakened, as it were, a new sense in those who had been listening all their lives to French and German operas. It seemed to tell – as music only tells – the story of the life of the desert. In listening one could almost see the boundless plain, broken only by the caravan, moving slowly across the waste. He could almost "feel the silence" of that vast solitude, and then faintly in the distance was heard the tinkling of the camel-bells, and the song of the desert rose upon the evening air, as

softly as if cloistered nuns were singing their vesper hymns. The novel conception took the fancy of the pleasure seekers of Paris, always eager for a new sensation. The symphony made the fame of the composer, Felicien David, who was thought to have shown a very original genius in the composition of melodies, such as Europe had not heard before. The secret was not discovered until some French travellers in the East, crossing the desert, heard the camel-drivers singing and at once recognized the airs that had so taken the enthusiasm of Paris. They were the songs of the Arabs. The music was born on the desert, and produced such an effect precisely because it was the outburst of a passionate nature brooding in solitude.

Music and poetry go together: the life that produces the one produces the other also. And as there is a music of the desert, so there is a poetry of the desert. Indeed the desert may be almost said to have been the birthplace of poetry. The Book of Job, the oldest poem in the world, older than Homer, and grander than any uninspired composition, was probably written in Arabia, and is full of the imagery of the desert.

But while the mind carols lightly in poetry and music, its deeper musings take the form of Religion. It is easy to see how the life of the desert must act upon a thoughtful and "naturally religious" mind. The absence of outward objects throws it back upon itself; and it broods over the great mystery of existence. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, when he was

"Alone on the wide, wide sea,"

found that

"So lonely 'twas that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be."

But in the desert one may say there is nothing but God. If there is little of earth, there is much of heaven. The glory of the desert is at night, when the full moon rises out of the level plain, as out of the sea, and walks the unclouded firmament. And when she retires, then all the heavenly host come forth. The atmosphere is of such exquisite purity, that the stars shine with all their splendor. No vapor rises from the earth, no exhalation obscures the firmament, which seems all aglow with the celestial fires. It was such a sight that kindled the mind of Job, as he looked up from the Arabian deserts three thousand years ago, and saw Orion and the Pleiades keeping their endless march; and as led him to sing of the time "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

Is it strange that God should choose such a vast and silent temple as this for the education of those whom He would set apart for his own service? Here the Israelites were led apart to receive the law from the immediate presence of God. The desert was their school, the place of their national education. It separated them from their own history. It drew a long track between them and the bitter past. It was a fit introduction to their new life and their new religion, as to their new country.

In such solitudes God has had the most direct communion with the individual soul. It was in the desert that Moses hid himself in a cleft of the rock while the Lord passed by; that the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind; and from it that John the Baptist came forth, as the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

So in later ages holy men who wished to shun the temptations of cities, that they might lead lives of meditation and prayer, fled to the desert, that they might forget the world and live for God alone. This was one of the favorite retreats of Monasticism in the early Christian centuries. The tombs of the Thebaïd were filled with monks. Convents were built on the cliffs of Mount Sinai that remain to this day.

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