CHAPTER XXXII.

A Diversified Journey.

Village of Beni-Hassan—Methods Used by Beggars—Sugar Factory—Dom Palms—Asyoot—Oriental Market Scenes.

ON the way to and from the tombs we passed the village of Beni-Hassan, notorious for ferocity, filth, and thieving propensities. We saw many of the inhabitants, a few who looked savage, others resembling the people along the Nile generally. The children are like the majority of the Egyptian children, sweet-tempered and vivacious. They followed us, crying, "*Backsheesh, backsheesh.*" Those who were disappointed would sometimes cry, but no such persuaders exist in the world as the Egyptian girls. They bow and smile, and use winning and beautiful gestures. Zincke says that an Arab girl to whom he had refused to give suddenly sprang forward and threw herself on the ground exactly in the donkey's path, and became violently convulsed with a storm of uncontrollable agony. In her convulsions she shrieked and threw dust on her head. He rode on, taking no notice of her. She reenacted the scene, but finding that he was not moved "with nature's mother wit and arts well known before," for the remainder of the way she ran along, still extending her hand, but now all winsome smiles.

One boy that we saw was so nearly naked that it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that he was. He came toward us carrying a big stone with which he beat upon his chest, and with an agonized expression held out his hand for *backsheesh*. We declined. He struck himself again. We shouted, "Go away." He drew back the stone as if he intended to throw it at us. We smiled, he laughed, and the crowd shouted.

At the ship we witnessed a disgraceful scene. A crowd of more than one hundred men, women, and children, from seventy-five years of age to five, the majority being from

fifteen to thirty, some entirely naked, and others holding up what little clothes they had to catch the *backsheesh*, oranges, and other fruits, screaming like wild animals, and throwing every possible expression into their faces. As wildly absorbed as though drunk or insane, they scrambled, fought, and plunged into the water. Little girls were lifted by boys and pushed farther toward the steamer, and when the money was thrown to them older boys would leap upon them and push them down into the water. There must have been a score of fights, and more than ten score of blows struck during the scrimmage.

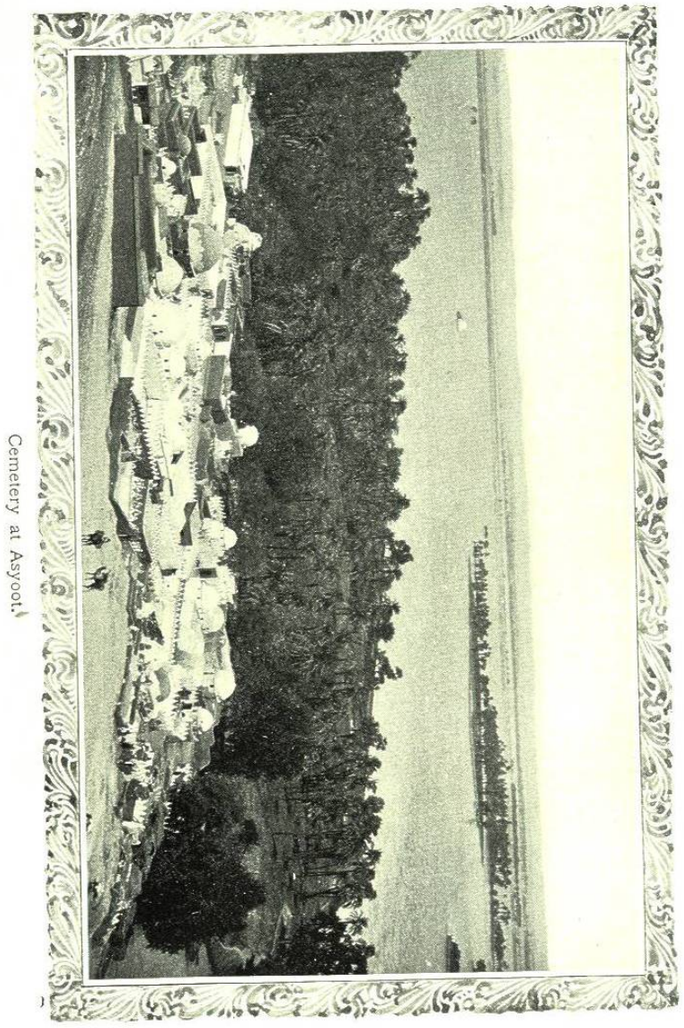
When the excitement was highest the Sheik, with his long, black robe and turban, appeared with a club in his hand, and went among the crowd, beating them terrifically. A guard also beat them over the head and shoulders with a *koorbash*, a whip of hippopotamus hide. This was genuine beating, for the children ran away screaming, and the resounding whack of the club and the whip could be heard. Several ladies retreated, but two American girls said, "It was the custom of the country, and they were there to see it." Yet the moment the Sheik's back was turned the crowd turned about, and the yell began. While the Sheik remained they were fighting among themselves, but did not resist him; though we saw two or three appearing to do so. At the close the Sheik himself, though not mingling with the crowd, stood at one side bowing and stretching forth his hand for *backsheesh*.

Soon after the steamer moved off we observed that the river left the mountains and made a bend toward the west, and in a little while we stopped at Roda, where is one of the largest sugar factories on the Nile. We explored it under the guidance of Abraham and a government officer. It is owned and managed by the Khedive, is lighted by gas, and employs two thousand persons. The machinery, made in France, is elaborate and costly. The workmen were almost naked, and hundreds were lying asleep with scarcely any clothes on, as black as the floor on which they slept, having nowhere else to go. They packed themselves together until the length of the side of a room was taken up; then another row was started, the heads of the second row being at

the feet of the first; and so on until the room was filled, leaving only a space about a foot and a half wide for a walk. Their wages are exceedingly small.

In former times the Khedive raised all the cane for the factory, but on account of the quantities eaten by the natives and the workmen, found that he was losing money. Now the men raise the cane, which the Khedive buys at practically his own price. It is peculiarly sweet and pleasant to the taste. We observed each process; first the crushing of the cane, then the passing of the sap through sieves to clear it from impurity, then into boilers, then into clarifying and cooling vats until it was brought out into different qualities of sugar. The superintendent of each department conducted us through it. Some could speak English, and where they could not our dragoman interpreted. On reaching one room the ladies of the party were shocked at seeing an almost naked workman in one of the bins perspiring profusely, the perspiration mingling with the sugar. "My!" said one of the ladies, "I would never want to eat that sugar!" But it was thrown by him into a "whizzer," and when the machinery stopped, and the sugar had been shoveled into a box, the superintendent took up some, and the identical ladies who had seen the process pressed forward to taste it. A sage commented thus: "After all, do not the fattest cooks knead the best bread? And in many European bakeries men tramp barefooted up and down the troughs as an expeditious mode of kneading." Having gone through sugar factories in the South, and canning establishments in the North, such an incident as this had no effect upon my nerves, and I enjoyed eating the sugar more than I would highly colored confectionery.

There was nothing monotonous in the scenery of the Nile. Charles Dudley Warner says truly: "The scenes are never twice alike. The combinations vary, the desert comes near and recedes, the mountains advance in bold precipices, or fall away." The living tableaux furnish great variety. We were never out of sight of boats, some handsome and beautifully painted, others short and dirty, and upon their decks men, women, and children, "clothed in all the hues of heaven and the rags of earth."



Cemetery at Asyoot.

We caught a glimpse of the first dom palms we had seen, after passing the ruins of Hermopolis. They differ from ordinary palms in the fact that the lower part of the stem, which is single, divides into two branches, and these again into two. The top is covered with large, fan-shaped leaves, under which the fruit grows. When ripe it resembles gingerbread in taste, and is eaten by the natives. The nut that grows in the center is so hard that the carpenters of Egypt long used it for the socket of their drills. Before it is fully ripe it resembles horn, but the inhabitants of Ethiopia, who utilize everything, are said to eat it. The bluffs, called Gebel-Aboofayda twenty-five or thirty miles farther up the river, extend along the east bank about ten miles. They are precipitous, and cause sudden gusts by their obstruction of atmospheric currents. Here many birds and wild ducks sailed out from caves in the rocks. On the top of those rocks are pits containing thousands of crocodile mummies.

At length Asyoot, beautiful for situation, appeared on the west bank of the river. It is the capital of the province of Asyoot, two hundred and forty-seven and a half miles from Cairo by water, and a few miles less by rail. Its population is thirty-two thousand. The course of the river for ten or twelve miles, with its sharp turns or angles, causes the city to appear first on one side and then on the other. The Libyan mountains, a few miles behind it, glow in the sunlight, while many river views and bits of water, appearing like small lakes or artificial canals, beautify the foreground. This city is the capital of Upper Egypt. Its name is a great stumbling-block to travelers. It is written Asioot, Asyoot, Asiüt, Ssout, Siôout, Osyoot, Osioot, O'Sioót, Siüt, Sioot, O'Siout, Si-ôôt, Siout, Syouth, and so on indefinitely.

Fifteen minarets could be counted projecting above the groves of palm and acacia. An embankment, ornamented with trees, extends to the town, which is entered through an old gateway and courtyard, forming part of the governor's palace. At Asyoot the market presented the most oriental view of such a scene obtained during all our African journeys. Men, women, children, and animals were crowded in seemingly inextricable confusion. The people looked happy, though

they were so jammed that there was scarce room for our little donkeys to go through, such was the mass of camels, donkeys, and sacred cows, which, like many other alleged sacred things, are common and even unclean when visited in the place of their nativity. With the braying asses, growling camels, bawling cows, cackling fowls, bellowing buffalos, vociferation of buyers and sellers, and yells of water carriers, it was a veritable Babel.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Asyoot to the Temple of Denderah.

Bazaars and Market Place—Starting Point of English Expedition to the Soudan—Ancient Lycopolis—Evidences of Roman Occupation—Mission of United Presbyterian Church—Ophthalmia Prevalent in Egypt—Scenes at Farshoot and Keneh—The Temple of Denderah.

THE bazaars are superior to most outside of Cairo. The articles sold are brought from Cairo and all parts of Egypt, Arabia, Nubia, and Abyssinia. In former times caravans arrived from the far South bearing tropical productions and manufactures of the equatorial regions; and an extensive business was done with the Soudan, which for the most part has been destroyed by the wars of the Mahdi and his successors. The red and black pottery of Asyoot is of wide celebrity. In the market place a multitude of jars of the inferior sort was offered for sale, and in the bazaars the finest work. The caravans from Darfoor formerly brought cinnamon, gum arabic, tusks, and ostrich feathers. We saw a small caravan. The acacia trees furnish the true gum arabic, which slowly exudes through the bark.

The city was practically the starting point of the English expedition to the Soudan in 1884. Stores for the army were brought by railway, and conveyed to the Second Cataract by steam and sail. Eight hundred rowboats, which took the English troops over the difficult pass of the river south of Wady Halfah, were placed in the Nile at this point.

Here stood the ancient Lycopolis, the City of Wolves. The wolf was counted sacred by the people, and these animals were numerous in the neighborhood. In the caves and the recesses of the rocks in the Libyan mountains wolf mummies can still be found. We came upon several which at the time we supposed to be dogs. Mummy jackals also are there; visitors to the British Museum can see the best preserved specimens. Our ride to the tombs and the grottoes abun-

dantly repaid us. We ascended the spurs of the Libyan mountains and saw catacombs with vaulted ceilings, elegantly sculptured, which a critic says might be taken for Greek patterns if one did not know that the ceiling is older than Greek art.

Evidences of Roman occupation remain. During the earlier Christian ages these tombs were occupied by Christians, some of whom fled from persecution, and others resorted thither to lead lives of monkish solitude. When Theodosius the Christian was desirous to discover the will of God he could not, after the manner of his pagan ancestors, consult the oracle at Delphi, but heard of a monk in Egypt supposed to have the gift of miracles and the power of reading the future. According to tradition, he sent Eutropius from Constantinople to Alexandria, whence he ascended the Nile to Lycopolis. Here a holy monk, named John, dwelt in the side of the mountain, in a cell where he lived fifty years "without opening his door, without seeing the face of a woman, and without tasting any food that had been prepared by fire or any human art." He spent five days in prayer and meditation; on Saturdays and Sundays he opened a window and gave audience to the suppliants who came from all parts of the Christian world. He gave Theodosius a favorable answer which is said to have been fulfilled.

I visited an institution not mentioned by Charles Dudley Warner or referred to by Miss Edwards, but which is worthy of the attention of any who propose to describe a country *as it is*—the Mission of the United Presbyterian Church of North America. The college buildings are commodious, eligibly situated, a little out of town, on a broad lawn surrounded by gardens. Here more than four hundred students are annually instructed. They are mostly Copts, though a considerable number of Mohammedans are among them.

Most of the officers were absent attending the annual meeting of the Mission, but we were courteously received. This college has by genuine merit secured the high approbation of all who know anything of its work.

Ophthalmia prevails in Egypt, the majority of the people being more or less affected by it. The number of one-eyed

persons and of those with acutely diseased eyes is so great that Miss Edwards affirms that as many as one in twenty of the persons in certain districts are blind or partly so, and that she saw so many children of four or five years old with the surface of one or both eyes eaten away that she had not been many weeks on the Nile before she began to avoid systematic exploring of native towns whenever it was practicable to do so.

We had an instructive but painful opportunity of seeing how prevalent this disease is. Professor Hirschberg, an oculist of Berlin, called some of the students into a room and made an examination of their eyes as a part of his study of the subject of ophthalmia. Not one of the fifteen had a thoroughly sound eye; some were blind in one eye, two were hopelessly diseased, and the remainder in various degrees of imperfection, several of whom, without attention, would in his opinion soon become totally blind. Everything about the college was scrupulously clean and neat. We were informed, soon after arriving, that Dr. Isaac G. Bliss, for nearly forty years missionary of the American Board, and at the head of the Bible House in Constantinople, who, accompanied by his wife, was making a journey through Egypt for his health, had been taken ill, and was supposed to be dying. The young gentleman who traveled with me was a fellow-student of a son of Dr. Bliss in Amherst College, and bore from the young man to his father a letter of introduction, which he intended to present in Constantinople. Their forebodings were fulfilled by the event, for Dr. Bliss died that day, and holy men bore him to his burial place, by the side of Dr. Hogge, the founder of the Mission, in a cemetery just outside the city, given by a wealthy Mohammedan who had been converted to Christianity.

When we left Asyoot the scenery began to take on a tropical aspect. The heat was intense; the air, however, as dry as the broiling sun and the hot sands of the desert could make it. The heavy evaporation from the Nile did not appear to moisten it eighteen inches from the water. In the morning it was impossible to sit upon the eastern side of the boat, or on the western side in the afternoon. The absence of humidity made the temperature endurable.

In the vicinity of Farshoot we caught glimpses of flocks of sheep guarded by the Howara dogs, famous from ancient times—large, fierce-looking, with rough black coats, and a courage unsurpassed by any breed of dogs in the world. Groves of palms and acacia trees lined the banks.

At Keneh we made the usual visits to the bazaars, tasted the excellent dates, and saw the manufactories of porous water jars and bottles.

There and elsewhere we were astonished to see the enormous weight which in water jars the women would bear on their heads. No one who sees an Egyptian woman carry these can fail to recognize the connection between walking with a weight upon the head and the most graceful carriage. Egyptian women have a bearing which the women of other countries might covet. A friend informed me that he had seen women of ordinary size who could uplift water jars weighing one hundred and twenty-five pounds, and walk a long distance with them without the slightest difficulty.

The Temple of Denderah is in an excellent state of preservation; much of it hardly deserves to be called a ruin. Here, for the first time, an unpleasant peculiarity of the tour appeared. Our dragoman was not an archæologist or an Egyptologist, but he knew thoroughly what he had been taught, could recite it distinctly, and his interlocutory remarks were amusing. Two passengers, one an Englishman and the other a German, had formed their ideas from books, and were continually contradicting and puzzling the conductor. The majority knew only what they had read in a general way, and wished to have Abraham unfold his story. They were there to be led, not to make reputations as antiquarians, or to contend with Wilkinson, Mariette, Lepsius, and other authorities. These men, however, so contradicted him, for a considerable part of the time, that he did not know what to say, and the tourists generally were in confusion. At the end it became necessary to administer heroic treatment to these untimely combatants; their pertinacity was frowned upon until it gradually gave way to more decorous conduct, which desirable consummation was hastened by several egregious blunders into which they fell.

Mariette gives, in five lines, the history of the Temple of

Denderah: "Its foundations were laid under Ptolemy the 11th, otherwise Theodosius; though some authorities would make it Ptolemy the 10th. Its construction was finished under Tiberius and its decoration under Nero. Jesus Christ was living at Jerusalem when this temple was being completed."

No analogy can be drawn between the temple and any known modern church. None except the king and priests were ever allowed to enter. Within, in total darkness, the *fêtes* were celebrated and processions organized. The darkness served the purpose of preserving the precious objects, the sacred vestments, from ravages of insects and from dust and sun. The outline drawings and the coloring in the Temple of Denderah are unsurpassed. Forty-two names of Osiris are found on the forty-two gnomes on the ceiling. Hathor, worshiped there, is the pupil of the sun's eye, and therefore the Egyptians made her the Goddess of Beauty, for they put beauty chiefly in the eyes. She has many beautiful titles; and personifies the harmony of the world. One of her names is Sothis, the equivalent of Sirius. She is therefore the goddess who governs the periodical return of the year, announces the rising of the river, appears at the eastern horizon, and foretells the renewal of nature.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Denderah and Nile Experiences.

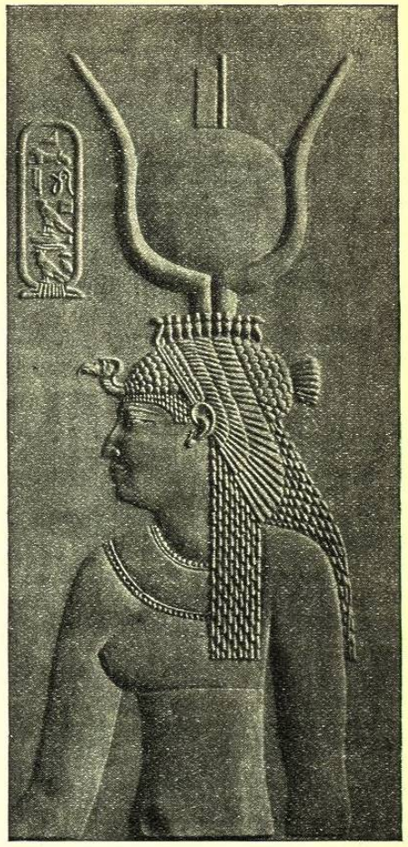
Forgotten Credentials—Chapel of Isis—Stories of the Tentyrites—Inhabitants of Orubos—The Crocodile—The *Shadoof* and *Sakeeyah*—Silence in Egypt.

WE were obliged to purchase a certificate that we had paid an English pound toward the preservation of the remains in Egypt. This document, beautifully written, was placed in our hands, and we were required to show it when called for. Quite a number of tourists who had duly purchased had left the credentials on the ship. Our party, with prudence, were provided, but we were not disposed to enter until all could be admitted. When Abraham arrived, he towered over the unfortunate guard with such vigorous ostentation that he succeeded in securing the admission of the delinquents, on pledging his honor that the assistant dragoman should immediately proceed to the ship and procure the credentials. The guard, however, was not entirely subdued. He felt that he must magnify his office, and made us as uncomfortable as possible.

We ascended the broad stone terraces which possess an aspect of dignity and grandeur seldom surpassed. On one gateway is a representation of the sun with its sacred emblem, the hawk, supported by two gods. In the chapel of Isis we saw the figured cow before which the Sepoys prostrated themselves when the English Indian army landed in Egypt in 1800. Abraham dwelt upon this, and avowed the opinion that the religions were identical; but it has been well said that the accidental worship of the same animal in Egypt and India is not sufficient to prove any direct connection between the two religions.

I went as deeply into these mysteries as time, reflection, books, and conversation would allow, but they are too complex to retain, unless one gives himself to a special and continuous study of them.

On the walls are the names of Augustus and of his four successors in the empire, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. But on an older part of the structure is the name of the Egyptian son of the greatest of the Cæsars, together with his mother's, the Egyptian enchantress, Cleopatra. Its several portraits of Cleopatra attracted more attention.



Cleopatra—Temple of Denderah.

To the southeast of Denderah are grottoes and numerous tombs. Scattered over the desert are stones that were made round by rolling. They are of granite and porphyry, and show traces of an ancient rush of waters.

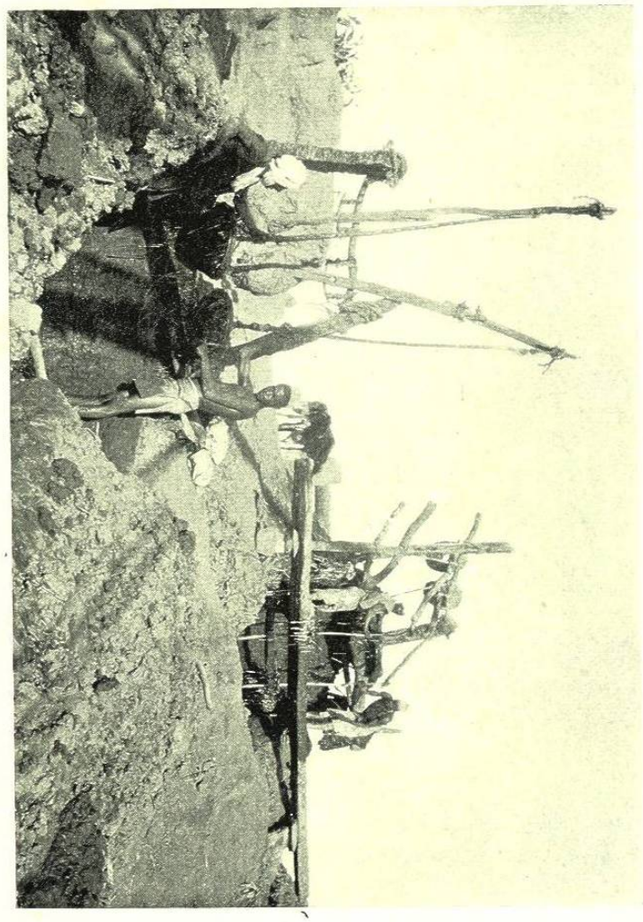
Of the Tentyrites, who from the earliest times dwelt hereabouts, extraordinary stories are told. Pliny's *Natural History* contains several which delighted my childhood, illustrating realistically their marvelous power over the crocodile. The philosopher Seneca did not think it beneath him to attempt to explain their control over them. He accounted for it by the contempt and consciousness of superiority they felt in attacking their enemy, and adds that

those of them who were deficient in presence of mind were frequently killed. On this an English writer, reasoning, says: "The crocodile is in fact a timid animal. Usually it flies at the approach of man, and only ventures to attack its prey on a sudden." He calls attention to the fact that we seldom or never hear of persons devoured by it, unless they are standing in shallow water on the sloping shore of a river, whereby the immense power of its tail is able to throw down and overcome the strongest man, who, being carried immediately to the bottom of the river, has neither the time nor the means to resist.

Abraham related an amazing story of a man who was knocked senseless in this way, and the crocodile drew him under the water; but when it was supposed that he was probably bisected he reappeared and floated near the shore, and on being restored to consciousness said he drew his knife and stabbed the crocodile. This could not be believed; but a few days later the body of the crocodile floated, and was found to have a stab exactly as the man had stated.

While the Tentyrites hated the crocodile, their neighbors, the inhabitants of Ombos, worshiped it, and resented, with all the rage of a sectarian feud, the killing and eating of "the godlike animal." The reason for worshiping the crocodile is supposed to be that, as it came in with the Nile, it became the symbol of the life-giving water; but in other departments, which had too much water, it was not the crocodile, but the *ichneumon*, the enemy of the crocodile, which was worshiped. The ichneumon is a curious animal the size of an ordinary cat. Among foreigners it goes by the name of "Pharaoh's Cat." It lives on rats and mice, birds and reptiles, is occasionally tamed, and serves the purpose of a cat. It is particularly fond of eggs, and as the crocodile buries its eggs in a thin covering of sand on the river banks, and the ichneumon destroys them, the ancient Egyptians regarded it as sacred, and buried it in "holy repositories!"

The crocodile is as valuable in the water as the hyena and vulture upon the land. It lives entirely on animal food, and prefers tainted to fresh meat; therefore, naturalists say that it is of great service in devouring dead animals that would otherwise pollute the waters and the surrounding atmosphere.



Shadoof.

Having seen both alligators and crocodiles in Florida and Louisiana, I hoped to see a crocodile on the Nile, but one might spend years there and not find one below the First Cataract. Only a few years ago they were numerous.

Charles Dudley Warner saw one. Lord Ducie in 1872 killed a full-grown specimen fourteen feet long, recovered the carcass, and in its stomach found evidence that it was a child eater. This was about one hundred and seventy miles north of the First Cataract, and not far from this point.

Mariette explains that the reason we do not find them now is because the crocodile is driven farther and farther south by the firearms of travelers and the constant passing of steamers. Similar treatment is driving out the alligators in the Southern States.

A picturesque and never monotonous spectacle to the Nile traveler is the working of the various machines employed to irrigate the land during the time of low water. The principal is the *shadoof*. This machine is the oldest with which the race is historically acquainted, and it is maintained that in no invention in modern times is the result so great in proportion to the degree of power employed. The best and briefest description that we have seen represents it as consisting of two posts, about five feet in height and three apart, connected at the top by a horizontal bar; across this is slung the branch of a tree, having at one end a weight composed of mud, and at the other, suspended by two palm sticks, a bucket made of basket work, matting, or a hoop with woolen stuff or leather. This is worked by one man. Goatskin buckets are often used. The man who operates it stands on the edge of the river; before him is a hole full of water fed from the stream. He takes hold of the cord by which the empty bucket is suspended, and, bending down, by the weight of his shoulders dips it in the water; he then rises, with his hands still on the cord; this gives the bucketful of water an upward movement, and the weight strung on the other end of the pole presses downward and it is lifted over to a trough, into which, as it tilts, the water is poured.

One man can run this machine and lift water from six to eight feet. The men keep on all day, gracefully bowing and