

The tomb of Rameses III has two modern names. The best known is Bruce's, named for the traveler who discovered it; the other, the Harper tomb, because of a celebrated picture in one of the chambers of the main building.

The process of cooking and kitchen work is portrayed in one of the chambers; men cutting up joints of meat, putting them in the caldron over a wood fire, pounding in a mortar, mincing meat; men kneading with their feet, or kneading bread with the hand. In all there are six chambers, some illustrating farming, others Egyptian furniture. These alone would be sufficient to demonstrate that the people were highly advanced in civilization. The picture of the harpists is one of the best known in all Egypt, for many copies have been made. The instruments are well formed; one, if not both, of the minstrels is represented as blind.

Emerging from the tombs the tourists divided into parties—those who returned by the valley, and those who crossed the mountain chain.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## Ascent of the Libyan Mountains.

Barrenness of the Mountains—View from Summit—The Descent—Colossi—  
"Vocal Statue of Memnon."

THE sky was cloudless, the atmosphere devoid of moisture, the effect from the heights unique. The sky seemed blue, but as one looked at it the background appeared a brilliant black, from which infinitesimal rays of blinding white light incessantly darted, making it as dazzling as the intensest electric light, without contrast of shadow. The mountains were utterly barren, like the Alps above the line of vegetation, yet more sterile, for I have never found in Switzerland (except when within a few hours of the summit of Mont Blanc) a spot where, if soil could be reached, some slight indications of vegetation could not be discovered. Here heat, sand, rock, and absence of moisture made impossible even incipient vegetable life. Could one imagine a hundred thousand buildings of stone, broken into pieces of different proportions, and a million cart loads of sand and oblong pebbles deposited at random, the winds of a thousand years blowing them to and fro, gravitation meanwhile constantly producing a conical form, and the desert restoring what was lost through the action of the wind, and water at rare intervals pouring through the ravines and down the mountain sides, he could form some idea of the scene.

The height of the loftiest may not have been more than a thousand feet, but the effect was that of four times the altitude, for they rise abruptly from the plain, as Gibraltar from the sea. The most beautiful view in Egypt was before us. When we stood upon the highest peak, westward was the great Libyan desert extending to Sahara. It was appalling to consider that a bewildered traveler might wander there for months and never see a human face. One afloat in the sea might be carried to the shore by friendly tides and waves, but there are



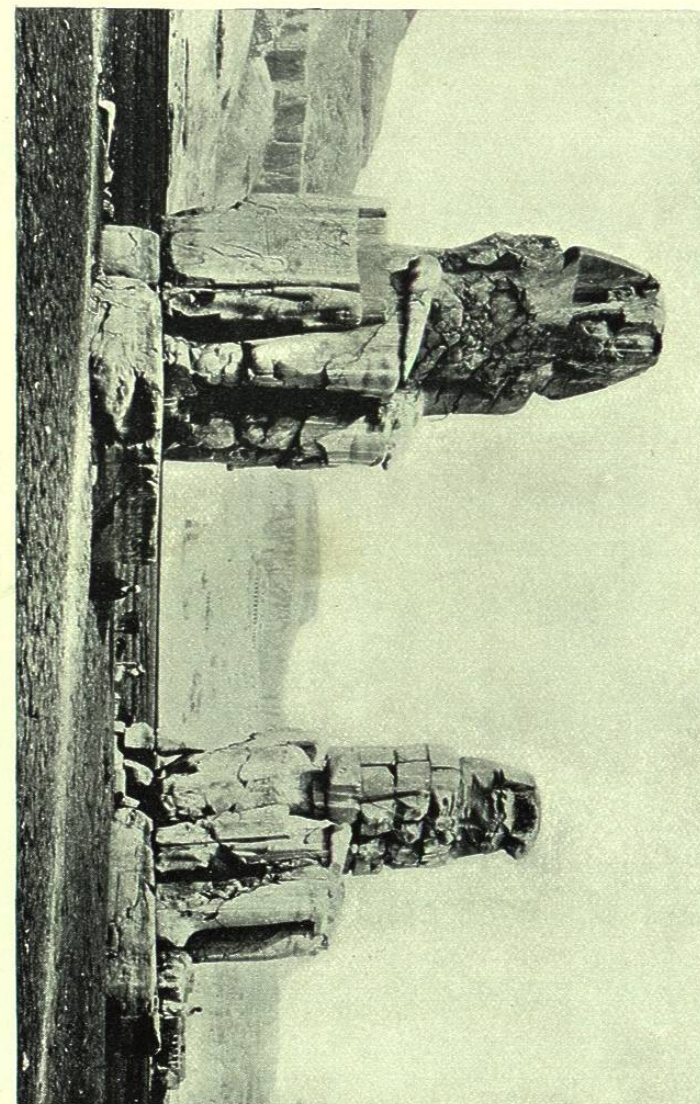
no currents in the desert. The prairies of the West and the steppes of Russia, when the winds blow and the tall grass waves, resemble the billows of the ocean; but wind upon the desert renders all things invisible.

Before us lay the plain of Thebes, over which we had passed; at a distance of a few miles, the Nile, whose immediate background was the verdant landscape; beyond, the columns of the Temple of Luxor, and the ruins of Karnak. With the eye resting on the temple, the remote plain was like a prodigiously magnified picture of the full moon; the sand having a silvered gold effect, and the villages and ruin, reduced to an apparent level with the plain, resembling the darker surfaces of the "Queen of Night."

Distant twenty miles the Arabian mountains stand perpendicular against the sky. I tried to organize a party to explore them, but without success; a proposed moonlight excursion to Karnak, which would have been jeopardized by the time such a trip would have required, proving an insuperable obstacle.

On descending our sufferings from the heat were intense. My traveling companion alarmed me by his appearance, as well as by unaccountable weakness and pain in the head. The few ladies who had chosen to make the ascent regretted it. Our donkeys and guides, accustomed to the climate, did not suffer; even the little water girls, carrying large porous jars, ran up and down the mountain sides as cheerfully as though playing in a garden.

On reaching the plain we rode directly to the Colossi, which had been in sight all the morning, and which to some were more interesting than any of the temples or tombs already visited. They are statues fifty feet in height, standing upon pedestals ten or twelve feet, and the Nile has deposited soil to a height of more than seven feet around them, and during the inundation they are surrounded by water. When erected they consisted of a single stone, and both represented Amenophis III. The temple, before which they stood in the attitude of guardians, has disappeared. It was built of limestone, and was torn down and burned in the neighboring limekiln. These Colossi are of breccia, a "kind of



Statues of Memnon.



pudding stone mixed with agate-like pebbles," and having no value as lime, have been spared.

One of these monoliths met with an accident which made it more famous than otherwise it could have been. The more northerly and renowned is the Colossus of Memnon, or "vocal statue of Memnon." The tradition is that a sound issued from it at the rising of the sun. It was simply known as the statue of Amenophis until an earthquake, supposed to have occurred in the year B. C. 27. At that time were broken off the head, upper part of the arms, and body. Some say that this was not done by an earthquake, but by the fury of Cambyses, the Persian, and others attributed it to Ptolemy Lathyrus. Pliny and Juvenal and other classic writers refer to this statue.

There is no record of the sound having been heard when it was entire, but there are many witnesses to its occurrence subsequently. They represent that it appeared to come from the trunk, and was a sonorous ringing tone, resembling a human voice, and heard only when the first rays of the morning sun fell upon the statue. Strangers visited it from all parts of the world, and when they heard the note made an inscription to that effect upon the huge legs of the statue. Strabo said that he "heard it, but could not affirm whether it proceeded from the pedestal or the statue itself, or even from some of those who stood near its base."

Many of the inscriptions are dated, going back to the time of Nero.

Various opinions are held of this phenomenon; one, that it was the action of the heat of the sun upon the cracks in the stone wet with dew, which is certainly heavier there than would be supposed from the apparent absence of moisture in the air. The action of the sun upon stones is often sufficient to produce a loud noise even in much cooler climates than that of Egypt. Another view is that it was a trick of the priests, one of whom is supposed to have hid himself in the statue and struck a metallic sounding stone. In favor of this is the fact that there is such a stone still in existence in the lap of the statue, with a recess cut immediately behind it, and large enough to conceal an operator.



A suspicious fact is that important personages, such as the Emperor Hadrian, "heard it two or three times, while ordinary people only heard it once, and sometimes had to go several times to do that."

An Egyptian loitering near made a sign that he would ascend the statue and strike it; accordingly I hired him. The sound was simply that of the blow. But the trifle paid made him happy, and the circumstance gave a little more vividness to the fact that nineteen hundred years ago travelers from all parts of the known world stood in that very spot listening for the sound with which, "when the brilliant sun shoots forth his rays, he announces the return of day to the mortals here assembled."

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## Life in Modern Thebes.

Entertainment by the Consul at Thebes—An Oriental Dinner at the House of the British Consul—Wonderful Boy Gymnast—A Huge Monkey—Karnak by Moonlight—Varieties of Stone in Egypt.

THE United States consul, deputy of the consul general at Cairo, is an Egyptian; he called upon us and cordially invited the Americans on board to an entertainment at his residence. There is an ancient proverb to the effect that one should not "look a gift horse in the mouth;" but as he did not hesitate to communicate to us, in a variety of oriental modes, that it would be well to make up a purse to pay the expenses of the entertainment, I am not restrained from observing that it was of a peculiar character. Egyptian women were brought in to dance to the accompaniment of music, which reminded me of a lecture on sound delivered by an eccentric vagrant professor of oratory and music, who said that all sounds are divided into two grand divisions, "music and noise." By this simple classification I have no difficulty in locating, rhetorically, the place of these Egyptian melodies. The women were vulgar in deportment, but wore long dresses trailing upon the floor. Their performances were acrobatic and gymnastic rather than terpsichorean. One performed with a lighted candle in a candlestick on her head, and it was an extraordinary feat, as she frequently placed her head at right angles with her swiftly moving body, the candle remaining in its place.

Coffee and other beverages were passed, and in the intervals of the performance of these women they ate, drank, and smoked. We were requested to guess their ages. Knowing that Egyptian women look older than they are, I ventured to guess the eldest to be thirty-five, the next twenty-five, and the other two twenty and seventeen. But the eldest, though she had been married for some years, was only twenty-two,



and the youngest eleven. The entertainment was not such as I could recommend, or would have attended had I been aware of its character. For those who wished to see what they should not it was not bad enough; for those who simply desired to have a pleasant and varied evening's enjoyment there was nothing pleasant and nothing varied, and the ladies and gentlemen of the party unanimously voted the entertainment tedious. There is little business in Luxor for an American consul, and these men make their living chiefly by selling antiquities.

The British consul is a more important character, and, on the evening of February 21, a party from our steamer, including several gentlemen from England and Scotland, dined in oriental fashion at his house. On arriving they were shown into a room containing a collection of Egyptian antiquities, and several albums of autographs of those who, during the last thirty or forty years, had called at the consulate. Among the American signatures was one that elicited interest—Ralph Waldo Emerson. Before dinner was announced a servant entered with water, and another distributed napkins. After all had washed their hands they proceeded to the dining room. The room was plain, but the repast might have served for a king. Fourteen chairs were placed around a small table three feet or so in width, which was covered by a circular brass tray, a little larger than the table itself. All having been seated, and a tureen of soup placed in the center, the host put his spoon into the dish, inviting the guests to follow. Bread had been provided. After all had partaken, the soup was removed and chicken brought. The host, having torn it into small pieces with his fingers, handed a tidbit to one of the ladies present, and then invited the others to partake. Each took a piece in his hand, and the chickens were quickly disposed of. After them was served a course of two kinds of vegetables; then dishes of mutton, in color as black as charcoal, but in flavor excellent; stewed tomatoes were next proffered, in which the host dipped his bread, followed by the guests. After the tomatoes came the turkey, in the breaking up of which the host was assisted by a native gentleman. Two dishes of spinach were served, then a haricot of mutton, which was fol-

lowed by rice, over which the gravy of the mutton had been poured. The dessert was a species of tart, browned on the surface, the contents composed largely of cream deliciously flavored and sweetened. Last of all came a bowl of rice, cooked with sour milk; the whole, however, had been so flavored that not a trace of acidity remained, and the dish, like that which had preceded it, was unanimously declared to be delicious.

The meal ended, the host said, "All-ham-du-le-lah," the meaning of which is, "Thank God." Then the servants, of whom there were three in waiting, drew near with soap and water, that all might wash their hands. Coffee was then served, and the guests repaired to the waiting room. After a nephew of the host had expressed thanks, on behalf of his uncle, to the guests who had honored him with their presence, a Negro, Abdallah by name, belonging to a tribe in the South, was brought forward. He exhibited the mode of singing, dancing, and fighting prevailing in his own tribe. On leaving, the servants who had waited on the table, each carrying a lantern, accompanied the guests to the steamer.

At Luxor a wonderful boy, Egyptian and Mohammedan, appeared as a gymnast. He could not have been more than twelve years of age, and was quite small, but of symmetrical figure, his head being especially well proportioned. The little fellow lived there and was engaged in ordinary work, but when steamers lay alongside he came down to the water's edge and performed for the diversion of tourists. The gyrations which he made were always the same, and consisted of raising and lowering his arms very rapidly, accompanied by a peculiar chanting and a startling crackling of his joints, producing sounds like those made when a pair of castanets are struck. His chief charm was in the brightness of his eye, the whiteness of his teeth, the naturalness and gleefulness of his smile, his expressive gestures, and his way of saying, "Thank you, sir;" or "Thank you, madame;" or "I am glad to see you, sir." He soon discovered what language the traveler spoke, and though he knew not another word except these salutations and thanksgivings, could utter them pleasingly in a halfscore of European languages.

Another curiosity was a huge monkey just brought from



South Africa. Its height, when erect, was equal to that of a short man, and its superficial resemblance to the human race appalling. The owner kept it chained, and sometimes all his strength was demanded to prevent its escape. Not long before, a powerful man took the attitude of a boxer in front of this animal, which, standing erect, struck him with such rapidity on each side of the face as to confuse him, and then seizing him under the arms made frantic efforts to tear his face with its teeth.

Karnak by moonlight is beautiful, ghostly, and almost ghastly. A young lad who sought solitude hastened back to the company, saying that it was no place in which to be alone.

There is great variety of stone in Egypt—granite of different kinds, limestone, sandstone, porphyry, slate, siliceous red gritstone, pudding stone, alabaster, gypsum, and in the Arabian desert marbles of various sorts. The Pyramids were built of limestone blocks, the temples of Thebes and the Thebaid generally of sandstone. But "obelisks, statues, and whole sanctuaries were hewn out of the granite rocks at Assouan (Syene)," and transported, by modes which can only be conjectured, to the sites where they now defy time or crumble before it.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

## From Thebes to the First Cataract.

Temple of Edfoo—Kom-ombos—Island of Elephantine—Camel Riding—Assouan—Nubian Boatmen's Song—Ride to Philæ—Ancient Methods of Quarrying Stone—Description of Philæ—Temple of Isis—The First Cataract—Herodotus on the Sources of the Nile—Aquatic Feats at the Cataract—An Hour in the Desert—Experience of Foolhardy Tourists with Robbers—Nubians—A Solitary Palm.

ASCENDING the Nile the view of the mountains on the left was of thrilling interest because of the experience of the preceding days. The travelers generally, even the youngest of them, were silent and thoughtful; all the volumes in the ship's library were in requisition, and diaries and notebooks rapidly filled. I brought home nearly one hundred excellent photographs of Thebes and vicinity; marvelous aids to recollection.

At Edfoo we landed at the foot of a bank of sand and visited the temple. Mariette quarried this as one of his first works, after his appointment as conservator of the monuments of Egypt and director of the excavations. I read his description, which is that "it is a monument that speaks for itself; that no description can do justice to it; that its magnificent porticoes and halls are unique in Egypt, and that its excavations were the most expensive archaeological work ever executed under the auspices of the Khedive."

The heat was intense as we sailed away from Edfoo. There we saw Nubians and Soudanese, and began to realize how far south we were. Long and narrow strips of cultivated land separated us from the encroaching desert, and here and there it reached the water's edge. The bottom of the river could be seen distinctly, and in many places the water was not more than two feet and six inches in depth.

Kom-ombos was the next point at which we disembarked. The ruins of two temples with various sculptures and some almost illegible paintings, the whole gradually being under-