

June—fellow-bestridden donkeys, Arabs of the Nejd and prancing English bloods ridden by dandy Beys and still dandier Jew bankers, jostling every variety of wheeled equipage, from street hackneys packed with Cook's tourists, to the smartest of London or Vienna-built broughams and Victorias, with eunuch-escorted ladies of the Khedive's harem, wives of the Consuls-General, or of the Shemitic financiers aforesaid, or Polish "countesses"—last from Monaco—beguiling bachelor guests of Shepherd's or the "New." From October till April the opera-house, and French comedy theatre, with the best troupes money can secure, afford on alternate evenings lyrical and dramatic entertainments hardly to be surpassed in Paris or London; while Greek and German *brasseries* and musical *cafés*—in which mixed Bohemian bands and native performers on the *eka'noon*, the *'oo'd* and the *kemen'geh* give the visitor his choice between the lively strains of Wagner and Strauss and plaintive if discordant Arab airs—minister to meaner tastes by the score. In the fine group of buildings erected by the Duke of Sutherland, on ground given him by the Khedive, overlooking the Esbekieh gardens, the new Khedive Club—founded on the model of our best London institutions, under the patronage of the heir-apparent and the chairmanship of the British Consul-General—provides *salons*, a *cuisine*, and billiard and reading rooms, not unworthy of Pall Mall, where members, or travellers admitted to temporary fellowship, may read nearly all the periodicals to be met with in the Travellers or the Reform, and, if so minded, may play at billiards or "cayenne" whist for stakes not permitted at either.* Add to all this, that fre-

* A similar establishment, also under the patronage of Prince Mehemet Tewfik, and called the "Mehemet Ali" Club, has been more recently opened at Alexandria, where, like this other at Cairo, it is already an assured social success.

quent balls and concerts at the palace during the winter bring together the official, financial, and commercial *élite* of both Cairo and Alexandria, and make everybody who is anybody known to everybody else—and the result is a sum-total of social *agréments* not to be matched anywhere else in the East.

Although the "sights" of Cairo lie outside the scope of this volume, yet to write at all of the city, even as it is, without allusion to at least Heliopolis and the Pyramids would be like commenting on *Hamlet* without mention of the Prince. Excellent carriage roads—the work of the present reign—now lead to both, facilitating their inspection without weakening the weird interest with which these oldest of human monuments impress, not to say overpower, the imagination. The drive to the former, which is about eight miles off, leads down the Fagála past Abbasieh—erst the palace of Abbas Pasha, but now a barrack and military school, in which that poor cowardly bigot, a prey to the fear of assassination, used to shut himself up under the care of extra guards, and with saddled dromedaries in the stable ready to carry him into the desert on the first alarm. Thence on over the fine plain on which Sultan Selim, in 1517, fought the battle that won him Egypt, and where, in 1800 again, the French under Kleber in their turn beat the Turks, and regained Cairo—to the famous jessamine and orange-gardens of Mataráèeh, in which stands the "Virgin's Tree," the grand old sycamore that (tradition says) sheltered Joseph and Mary after their flight into Egypt. Less than a mile farther on, through a shady acanthus grove, and you reach the lone granite obelisk—the oldest in the world—that marks the site of the famous "City of the Sun," in the family of whose high-priest Joseph found his bride, where Moses learned the wisdom of the Egyptians, Jere-

miah penned his Lamentations, and Plato thought out his sublime doctrine of the immortality of the soul. For nearly 4,000 years this solitary pillar has pointed with its tapering apex to the sky, and yet the hieroglyphs on its sides are still nearly as sharp and distinct as if graven a year ago. It is sixty-two feet in height, with a diameter of six feet at the base, and is one of the many enormous monoliths quarried 500 miles away at Assouan, whose cutting, transport, and placing *in situ* are still perplexing problems to the modern engineer. Some mounds of crumbled bricks extending over a considerable area, every square foot of the interspaces of which is now cropped with maize, clover, or cotton, are the only other vestiges of this once sacredest of Egyptian cities, from which, as he rides or drives back to mushroom Cairo, even the most light-hearted of tourists can hardly fail to carry away a mournful sense of the vanity of human things.

The excursion to the Pyramids, which was once almost formidable from the inconvenience of crossing the Nile by a ferry and then riding on donkey-back for seven or eight miles along a tortuous track, broken at frequent intervals by ruinous canals or patches of submerged ground, is now a pleasant carriage drive of an hour and a half over the fine iron bridge from Kasr-en-Nil to Ghizeh, and along the broad macadamised and tree-fringed *chaussée* that—high above the inundation—now leads in nearly a straight line from the river up to the sandy slope leading to the platform on which the Pyramids stand. The plain thus crossed forms one of the prettiest pieces of landscape in Egypt, blooming everywhere after the inundation with the richest verdure, and dotted all over with villages embosomed in thickets of date-palms, tamarisks, acacias, and sycamore-figs, than which—as looked at a mile or two off—nothing could well be more picturesque. As the

visitor is seen approaching, a score or more of half-naked Arabs swarm out of one of these rookeries near the extremity of the plain, the sheikh of which has the monopoly of supplying guides for the exploration, and as the carriage pulls up, a wordy battle in the guttural vernacular or broken English (which most of these Pyramid Bedaween speak) begins, as to who shall have the honour and profit of conducting the *howadji* into and up the vast pile whose stupendous magnitude is now first realised as the eye mounts the gigantic staircase from its base to its far-away summit, compelling a sense of awe and wonder such as perhaps no other work of man's hand could inspire. It would be surplusage to add another to the many descriptions of these oldest and grandest of human monuments, with which the reader is already familiar; but as, although hoary with the age of nearly sixty centuries, they are still the most striking artificial features of Egypt as it is, it may here be repeated that these Pyramids of Ghizeh—as the colossi of Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerinus (a pigmy by the side of the other two), and half a dozen smaller cairns are distinctively called—form only one of many groups of similar structures extending from Abouroash, five miles north-west of Ghizeh, to Illahoun in the Fayoum. From the top of the Great Pyramid, the eye, looking away southwards over the palms of Memphis, takes in the most important of these other groups—those of Sakkara, Abousheir, and Dashour, stretching along the western bank of the river, weird vestiges of a past that was already remote before history began.

In a sand-hollow a few hundred yards to the south-east of the Great Pyramid, stands, or rather couches, the half-buried Sphinx—“gazing straight on with calm eternal eyes” across the vista of seven thousand years, for, ac-

According to Mariette Bey, it was already old before the stupendous gnomon of Cheops was built. But of this again no description need be attempted: from Pliny to Miss Edwards, its solemn and majestic presence has already been the theme of a hundred pens. The fine rhapsody of Mr. Kinglake may, however, be once more quoted:—"Upon ancient dynasties of Ethiopian and Egyptian kings, upon Greek and Roman, upon Arab and Ottoman conquerors, upon Napoleon dreaming of an Eastern empire, upon battle and pestilence, upon the ceaseless misery of the Egyptian race, upon keen-eyed travellers—Herodotus yesterday, Warburton to-day—upon all and more this unworldly Sphinx has watched, and watched like a providence, with the same earnest eyes, and the same sad tranquil mien. And we, we shall die, and Islam wither away; and the Englishman, straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile, and sit in the seats of the Faithful; and still that shapeless rock will lie watching and watching the works of the new busy race, with those same sad, earnest eyes, and the same tranquil mien everlasting. You dare not mock at the Sphinx."*

As Cairo is the usual starting-point for the Nile voyage, it may here be said that this may now be done either in the old fashion by *dahabeeyah*, or by the cheaper and more rapid, but much less enjoyable steamers of the Khedivieh Company, which ply fortnightly between Boulak and the First Cataract from November to March, making the run up and down in three weeks, at an inclusive fare of 45*l.* for the trip; or it may be made with the variation of going by railway to Assiout, and there joining the steamer. For those, however, to whom time and money are minor considerations, the *dahabeeyah* will

* *Eothen*, p. 327.

always retain its special attractions. The hire of these picturesque craft—which, as is seen from the tomb frescoes, are in form and outline close copies of the old Pharaonic barges—varies from 60*l.* or 70*l.* to 150*l.* or 180*l.* a month, according to the size and furniture of the boat; but an inferior class called *cangias* may be had at lower rates. Either may be hired for a round sum for the trip, according to the limit of the voyage, or by the month for the sums stated, which include crew and all other charges connected with the vessel, travellers only finding their own servants and provisions. Of the delights and advantages of a Nile voyage, whether for pleasure or for health, nothing need here be said, seeing that—except as regards the climate, which, now as ever, makes mere life a luxury, and a landscape monotonous indeed in its outward forms but infinite in its wealth of tropic beauty and the ever-changing play of light and shadow that still glorifies the whole—it carries you away beyond printing-presses and cotton-mills, sugar factories and railroads, into Egypt of the past, with which the object of this volume is not concerned.

It only remains to add that Cairo is the centre of a very considerable but mostly transit trade in gums, ivory, hides, and ostrich feathers from the Soudan, of cotton and sugar from Upper Egypt, of indigo, shawls, and carpets from India and Persia, of sheep and tobacco from Asiatic Turkey, and of machinery, hardware, cutlery, glass, woollen and other manufactured goods from Europe.*

* In connection with Cairo may be mentioned the village of Helwân, long famous for its sulphur springs, but which has only become fashionable as a health resort within the past three or four years. It lies on the eastern side of the Nile, two and a half miles from the river, and fifteen and a half above the capital, with which it is now connected by a railway, opened last year, from the Roumeyleh Square, below the Citadel. A fine bath establishment

ROSETTA, third in the official list of "cities," though fourth in point of size and population, lies forty miles east of Alexandria—with which it is now connected by railway—on the western branch of the Nile, to which it now gives its name, six miles in from the sea. It is considerably older than Cairo, having been founded during the Abbasside dynasty by one of the usurping Tooloonide kings, in A.D. 870. It was long one of the most important commercial towns of Egypt; and before the cutting of the Mahmoudieh canal by Mehemet Ali the whole of the overland trade from India passed through it, in consequence of the decay of the old canal of Alexandria. When captured by the French in 1798, it had a population of more than 20,000, which, after since dwindling to less than 14,000, has recovered to 15,000, with a corresponding revival of its commercial activity, which is, however, still greatly impeded by a sand-bar at the mouth of the river, passable only by small craft. Extensive gardens and a very salubrious air render the town itself one of the most agreeable in Egypt, and, before Ramleh grew up, made it a favourite summer resort of Alexandrians and Cairenes. It was here that the British expedition, sent in 1807 under General Fraser to effect a diversion in favour of the Mamlouks as a counter-stroke to French policy, suffered disastrous defeat by Mehemet Ali; and here, too, eight years earlier, was found by the French, while digging the foundations of a fort a short way below the town, the famous "Rosetta Stone" now in the British

has been built over the spring—which has a natural heat of 86° Fahr.—and close by it an excellent hotel. The attractions of the place are already so great that M. Blanc, the play-king of Homburg and Monaco, recently offered the Khedive a large sum for permission to introduce the additional allurements of *rouge et noir*. His Highness, however, refused the offer, as he had previously refused a much larger one for leave to open another "Kursaal" in Cairo itself.

Museum, the trilingual inscription on which first furnished Dr. Young and Champollion with the key to the old sacred Egyptian writing.

Eighty miles beyond, DAMIETTA similarly gives its name to the eastern estuary of the Nile, five miles up from the sea. Here again, a bar at the river-mouth limits the navigation to vessels of not more than sixty tons, but these carry on a considerable coasting trade, and also with Greece. The chief exports are rice, dried fish from Lake Menzaleh, dates, hides, bones, linseed, and beans. It was formerly famous for its manufacture of leather, and for the striped linen cloths called *Dimity* (from *Dimyát*, the Arab name of the town), but both these have long ceased to be specialties of the place. The existing town—which, though standing on the eastern bank of the river, properly belongs to the interior Delta—dates from the thirteenth century, but prior to that time a city of the same name—anciently Tamiáthis—stood about four miles to the south. This latter then formed the chief eastern bulwark of Egypt against the crusaders, by whom it was more than once taken, and was indeed the basis of the operations of St. Louis in the unfortunate sixth crusade. It was in consequence razed, and re-built on its present site by the Mamlouk Sultan Beybars, who at the same time closed the river against the Frankish ships by sinking stone-laden barges across its mouth. The present population of the town, which is estimated at 29,400, consists chiefly of native Moslems, with a few Syrians and Levantine Greeks.

PORT SAID, thirty miles farther east, owes its origin to the great canal, and is therefore barely eighteen years old. In April, 1859, M. de Lesseps and his little band of pioneer navvies landed on what was then a desolate strip of sand-bank between the Mediterranean and the shallows

of Lake Menzaleh, and began his great work by selecting the site of the city and port which were intended ultimately to rival and even to supersede Alexandria. The spot was chosen, not because the shortest line could be drawn from it across the Isthmus—that would have run farther eastwards, through the Gulf of Pelusium—but because it was the nearest point to deep-sea water along the coast, and in honour of the then Viceroy it was named Port Saïd. The very site, however, of the future town had to be formed, and this was done by spreading over the sandy slip the argillaceous mud dredged from the adjoining lake, which the fierce heat of the Egyptian summer soon hardened into a sufficiently firm foundation for the workshops and other light structures that rapidly sprang up along the line of the new harbour. The coast being here an open roadstead, the port had also to be artificially created; and this was effected by running out to sea two great concrete moles, respectively 2,726 and 1,962 yards long, and 1,500 yards apart. The space thus enclosed forms a triangular port of about 550 acres, with 30 feet of depth at the entrance, and is connected with an inner harbour, called the “Grand Bassin Ismaïl,” by a channel 300 feet wide and 26 deep, through which the great ship canal is reached. Joining on to this principal inner basin are the “Bassin Sherif,” the “Bassin des Ateliers,” now little used since the completion of the works, and the “Bassin du Commerce,” north and west of which the principal part of the town itself lies. The native quarter is scattered westward over the strip of sand between the sea and the lake. A fine lighthouse stands at the shore end of the western mole, from the lantern of which, 150 feet high, a first-class electric light flashes twenty miles out to sea, and smaller coloured lights are also placed at the seaward extremities of both. The new

port thus formed is—and until the completion of the great works at Alexandria will remain—the safest and most easily-approached harbour anywhere between Tunis and Smyrna. As there are no springs on this part of the coast, the water-supply of the town is pumped through a double row of iron pipes from the fresh-water canal at Ismaïlia, and to provide against accidents a three-days’ provision is kept stored in a large reservoir called the “Château d’Eau.” As might be expected from its origin and relations, Port Saïd is in appearance rather a French than an Egyptian town; and its regularly-laid-out streets, squares, quays, hotels, and other adjuncts of a European seaport wholly lack the picturesqueness of the towns and cities of the Delta and Nile valley. Its trade is almost exclusively limited to the supply of vessels passing through the canal, and its population—which includes some of the worst samples of Maltese, Greeks, Jews, and Italians to be met with in the Levant—three years ago numbered 8,671 of all nationalities.

In size merely a fort and a village, EL-ARISH owes its rank as a *mohafza* to its position as the frontier town between Egypt and Palestine. The little river, of the same name, which here forms the actual boundary, is dry during the greater part of the year, but after the rains it empties into the Mediterranean a tolerably rapid though narrow stream. Except as a Customs station and frontier garrison, the place is of no importance, and its population numbers only 2,284.

Like Port Saïd, ISMAÏLIA is a creation of the Suez Canal. Sixteen years ago its site was a barren waste of sand, and now, with a population of more than 3,000, it is the prettiest and most attractive town in Egypt. It is situated exactly in the centre of the Isthmus, on the western shore of Lake Timsah, through which the Canal