Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert

Frances Gordon Alexander

With Sixty Illustrations
from Photographs
and a Map

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1912

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

PREFACE

THE following pages are the impressions of two wayfarers who, starting from Cairo, made an expedition into the Libyan Desert, the northeastern corner of the Great Sahara, as far as the oasis of the Fayoum.

For two women to start upon a camping trip in the desert, with only an Arab retinue to protect them, seems to some of our friends to show a too high sense of adventure. But it is perfectly safe and feasible. Provided a well recommended

dragoman has been selected to take charge of the expediton, one is free from all responsibility and care. He provides the camels, donkeys, tents, servants, supplies, and acts as guide, interpreter, and majordomo.

The price, part of which is usually paid in advance and the remainder after the journey is finished, is naturally dependent on the size of the caravan.

The comfort in which one travels depends in part upon the amount of money expended, but in great measure upon the executive ability and honesty of the dragoman. As the licensed dragoman would be answerable if any accident were to befall a party under his charge, every precaution is taken. As the guards patrol before the tents in the silent, starlit nights, one feels as safe as in a crowded city—quite as safe and much happier.

F. G. A.

New York, October 1, 1912.

CONTENTS

Contents

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations

Illustrations

Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert

Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert

I

OUR FIRST ENCAMPMENT

IT is Thursday the twenty-third of February, and the first hot day of the season.

Has this brilliant sun and cloudless sky come as a good omen to start us on our expedition through the desert?

In the Libyan Desert

It is to the Fayoum we are wending our way; the land of golden plenty, where the fig tree and the olive abound, where the vine and the lemon flourish, where roses and mimosa scent the air, and where the glancing water, flowing through the irrigating canals, carries life and plenty through the fertile land—an enchanting vision after shivering in the cold winds and under the gray skies of Cairo, watching clouds that damp our spirits and chill the air, but whose rain never seems to lay the dust that swirls and meets us at every street corner.

We are two pilgrims seeking warmth and sunshine, only too anxious to shake the dust of Cairo from our feet. We have rid ourselves, as far as possible, of all impedimenta.

When luncheon is over our maids start in a motor from Cairo with our slender luggage, and we follow in another to the Mena House Hotel on the edge of the Libyan Desert—the desert which stretches

from the Nile on the east to the Sahara on the south and west.

After a short run we descend from the noisy motor and find Fadlallah, the dragoman, waiting to take charge of our little party.

Our belongings are packed on a camel, and with light hearts we mount our donkeys and start for the camp and the free roving life which awaits us.

The camp has been pitched three miles away. Quite a small settlement it looks with the white tents shining in the afternoon sun.

Fadlallah and Toulba

In the Libyan Desert

Our caravan consists of twelve baggage camels, a sand-cart and pony, and five riding donkeys; while our Arab retinue numbers twenty-five, including our dragoman Fadlallah and his small son Toulba, who soon deservedly earns the name of the Terrible; Reshid, the second dragoman, who in our marches is to conduct the slow-moving caravan; Ahmed and Abd-es-Sadak, the waiters; Muhommed, the cook, and his assistant; Saïd, the horseman, and the camel men and donkey boys.

We have four sleeping tents, for our maids and ourselves, our kitchen and dining tents, and a smaller one, carried on a dromedary, to be pitched during the day while we take lunch and a siesta.

To-night we camp near the Gizeh pyramids—those mighty sepulchres of dead kings, built in the far remoteness of time. Tradition relates that for over a century, while they were building, the temples were closed, sacrifices abolished, and the life of

the nation was at a standstill, while the whole population was forced to labor in bringing the huge stones from the Arabian quarries, and in making of them these stupendous monuments.

"Pharaoh could see them from the terraces of his palace, from the gardens of his villa, and from every point in the plain in which he might reside, between Heliopolis and Medum: a constant reminder of the lot which awaited him in spite of his divine origin."[1]

Our tents fascinate us with their brilliant colored linings and quaint designs in blue, green, white, and scarlet. Passages from the Koran in the beautiful Arabic characters adorn the walls, the effect of it all being very restful to the eyes. Though we can see these tents made any day in the tent bazaar, the design dates from the Saracenic period, and is probably the same as that used by Saladin in the time of the Crusaders.

[1] Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization.*

In the far off centuries, such tents were in use in India, with the decorations representing men and beasts; but on the coming of Mohammed, whose religion forbids the portraying of the human form, the Arabesque was substituted by his followers, and remains to this day an attractive example of Mohammedan art.

The sunlight streams across the doorways of our tents. The endless azure sky, the purple hills, call us. We wander out into the desert and look across the golden sands to the end of the world—a "march of a thousand days," as the Bedouins say. The undulating sands are like great waves of the sea; and mounting one of the crests, there is suddenly disclosed a troup of camels tended by an Arab.

The tops of the pyramids stand faint lilac against the opal sky. We pass on, losing the camels and their solitary guardian. This is one of the continual

surprises and fascinations of the desert. A few feet upward and new wonders are disclosed. A slight descent into the hollow of the sands, and, as if by magic, the things just seen have disappeared. To be lost is the easiest thing in the world.

We advance, and range upon range of hills palpitate in the radiant air. What marvellous things may not await one beyond these reaches of glowing sand! The restlessness and mad endeavor of modern life viewed from these broad horizons, from this large simplicity, seem arid and common, and much of the strenuous running back and forth on the earth but a cheating semblance of life and death to the soul. In the desert all pettiness drops away, and the spirit seems to break the bonds which hold it. Beyond each successive hilltop the blue bird flutters: no hope is too high, no dream unrealizable. There is no satiety, and the best gift of all is the

conviction that this is endless—new marvels, new beauties, new life. Just beyond *must* lie the "things longed for and found not here."

Photo, Hiesinger

II

DERVISHES OF GIZEH

Friday, February 24th.

OUR tents are pitched in a semicircle facing east, with the animals, camel drivers, and other attendants some distance to the left.

Toulba trots about the camp, a quaint little figure in a blue silk robe, a scarlet *tarbouche* perched jauntily on his head, his black cloak trailing in the sand. He possesses a small black slave from the Soudan,

named Ali, whose duties consist in amusing Toulba and preventing him from getting into mischief. They are a quaint pair, enjoying life in a quiet, sedate fashion. Ali is clad in a single white cotton garment, which falls in straight folds from his neck to his ankles, and wears a white skull-cap on his woolly head. His years number nine, and his whole responsibility in life is his little master, whom he worships with a blind adoration totally undeserved by Toulba.

Our little camp gives us much pleasure. In the animals, and more especially the dromedary, we have a happy feeling of proprietorship.

We pat the donkeys, the patient, sure-footed little beasts who are to carry us so many miles. For we are to ride them when we do not use the sand-cart, as we do not care for the gait of the camel or dromedary.

We feed the white pony with sugar, and

attempt to give some to the camels, but they receive our attentions with supercilious contempt. We visit the kitchen tent to see Muhommed, an old Nubian of large

Saïd, donkey boy, and Ali

presence and dignity, who proudly informs us he was once cook to General Grenfell Pasha. We look with interest on these Arabs, who are to be our companions in our nomad life. Abd-es-Sadak and Ahmed, two Bedouin youths dressed in im-

maculate white garments with red sashes, will jointly perform the duties of waiter and housemaid, while Reshid is the watchman told off to guard the section of the camp we occupy. Often in the future will we hear the soft sound of his bare feet in the night, and see his dark form, with a gun slung over his shoulder, outlined against the starlit sky. For we sleep with the door of our tents flung open, and we wake to the welcome of the morning sun.

Last night under the full moon, the desert glowed with a rose-white light, and the pyramids stood out as giant guardians of the past; sentinels of the desert that have seen the rise and fall of dynasties, the ebb and flow of civilizations, the glory and the death of empires; and that still remain unmoved, wrapped in a cloak of impenetrable silence, guarding the secrets of the ages.

Nature has dealt very gently with the

monuments in this land of perpetual sunshine. It is the hand of man that has destroyed so much. The Hyksos and the Persians ransacked the pyramids and overthrew many of the temples, and the Arabs have mutilated the statues which their religion bids them regard as unholy. Mehemet Ali threw down one of the beautiful propylæ of Karnac to obtain lime for some paltry nitre works, though the limestone ridges of Thebes were close by; and six hundred years ago Sultan Hassan stripped the Great Pyramid of its outer covering of polished granite to build the mosque which bears his name.

To-day being Friday, the Mohammedan Sunday, we are taken to see the dervishes, who at midday hold a service in a cave near the pyramids. Though we must often have passed close to their holy place, we have had no idea of its existence.

Near the steps leading down to the opening of the cave are a number of camels,

horses, and donkeys held by boys, while the owners are within. The entrance is crowded, a way being made for us with difficulty, as Mohammedans strongly object to the presence of unbelievers.

On entering the cave we take off our shoes, for we are treading on sacred ground, and find ourselves in a low, dark room full of Arabs swaying slowly backward and forward, ejaculating "Allàh, Allàh," while a reed flute repeats a few notes with ceaseless monotony.

As the strange music rings louder and fiercer, their gestures become more violent, their faces are alight with a wild exultation; in their eyes gleams the flame of a passionate faith. The long hair of the dervishes falls back and forth across their faces, as they bend themselves forward to the ground and back again with monotonous regularity. They fling themselves to and fro till they look like dark snakes twisting and writhing. Flecks of foam

are on their lips; sweat is pouring from their bodies; and the cave resounds with cries that resemble the sullen roar of an angry sea. The heat is terrific.

In another cave partially walled off, are women whose eyes shine with the same intense emotion, whose every movement suggests a rapturous ecstasy.

These Bedouins soon lash themselves into a state of religious frenzy and self-hypnotism. If one of them is suffering in mind or body, he thinks it is caused by an evil spirit which has entered into him, but that the name of Allah, combined with the ceaseless motion and the sacred surroundings, will drive forth the afrite.

They all firmly believe that every Thursday night the spirits of five of their most holy *marabouts* meet to hold converse in this cave. Nothing would induce an Arab to enter on that night, for he knows that punishment for his temerity would surely follow.

On leaving we attempt to photograph some of the groups as they stream by, but desist on seeing that many object.

We pass the Sphinx on our way back to camp, pausing, as all must pause, before the eternal wonder of this monument of man's creation. Hewn from the solid rock, it crouches in the desert sand, its sightless eyes turned to the east, with an expression of limitless patience and unfathomable mystery.

There is music in our camp; for Saïd, the horseman, with his faint smile and the far-away look of one listening to something at a distance, is a real Pan of the desert, evoking from his reed flute all manner of elusive and plaintive notes suggestive of the infancy of music—birdlike notes with a sad undercurrent as of an imprisoned soul struggling for expression. He is sometimes accompanied by others, who play the *derabukka*, or clap hands in rhythm to

the weird airs. The beaten *tom-toms* add something almost violent. At first the music sounds monotonous, but gradually unrecognized cadences, palpitating with the impenetrable soul of the East, grow upon one until one is captured by the strange spell. Occasionally one of the camel drivers steals up and joins in the slow dancing of the Bedouins.

The Bedouin came originally from Arabia. Now he is a wanderer in the great Sahara, Libyan, Syrian, and Arabian deserts. A tribe will number from 3000 to 100,000 people, all owning camels, sheep, and goats. When it moves it sweeps over great tracts of country, forcing before it wolves, jackals, gazelles, and all the wild creatures of the desert. The approach of these animals will often warn a tribe that another is advancing. These sons of Ishmael trade in dates, bananas, henna, and sugar cane, which they bring from far oases to the cities near the sea, returning

eventually with tobacco, tea, coffee, and grain.

There are immense caravans guarded by warlike nomads, where every man is armed to the teeth, trading with the Soudan and beyond. They once trafficked largely in slaves. Now they go in quest of ivory, gold dust, ostrich feathers, and the rich produce of the far South.

These rich caravans travel in fear of the roving hordes of desert robbers who are ever ready to pounce on a defenceless caravan. Their most dreaded foes are the fierce Touarêgs, a powerful race, who are known as the God forsaken, and who have no word for law. These curious beings keep their faces hidden behind a sort of black mask, even in the presence of their own families. They inhabit remote oases in the Sahara and rove over a country as large as Russia. Mounted on the famous breed of white camels, the swiftest in the desert, they will secretly track a caravan

for weeks, waiting their opportunity to strike. The desert alone is witness of the scene of slaughter that ensues, for it is a fight to the death. No quarter is asked or given, no exception made for women or little children. None may survive to tell the hideous tale. The sands are red when all is over; the victors vanish with their spoil. In the silence of the night the wild beasts of the desert come to the smell of blood. When the sun rises, no sign remains of the awful tragedy save a few whitening bones.

To be lost in the waterless desert is the haunting fear of the nomad, but these human tigers, who rarely attack unless confident of success, are even more dreaded.

The food of the nomad consists chiefly of dates, milk, and bread. They make the last by grinding the grain between two stones, mixing it with a little milk and baking it in a hole scooped in the sand, in which they light their fire.

The camel and the goat supply most of the simple wants of the Bedouin. Their women weave the tents from the hair of the goat, which also supplies them with milk and food, while the camel gives them fuel, milk, and material for their clothes. The hair of the young camel, shorn at two years old, makes the beautiful, soft camel's-hair shawls one sees in the bazaars. When the animal's coat grows coarser with age and repeated clippings, it is used for blankets, cloaks, *tarbouches*, and carpets.

The dromedary is of finer build than the camel, and is very fleet of foot. It often travels from seventy to a hundred miles at a stretch, covering the ground with a swift, easy motion. The dromedary is the race-horse of the desert, and has earned the picturesque title of "Child of the vanishing wind."

III

ON TO SAKHARA

Saturday, February 25th.

ON waking in the morning, the shouting of the Arabs, the muttering and gurgling of the camels, the braying of the donkeys, tell us with no uncertain voice that we are moving camp.

We sit on a hillock of sand watching our tents fall and our bedsteads hoisted on the humps of the camels, there to see-saw all day in giddy fashion, while carpets, chairs, portmanteaux, and kitchen utensils are slung in nets, to bump against the patient sides of the long-suffering animals.

The long procession starts, the camels walking away with a dignified, disdainful tread peculiar to that animal. Our Bedouins stride along with bare feet beside them. Only Muhommed, the Nubian cook, in view of his sixty-odd years, is permitted to ride; for the Arabs are very kind to the old, always treating them with great consideration.

We skirt along the desert, keeping the valley of the Nile in sight near the pyramids of Abusir, and pass a cemetery with its mounds of sun-baked clay, sometimes covered by pagoda-like structures open at the sides, and sometimes by curious dome-shaped tombs, indicating the burial-places of *marabouts* or other important persons.

"There," said Abd-es-Sadak, "is my father's house." But we could see no house. "My father's room," he explained. "He is buried there." Mohammedan as he is, there still lurks a trace of the old

"Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"

Photo, Maass

23

Mohammedan Cemetery

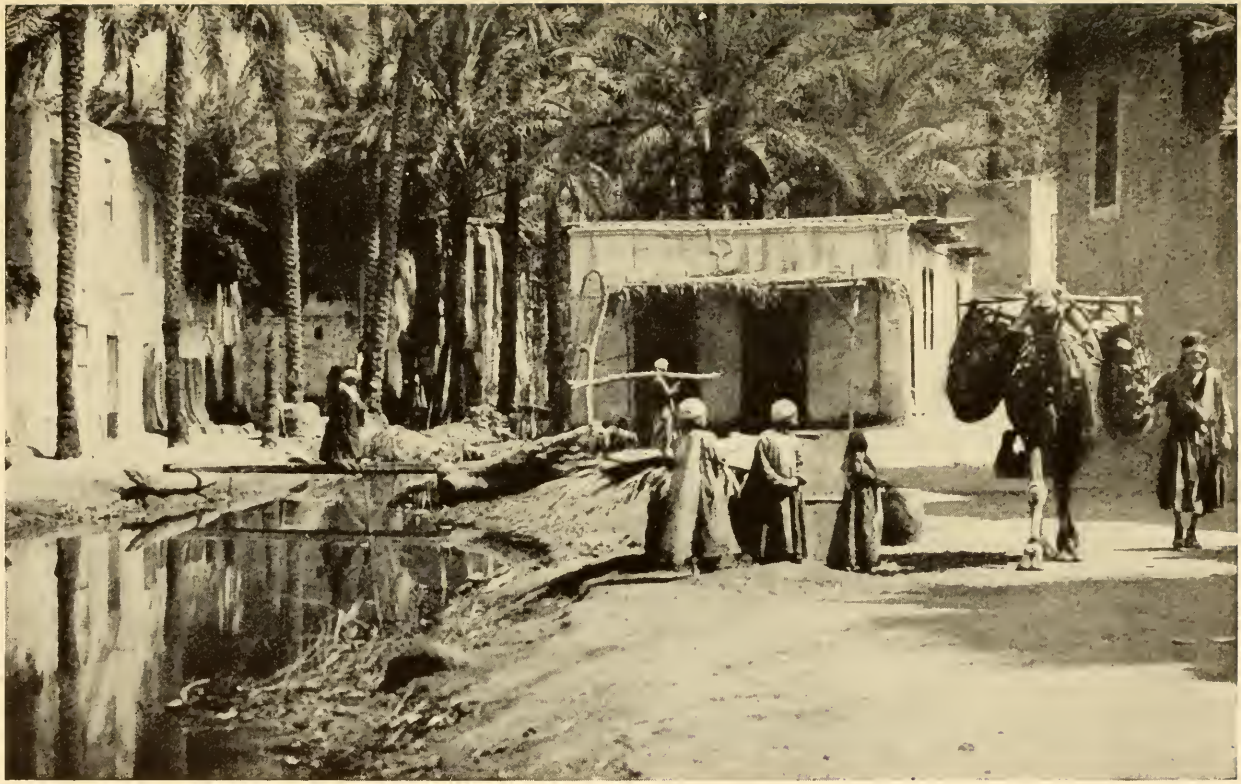
Egyptian belief in the continuation of a material life on earth.

We round the top of a desert dune and beneath us in a haze of green lies the village of Sakhara, picturesque in its palm woods; and are greeted as usual by barking and snarling dogs, with their mongrel appearance, their dirt, their sores, their furtive and treacherous ways. The pariah dog, wherever he is to be found in the East, seems not quite to belong to the canine race. He is not the friend and companion of man, but a wretched freebooter living on the community. At best he is disregarded, but often he is treated with blood-curdling cruelty, which we would find almost unendurable if even to ourselves he did not seem of a race alien to the dogs we know.

As we passed, our attention was arrested by the figure of a woman sitting on the threshold of a mud hut. Her veil had fallen back and hung in long folds across

her gown. Her hands were clasped about her knees, her beautiful face was half turned away, and her large dark eyes were fixed on the horizon, with a look of unutterable sadness. She did not stir or glance towards us, though our cavalcade passed quite close to her. Was she deaf or blind, or simply (as she seemed) one who had passed beyond despair, for whom the incidents of life had ceased to count, living in a "no man's land" where hope and sorrow and fear can no longer enter?

The houses of sun-baked mud are usually more or less dilapidated, for to keep anything in repair is alien to the Eastern mind. But one stands out conspicuously in a coat of fresh, yellow-tinted whitewash, with cabalistic-looking drawings in red and blue rudely scrawled upon it, as if by the hand of a child. "That," says Ahmed, with pride, "is the house of a very holy man who has just made the pilgrimage to Mecca."



Photo, Maass

27 A Native Village

On to Sakhara

In the eyes of the people the pilgrimage to Mecca still remains a tremendous enterprise, worthy of admiration and reverence. In the old days, when the slow journeyings across the desert with a camel caravan sometimes took years, and the dangers of the road were many, it may well have seemed a great test of faith; but now, with railways and steamers, it is fast losing any quality of hazardous adventure. The huge railroad station for Mecca at Damascus suggests the tripper to Brighton or Coney Island. And even the Holy Carpet goes by rail although it is carried on a camel, especially appointed for this service, to the outskirts of the town, and departs and arrives with all the old-time ceremony. The c rpet itself is covered from the public gaze by a howdah on the back of the sacred camel, and is accompanied by a procession of others richly caparisoned, and by gorgeously dressed dignitaries, holy men, and retainers. It is awaited by a great multi-

tude of high and low, who have the *appearance* of being impressed. Thus "the old order changes, giving place to the new."

At noon our lunch is spread in a sandy hollow, and we gladly rest our weary limbs on cushions which appear very soft after the long hours in the saddle. Man and beast alike partake of refreshment, after which the Arabs lie inert, with muffled heads to protect themselves from the sun. Toulba has tossed aside his cloak and crept into the shade of our tent. He is fast asleep, his little face upturned, while his faithful slave keeps watch that no flies steal on his sacred nose.

Our caravan passes while we drowse the hot hours away; we hear the soft thud of the camels' feet and the droning voices of the men as they urge their beasts onward.

We look with interest at the beetles crawling in the sand, for are not they the descendants of the famous scarabs of his-

tory, whom the ancient Egyptians worshipped as emblems of eternal life? The female deposits her eggs in the soft mud of the Nile just as the annual overflow begins to subside. She works the wet clay that contains the eggs into a ball, which she cleverly rolls away from the river into the adjacent sand of the desert. Here she buries herself and the object of her solicitude to the depth of several feet. She has accomplished her destiny and dies in her sandy tomb. Once greatness was thrust on this little creature, when as the emblem of eternal life it was as a hieroglyph engraved on gems, and its likeness worn alike by the living and the dead.

The cool wind of evening has risen, and the sun is already in the west when we continue our journey. Our camels, with slender, outstretched necks, make grotesque shadows on the ground, as they move with slow, fastidious steps through the shifting sand.

The villages we pass are invariably built on higher ground than the cultivated land, in order that they may be above the level of the Nile in flood. The brown mud houses, slender minarets, and groves of palms give a very charming effect in the distance; but on entering them their filth and squalor are appalling.

This region is full of historic interest, for Memphis, the ancient capital of Egypt is not far off; and close to the native village of Sakhara lies the great kingdom of the dead. The desert sand for miles is honeycombed with tombs and subterranean temples; for this vast plain was once the cemetery of the Pharaohs.

Although for several thousand years archæologist and robber alike have rifled these splendid sepulchres, the buried treasuries are inexhaustible, and there must still remain many sleeping their last sleep, swathed in their fine l nen bandages, and

surrounded by bas-reliefs representing all they loved in life.

The excavators are patiently digging these endless sands, striving to wrest from them the secrets of the past. New treasures are unearthed, history is unmasked, more marvels come to light, revealing the life of ancient Egypt, a human document of absorbing interest.

We find our camp at dusk being pitched on the edge of the cultivated land, and watch our tents put up with sinking hearts, trying not to admit to ourselves that we are too near the barking dogs and ophthalmic children of Sakhara.

The natives look at us with grave, incurious eyes. Some are weaving as they walk, and their shuttles are the same as those used by the weavers of old when the Pharaohs held sway over Egypt. Young girls pass by with stately gait, poising earthen water jars on their heads with a strange grace and dignity. Women with

trailing black robes, holding a corner of their veils across their mouths, carry chil-

Photo., P. Dittrich

Carding wool

dren whose faces swarm with flies. Blind men grope their way along the path. In

this land, where so many are sightless, the blind accept their fate with the marvellous patience of the East.

Though we regret not camping on the clean desert sand, we are almost consoled by the carpet of small mauve irises, growing on the irrigated ground which the Nile washes completely over for two or three months every summer.

Behind us stretches a chain of hills, crowned by pyramids that at night look like faint ethereal ghosts, flooded by the white radiance of the moon.

The desert lies bathed in a silvery mist, from which rise dim distances and phantom shapes, whose mystery makes us feel we have crossed the Styx and are wandering in an unreal world.

It is a "night of the Prophet," as the Arab saying goes, and our Bedouins sit in their white, flowing robes, still as the statues of old, save for the slight movement of their fingers on the reed pipes, as the

thin sweet notes fill the air with a melody whose elusiveness creates a subtle charm.

A voice breaks into song. The song holds a delicate enchantment, whose endless monotony seems to tell of great spaces, of endless longing, and to draw our souls into unseen worlds. Then other voices join with the refrain, "*Ya Muhommed, ya habeeby,*" and we know the song is addressed to the Arabian prophet.

IV

A CITY OF THE DEAD

Sunday, February 26th.

TO the east of us some crumbling earth-works, many fragments of broken granite, and a few statues alone mark what was Memphis, once the largest and most magnificent city of Egypt. Other cities supplanted it as the home of the court, and its power and influence waned. It was despoiled of its treasures, and even its palaces and temples were torn down to adorn its younger rivals. The waters of the Nile broke through the untended dykes and submerged it. But

as late as the 12th century A.D. a traveller writes,

> The ruins of Memphis occupy a space one-half day's journey everyway, and they offer to the eyes of the spectator a collection of marvels which strike the mind with wonder, and which the most eloquent man might in vain attempt to describe.

To the west, beyond the Libyan hills, lies another city, which has better resisted the encroachments of time—the City of the Dead. Due to the fact that "the desert keeps what it covers," and to the greater stability of the buildings, we are here able to see on their painted and sculptured walls the daily life of long past centuries. For here were buried the kings, queens, and nobles, and even many of the animals belonging to the once great city of Memphis. As the Egyptians believed that the soul (the *Ka* or double) an the body of man were inseparable after death, and that the life of the soul depended upon

the preservation of the body, the tombs were built, as was hoped, to last for eternity; while for the short life on earth less solid structures sufficed.

In archaic days the body was embalmed and buried at the bottom of a deep shaft, which was then filled in, and above it was built a simple structure—a *mastaba*—in which the offerings were placed, principally food and drink, and where the dead man's friends met to feast, to pray, and to recite the formulas by whose magic the pictured scenes on the walls were turned into realities for the sustenance of the body. Later on, these *mastabas* grew into houses of the dead, with many rooms, arranged doubtless after the manner of the houses of the living. A man's life must have been largely spent in preparing for death, or the after life.

But to provide the body and the *Ka* with an enduring shelter was not enough. The *Ka* was obliged to go back and forth

from the sunken burial chamber to the rooms above in search of food to nourish the body, also the amusements and occupations which filled the living years must be provided. Statues resembling the dead man as closely as possible were placed in a concealed room, that, should he body meet with an accident, the *Ka* would still find a familiar abiding-place. Through the very heart of life ran the haunting fear of annihilation, to cease forever from out this golden land.

The names, titles, attributes of the dead, are everywhere repeated with the wish for continued existence on earth rather than for self-glorification. And the living were ever ready to assist the dead, that in their turn perpetual life, so dependent upon the good offices of the living, might be accorded them. Again and again was carved on the stone:

O ye princes, O ye prophets, O ye high priests

celebrant, initiated into the mysteries, O ye lay prophets, O ye officials, O ye dwellers in your cities, all who may be in this temple if you love life, and hate death, if you desire strength for your children, say with your mouth the formula for thousands of bread, wine, and cakes, oxen, geese, perfumes, garments, and all things good and pure which are for the life of a God to the *Ka* of [whoever might be the inmate of the tomb].

These *mastabas* or houses, were the graves of the people and nobles from early times, while the pyramid was the tomb of the king. And from Gizeh to Medun they stretch, most imposing relics of past glory.

The known world was ransacked for everything that was most beautiful for the building and adornment of these homes of the dead. The funerals, with the priests in their flowing robes; the gold, the jewels, the chanting music, and the wailing mourners; the feastings and offerings and prayers for the dead; the great processions to praise and worship the deified kings, must have

made a life of continual animation, at once impressive and magnificent.

We break up camp early to visit Sakhara, this great necropolis of the dead. We go first to the tomb of Ti, companion and counsellor of the king, "pleasing to the heart of his Lord."

As we descend into the mysterious silence of the tomb, the Arab guardian lights candles whose feeble rays enable us to see dimly the marvellous drawings on the walls, in those rooms unlighted from above.

As was the custom in those days, men of importance had many honorary titles, and Ti's exact station and calling is uncertain. It is evident that he possessed great power. His statue in the Cairo Museum shows him as a man of unusual intelligence and force. With head upheld he seems striding through the world, knowing how to take and use the best things in life.

It is well named the "Happy tomb of

Ti." In the exquisite bas-reliefs which cover the seven rooms of his *mastaba* there is such restraint, sense of proportion; above all such delicate modelling, such perfect rendering of every animal, bird, and reptile, that each one is at once an individual portrait and a type. And the genius which thus grasped the race in the individual, achieved perhaps the most notable work of art before the days of Greece, and with a note of vivacious energy and pagan gaiety which men may well have had when the world was young.

To-day, as five thousand years ago, appears the trotting donkey, the fluttering bird, and the swimming fish.

The busy toilers of old Egypt are hard at work digging and tilling the Nile soil, gathering in the corn, slaving to satisfy the demands of their exacting masters.

Here we see the making of beer and bread, the working in metal, the building of boats, the catching and salting of fish;

the flax being cut, tied in sheaves, on the backs of donkeys, unloaded, trodden by oxen, and counted by scribes with their papyrus, ink palettes, and cases of reed pens; courts of justice being held with the *fellaheen* brought for judgment. An orderly procession of cattle, birds, antelope, game, march onward to be changed by the magical formulæ into food for the *Ka* of Ti.

We see Ti seated with his wife Nefer Hoteps beside him, watching the slow dancing of the East; Ti at his table eating, with a menu, above his head, of the food, drink, clothes, and perfumes which are at his disposition. There are sacrificial bulls for Ti, incense for Ti, statues of Ti in their shrines, a whole world filled with a serene ardor and activity. Through all these centuries, with what buoyancy of life has each followed his appointed task in the "Happy tomb of Ti."

Notwithstanding the growing heat of the

sun, we go to the Serapium, the burial-place of the sacred bulls. From the days of Ti to the building of the Serapium as long a time had elapsed as from the hewing of its mighty galleries to our own era.

The worship of animals had always existed, and cemeteries for dogs, cats, birds, were all about us. With the lapse of years the religion of earlier times became more complicated and superstition greatly increased. Finally it was believed that the actual spirit of the great God Ptah-Sokar-Osiris was incarnated in a bull and at its death passed from one sacred bull, or Apis, to another. While alive, the bull was worshipped in a temple at Memphis. Strabo writes of the interest travellers found who saw Apis frisking about his palace, and the amusing solemnity with which these friskings were watched with the hope of discovering divine revelations. At his death Apis was buried in vaults at Sakhara and worshipped in the Serapium,

a temple built above them. For hundreds of years this temple was buried in the sand and lost to the world until discovered by Mariette, the great Egyptologist. The *cartouches* show that the earliest interments were contemporaneous with the last kings of Israel. On one mighty sarcophagus is the *cartouche* of Cambyses, King of Persia, who conquered Egypt in the seventh century. In another, a mummy of a sacred bull remained intact, to be found by Mariette, who on entering the sealed chamber saw on its sandy floor the footprints of the last Egyptian to leave the tomb over two thousand years before.

The farther we penetrate into these terrible vaults, the hotter grows the air, and in the tombs of the Apis the atmosphere is like fire, while the immensity of these subterranean halls, the eternal night, the near presence of the mighty dead, fill us with an indescribable awe. We are glad to leave these dread nether regions of

black shadows for the blue skies and sunshine of the world of to-day.

We journey on in a haze of heat which quivers in the air and glows with a passionate life. The great dunes stretch into the still solitudes, broken by hills and valleys of pale sand that are pencilled brown in places by the small stones lying thickly on the surface. In the golden distance we see a lake with islands and peninsulas jutting into the water. The gray shimmer of its surface lies unruffled in the noonday glare; feathery palm trees are reflected in its still depths—dream mysteries of the desert, phantom forms born of the miracle of mirage.

Against the sapphire blue of the sky appears a slender white line, at first mistaken for a cloud, gradually changing into a flame of rose, as the sun catches the pink breasts and wings of a flock of flamingoes sailing westward. Like a silver thread

they come, and like a streak of flame they vanish into the mysterious land that lies beyond the sunset,—a radiant vision of color sweeping into the great unknown.

We pass the "Step Pyramid," the oldest in existence, and a great stone pyramid looms in front to the south, which appears never to grow nearer. In the clear, dry air it is difficult to judge of distance with accuracy, and it is useless to ask a native who never measures it by miles. The majority of the natives do not possess watches, measuring the road by the pace of their camels and donkeys or the position of the sun.

By the "great stone pyramid" we hope to lunch, and shortly after one o'clock we reach it, a mass of copper gold against a deep blue sky. This pyramid is only forty feet less in diameter than its mighty rival at Gizeh, but it has a less imposing appearance, as it is not so high.

While we lunch, the profound silence is

broken by vague cries. Our caravan passes and one of the camel men is singing a haunting song of the nomad, that holds a strange melancholy, a yearning appeal, in its terrible monotony. As men and beasts vanish from view in the recesses of the sand-dunes, the voice still floats in the air, the sacred name of Allah grows fainter and fainter in the distance. Then follows once more the silence of the desert—forceful, eternal.

When lunch is over and after a rest to enable the caravan to reach its destination before us, we again resume our journey, past the "blunted pyramid" and the "ruined pyramid of Dashoor," which appeared to us like a heap of stones rising from a forest of trees. These trees vanished like smoke as we approached; another mirage has deceived us.

It is only a close inspection that reveals the wealth of flowers that grow in the

desert far from any visible water. The tiny crucifer with its purple head and radiating foliage, the little yellow pea-flower and the blue salvia pluckily take root in the sand, while mesambrianthemums make a brave show with their large, mauve, waxy leaves, and the rest-harrow becomes a shrub of golden bloom when not eaten down by the gazelle or passing camel. There is also a flower resembling a forget-me-not, with blossoms of deep blue or brilliant pink, and the Jerusalem sage is frequently to be met with in the rills of yellow sand that intersect the desert, however stony.

Turning to the left down a valley through a chain of hills we once more come on cultivation. Large sycamores of the south, groups of acacias and prickly pears, the blue green of the latter making a charming contrast with the white *marabout* tombs and brown mud walls of the village of Dashoor.

" Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"

Photo., Maass

Marabout's Tomb

The cupolas of these tombs are a picturesque feature of the East shining like white gems in the surrounding greenery. The *marabout* is the mystic of Islam, and these holy men, judging from the multitude of their tombs, must have flourished and multiplied exceedingly. Once upon a time the term *marabout* was only applied to a great religious leader of learning and piety, but now many a wandering idiot is called a *marabout*, for the Arabs believe him to be a special favorite of Allah, who has withdrawn his mind to heaven, leaving his body to fulfil its appointed time on earth.

Far away is the Nile with its copper-colored waters gleaming violet and amber in the hot sunshine; its banks fringed with palm groves or strips of carefully tended vegetation. We are charmed with our camping ground. Soon the hush of evening descends; a great silence broods over everything; the desert, the village, the white tombs turn rose colored in the pink

flaming glory of the sunset. After dinner we wander into the desert. The wind with an almost stinging freshness, comes to us from the ends of the earth across the seas of sand. Wrapped against the penetrating cold, we lie gazing into the blue purple of the night. The stars seem to hang like lamps at varying distances, the planets appear like small suns emitting rays of light; very different from the twinkling stars and flat effect of our dark, northern skies.

Beneath us lies the camp where our tents stand like gray sentinels in the blue gloom of the night, alluring us with their promise of rest and shelter. The fire gives forth a cheerful glow, the flame leaps to a sudden blaze as the men heap on fresh fuel. It lights up their dark faces and sends flashes of warm color over their white robes. On the desert breeze is borne the sound of music—low, throbbing tones of drowsy melody. Now and again a wail

of sadness dies away in waves of whispered longing for that which ever lies beyond. Saïd, the desert Pan, is playing his reed pipe, the wild, barbaric notes voice the soul of a primitive people.

Gently the peace of the great desert steals over us; the strange beauty of the night, the soft, mysterious silence fills one with an emotion at once joyous and awe-inspiring. All cares are forgotten: all troubles vanish under the light of the shining stars.

"And the night shall be filled with music
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

V

A DAY AT DASHOOR

Monday, February 27th.

PERFECT as are the nights, with a still perfection that enchains and tranquillizes the soul, the mornings are radiant with the glory of the coming day.

As the dawn faintly flushes the eastern sky, the stillness seems to vibrate with life. There is a sense of expectation in all things, a joyous feeling of hope quivering through the air. The stars pale as the sun rises and bathes the new world in a silver light. Our tents facing the Sun-god are flooded

with fresh, warm life. From afar the voices of the *muezzin* sends forth his fourfold cry to the north, south, east, and west. The Arabs prostrate themselves in prayer. With their faces turned to Mecca, they praise "Allah the most merciful, the ever compassionate," bowing their heads to the ground in reverence to the "Giver of all."

We spend a quiet day watching the natives pass by, greeting one another with the Arab formula, "May your day be happy," to which the others reply, "May your day be happy and blessed." When friend meets friend they shake hands, each placing his hand lightly on his heart, lips, and forehead in token of friendship and respect. This is said to mean, "The feelings of my heart, the words of my lips, the thoughts of my mind are for you." The voices of these people are loud. When several are together, it sounds to unaccustomed ears as if they were engaged in vio-

lent dispute, when they are probably only having a peaceful gossip. We are often startled by a storm of voices arguing, shouting, disputing. We hold our breath waiting for the blows and the shots which never come. This suggests the story of the European who took something to a native shop to be mended. Whereupon arose an argument between the proprietor and his apprentice which waxed so loud and furious that in dismay the stranger asked a passerby the cause of the trouble. The man listened a moment and said, "There is no trouble, they say, 'May be'." Though their tones are strident, their tread is noiseless, no doubt from the custom of walking barefoot, or in flat Arab slippers.

The Arab of the desert moves with stately gait. With head erect he strides along as if he possessed the earth and all things in it. The women also walk with free, untrammelled grace, and in their eyes

is the look of those who live in open spaces. They bow their heads alone to *Kismet*, meeting death undaunted; for when it comes they recognize the will of Allah, and old and young accept what Fate brings, knowing no regret and no fear. The look of quiet contentment on their faces is good to see. And how little it takes to satisfy their simple needs! A pipe, a cup of coffee, a little shade, a handful of dates, some bread and sugar, and water to quench their thirst. For the sunshine robs poverty of half its sting, and none may starve in this land, where the Koran commands that no man shall refuse bread and salt to his neighbor. In their wise philosophy vexatious memories are put aside. If conversation flows into troublesome channels, it is abruptly changed. The warm sunshine, the great silence of the desert, is made for peace; the stress and strain of Western life are unknown to a people who, joined to a great love of nature, possess

an exquisite sensibility and power of concentration, and find their happiness in dreamy tranquillity and contemplation.

The scene before us is almost startlingly brilliant. The palm trees stretch their heads toward the Sun-god drinking in the light and the heat, blue and mauve shadows flicker on their straight brown trunks. The white *marabout's* tomb shines with opal and pink reflections in the transparent light. The air is laden with curious penetrating perfumes. Everything seems pulsating with heat and color. Is it the spell of the East or the magic of color which makes the very air seem alive with a suggestion of ecstasy and tragedy, the passion and the pain of life? A land in which at any moment *anything* might happen. Under the dull skies of the north the day shall be long ere

"We have forgotten all things meet
We have forgotten the look of light
We have forgotten the smell of heat."

A Day at Dashoor

This day Ibraheen Bey, head *sheikh* of Dashoor, sends to know if he may pay us his respects, and we in vain await him all the afternoon.

The *sheikh*, or *omdeh*, is the mayor and patriarch of a village, a landed proprietor on a small scale. Before the English occupation these *sheikhs* were minions of the *pashas* and usually tyrants on their own behalf, enforcing the will of those above them and their own exactions on the helpless people.

It is hard now to believe that a few years ago the *courbash*, the *corvée*, and slavery flourished. Injustice walked unchecked through the land. Insecurity of life and property, poverty, and indescribable suffering were the common lot. The country had been squeezed like an orange. Even the canals on which its very life depended, had been allowed to drop into an almost irreparable state of disrepair. With enemies within and without, Eng-

land started upon what must often have seemed a hopeless attempt at reconstruction. To those who know the story of the struggle, and who see the achievement, there are few chapters in history which will awaken greater enthusiasm and admiration. There is much talk now of "Egyptianizing" other moribund countries. Two things, however, are necessary: the administrative qualities of the English, and the inherent vitality of the Egyptians.

The west glows with deep red, above which is a sky of tender, delicate green, shot with the rays of the setting sun. This is the magic hour of our nomad life, the hour of dreams, of happy silence, while the stars appear in the deep sky; and the low, drowsy murmur of a tale from the *Arabian Nights* reaches us from where our Bedouins sit in a circle round the fire.

VI

A VISIT TO A HAREM

Tuesday, February 28th.

AT ten o'clock, when least expected, Ibraheen Bey arrives accompanied by his two sons and several brothers and nephews, while a few minor *sheikhs* add lustre to his train.

Some of the younger *sheikhs* are dandies in their brilliantly-colored silk *kaftans*, embroidered sashes, graceful cloaks, and spotless turbans.

Our visitors are of the Egyptian race. In some of the faces one recognizes the

long eyes, straight brow and nose, and somewhat prominent chin of the Pharaohs; and their long slender hands and feet appear like a reproduction of a bas-relief from an old temple.

We hold our *durbar* in the luncheon tent, with our guests seated in a semicircle round us. The visit lasts an hour, enlivened by coffee, cigarettes, and a book in which there are some hunting pictures, creating great surprise and enthusiasm. In the course of conversation, carried on in very disjointed Arabic on our side, and with the aid of an interpreter, the Bey intimates that he is the owner of large flocks of sheep and goats, and that his family is of old and distinguished lineage. Not to be outdone we reply that we are the proud possessors of so many cows that we cannot count them, and we stumblingly strive to speak in the language of the East to this patriarch of the Old Testament.

Late in the afternoon we mount our don-

keys. Accompanied by Fadlallah and our donkey boys, we ride through the village to return the visit with royal promptitude. On our way we pass a funeral procession. The body, carried on a wooden stretcher, is wrapped in a silken shroud sprinkled with holy water from the sacred well of Zeni Teni in Mecca. There is a long line of mourners, and the bearers of the bier chant an Arab hymn, telling of the delights that await the true believer in Paradise. The dead man must have been of some importance, and lavish in his alms, judging from the number of beggars. The crowd is swelled by the villagers who have joined it, hoping for the bounty invariably distributed by the relatives at the side of the grave.

We dismount at a large house built of the inevitable mud, with a coat of whitewash to mark its superiority over its neighbors. Like most native dwellings it presents a blank face to the street, its

privacy being further enhanced by high walls. The impress of a hand is on the door, the sacred hand of Fatima, daughter of the Prophet, bringing peace to the dwellers within. The courtyard is very picturesque, with a well in the centre, beside which stand two palm trees making a grateful shade.

The room we are received in is of fine proportions, with a European carpet of hideous design, while glass lamps of even more unsightly pattern stand about. The walls are crumbling in places from the ravages of the high Nile.

After we have partaken of the usual coffee and cigarettes, curiosity gets the better of our manners, and though we know it is against all tradition to ask an Oriental after his female relations, we mention to Ibraheen Bey that it would give us great pleasure to be permitted to call on his wife. However, he replies that she is away from home.

A Visit to a Harem

The house is conducted on the patriarchal system, two of our host's brothers with their families living in different parts of the building. One wife had been ill, and Ibraheen Bey, on hearing that one of our party has had some hospital training, asked if she would pay the invalid a visit, since doctors are not allowed near their womenkind. We, of course, are glad to be of any possible use, and having sent for the "healing physician," we cross the courtyard and enter a dark and dismal room from which both sun and men are rigorously excluded. The windows of the harem are all of lattice work, through which air passes, but very little light.

The gloom and depression of these rooms to one unaccustomed to being shut out from the sunlight and the living world by a wooden screen, is indescribable. The sufferer had the listless air and dragging footsteps almost always seen in those whose lives are spent in this imprisonment. She

was fat for so young a woman, and had a sweet, pathetic expression. The room was unfurnished except for some rugs, a few divans, and some cushions on the floor, but in spite of all the disorder and untidiness of the East, everything was spotlessly clean. On a cushion in a corner crouched an old crone with bright peering eyes and a crafty look. It was hard to say whether the younger woman was afraid of her, or simply overcome by our presence, but her whole being seemed to speak of fear and depression. The monotony of these lives behind the *yashmak*[1] and the shutter appears to us almost like a living death. The more fortunate are those too stupid or too little educated to appreciate their condition. It is said that the cruelty and the crimes committed in the seclusion of these harems if brought to light would startle the Western world.

On the invitation of the invalid, we

[1] Veil.

ascended the stairs to the top of the house, passing through a door leading on to a flat roof. Here rugs and cushions were spread on which rested some pretty young women, chatting and laughing, who at once rose to welcome us with friendly smiles. Two small children were playing a game of marbles, and a beautiful Persian cat lay in the arms of one of the women. These native ladies were below the average height of Europeans; they had large brown eyes, delicate features, and were very attractive in appearance, with perfectly-modelled hands and feet, while heavy, silver anklets drew attention to their slender ankles. They smilingly insisted on our breaking bread with them, and we ate a belated tea of biscuits, dates, and shelled walnuts served in china saucers on a brass tray.

From here we could see the roofs of other and poorer dwellings; the life of the roof in the homes of the poor. On the next

house, divided from us by a narrow street, the women were cooking, and on countless other houses were busy figures. During the hot summer months these roofs are partitioned off, the men sleeping on one side, the women on the other, to enjoy the comparative coolness of the desert breeze that is born at sunset, to die again with the coming of the day. Beyond the houses, through the green wealth of palms and cactus we get glimpses of the desert, now bathed in the flaming glory of the sunset. The brilliant shafts of light are like beckoning fingers luring us to a magic world of unknown splendor. The desert calls us. We bid farewell to the charming little ladies of the harem and, followed to the outskirts of the village by Ibraheen Bey, his brothers, nephews, and sons, as well as by the gaze of the entire population who have apparently all rushed into the streets to have a glimpse of us, we return to our tents set in the golden sands, where the

golden sunset wraps all things in its revivifying life, in this "land of gold and song and prayer."

Nothing could exceed the hospitality of these people toward us, and Ibraheen Bey, though fat and ungainly, is not without the dignity of the Eastern potentate. While we remained on his property he sent two of his men to guard us. We found through the whole of our expedition that the *sheikh* of the village on whose land we camped, considered us his guests, sending his own watchman, as is the custom, to be responsible for our safety, and to whom we are expected to give *backsheesh* for the service.

This night we close our eyes early, foregoing our meanderings by starlight, for we know that to-morrow we start on a two-days' trip across the waterless desert. Nearly fifty miles stretch between us and Birket el Kurum, the northern point of the Fayoum for which we are making.

VII

SHIFTING SANDS

Ash Wednesday, March 1st.

OUR baggage camels are groaning under more than their usual load, as four of their number have been set apart to carry water. The water, in big clay jars of graceful design, which have not been altered in shape for many centuries, is carried in nets on the camels' backs. Instead of corks, the necks of the jars are stopped with green leaves, and though exposed to the rays of the African sun, the

water is always cold, thanks to the porous quality of the clay.

These earthen jars are made in the villages of Upper Egypt and sent floating down the Nile on flat-bottomed cargo boats to their various destinations. Several hundred jars are bound together with palm tree bands. They are carefully covered with green leaves and a second stratum of pots is placed above them. On the top are perched native boatmen, who skilfully guide them down the stream.

These boats carry most of the produce of the land, as well as people, cattle, chickens, donkeys, and camels. It is amusing to see the latter when they are obliged to land in shallow water. The manner in which they put their long legs over the side of the boat, carrying high their protesting heads, is an object lesson in reluctance and offended dignity. It is a wonderful sight to see the boats with their high prows and lofty lateen sails swooping down

wing and wing, with the tide and the wind behind them, like a flock of ravenous birds, or, at sunset, like will-o'-the-wisps skimming over the shimmering opal water with their graceful pointed wings outlined against the brilliant sky; and at night in the half light of the stars stealing like white ghosts near the banks where the dark palm trees rear their plumed and graceful heads.

Every drop of water required for household purposes is brought by the women from the river or canals in *goollahs* or earthern jars, in shape very like the Etruscan vases. From time immemorial women have trooped down to the water's edge with the *goollahs* on their heads, a long line of graceful figures in flowing, black garments. Arrived at the river's bank, each woman tucks up her skirts and wades into the stream to fill her jar. These *goollahs*, when full of water, weigh about forty pounds, and with this load on their heads

the women climb the steep bank and walk erect to the village often a mile or two away. As they file back at sunset, their black figures silhouetted against the sky, their clinging draperies and veils fluttering in the wind, and with their inimitable grace and dignity of attitude, they look like a procession of Tanagra figurines on their way to perform some sacred rite.

We wish to travel twenty-five miles before night falls, as not only is the water very precious, but our poor camels will not see either food or drink till we reach the Fayoum.

All the morning we journey through a plain of endless sand, in which lie heaps of great rocks and stones giving the illusion of gigantic temples ruthlessly destroyed by some long-past convulsion of nature. Deep gullies break the monotony of the measureless plain, and as the hours pass, low hills appear on the horizon.

At noon, on emerging from a valley, we meet a Bedouin tribe. Fine-looking men in tattered cloaks, armed with guns and long knives, lead the way on foot. Then come camels carrying the old men, women, and children, and again more camels laden with various goods and chattels. Young camels skip merrily about as they follow their mothers, while a flock of sheep and goats bring up the rear. The younger men and several women are walking. The latter are veiled, but we can see their eyebrows, blackened with *kohl* to meet across their foreheads; and the hands that hold their draperies are stained red with henna. An old Arab, with gray beard and hawklike face, rides forward to exchange greetings with Fadlallah. They touch their breasts, lips, and foreheads, speak a few words, again salute in Arab fashion, and then the Bedouins steal silently away and are lost to view in the lonely desert. And always our desert Pan is singing as he

runs with bare feet by the pony's head.

The air is exquisitely clear and pure. It is good to be alive.

Our lengthening shadows, deep blue on the tawny sand, tell of the passing of the hours. The sun's slanting rays transform the wilderness into a world of entrancing beauty. Stretches of sand turn to golden seas, rolling away in waves of orange, of red, of pink, till in the quivering air this riot of color melts into the blue blur of the far distance.

A faint, wide track crosses ours, barely discernible in places. It is a caravan road made by the prints of the camels' feet, and by hundreds of thousands of naked human feet, as they tramp their long journey from Eastern lands to far oases in the great Sahara.

In the track of this desert road a skeleton is gleaming white, with ghostly ribs protruding through the sand. Some wretched camel has died on the march. When one

of these poor beasts sinks to the ground, the Arabs seize her load and divide it among the remaining camels, while she is left behind to die. Her reproachful eyes follow the receding caravan; once more she tries to rise, but her strength fails and she falls back to gasp out her life in the lonely desert. Often ere the breath has left her body, she is the prey of the jackals, the hyenas, and the vultures. In a few short hours nought remains save the whitening bones.

As we ride on through the endless wastes and eternal silence of the desert, we realize its mystery; its endless and infinite variety. Here we are passing through sands that look as if the ocean had just receded from them. Now we are approaching a chain of red hills on whose slopes rest giant and grotesque forms. Huge tortoises appear to be crawling to the summits, and strange shapes, suggestive of pre-historic days are scattered near. Again we pass on to what

look like pagodas against the sky, twisted by the action of nature during many thousands of years. Long lines of driftsand, heaped up by the wind, have made hills where once were hollows. In the desert one drinks of the waters of Lethe. It is on too large a scale, too vital, too intensely alive, not to blot out lesser things. There are no Marconis or telephones, no business or parties. All that is supposed to relieve the monotony of life is lacking. None of it is here, and yet there is everything. The desert, changeless and eternal, is ever changing. In these limitless solitudes we pitch our camp.

VIII

LOST IN A SANDSTORM

Thursday, March 2d.

AN unearthly din at six A.M. reveals a dramatic incident in the life of Toulba the Terrible. For some slight fault his father had slapped him on the hand, whereupon the child of the nomad flung off his *galabieh*, threw his purse of precious *piastres* on the ground and ran in a frenzy into the desert to reappear later in a somewhat chastened mood, when no more notice was taken of him or his temper.

Lost in a Sandstorm

We make our start under a cloudless sky while about us are sweeps of golden sand, rising like ocean waves, eternal, unending, reaching away to far horizons. Immense rocks and stones of violet hue are scattered in this golden sea. To the west rises a chain of rose-colored mountains, whose peaks are stained crimson and orange in the hot sunshine. Though no life is visible in this naked immensity, the impression it gives is of a warm splendor and intense vitality. And we pursue our way ever through more profound solitudes, along valleys of burning sand, past ridges of strange, contorted shapes, over plains of vast, undreamt-of isolation.

The desert becomes flatter, the sun beats upon our heads, the sands glare under our feet with a white light. The heat rises from the burning plain and quivers as though steam were rising from it; little spirals of heat waves ascend in the hot still air. The charm of the morning has

vanished; the desert is showing us that under the beauty and mystery lies a feline ruthlessness. Nature has asserted herself; in her grasp we are no more than withered leaves. Even the mountains seem no longer able to resist; their color and outline fade to a blue line as they sweep away into the heart of Africa.

At mid-day, after five hours of continued march, we feel very weary. To our dismay, the lunch tent is not on the dromedary but has been left behind with the caravan, and we eat our meal in the pitiless rays of a scorching sun in the flat, open desert. To add to our woes, the wind rises, blowing alternately hot and cold, followed by a sudden gust and whirlwind of sand. Fadlallah insists on our leaving our lunch and starting immediately. He seems in great anxiety. We do not lose a moment before continuing our march, but we have not gone far when we find ourselves in the centre of a sandstorm. Every-

thing is obliterated a few yards away. The Arabs cover their heads with their cloaks, or unwind their turbans to shield their faces. We take refuge behind our handkerchiefs, but can scarcely breathe for the whipping, stinging sand. Fadlallah alone, with his eyes uncovered, leads the way on the dromedary. His is a hard task in that blinding storm, as to lose his way might mean death to the little party. Hour after hour we blindly plod on guided by the thud, thud, of the dromedary's feet.

We are in chaos, half breathless, blind, shut out from the world we know, forced into an unknown world which holds no future and knows no past. A few false steps and the desert and the storm would seize and annihilate us in its relentless grasp. There is no room for fear, only a feeling of exhilaration such as might be felt in a great storm at sea, when the forces of nature wage war on each other, and

the unshackled strength of the unseen powers stand revealed.

In the heart of the storm we seemed to hear the rush of the Valkyrie, the charge of contending armies, ships foundering at sea. All victories, all defeats, the din and the carnage, the joy and the fear, life at its uttermost.

Toulba and his small slave have both been astride the same donkey.

Glancing round we see that Toulba is riding alone. The small slave has vanished, also Toulba's *tarbouche* which has been whirled off his head. Regardless of consequences, he had ordered his slave to run after it. An impossible task, and the little figure is already swallowed up in the sandstorm. We have to shout to Fadlallah to make a halt, and by good luck the child is rescued. Though we make allowance for the five short years of Toulba's existence, we view with horror this youthful Oriental's indifference to his small slave's life.

After what seems endless hours, the storm abates somewhat and we are able to look about. Instead of the interminable desert our eyes are gladdened by the sight of the oasis, whose trees are distinguishable through the pall of fine sand that still hangs in the air.

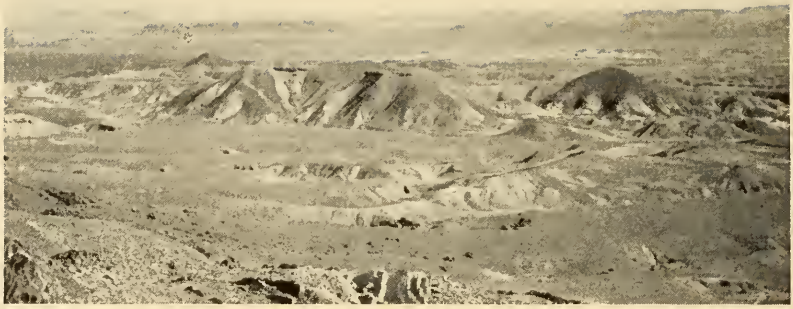
Those green tufts rising on the horizon above the sea of sand are to us what the sight of land is to the shipwrecked mariner. Our animals are in a deplorable condition, but they sniff the air and start again with renewed courage. We have still a large piece of desert to traverse, but its aspect is changing. We can see the tracks of men and camels.

The state of our men reveal what the stress and strain of the storm has been. Their swollen, reddened eyelids, their cracked lips, their haggard faces, in the lines of which the sand still lies, show the desperate fight that has been waged against nature.

Though we have come safely through the storm, we feel great anxiety about our caravan.

As we sit huddled in the sand-cart, hungry, thirsty, with mouths parched, our hair and eyes full of sand, we try in vain to emulate the attitude of the children of the desert, who have tasted nothing since the morning start, have run all day through scorching sun and terrible storm, and now squat on the ground in the ancient posture that has descended to them through countless centuries, resigned to *Kismet*, content with whatever Fate may have in store for them. Hour follows hour with leaden feet. The sun showing dimly through the thick atmosphere sinks from the stormy sky. As darkness descends, no stars appear to lighten our vigil. We are roused at last by the guttural voices of our Arabs. Indistinctly we see dark forms looming in the night, and rejoice to recognize our caravan. Yet a little more patience, and

we gladly rest in our tents on the edge of the desert, with the great oasis and the sacred lake of Kurun stretched beneath us.



IX

BY LAKE KURUN

Friday, March 3d.

WE wake next morning to a glorious day. All traces of the storm are gone. The desert lies ridge upon ridge of yellow sand, warm in the golden sunlight. The giant, petrified remains of a primeval forest rest on its great dunes, while in the distance the varied tints of ripening barley, gray olive woods, and the green of the *dourah* fields tell us that we have reached

our goal and are in sight of the most beautiful oasis in the Libyan Desert.

The lake beneath us covers many miles. Formerly it was even larger than it is to-day. The northern shores, which are now deserted sand dunes, once bore rich crops, and were the home of a thriving population. A small but nearly perfect temple still remains to tell of the glory of bygone days.

The Pharaohs looked on this region as their happy hunting-ground. When weary of life in their great cities, they came here to seek rest and indulge themselves in the sports they loved.

Now the lake is edged with tamarisk trees, and for nearly a mile through its shallow waters that lap the desert, appear the feathery green and pink blossoms of this beautiful bush. Wild fowl of all sorts abound and the natives make a living by fishing in its waters.

And always the mighty desert stretches

away in undulating hills of sand and valleys of blue shadow, until like an upturned cup it meets the sky.

The day is calm, the fierce sun pours down from a sky of blazing blue, the air is breathless. We have walked a short distance, and are not far from our camp, but it is hidden in this vast ocean of swelling summits and sinking hollows. The lake and the oasis are also invisible. Rounding a sand dune appear two Bedouins leading their heavily-laden camels. We watch them as they cover the ground with long, swinging strides, each movement giving the impression of strength and elastic grace. They courteously greet us with the Arab salutation, "Peace be with you," as they pass. With their dark, impassive faces, these men in their dusty, floating robes speak to the imagination of lonely, desert marches, of night vigils under the shining stars, of the life that ever wanders far from the haunts of men in the silent

places of the earth; and about them is the aloofness that one ever meets with in these Eastern people, the aloofness of the Moslem to those of an alien creed. Under the garb of their innate reserve and politeness lies the undying contempt for the unbeliever.

The shrill, melancholy note of the sacred hawk startles the silence. Over the desert comes a weird light, the golden world grows dim, sadness drifts across the darkening plains. Again we hear in the distance the low, booming voice of the storm. A puff of hot air rises, dances along the sand, and whirls into nothingness. Another and yet another follows; the sand ceaselessly dances and quivers till the desert is all alive and moving. The sun is wrapped in a tawny saffron robe, opaque, sinister. From the south comes a sound of mighty wind; soon even near-by objects are blotted out; the sandstorm has returned, forcing us back to the refuge of our tents.

The fine sand penetrates everywhere, covering each object with thick impalpable dust.

Our lunch reaches us well flavored with sand, notwithstanding all possible precautions, and our waiters' eyes are blinded as they struggle from the kitchen tent. The flap of our dining tent is barely raised for them to creep in with the food, but a whirl of sand invades us. We can but smile in sympathy with the smiling faces of these natives who patiently serve us, making naught of the added work. When we remark upon the odious weather, Reshid replies, "Allah sends the storm, oh, lady; it is written in the book, *Inshallah*, he will send a soft wind to-morrow."

We had promised our Bedouins a couple of sheep on arriving at the Fayoum, and at break of day several of the camel drivers had ridden to the nearest village in the oasis to buy them, to obtain fodder for the camels and donkeys, and to fetch water

for the camp, as the water in the lake is brackish.

Late in the afternoon we open our tents as the storm is subsiding, and see our camels returning laden with water and *bursum*. Jemha, the Nubian camel driver, is on foot leading a sheep that bleats piteously at its strange surroundings.

The camel men are paid six shillings a day, and find themselves and their beasts in food. As they are very poor they have preferred to buy one sheep and spend the remainder on fodder for their beasts, so it was said. We never knew whether that extra food ever reached *these* animals.

The little sheep is hobbled and left to its own devices. He cleverly makes his way to the load of *bursum* just taken from the camels' backs. He nibbles away till driven off by the Arabs, when he bleats sadly for a few minutes and then returns to the feast. He keeps this up until the hour of sacrifice draws near,

when he is led away. The bleatings cease, and all is silent.

At sunset the wind falls, the twilight creeps onward; the round, orange sun drops over the edge of the world; the sky turns a vivid, translucent copper with one broad swathe across the heavens of red—deep, blood red. A line of tall palm trees, black silhouettes, slowly move their drooping, feathery branches, bending their graceful heads to one another. What are they saying?

Oh! the mystery and the ferocity of this land! Under the outward calm there lies the sword. "Din-Din-Din Muhommed."

X

THE ROAD TO SENOURIS

Saturday, March 4th.

A COLD, gray morning, but we rise at six to go duck shooting on the lake. The boat, which looks like a Chinese junk, cannot come within twenty yards of the shore, because the water is shallow; so we are carried on board by the native fishermen.

The preparations to make the boat ready for our reception are amusing. The Arabs get bucket loads of sand and pour them on the stern, which is decked over. Then a carpet, brought for the purpose, is spread

out for us to sit upon. As we row out we are continually caught in the tamarisk bushes. Little peninsulas of sand jut into the lake, upon which are erected diminutive straw huts, and wooden supports on which the nets are drying.

The fishermen are wild-looking people, appearing almost like savages when compared with the *fellaheen* on the Nile banks. They seem an amphibious race, and are scantily clad in a sort of coarse yellow sacking, in which with instinctive art they manage to look very picturesque.

The pink flowers of the tamarisks rising from the surface of the water; the shape of the boats; the tiny bamboo shelters, remind one of Japan.

But the rhythmical song which the boatmen sing is of Egypt, and may be heard from one end of the land to the other as the rower bends to his oar—"Allah! houa! Ja Mohammed! Ja Ahmed! Ja Embahi! Ja Abbasi! Hele, hele!"

The ducks prove even wilder than the natives. We find that the only way to get a shot is to hide the boat in the tamarisk bushes and wait patiently for them to fly over us. We eventually succeed in shooting *one*.

On our return to camp, the wind again threatens to rise, so we decide to move on to Senouris immediately, to exchange the sand dunes for the green of the Fayoum, forgetting that Senouris is eighteen miles away, and that the pace at which a caravan travels is less than three miles an hour. We break the news to Fadlallah, who accepts it with Oriental resignation, and by three o'clock we are once more under weigh.

After riding through a few more miles of the desert, it is with a thrill of delightful anticipation that we step from the endless sands into the green fields. We see running water; and trees, that give actual shade, no longer phantoms of mirage. The

pure, dry air of the desert, the exhilarating life of those lifeless regions, has now changed. The scent of spring and green growing things is in our nostrils.

We find some difficulty in getting the sand-cart along, as the Fayoum is interlaced with deep canals, and the path on the banks is often narrower than the width between the wheels. Our donkey boys overcome this difficulty by lifting the cart bodily over the worst places.

The country is flat and thoroughly cultivated. Barley is turning ripe; fields of *bursum*, on which the flocks feed, are a wealth of green, and their flowers are in full bloom, which make them look in the distance like a misty blue carpet. Cotton, fig trees, vines, and clover are also seen in abundance.

Prosperity seems to reign in this happy land.

Here and there are encamped gypsies in low, brown-striped tents, the women rarely

99 An Irrigating Canal "Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"

wearing the *yashmak*. Some of the gypsy women run to the roadway as soon as they espy us, and stand in open-eyed wonder until we pass. They are often quite pretty with faint blue tattooings on their bronze chins. They have large, soft eyes, small, well-shaped hands and feet, and slender, beautiful figures. They often adorn themselves with a gold filigree ring in the nose, and flat coin necklaces. Like all the women of Egypt they carry their babies astride on one shoulder.

The necklaces these women wear often represent the wealth of their husbands. The natives convert their earnings into gold coins, which they place for safety round the necks of their wives and daughters. If the family finds itself in pecuniary difficulties, the men will take a coin to the nearest bazaar and realize its value. Often women whose dress and appearance would lead one to suppose them destitute, are wearing necklaces

and anklets worth from thirty to forty pounds.

These people are hung with charms and amulets; for all Orientals greatly fear the Evil Eye. They believe if an object is looked on with covetous feelings, trouble will ensue, not to him who covets, but to the object coveted. A mother will keep her baby in shabby clothing in order that another woman may not cast an envious eye on it.

We meet a Nubian girl whose robe is somewhat scanty, but she wears a bunch of white cowrie shells against her ebony skin, not in a spirit of coquetry, but to divert the gaze of the public from herself to the shells. It is a point of etiquette with every Arab that he so word his admiration that he renounces every wish to possess the beautiful object before him. He may say *Hashallah* (God's will be done) to show his appreciation. Any other expression would be deemed a breach of good manners.

"Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert" Photo., P. Dittrich

A Bedouin Girl

The Road to Senouris

As we go deeper into the Fayoum, the path becomes a road, with a constant stream of busy active life; animated but surprisingly noiseless. The donkeys trot briskly, some almost hidden under their burdens. People amble by on these little beasts, lurch along on camels, or walk with a swinging gait. A favored few gallop on small gay horses. Flocks of mingled goats and sheep are driven by stalwart shepherds. The air is full of dust, which, in the rays of the declining sun is turned to a golden haze, making a fairylike setting for this scene of cheerful activity.

All seem too much occupied with their own affairs to pay attention to us, as they quickly pass us, except the water buffaloes, who, with raised heads peer at us out of their inquisitive, self-satisfied little eyes. Their appearance is a cross between a cow and a hippopotamus, their curiosity that of a monkey, and their bad temper their own. We pass one of them who has just

shaken off its pack in a ditch from which an old man and a child are trying to pull it. The evident malignant pleasure of the brute makes one wish to beat it. These animals are seen to the greatest advantage lying, as they delight to do in hot weather, in a muddy pool with only part of their ugly heads showing above the surface of the water; although it is rather impressive to see a string of them walking up a bank after they have been bathing in a stream, with measured tread and proud self-satisfaction, their gray hides glistening in the sun.

As we approach Senouris, drops of rain begin to fall. We know only too well that our caravan cannot overtake us for at least two hours. It is already six o'clock, and the sun is setting as we enter the town.

Fortunately Fadlallah knows the *omdeh*, and assures us that the latter will gladly offer us shelter and hospitality, which is the custom of a country where no hotels exist.

"Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert" Photo., P. Maass

107 Water Buffalo

After riding along tortuous streets, we pass through an arched gateway, forming one side of an open square. Beyond is a similar gateway, on the left a garden, while on the right stands a large house.

It is here we are to seek shelter. After consultation between Fadlallah and the door-keeper, a dignified figure appears, dressed in a yellow silk *kaftan*, a blue cloth *galabieh*, and a large white turban. It is Mured Bey, *omdeh* of the village. He at once makes us welcome. We follow him through an outer and inner courtyard. On the threshold of the second doorway are rows of many-colored slippers, telling of company within.

We enter a large room with divans round the walls, on which are seated many friends and relations. The room is dark, and the murmur of conversation is like the hum of bees.

No one shows the slightest surprise at

this sudden invasion of four foreign women,[1] slightly dishevelled, very tired and dusty, descending from either sand-cart, camel, or donkey. We are at once offered coffee and cigarettes, while the three beys, in turn, come and attempt conversation with us.

The rain having ceased, temporarily, we are glad to be taken into the garden. It is too dark to see anything except the palms waving their graceful branches against the sky, but the smell of jasmine is wafted to us in the soft air, we crush geranium leaves beneath our feet as we walk, and their sharp sweet scent tells of hot summer days to come.

Through the still air there falls as if from the skies, a clear voice, rising, falling, swelling—the call to prayer:

"God is great, God is great—
There is no God but God—
I bear witness that Muhommed

[1] The wanderers and their maids.

Is the Prophet of God—
Come to prayer—come to prayer—
God is great—
There is no God but God."

From the great world of Islam, from the ends of the earth, the summons goes forth, and a wave of prayer is wafted to Allah from countless worshippers in distant camps, in obscure oases, in crowded cities. To the north, to the south, to the east, to the west, the moving voice calls, and from far minarets drops earthward like a faint echo, "Come to prayer—God is great. God is great."

Dinner is announced, and we return to find that the room has been cleared and two small tables set, one for us and one for our maids. The Egyptians are true lovers of flowers, and near our plates are tight, little nosegays of roses and jasmine.

Besides entertaining us, these hospitable people are feeding our dragoman, donkey boys, pony, and groom.

The Arabs have mastered the art of making meat tender in a country where you eat your sheep the day it is killed. We sit down to an excellent meal of *kufta*, which is rice and mutton with a rice sauce; a dish called *doukkah*, composed of vegetables highly spiced; a boiled chicken; crisp Arab bread made in large flat discs; a corn-flower pudding, and a preserve, which consists of apricots stewed with almonds and raisins.

The Arab is content to eat with his fingers, or a spoon, when necessary, but in deference to our Western ideas we are provided with knives and forks.

A black slave with bare, noiseless feet enters, carrying a gilt basin with a perforated cover. We hold out our hands while he pours over them warm water, scented with jasmine flowers, from a tall gilt jug which matches the basin. This ceremony over, Amin Bey comes in to see

that we have all we require, and coffee is passed to us.

A Traveller

It is nearly nine o'clock when we hear the welcome news that our caravan has arrived, and our tents await us half a mile away. We say good-night to our kind hosts, thanking them for their opportune hospitality.

On reaching our destination we appreciate how much we have asked of our men

in requiring them to pitch a camp in the night, having to grope for everything in the dark and rain, after a six hours' march. Luckily our bedding is dry, but our Arabs spend a miserable night, sleeping on the damp ground, with their heads all muffled to protect them from the rain. The first thing a native does when it becomes chilly, is to wrap up his head and ears. He then considers himself immune from catching cold.

We discover later on that our watchman Reshid has a bad chill, but he never complains or shirks his duty. Repeated doses of quinine eventually cure him without his having to resort to the *hakim*, a native doctor, whose remedy would probably consist of an obscure verse from the Koran printed on a piece of paper and soaked in water, after which the verse is taken out of the water, which the patient then drinks. If he is not speedily cured, it is the will of Allah that he remain ill. It is *Kismet*, and who can alter the appointed thing? "*Alhamdulillahi.*"

XI

A GARDEN OF ALLAH

Sunday, March 5th.

THE morning reveals to us that we are camped in a "Garden of Allah," an opening in a forest of palm trees.

In the soft sand beneath, grow all manner of lovely flowers. Saxifrages with yellow-green, gray-green, and blue-green leaves; mesambrianthemums with starry, orange, or purple-red blossoms; pomegranates with shiny leaves and pink flowers;

while more marvellous than all are the scarlet hibiscus that spread in reckless profusion, dazzling to the eyes.

Beautiful birds perch in the trees. *Hoopoes*, golden orioles, and other brilliantly plumaged denisons of this region, flutter about, seeming to know no fear. A stream steals by in the sunshine. A road leading we know not where, surges with a continual flow of animated life. Horsemen in gracefully draped *burnooses*, with guns slung across their shoulders, mounted on their little Arab steeds with high-peaked saddles and gay trappings, dash by. Ladies of the harem, veiled and muffled in voluminous black silk, pass on ambling donkeys. Long strings of camels, more or less heavily burdened, file past. The women of the people wrapped in their dark *hulaliyehs* swell the population of the road, while the small "gamin," clad in orange or blue, flits about, adding color to the scene.

Directly opposite our tents is a large

"Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"
117

On the road

Photo., R. Paul

sycamore tree, giving shade to a well and a *marabout's* tomb. Bamboos, prickly pears, apricots, and *mish-mish* grow rampant beside it, and here are always to be found a few grave, bearded Arabs smoking their *narghilehs*. Through long vistas we can see in the far distance the gold of the desert crossed with long stripes of vivid blue, caused by the shadows of white clouds, floating above in the azure sky. This is indeed a day of content, and we are absorbed in the beauty surrounding us. The sun pours from the blue vault of heaven; we lie basking in the warmth, and these soft bright rays in some inscrutable way renew and fortify not only the body but the spirit. The birds lilt in a tree-top ecstasy; the bees on lazy wing seek the hearts of the gorgeous flowers; the air is full of perfume and sound. From the depths of the desert, where the winds blow unheeded and unheard, comes a soft breeze bearing we know not what message of peace and life

and fate. The magical spirit of the East holds us in its enthralling spell.

We are hoping to see our hosts of the night before, and at sunset the three beys arrive. It is so warm that we sit outside the dining tent, holding an animated conversation to the best of our ability. Though they speak no tongue except Arabic, and can only read that language, they are extraordinarily well informed. In discussing sport they are much interested to hear of grouse driving and pheasant shooting, and listen with thrilled excitement to accounts of deer stalking in Scotch forests. One of them shows us his rifle, with which he shoots the wolves in the Fayoum, or occasionally a gazelle in the desert, and we realize what an excellent shot he must be, if ever wolf or gazelle fall to the queer, old-fashioned rifle. We speak of salmon fishing in Norway, of ski-ing, of the cold north, and the snow they have never seen. They listen intently, gravely ejaculating "*mash-*

allah," as we picture an unknown world. Their charm, ease, and simplicity of manner make the visit interesting and agreeable. We are sorry when the time comes to say good-bye.

Hearing that Senouris is famous for its dancing girls, this night we send for one. The dining tent is cleared of everything except our chairs. After dinner we sit waiting in the still, African night. A faint, subtle fragrance fills the air. Above our heads the lanterns gleam fitfully. Through the upraised flap of the tent are the luminous stars, and the palm trees gently bending their drooping branches like beckoning arms. We can well understand that in far-off days the palm tree was worshipped as the living body of Hathor, the Egyptian Venus.

Presently voices break the stillness, and into the tent file six Arabs in white draperies, who gravely seat themselves cross-legged on the ground on either side of the

entrance. Two have flutes, two *tom-toms*, and two mark the rhythm by clapping hands. The cadenced music begins languidly, repeating the same refrain again and again. Gradually it gains force and volume, then come notes like the shrilling of bagpipes, then sudden bursts of sound like Russian music, returning always to the original theme—plaintive, penetrating, monotonous.

Suddenly out of the night against the purple dusk appears a slender, upright figure, all gold and scarlet—the dancer of Senouris, red roses in her dark hair, shimmering red silk draperies, gold bangles on her arms and ankles. Filigree necklaces fall from her small, round throat to her waist; huge earrings hang in her ears, a nose-ring in one delicate nostril. Her great, dark eyes have the shy appealing expression of the gazelle, but in their depths lies the inscrutable gaze of Egypt—eyes which through endless incarnations

have looked on many things. Her chin under the curving red lips is faintly tattooed in blue. It is not disfiguring and though primitive and savage, is wholly soft and alluring.

A gun is handed to her. With arms held in the stiff, conventional manner often seen on the ancient bas-reliefs, she lifts it under her chin and begins to dance. The upper part of the body is held immovable, except the arms. The gun points to the right, points to the left, while the slender, bare feet keep time to the music. She never seems to lift them from the ground as she circles slowly round the tent, still pointing the gun, occasionally dropping to the ground, on one knee, limp, with the apparently boneless suppleness of the East.

One of the men seizes a gun and joins in the dance. They advance, retreat, circle round each other, cricle round the tent. Our camel men who cluster about the door, keeping time to the weird,

throbbing music by clapping their hands are visibly delighted.

Another man jumps up and dances wildly, holding his arms outstretched on a level with his eyes, his bare feet shuffling noiselessly on the floor. The excitement is intense.

The music changes into a minor key and the girl dances more slowly; her sinuous body undulates in long curves, her eyes are half shut, her arms move in rhythm to the wild, seductive music. The hoarse cries of approval cease; the Arabs are silent but their eyes are gleaming.

Again the music changes. We seem to hear the soft sound of the desert wind and see vast sunlit spaces. The dancer's mouth is set, her body is rigid; only the wonderful arms entwined with gold, the graceful hands with henna-stained nails are moving—she is like a sphinx dancing itself back to life, an incarnation of the soul of the desert.

Abruptly the music ceases; we return from dreamland; the dance is over.

The dancer is tired and asks for a cigarette. She sits cross-legged on the floor puffing rings of smoke from her red lips, talking with animation in a low voice with notes in the throat like those of a thrush. With her intense vitality and indescribable look of race, she is a bewitching figure. She softly sings a plaintive song of her people:

"I am wounded, full of wounds, upbring me
my physican,
I have been wounded by a lance of eyes. Oh!
Lord grant me my beloved."

If we miss something in the dancing, it may be that the dancer herself lacks the divine spark which alone can reach out and deeply move one.

There is much that suggests Cossack dancing—the fire and the energy. But in the Bedouin dancing there is a marked

reserve, which might suggest lassitude, did one not feel that the restraint is intentional, and that beneath it lies an unconquerable force, a force that does not expend itself. Perhaps in this lies the strength of the Orient—its permanency.

XII

ROSE GARDENS OF FEDDAMIN

Monday, March 6th.

THERE is now a question as to the direction of our further wanderings. The feeling that time does not exist in this land of *maleesh* and *Kismet* soon happily takes possession of us. Our vagabond spirit from the first refused to make plans. We stopped in one place or drifted to another as the caprice of the moment suggested.

Some one had spoken of the roses at Feddamin. The rose gardens of Feddamin! What an alluring sound! The more often we repeat it, the more definite becomes the picture in our minds of these enchanting gardens. Loath though we are to leave our present resting-place, the compelling charm of the *sound* of the rose gardens of Feddamin calls us. We feel that old Omar's spirit must be lurking there, for as he said:

"And look, a thousand blossoms with the day
Woke; and a thousand scattered into clay."

Surely would the Persian poet have loved this land of the rose, the vine, and the green shade he sang of—a haven of beauty encircled by the golden desert.

We start early and pass the Arabs sitting cross-legged beneath the sycamore trees, gravely talking and smoking; women are filling stone water jars at the spring, and

"Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"
129

Senouris

Photo., R. Paul

poising them on their heads, with stately grace. The children in their bright garments are darting about, the road is alive with passers up and down. Our long caravan joins the throng, marching single file.

To-day the old cook Muhommed is walking. He and Fadlallah have had a dispute as to which is responsible for the bad butter, of which we had complained. Muhommed said he would gladly buy good butter if Fadlallah would give him the money. Fadlallah replied that he had given this miserable old Shylock the money and still the butter was bad. Whereupon Muhommed went "on strike" and refused to cook Fadlallah's breakfast, who as a punishment, decreed that Muhommed should walk, and took away his donkey. All this we learned afterwards; also, that as soon as we were out of sight old Muhommed mounted the camel which carried the kitchen tent and its appurtenances. So

not much harm was done. And some of us continued *not* to eat the butter.

We pass under an archway, stop a moment in the market-place, where a busy crowd are chaffering, file through the narrow streets, golden in the blazing sunshine, with shadows as brilliant and blue as the Mediterranean.

Out of the town we are once again on the high road. Our retinue is swelled by the presence of Abdullah the Magnificent.

He rides a swift dromedary, gay with tassels. His embroidered saddle-cloth of green and scarlet and high-peaked saddle are works of art. The long Arab gun slung across his back is beautifully inlaid; the turban folded round his scarlet *tarbouche* snowy white. He is delegated by the beys to remain with us while we are in the Fayoum, to add protection with his gun, and dignity and honor with his presence. He leads the way, clearing a

path for us, shouting in imperious tones, "*Oah Yameenek, Oah Shumalek,*" waving, with a commanding hand, donkeys, camels, and their owners into the ditch on the side of the road.

A moving obstruction

The sugar-cane is being cut and many donkeys amble along with loads of cane, cut in six-foot lengths, across their backs. Their riders who are busily chewing the sweet sugar-cane leave their donkeys to choose their own path, and it is no easy matter to pass them. When we see camels advancing with loads rising far above their supercilious heads,

and as broad as the road, we know that we are the ones who must take to the ditch.

Many of these camels are gaily caparisoned with embroidered trappings, from which hang brightly-colored tufts and tassels. The most dissatisfied of a notably discontented race are gurgling and gobbling like turkeys. Others look with disdainful indifference, as slowly moving their high heads from side to side, and stepping with soft precision, they lurch along with languid grace. One of them is so surprised at the sight of our sand-cart (the first one to cross the Fayoum) that it stops, looks at us, at the cart, at the pony, and at Saïd with an inquiring and contemplative air. When urged on by its rider, it advances a few steps, then stops, turns, and again carefully scrutinizes each detail.

There are inquisitive camels, intelligent camels, contemptuous camels, indifferent camels, yet all have in common an air of

135 On the march "Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"

sadness and conscious superiority to the petty world of men, as if haunted in their servitude by the remembrance of some high estate from which they have fallen. It is said that no European can really manage a camel.

"The East is the East, the West the West,
and never the twain shall meet."

Slowly we travel through this garden of Eden, the sponge-like hoofs of the camels and the bare feet of the Arabs passing silently over the ground. As the road is rough and uneven, we discard the sand-cart for the donkeys, which amble along at a slow trot that is very soothing. The smallest of our donkey boys, little Hussan, is joyfully singing at the top of his voice; his song is an ode to some dusky beauty clad in Indian silk. His little bronze figure is the embodiment of grace, and he sings with the untrammelled joyousness of the soaring lark. He never seems to tire

during the long, hot marches; though his years are but twelve his young strength makes light of the daily task, for he is a true son of the desert; he comes of a race that has ever lived in the freedom of its expanse.

We are proceeding southwest, the country becoming more wooded. We skirt deep ravines with swiftly running streams, olive groves, thickets of palm and cactus, while now and again in the distance we get a glimpse of the great lake.

In this brilliant Eastern sunshine we envy the women their kohl-encircled eyes, for when pencilled round the rim it softens the glare and saves the eye from many diseases that lurk in the dust and heat.

And always the sun is raining down a stream of molten gold, painting the mud houses with dazzling color, making the white domes shimmer like pearls. Waves of heat quiver along the ground.

" Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert "

Photo., J. P. Sebah

139

In the Fayoum

The fertility of this country is beyond the dream of the most avaricious farmer, and several harvests are reaped during the year. The clover, which now reaches to our knees, is cut three times, and the corn ripens in a few weeks. These arable lands, fertilized by the rich deposit of the Nile, do not require the rest so essential to our soil. The plough is generally drawn by a camel, as the buffaloes are reserved for working the wells. The land is so saturated with the constant irrigation that the primitive wooden plough used by the *fellaheen* tills it with the greatest ease. In this wonderful country nature responds lavishly to the slightest effort. "Where we set up steam-machines, the *fellah* scratches the ground with a match."

A pastoral people have lived here from time immemorial, and we meet many flocks of sheep and goats. The former are small and brown, with horned heads, and their wool is long and silky. The dogs that

guard the flocks are very fierce, and our escort had frequently to throw stones to keep them from attacking us. We had one horrible experience, for one of them seized poor little Hussan's cotton robe and would have mauled the child if Fadlallah had not hit it heavily with the butt end of his gun. The brute crawled away moaning. Of course the angry owner descended upon us, and a stormy scene ensued, but we soon appeased him with *backsheesh.*

At noon we halt in the shade of an olive wood to lunch.

Our luncheon tent remains on the dromedary's back, and the green coolness is very welcome after the dust and glare of the road.

Little rivulets run like a network through the land, and a giant Lebek tree throws a great, purple shadow on the ground and dancing water. From our resting-place, through the twisted trunks of the trees, we still see the road with its wayfarers,

143 A village street "Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"

donkeys carrying huge panniers of vegetables or fruit, camels with great bales of merchandise. Now comes a magnificent white donkey, its ears and tail dyed with henna, a fancy pattern clipped on its hind-quarters, and perched on his scarlet saddle is a dignified gentleman, whose large girth proclaims him the possessor of many shekels.

We lunch while the busy world on the road streams by, and drowse through the golden afternoon till the lengthening shadows tell us that we must be moving onward.

Continuing our way, the tropical vegetation increases. Forests of giant prickly pears, orange trees bearing their wealth of white flowers and yellow fruit, mimosa and oleanders weighted with their load of pink blossoms, spread away on each side of the road, and the fairylike, pale flower of the *mish-mish* is blooming everywhere. We are journeying through an enchanted world reaching Feddamin all

too quickly, to find our camp pitched on the market-place, a spot evidently sacred to the accumulated rubbish of centuries. Even the surrounding gardens do not make up for the dirt at our feet.

The inhabitants look on us with the superb indifference of the East. But we can scarcely believe our eyes at sight of their chickens. We see two flapping feathery wings, the rest of the fowl plucked bare as if ready for the pot. As these fowls are walking cheerfully about, we come to the conclusion that they are suffering from some terrible but painless disease. It is many a day before we dare eat chicken again.

We ramble through the narrow uneven streets with their indolent, shiftless, ever-changing crowd. Women in graceful draperies pass by on naked feet, bundles poised on their graceful heads, their dark eyes gleaming above the concealing veil which is held in place by a piece of bamboo between the eyes.

Photo., P. Dittrich

Snake charmer

Children in garments of many colors flit about like gay butterflies, making

the air resound with laughter and merry voices.

A passing snake charmer scrutinizes us.

Tucked away in a quiet corner is a little bookshop. The owner, who wears large spectacles, is evidently a *Hadji*. He has made the pilgrimage to Mecca and is entitled to wear the sacred green turban. He is also a man of learning, the scribe who manages the correspondence of the illiterate population. Beside him stands a client dictating a letter, which the spectacled one is immortalizing on paper.

Further along the street is a *café*, where the customers sit on little straw mats, sipping coffee, smoking, drowsing, as if the hours were created alone for sleep and enjoyment. At night the story-teller will come to relate to them a tale of some popular hero, and his audience will sit huddled round, listening with rapt attention as he tells of battles and mighty deeds of the past. These Arabs love to hear a good

story, and the art of recitation is held in very high esteem.

Where are the shades of Omar? Luckily for him, not here.

A nearby garden had a rather green and pleasing effect. We struggle through the cactus hedge and beyond it we are in a longed-for garden of Feddamin, but are disappointed to find no place to sit or rest, as the ground is alternately sandy, or muddy from the irrigation, which is necessary as little rain falls, and the vegetation is dependent on the sluicing of the canals, which intersect the land. Such a garden! Cactuses, prickly pears, and some shrubs and stunted trees. The mud is half dried in some of the irrigating canals, on the edges of which we stumble along, torn by the prickly pears. Not a rose, not a flower.

We are cheered by hearing gay voices, and across a hedge we see a man, half-way up a palm tree, cutting the branches and

tossing them to a woman who stands below. They are working steadily but their gay, light-hearted chatter never ceases until we make our appearance.

Fadlallah, who has been piloting us, speaks to them and they cheerfully answer, while looking at us with great but restrained interest.

Date palms are largely cultivated here, forests of them stretching away as far as the eye can reach, a sight to gladden the Arab heart. Of all the gifts of nature to Egypt, the palm tree might easily rank first. Its trunk supplies the people with beams in a country where wood is practically non-existent. Its fruit is a useful article of food, baskets are made from its leaves, while its fibre is used for ropes, cordage, nets, and mats.

The female palm tree is named *nakla* by the Arabs, who regard her with much affection. A male palm will fertilize several *naklas*, and the life of these trees

extends over many centuries. When the trees look withered, and cease to yield a crop of dates, the Arabs bleed them, on the same principle as the *hakeen* bleeds his patients, but usually with a better result. If the tree still does not yield to treatment, they take very drastic measures, cutting off its head, which has the surprising result of making it produce new branches, which in their turn bear fruit. A palm will submit to being decapitated twice, or even three times, but there is a limit to its patience and it seldom survives a third mutilation.

We are not tempted to pursue our investigations further, and start back, crouching under the low branches of the trees, trying to avoid the mud and the thorns. We find on our return that the *omdeh* has invited us to remove our camp to one of his gardens. We ask, still hopeful, "Are there roses?" "No. Possibly some rose bushes, but no roses; it is too early."

We are too broken-spirited to move. Just then Reshid appears with a handful of small yellow fruit. It proves to be a delicious miniature lemon with a faint flavor of lime. So, like many another, "we picked a lemon where we thought only roses grew."

From the depths of the garden comes the haunting familiar sound of an Arab flute. We discover the player, a boy of perhaps sixteen years, with an intelligent face and dark, sombre eyes which gaze at us with a strange unmeaning stare. He is very poor, judging from his one faded blue cotton garment, and we offer him *backsheesh*, which, to our amazement he ignores. We discover that he is blind. The light of the golden day, the splendor of the starry nights are alike hidden from him. He lives in a land of shadows; plaintive, desolate music constitutes his world.

The sunset is gorgeous. Masses of pink, fleecy clouds trail along the blue ether, and

the slender, new moon gleams occasionally through the rose mist. As we watch, the western sky changes to a flaming red which slowly turns to bright pink, to mauve, to pale green. For nearly an hour this glory of color lasts as the sun sinks below the horizon. Then in a faint blue sky, the evening star shines with a radiance that lights our earth. It is said that the star-light of Egypt is brighter than the moonlight of the North.

Our night is much disturbed by the howling of the wolves that infest these gardens. There are quantities of them, and they are difficult to exterminate because of the almost tropical jungle.

What was even more disturbing than the wolves was the constant shooting going on all night by our watchman and half the villagers who seemed to be firing at some band of marauders. To add to the din, the inhabitants of all the hen-roosts were clamoring and cackling in an

extremity of agitation, while the dogs never ceased barking through the tumult of the night. As dawn approached, a hush fell on the world . . . then the soft cadence of the *muezzin's* call to the faithful rang through the silence. The hour of prayer had arrived, a pæan of praise rose and heralded the unborn day.

XIII

MEDINA

Tuesday, March 7th.

WE have gladly shaken the dust of the market-place of Feddamin from our feet, but we know that when we have returned to the cold realities and the futile rush of modern life, the dust will be forgotten.

The gardens with their glory of flower and fruit, the scent of the orange blossoms in the warm air, the flaming sunset, will beckon us to return in dreams to this

enchanting world that holds a profound joy, a perfect content in its radiant atmosphere.

We are now on the road to Medina. As we leave the gardens behind, the path becomes steeper. We enter a narrow road which winds for miles through a magnificent avenue of palm trees. Their straight trunks rise on either side like a colonnade. High above us their plumed branches meet in a canopy, through which here and there, the brilliant sun pours, making purple shadows on their trunks, and on the red earth. On either side framed by the dark trees, stretch bright sunlit fields. Great shrubs of flowering *mish-mish*, a mass of soft pink blossom, stand in strong relief against clumps of vivid green bamboo.

At last we leave the winding avenue of palms. We cross bridges over chasms with water running beneath, the tall trees reflected in the stream.

The sides of these ravines are the happy

157 A roadway "Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"

homes of the flowers. Great clusters of yellow saxifrage deck the steep sides, while scarlet and violet mesambrianthemums trail their gaudy, fantastic blossoms over the gray rock. Rare ferns peep out from every nook and cranny, and thorny mimosas create a fairy world of emerald-tinted shadow.

On the edge of the stream the women kneel to wash their household linen, while their brown babies run naked on the bank. Close to them a buffalo is swimming in a pool, its black muzzle alone, showing above the surface of the water, while its owner on the bank is uselessly using alternate threats and entreaties to make it come to land.

Along the dusty road two weary figures are trudging, a man and a woman. The man limps painfully as he passes; his eyes stare vacantly at us with no sense of recognition. Behind him the woman staggers slowly under the weight of the sick

child she carries in her arms. Her face is unveiled, her black garments trail unheeded in the dust. We can hear the moans of the suffering child. For many days these poor parents have trudged the long road on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Sid Ali, the special protector of children. History relates how the famous merchant loved the little ones, and these Arabs will reverently lay their precious burdens at the feet of the saint, trusting that he will intercede with Allah on behalf of their baby.

For the first time we see Egyptian geese in the villages and on the edges of the pools.

Basket making seems an important industry. In front of many houses, sit women with a pile of split bamboo leaves beside them, busily plaiting, while many are weaving at small handlooms. We see men in bright blue cotton garments thatching roofs, and chanting "Allàh, Allàh,

Allàh," as they work. The children, the dogs, and the dust are present as always. Pigeon houses raise their square heads

Pigeon houses

above the palms and bamboos. They are to be seen throughout Egypt and are very charming when, as to-day, their towers rise from among green shrubs and trees. Sometimes they look almost like huge fortresses, dominating the entire village, so large and massive are they. The pigeons

are not only sold in large quantities for food, but are useful for the guano they produce. Carrier pigeons have been in use in Egypt for ages and it may be by their means that news is circulated with such inexplicable quickness in outlying districts.

Abdullah the Magnificent once more leads the way, leaving a trail of dust behind him. As we in the sand-cart do not appreciate this, we urge our horse to a gallop. The faster we go, the faster goes the dromedary with the conscientious Abdullah, and the thicker grows the dust. It is a neck to neck race for some time, but on gaining a short lead we are at last able to convey to him the idea that we prefer to lead, so the dromedary's nose remains behind our shoulders. But whenever we turn we are greeted with a deep salaam from Abdullah, indicating respect and a puzzled acceptance of our extraordinary demands.

Medina

On entering the town of Medina we again allow the Magnificent one to resume command of the road.

This is the chief town of the Fayoum. It is curiously picturesque. Through the central street a river runs in a deep causeway, with a road on either side flanked by colored houses, pink, yellow, blue.

Through half open doorways we have glimpses of courtyards with green trees and flowering shrubs. Some of the houses are attempted imitations of European styles with high stoops and iron railings at appalling angles, but most of them are Oriental with overhanging balconies enclosed by *Morashabieh* work, through the fine carving of which it is possible to see out, but not to see in. We wonder if beautiful Eastern women are looking down upon us as we pass, and envying us our freedom.

One house seems to be in a curious kind of mourning, yards and yards of black

cloth hang from long poles and reach above the doorway, in front of which stands a negro in a black *galabieh*, his hands which are a deeper ebony than his face rest upon a tall stick. We do not at first realize that it is a dye house.

A motley crowd surges by us, camels with loads and without them, donkeys of every description; some with fine trappings and proud riders; others, less favored, with burdens of all kinds. A large gray one is drawing a native omnibus (a platform supported on four wheels) on it three women of the people, closely veiled, are seated cross-legged, while two small children sit beside them as solemnly as little Buddhas.

All kinds and colors of men meet here. Black Nubians, the women wearing heavy nose rings. *Beshariens* with their hair standing out in a wild mop, or else in dozens of small tight braids well greased with castor oil. *Fellaheen*, who come to

"Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"

165

Medina

Photo., R. Paul

barter: Greeks, Jews, soldiers, peddlers, snake charmers, *pashas*, ladies of the Harem whose transparent white gauze *yashmaks* emphasize their beauty (if they have any) rather than conceal their faces; others, whose veil held in place by a perpendicular bamboo support upon the forehead, covers face and figure completely. Lemonade and sherbert sellers with gay turbans and *galabiehs* and large richly colored aprons, their great brass jars brightly burnished, click their brass drinking cups like castanets, to call the attention of the public. The *arabias*,[1] which we have not seen since we left Cairo, push through the crowd, driven with the usual heedlessness. The drivers' legs raised high over a bundle of green *bursum* with which they feed their horses whenever they stop.

A young girl with bare feet and an earthen jar poised on her head, smiles at us from a doorway. Three men ask

[1] Small Victorias for hire.

for *backsheesh;* not in the insistent manner of tourist-trodden spots, but in a friendly, joking spirit.

Medina boasts two Greek inns and a fine barracks with clean, well-appointed-looking soldiers standing about. How different from the days of the old régime. Then the army more ready to mutiny than to obey, to run away than to fight unless stiffened by more martial troops, had never been a strong arm for the defence of the

country. Small wonder when over the door of the barracks might have been written, "Who enters here leaves hope behind." The soldier knew when he was drafted that he would never see his home again, unless, broken in health, he returned to be a burden to those about him. Now with regular pay, clean quarters, discipline, there is a great change. After the Arabi rebellion the old Egyptian army was dissolved by the Khedive in 1885. When the English undertook to create an efficient Egyptian army the result was regarded as more than problematical. These upstanding troops after a conscription of five years return to their people, and from a Western point of view usually relapse into the original Egyptian, no matter how promising may have seemed their aptitude and intelligence. Through all the ages is the same story repeated. Egypt makes the true Egyptian her own. Those who push into the no man's land—land of the

adopted *tarbouche* and the attempted "Effendi" become "neither hot nor cold" like the Laodicean, and disappear from the earth's surface. Not on the early tombs do we see that type nor shall the world behold it in the distant future. But for the purposes of the army the gain has been great, a d who shall say how much patient work and self sacrifice has gone to the making of this achievement?

"They have made a black man white
They have made a mummy fight
But the everlasting miracle 's the same."

While Muhommed the cook does his marketing, we visit the bazaars, which are somewhat like those in Cairo, but on a smaller scale. There are the same narrow, uneven streets, sometimes open to the sky, occasionally roofed in with wooden rafters and pieces of matting through which the sun filters, giving a dim cool light.

The Arabs sit in their little shops which

are like large packing cases open in front, working, smoking, leisurely chatting; their goods spread out to tempt the passerby. We explore the gold and silver bazaar with its anklets, necklaces, rings for fingers, ears, and nose, its trinkets of quaint designs of Eastern workmanship. In his room ten feet square squats the merchant, magnificent in his long, amber satin vest, outer robe of delicate hue, and striped silk turban. We are not permitted to cross his threshold, but sit at the edge of the carpeted floor which is raised a few feet above the level of the street. Here, while Turkish coffee is passed round, there is much haggling, till at length a price is agreed upon and the bargain closes amid many salaams.

We wander through the leather bazaar, bright with the beautifully colored skins hanging everywhere, a long array of kaleidoscopic colors. Here also are slippers of every size and shape, and small velvet

shoes heavily embroidered in pearls to be worn by some favorite of the harem.

On our way to the carpet bazaar, a water seller with his skin of water on a small brown donkey looks so picturesque that we stop to photograph him, he is much pleased at the compliment, as he considers it, and laughs broadly. A pretty woman with a very thin white *yashmak* is equally willing to be taken. We pass the tent bazaar, and reach an old carved stone doorway leading into a dim alley. This is the scent bazaar, where the essence of every flower of the East is caught and imprisoned in slender glass bottles. Here among the perfumes he loves, sits cross-legged an Arab reading the Koran, swaying gently to the rhythm of the beautiful verses as he intones them in a low, melodious voice. Beyond him in the next recess are two men playing chess, and beside them, in solemn silence, sits a little girl whose orange gown lights up the

dimness like a flame. Shadowy figures in graceful robes glide softly along the narrow street, greeting one another with the charming salutation, "Peace be with you."

What a soothing spell lies on all things. Though the lotus has ceased to flower, this is still the land of the lotus, full of a dreamy peace, whose people are indolent, languorous, fatalistic, careless of past or future, heedless of the passing of the hours.

With reluctance we leave this mysterious world, with its atmosphere as of an *Arabian Night's* Dream, and return to the busy, crowded streets.

Turning eastward we cross a river which is a branch of the Bahar Yusuf Canal, a remnant of ancient Egyptian construction which conducts water into the Fayoum through an opening in the hills near Beni Suef.

The god of the Fayoum, some thousand years ago, was worshipped here under the form of Sebek the crocodile, and his temple

at Shodik was once the scene of weird rites.

A number of crocodiles were kept in a lake in honor of the god. They were adorned with jewels, their ears hung with rings, their paws clasped with massive bracelets. Their admirers fed them with honey and fried fish, when no doubt the poor beasts were hungering for one of the fat priests who waited on them. The temple, the crocodiles, the priests are now no more, but at Kom Ombus in Upper Egypt there still stands a temple dedicated to Sebek, with the mummies of the sacred crocodiles reposing nearby in a shrine.

Close to Medina rise great hills of sand, in whose depths probably lie hidden the treasures of the temple. In time the excavators, patiently penetrating through these giant mounds, may perchance bring to light many hidden secrets of this curious religion that could make a god of a croco-

dile; an animal that almost everywhere else in Egypt was abhored and reviled.

We are anxious to camp in the desert this night, and follow a dull road as far as El Edwa.

Pan, to cheer his path, keeps singing in a subdued voice as he walks by the pony's head:

"The baby gazelle, my children, goes behind
its mother to her pasture,
It goes to the pasture without any shoes,
with little bare feet."

We eventually strike a great, stony desert, whose bleached sands and dark, mournful-looking rocks seem chill and lifeless. It is late, even the afterglow has faded from the sky, and a sense of haunting desolation has fallen on all things.

It is here we pitch our camp, having been nine hours on the road.

We exchange the noise of yapping dogs for the barking of foxes. The shrill

laughter of hyenas is added to the growling of the wolves.

We have a double guard about the camp on account of the wolves. There are several in a ravine barking and calling to each other with curious, high, long-drawn notes. The most brave or hungry steal so close to our tents that we can see their dark forms outlined against the starlit sky.

Although the surrounding landscape lies sterile and bleak, it is still the desert with its infinite vacancy and silence, and its potent power of tranquilizing the spirit. We sleep happily, knowing we are in the desert we love.

XIV

THE FIRST SUFFRAGETTE

Wednesday, March 8th.

THE wind rises in the night, the camel men are kept busy tightening our tent poles and hammering in the wooden pegs; but two of the tents blow down. One is the kitchen tent where breakfast is being cooked, the other unfortunately is a sleeping tent from which a head with difficulty emerges to call for help. As soon as the debris is cleared away, the victim in her bed is carried into the dining tent, while odds and ends of her wardrobe are

collected from different parts of the desert where they have been strewn by the wind. Luckily almost everything was packed ready for starting, but the few breakable things left out are completely smashed.

Another excitement is still in store for us this eventful morning. A loud report startles us. It comes from the resuscitated kitchen tent. Toulba the Terrible had got hold of the watchman's gun and aimed it at the cook, a Nubian of ample girth, whom he had missed by a few inches. We, in our just anger, send for Fadlallah, to remonstrate with him for leaving a loaded gun about, suggesting that children should not be permitted to handle firearms. He argues that he had been teaching the boy to shoot and he has been shooting! We are pleased to hear yells from Toulba shortly after our conversation with his father.

This day we leave the desert for a time, skirting the irrigated land, having to dodge

canals that meet us at every turn. Above one small pool hovers a kingfisher striped black and white. For some minutes we

A Wedding Party

watch the beautiful creature poising immovable, then suddenly dropping upon its prey in the water beneath.

As we journey along the narrow banks of a canal, we see some camels coming toward us, on which are huge bundles

that appear in the distance impossible to pass. On their approach we find it to be a wedding party.

The bride is in a black *howdah* that sways on the back of the first camel. It s completely closed in and adorned with tall, upstanding palm leaves. The little lady inside is invisible, but we picture her seated in lonely splendor in her lofty prison, dreaming who knows what dreams of fluttering hopes and fears. The next camel carries a platform on which sit cross-legged three women singing Arab love songs, to which the bride in front sings the refrain. It is interesting and pathetic.

Following the camels come the guests, the older ones on donkeys, the remainder on foot. The women wear their wedding finery; under the black draperies, we get glimpses of brightly-tinted silks and gaudy, barbaric jewels. The bridegroom is not there, but awaits his bride in his own home.

"Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"
181

A Gisr

Photo., R. Paul

The price of a bride among the poorer classes varies from $50 to $250. She is usually selected by the mother or sister of the would-be bridegroom, who is allowed to see her when all arrangements are concluded.

If the young people are mutually satisfied after gazing into each other's eyes, as no conversation is permitted, the wedding takes place, the husband paying the bride's parents half her price on the engagement and the other half the day following the marriage. If the bridegroom does not consider the lady all his fancy depicted, he returns her to her parents the next day, forfeiting the money he has paid on his engagement; while if the bride finds her husband is not the fairy prince she hoped for, she returns home, the parents sending the deserted husband back his money.

We pitch our tent, for lunch, under the meagre shade of some date palms. Before we are seated, we see the dignified figure

of an old man advancing. Fadlallah hastens to meet him and we can tell by his demeanor that it is a person of importance. These Arabs are inimitable in expressing by their manner the exact amount of deference (or the reverse) to which they believe another to be entitled. This is the richest man of the district who has come to welcome us to his palm grove.

Not far distant is a *gisr*. These high raised banks intersect the entire country.

Before us is a continual passing of people and animals, which we find most entertaining. These moving pictures outlined against the sky line are ever one of Egypt's chief attractions.

Here we bid a sad farewell to the Fayoum, that joyous land of flowers, fruit, and golden harvests; and to Abdullah, servant of the three beys.

As we advance the scenery becomes very monotonous; an ocean of sand and desolate rock hills, boundless, soundless, animated

by no plant, no beast, no trace of life. At noon when the sun beats fiercely on the burning sand and the air quivers with heat, there often appears a mirage of water, forming a remarkable contrast with the staring, dry desert. Many a poor wanderer has been mocked by these phantom lakes, which the Bedouins have well-named "*Bahar Shaitun*," (Satan's water).

In the Old Testament this desert mirage is alluded to by the prophet (Isaiah xxxv:7), "And the serab shall become a real lake." The Arabs still use the word "serab" when describing a mirage.

We make our way through the desert till an opening in the hills shows us the Pyramid of Medun, first seen glowing like a pink pearl against the faint blue sky.

We are once more within sight of the Nile. Far beyond the pyramid, on the other side of the river, stretches the Arabian Desert, which has many strange defiles not large enough to be imposing, and some-

what monotonous, and of a chocolate brown color.

Far, far away, many days' journey, on and on through all the changes and wonders of the desert are the now disused quarries and mines which once yielded such wealth to Egypt; where through succeeding generations the slaves and the captives of war were forced to work under the lash unceasingly, without pity for age or sex or infirmities, until death released them.

There are still remains of the old encampments. In some cases the partly worked mines and quarries look as though they had been deserted in great haste, at some sudden summons. Strewn about the marble quarries are many blocks in the rough, or partly trimmed. Several of them are numbered, and some of them addressed to departed Cæsars. On one, shaped in the form of a capital, is the inscription, "The property of Cæsar Nerva Trajan."

Farther still, in the region of Suakin,

lay the famous land of Punt, which the ancient Egyptians believed to have been the cradle of their race and the original home of the gods. Beyond it they thought was a debatable Land of the Shades, where men might approach the manes of the departed. And beyond that again was the abode of the gods. Punt was also a land of fabulous wealth, to which expeditions had been sent from time to time in quest of dwarfs, to divert the ennui of kings; myrrh and incense, for the delectation of the gods; gold, ebony, skins, slaves, and many other luxuries.

Perhaps the most notable expedition was that of the energetic Queen Hatshopsouî-tou, the first advanced woman known in history, the forerunner of the suffragette, who reigned,—an unheard of thing—as King over Egypt 4500 years ago. She is said to have distorted the laws and the conventions of the land, to suit a female ruler.

One of the first things to which she directed her attention was the building of a temple to the God Ammon, and for her own glorification, which was also to be her burial-place. We are told that the god commanded, that "The ways to Punt shall be searched out, for I desire that you establish a Punt in my house and plant the trees of God's land beside my temple in my garden."

So the expedition sets out, and the incidents are afterward recorded in pictures on the walls of the temple, where they are to this day. We see the vessels starting, and arrived at their destination; being laden with "All goodly fragrant woods of God's land; heaps of myrrh, resin, fresh myrrh trees, with ebony and pure ivory, with green gold of Emu, with cinnamon wood, with incense, eye cosmetic, baboons, monkeys, dogs, with skins of the southern panther, with natives and their children. Never was the like of this brought

for any king who has been since the beginning."

On the successful return of the expedition to Thebes, there rose on the west bank of the Nile three great terraces, with their myrrh gardens and delicate colonnades, to an elevated court where the Holy of Holies of the painted and sculptured Temple of Dehr-el-Bahari was cut in a bay of the cliffs which rise like a mighty bastion above it. When it was finished the Queen proudly said, "I have made him a Punt in his garden just as he commanded me. It is large enough for him to walk about in."

The people of Egypt were kept busy in the service of the Queen, building her temples and monuments, raising her obelisks. (It took nine hundred and sixty men to man the galleys which transported two of them). Not only did she succeed in keeping her place as ruler but she kept in subjection her husband and half-brother

Thoutmôsis III, the greatest and most successful warrior of all the Pharaohs, who extended the Egyptian Empire to its farthest limits, and who for fifteen years, till death ended her sway, was longing to start upon his conquest of Syria. Small wonder, after waiting while Hatshopsouîtou raised temples and obelisks to herself, that, at her death, he hacked out her *cartouches*, her face and figure, on all the monuments she had built for her own glorification. But he did not annihilate her. She must indeed have had, in a high degree, that curious quality of character which, across the centuries has carried and made her a living figure to our own day.

The God Ammon is gone, Thoutmôsis, the conqueror is gone, and so is the great Queen; but something of her spirit remains in this temple which is like no other in Egypt; for there is a delicacy, a penetrating charm, almost an intimate personal note, which must always be felt as one

looks at Dehr-el-Bahari with its spacious terraces and delicate colonnades; gleaming and white in the morning, golden in the blazing mid-day sun, rose-colored and soft at sunset, as it nestles in an arm of the orange cliffs at Thebes.

Near our camp the sand of the desert is often gray, if one were to take it in one's hand to examine it; but, under the transforming light of the southern sun, it is constantly changing like a chameleon. There are great sweeps of reddish-brown on which the heat quivers like water; sometimes a path of gold stretching to a deep blue hill, which appears as if by magic on the horizon; then changing to brown, to black, to opal, as one looks.

For miles the long curves of sand on either hand rear their crests and flow away in long lines of the greatest delicacy and beauty.

As one goes southward, the intensity of color increases. Massive cliffs spring

upward to a great height; their perpendicular sides flaming with all shades of yellow and red, pale daffodil, saffron, the pink of sea shell, terra-cotta, blood-red. A blaze of color and life.

One seems in the presence of a force so masterful that it must eat up, annihilate, all weakness.

There is no note of sadness such as one sees in northern climes, where the very trees and shrubs often look as though tortured by the long, weary strife of nature trying to readjust itself unsuccessfully to alien conditions. Here all that is not vibrating with life is dead—dead, to be resurrected again in another form.

Still farther south, among the golden, tawny sands of the Soudan, is found the most dominant note of Africa—the unknown, the mysterious Africa, gleaming, glowing, stretching away to lands of eternal thirst; feline, savage, with an untamed fierceness satisfying something fundamental in one's

An Inland Shadouf

Photo., R. Paul

nature: the call of the jungle, traceable to those primordial ancestors whose simple instincts are still the master-note of our being. The sensation of having known it all before seems too vital not to be related to something in one's past, or the past of one's race.

And the gold palpitates and flows on to the edge of the cultivation, sweeping in torrents down to the waters of the Nile. In the motionless air the palm trees cast the red shadows of their slender trunks on the sun-baked ground. The sun pours from the deep blue sky. The glowing sand dunes seem to crouch; waiting with quiet, terrific force for some dramatic event—about to happen.

Accompanying the Nile as it flows by the radiant sands of Nubia and the fertile fields of Egypt, is the droning creak of the *shadouf*, by which, when the Nile is low (by a series of buckets attached to long poles), the water is lifted to the thirsty

land. In company with its drowsy note is the monotonous song of the half-naked

Photo., J. P. Sebah

Seti ab Abydos

men, on whose shining, bronze skins the water falls as they swing the buckets above their heads.

With a rhythmical motion, they stoop,

and with a lilt and a spring as of a live thing let loose, the bucket soars upward. What grace in these lithe, broad-shouldered figures, as they regularly rise and stoop to their work!

Their small heads, with noble profiles and over-large heavy-lidded eyes suggest the face of Seti on the white walls of whose wonderful temple at Abydos are the most subtly and perfectly modelled types of beauty in all Egypt. So successful was the artist that it was said he was killed by command of the king, that no rival should profit by his services. The same beauty lives on imperishably in the race. South of Assuan the type changes, the skin becomes darker, the figure less slender, the features less fine; at last,—the negro.

We camp within a few miles of Medun, relic of a long-past age, older than the pyramids of Gizeh, built by King Snefroui about four thousand years B.C.

XV

OUR LIFE IN CAMP

Thursday, March 9th.
Friday, March 10th.

WE have a disturbed night. The tents have been pitched in an exposed position on stony ground which does not hold the pegs firmly. The wind has been blowing with a fierce intensity, the tents flapping like the sails of a ship at sea, seeming but a frail protection against the fury of the elements. All night the men have been going from one tent to another, hammering in the pegs. The animals have

been restless and the donkeys have kept up an almost continual braying.

We wake to a gray day. The dust pervades our tents, obscuring the sacred writings and the crude pattern of kaleidoscopic colors, lending a curious air to our surroundings: the haze, caused by the particles of sand, giving a feeling of strange isolation, of being held by invisible hands in this unseen desert, imprisoned behind impalpable walls of fine dust.

The wind has fallen and the *hamseen* has passed, but the air is full of sand, and the sun is hidden by the clouds. The desert is like a dead thing—dull, sodden, oppressive. The cold, damp air and the mist of sand are like a fog at sea; but more dreary than the sea with its perpetual motion can ever be. Something sullen, almost sinister, in these great wastes takes hold of the spirit with a slow, crushing force. Dead hopes, dead loves, dead lives —dead and forgotten, without even the

vicarious life of remembrance. It speaks of the buried past of the world—suggests that as so many things have gone their way—so shall all life, and even the world itself be numbered with the burned-out planets, whose existence is long since over.

The tents are so unstable that Fadlallah suggests they should be moved to firmer ground, and a more sheltered position. The spot selected is about a mile away. We go in advance in the sand-cart. The tents are struck, and everything loaded on the backs of the camels. Each has its appointed load and everything is always put in the same place. In an incredibly short time we see them advancing with their swaying burdens.

We watch the camp being pitched. Reshid always directs, and assists himself with more energy than any one, though he has had charge of the caravan during its march and walked himself all of the way.

The industry and good-nature of our men are beyond praise.

First come the tents. The lower section of the pole is pounded firmly into the ground; then the upper half, to which the roof is attached, fitted into it. The cords attached to the corners are unwound, while a man holds the pole in the centre. He is quite covered by the folds of the tent, but only for a very short time, as an Arab quickly takes hold of each rope, and pulls it taut. The tent pegs are hammered into the ground with a large wooden mallet. The sides are stretched around the circular top of the tent, and tied with tapes. The flap, which forms the doorway, is thrown over the sloping roof or over a tent rope.

The rugs are undone, and the floors of the tents completely covered with them. The cots, which are packed in great waterproof sheets, each with its own mattress and bed covering, are put together and made up outside, and are then carried in.

The dressing tables and chairs which are collapsible, are unfolded and taken to their appointed places. The china, glass, and tinware are unpacked from the great wooden boxes which hold them and all is in order. In the meantime the kitchen tent has been set up and the kitchen utensils, which have a box to themselves, are taken out. Always, directly on arrival, the cook's brasier is put on the ground, until the kitchen is ready. It is shaped like a small trough about three feet long and a foot high, and stands on four legs. Charcoal is put in, on which a little methylated spirit is usually poured to start the fire quickly. The old cook sits cross-legged beside it, fanning hard to assist the blaze, and the kettle is put on. As soon as all is ready the camel men, who have been helping, attend to their animals. The saddles and bridles are taken off the donkeys, which have been hobbled. The camels, which are forced to kneel as soon as

they arrive to have their packs unloaded, do not move but rest quietly until they are given their food, which they loudly chew for the rest of the night. Their wooden saddles are rarely removed, but when they are, the camels immediately begin to roll to relieve their tired backs.

The waiters go to the assistance of the cooks, helping to peel the vegetables, kill and pluck the fowls and pigeons, open tins and jars.

Naturally at the end of a long march the first thing, after a roof over one's head, is to have something to eat. Our meals consist principally of eggs in some form, lamb or kid, chickens which are very poor, or pigeons which are very good, rice cooked in many ways, macaroni, potatoes, tinned vegetables and fruit.

After dinner we walk about our little village and see the animals eating and the camel men gathered about their fire, drinking coffee.

Toulba is playing with a stick and a bit of string and crooning to himself. He is an uncomplaining little fellow, always quiet and apparently happy.

In the kitchen tent some of the men are gathered telling stories. Reshid and Pan are sitting cross-legged on the ground near the dining tent. Pan with his reed pipe is accompanied by Reshid on a flute. We seat ourselves nearby and listen to the wandering airs. The luminous stars come out one by one and flame in the deep sky. The cadenced throbbing of the music, now loud, now low, is plaintive and wistful. The dissonances and partial tones and the double rhythm of the African music, which our untutored ears cannot even hear at first, have little meaning until one becomes accustomed to them; but, after a time they have an appeal which is strangely enthralling and remains ever after in one's life, a power to move and fascinate. There is great similarity to the Cossack music, the

Greek music of the people, the Scotch Highland music, and that of the North American Indian.

As we sit, surrounded by our small world, with whom we share so many interests, hopes, and fears, arising from the incidents of our common life, we realize that we do not penetrate beneath the surface. Behind each smiling face lies the mind and soul of the East, which we of the West shall never fathom. We know that the smile would give place to the dagger should the occasion and opportunity arise.

As we look at the brilliant stars above our heads we see that they are not as our own. Their luminous beauty far surpasses those of the North, but they are, to our eyes, out of scale. With the change of latitude their relative positions seem no longer the same. Even the familiar Dipper would never hold water at this angle. Farther south where the Southern Cross glows in the sky it is almost standing on its head!

We are startled in the night by the loud patter of rain on our tents; rain that contains the relentless force of this relentless land, threatening to soak through our frail shelters. But we are learning the lesson of the East. Resigned to *Kismet*, we again turn to sleep.

The next morning is glorious with life. Yesterday's unseen desert of veiled terrors appears a gracious world of warm sunshine. The shrill voices of the wind have given place to a golden stillness. On a day like this how fully one recognizes the truth of the saying, that "he who has drunk Nile water must ever return." Here one fits into the environment like a hand in a glove. In the busy haunts of men one can never again be quite content. We shall see others swimming in their natural element and wonder a little. Their busy activities will seem the dream, and the golden light, the waving palm branchesand the smell of the soil (acrid and over sweet) the reality.

Sometimes on our long marches, the sun blazing over our heads, the sands burning beneath us—so hot that one's soul melts within one, so thirsty that one's throat is like parched clay, and so tired that every fibre aches as we plod on—we hate Africa with a murderous hatred, as an enemy unconquerable, and yet striving to conquer one's very soul. Then a little breeze springs up, or a cloud throws a purple shadow across our way, or, from a sand crest a long sweep of limitless, golden desert rises to meet the blue sky on the horizon, and suddenly one loves it, and knows that the strength which made the hatred is part of a fascination not to be escaped.

Far away in the north where the little hills preach peace, we shall long for the sword, for the fierceness, for the heights and the depths, for the silence and the breadth and the ruthlessness. The desert does *not* bring peace, it brings life. He

"Who has heard the East a calling will never heed aught else."

We sit in front of our tents pretending to read, but in reality we cannot take our eyes from the constant transformation of the great pyramid. Now it rises from the golden sands, as gold as they; each moment it seems to have changed shape and character entirely. It is now dark brown and looks almost squat, uninteresting, and as though it were made of sandstone; but a mauve tinge creeps upward and soon it is all lilac and pink—a harbinger of spring. Then one side turns suddenly black and the lilac a brilliant purple—which all passes as it came, and in the distance we see an alabaster pagoda which seems to float in the air, infused with ethereal loveliness and purity. Why move on? Why go anywhere? One need only sit quietly to behold an everchanging scene of beauty and interest. Did Snefroui in the days of old linger as do we and view from the plain

these marvellous changes? For then, as now, and through the thousands of years between, has the Medun pyramid offered

Medûn

to the eyes of men these scenes of wonder and delight. As the day advances, between us and the pyramid a great lake seems to stretch, in which in turn stand grim, pointed rocks, battlemented castles, and slender palm trees. Islands, with dense

forests reflected in the water, change shape continually; and palaces lift their white towers in the vivid sunlight. We can even see the ripple of the water on this phantom lake.

After luncheon we again return to our supposed reading, but to our real enthrallment in the marvellous scene before us. In the late afternoon we see far off some moving specks, which gradually grow larger until we recognize the party sent early in the day for supplies. The camels are heavily laden, but not so heavily that the camel men are with two exceptions riding. These are little Hassan who is limping and Jemha the black camel man. He is a Berber and a slave, and the most reliable of the camel men. He never sleeps at his post or causes trouble. When we first saw him we thought he was wearing dark gray gloves, his hands are such a curious color. He has a gentle, sad face, and we wish

that we could speak to him and learn his story.

The slave trade has greatly diminished, but it is not yet entirely at an end. But slaves are well treated in Egypt. For one reason they are valuable, and also the Egyptians are naturally a kindly people. That is, the real Egyptians. The Arabs are considered by many to have inherited the qualities of their ancestor Ishmail whose "hand was against every man." The ruling classes were notably cruel in the days of the Turkish rule. But latterly when a *fellah* was threatened with the whip if he did not accede to some extortionate demand, he replied, "The English are here and you cannot beat me."

We remonstrate about little Hassan though we do not think that it is of much avail.

In the distance we see the green oasis and the glimmering Nile, and beyond, forming a great amphitheatre, stand the Mo

Rattam hills, jagged cliffs against the blue-green sky. Range upon range of mauve, rose, yellow peaks sweep the horizon, the valleys between them filled with mysterious, deep blue shadows, changing in color from moment to moment so completely that new mountains and valleys seem to replace those just vanished.

A pause, a hush, seems to hold the earth in suspense—then the world is suddenly illuminated by "a light that never was on sea or land," a miracle renewed each day in this land of wonders at the setting of the sun. The translucent air quivers like water and glows with an increasing radiance until all things seem to have become luminous of themselves. It is no longer the world of common things. Surely lovely princesses inhabit those marvellous hills where the most joyful of the pagan deities may still wander, and the fairies must be watching from behind every corner! Gradually the glory fades, grayness creeps over

the far hills and across the broad valley like an advancing tide. Only the great Medun pagoda stands, deep gold against the encroaching shadows burning and flaming as with an inward fire—consuming itself in the worship of dead gods.

XVI

A RUNAWAY LUNCH

Saturday, March 11.

IT is with a pang we feel that our trip is nearly over, and that our faces must be turned homeward.

For the first time in our vagabond life, we are to make for a definite place with the idea of reaching it at a more or less definite time. We feel, at first, as though we had been put in irons and the joy and variety of life had dropped to the ground with the uncertainty. It is no longer "*maleesh*," but "We really must be starting."

A Runaway Lunch

While our caravan heads straight for the north, we make a detour to visit the Pyramid of Medun.

Mirage, the phantom lake, still stretches before us. As we ride forward we feel that we must step into the water which seemingly retreats not more than a yard in advance. Toulba actually retreats. He has achieved one of the ambitions of his young life. He has managed to make off, astride the best donkey, which has a side saddle. His small legs are beating against the donkey's sides like a flail, while one arm brandishes a whip. His black cloak is floating behind him in the breeze, and his ears are, naturally, deaf to the shouts which bid him stop. However, this proud burst of freedom is of short duration, for he is soon overtaken, and a very sulky little Toulba is then seen riding, as a punishment, on the poorest donkey in the caravan.

As we approach the pyramid, its at-

traction grows, and we recognize that we are on virtually untrodden ground. The phantom of the dead past holds us in its grip. Where are the countless thousands who rejoiced and sorrowed in these dim ages, the great intellects that conceived and created these temples, the civilization that once made the arid desert to flower? All is now desolate, barren, silent.

The hyena and the fox haunt these solitudes, and the owl screeches at night in the forsaken tombs.

"Here sultan after sultan with his pomp
Abode his destined hour, and went his way."

Under the trackless sand at our feet perhaps lies the remains "of a city once great and gay, so they say,"—all that Time and the Desert have not devoured is this sepulchre of a king whose body was stolen from its resting-place in ancient times.

This tomb was built by Snefroui, the first Pharaoh to emerge from the

shadows of semi-historical days. A thousand years after his death, a phrase in com-

Chephren

mon use was, "There has not been the like since the days of Snefroui." He opened the commerce of Egypt with Phœnicia, founded her influence in Sinai, conquered rebellious tribes, developed mines, made

roads, and established his country on a firm basis of prosperity.

Little is known of the deeds of his successor, Cheops, who built the Great Pyramid, and less still of the next Pharaoh, Chephren.

From the earliest times, as is shown by the first inscriptions, known as the pyramid texts, the person of the king is always identified with that of the god. Chephren sits now in the museum at Cairo, a life-sized statue, the first impersonation of the divine right of kings, a figure of infinite dignity and repose. With a curious aloofness, which the Greeks gave to their immortals, the aloofness of one who is beyond the struggle and pain of the world, knowing and understanding with a human sympathy and more than human wisdom; with the faint elusive smile of Egypt, which lies in the eyes and the whole expression more than in the lips, speaking of profound understanding of the mysteries of life rather than gaiety. It is to be seen in the

archaic Greek statues influenced by Egyptian art, and disappears from the world

A Modern Mona Lisa

until reinvoked by Leonardo da Vinci in the Italian Renaissance—that rebirth of the spirit of paganism.

One wonders what the civilization (which

we can so imperfectly reconstruct) must have been which could produce a work of art that can so subtly but so clearly define the highest attributes of kingship. To this day all the world may see that Chephren was a great, powerful, and wise king, as he sits there seemingly judging, not harshly, all efforts and failures and successes. Transitory enough they must seem to eyes that have looked on life and all that has come and gone these thousands of years, leaving Egypt still Egypt. How many conquerors have passed over the land and gone their way! Ethiopian, Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Arab, Turk, French. While the busy people whom we left in the "Happy tomb of Ti," are working with the same implements, in the fields, on the river, in the villages. The same faces, the same gestures, the same cheerful activity. What persistence of type! The *fellaheen* of five thousand years ago are the *fellaheen* of to-day.

Numerous *mastabas* have been discovered in which the high priests and nobles had their tombs. Some of the bas-reliefs found in them are very fine, notably a panel in which geese are represented with the utmost fidelity to nature. It is so perfect in treatment, detail, and spirit, that no better representation of bird-life has been executed since it was placed in the tomb for the delectation of the Ka of some Egyptian, now since dead! Some of the bas-reliefs have been removed to the Cairo Museum, while the *mastabas* have been reburied in the sand to save them from the depredations of the natives.

It is sometimes wondered that artists of such consummate skill, and with such truth to life, should have had so little command of perspective.

"They almost all made it a rule not to attempt to depict the ground, substituting for it a single straight line, on which the

persons included in the same scene moved, and by which they were supported. In the upper rows they depict scenes that distance did not permit them to perceive any more than it does us, despite the incredible transparency of the air. And they attribute to them the same proportions as those of the scenes in the lower rows. These defects were imposed on them by the ritual of their religion. Were not these pictures so carefully and accurately executed, really magic charms on the composition of which depended the survival of a human being after death? The slightest error might imperil the destiny of the *double*, and so the artists were obliged to sacrifice the probabilities of perspective to minute truth of detail."[1]

It is from one of these half ruined tombs that the beautiful life-size colored statues of Nofrit and her husband Rahotpu were brought to light.

The whole statue of the Princess, seated with her hands upon her knees is instinct with energy and character. The face, and

[1] Maspero, Egypt: *Ancient Sites and Modern Scenes.*

particularly the eyes, which are of rock crystal and metal, express a shrewd, practical, domineering character, but not distinguished, elevated, or poetic. Indeed, rather the reverse, efficient but *terre à terre*. None of that splendid vitality had been wasted upon dreams, however beautiful. A thoroughly modern personality is the first impression. But to feel that our age alone is characterized by force and initiative is rather absurd. It is only necessary to examine the Egyptian statues and bas-reliefs of the best period, to see how false is this belief. By her side sits her husband, supposed to be the son of the Pharaoh Snefroui. What a contrast! The face of the son of the King is weak; at least, he could never be a leader of men. In spite of his curious brown color (in contrast to the vivid white of his wife) which suggests negro blood, but for which various reasons are given—as, for example, that the life of men was supposed to be spent

under the bronzing rays of the African sun and that of women in the houses—he has a greater look of race than she. The eyes which gaze straight before him are those of a dreamer of dreams. He might die for a lost cause but could never bend circumstances to his will. Was the indomitable lady beside him one of those vampire women who crush the lives nearest them? Did the artist knowingly leave a tragedy in stone for the world to ponder on? On the face of the Prince all may read a pathetic look of unsuccess—one who knows he is misunderstood but who is too proud, or weak, or wise for explanations—one who had failed in the things demanded which were not those he could have accomplished; who still knows that under a luckier star he might *not* have been counted a failure.

The color of the pyramid is a lovely, soft orange, and from its enormous base there rises a square tower in three tiers. Once there were seven tiers, but time has robbed

the pyramid of much of its glory and height.

What an atmosphere of serene calm broods over this land! The present drops away like a discarded garment. One is steeped in the "sentiment d'histoire"; the life of bygone ages. The desert is full of whispers; ghosts come and go; and even in the hot sunshine, the silence seems peopled with the shades of the dead Pharaohs. From the misty ocean of time comes the murmur of the past.

We climb some way up the crumbling pyramid and look below on the rifled tombs half hidden in the sand which obliterates so quickly the works of men hiding their secrets in its grim depths.

The great kites of Egypt circle above our heads uttering their shrill screams; and in the infinite blue sky is poised a hawk, which with slow movements of the wings circles slowly above us, then suddenly lets

himself drift on the wind with hanging legs and bent head, searching for his prey. As he hangs in the air, with outstretched wings touched by the sun, he seems an incarnation of the "Golden Horus," God of the Sun, as he is represented everywhere on the temples and tombs of ancient Egypt.

In this land of golden light where the rays of the sun are the givers of life, of death, of beauty; in whose beams one is bathed till the pains and sorrows of life seem exorcised, who shall resist the spell! All must become as we, worshippers of Horus, the Sun-god.

On descending a little on the north side, we find the mouth of the shaft which gives entrance to the burial chamber. We exchange a few words with the dark guardian of the pyramid, who cannot count on the *backsheesh* of the tourist in this lonely spot, still practically unknown to the travelling public.

A Runaway Lunch

On overtaking our caravan at midday, we discover that the dromedary which

The Lost Lunch

carries our lunch has followed us to Medun and missed us. As the camel man has only one eye, and is not overgifted with

brains, there seems little chance of his finding us again. Our poor donkey boys, who run all day with bare feet through the hot sand, are sent up every hill and point of observation to wave their white cloaks in the vain hope of the one eye seeing them, while the watchmen fire their guns hoping to attract his attention.

For once the donkey boys are too busy and excited, running hither and yon, to prod the donkeys. So ingrained is this habit that they must have been either prodding or rhythmically beating the flanks of the patient little creatures with their cane-like whips, since the days of the Pharaohs. It is useless to beg a donkey boy to stop, to assure him that you can do your own beating, or to take his whip from him. He would find or borrow another in the midst of the Sahara; nor can you restrain him by offering *backsheesh* (the strongest of all arguments with an Arab), or even by making him go in front of you.

Remove your eyes for one moment and the well-known jerk of the donkey, as if he were unhitching his hind quarters, will soon tell you the donkey boy has returned to work.

Jemha, our black camel man, in his zeal goes farther afield than the others, and in a valley comes upon a Bedouin driving a herd of goats. The poor man, thinking he has fallen into the hands of a robber, drops upon his knees, begging Jemha to take his goats but spare his life. No protestations can convince him that Jemha is only in search of a lost camel, and the Bedouin flies, leaving his goats to their fate.

Once a camel in the distance causes a flutter, but it is not our dromedary with the "one-eyed son of a Caliph," as we had named him on learning that he belonged to a very good family that had fallen on evil days.

Seeing that all efforts to regain our

runaway lunch are fruitless, we make a halt, and the cook descends from his camel to see what food he can prepare. After unloading several animals and raising our expectations to fever heat, it suddenly occurs to our simple-minded follower that there is no water with which to cook; so we have to content ourselves with bread, fruit, raw eggs, and milk.

We eventually camp on a hill-side overlooking the Nile valley.

We walk to the hill-top to have a more extended view. The moon is riding in the clear blue sky. It seems just above our heads and looks absolutely opaque. We can see raised surfaces as though it were modelled in plaster of Paris. The face of "the man in the moon" appears like a bas-relief with clear-cut features. In the distance the sails of the Nile boats look like great white butterflies skimming on the face of the water. As night descends they assume a gray, mysterious hue. Like

ghosts they glide on, vanishing into the deeper darkness.

A little owl is sitting on a stone uttering its pathetic cry, which is echoed back by a distant comrade. Evidently we are an unknown quantity in this desert, as the owl shows no fear and continues its friendly conversation. But its faith is sadly misplaced; there is a loud report, the small brown body falls in a crumpled heap, and we turn to see Fadlallah with a smoking gun. On upbraiding him for his wanton cruelty he replies that an owl hooted at his window for several nights before his father died. Since then he always shoots the bird of ill omen.

Late this evening the dromedary returns with a very sad and weary rider. His lips are swollen with thirst, he has eaten nothing all day, but has ridden backward and forward in a hopeless quest. When we see him, his one eye is weeping, and he looks such a pitiful object that we beg

Fadlallah to show mercy. He refuses to see him this night, wisely letting the sun set on his anger, for as he says, "My eyes are on fire and my blood runs hot. But I cannot beat him because he is of good family."

We are told that we shall need an extra guard as the nearby villagers are "bad people." We do hear shots in the night, but also the sound of beaten *tom-toms*, so probably the "bad people" are only having a fantasia.

When all is silent except for the occasional barking of the village dogs, we hear again our little Pan plaintively fluting and singing:

"The wind knocked at my door and I said
my little sweetheart has come to me,

Therefore art thou a rogue, oh wind, who
laughs at a grieving heart."

Eternal longing, eternal hope!

XVII

AN AFRITE

Sunday, March 12th.

AS we look about us we are confronted with two untidy-looking mounds. They are the remains of the pyramids of Lisht. With their casing all torn away, giving them the appearance of enormous rubbish heaps, it is difficult to believe they contain the sacred bodies of the mighty Pharaohs.

The tombs lie at such a depth beneath the sand, that the water has flooded them,

and at present it is impossible to enter, or know certainly which of the Pharaohs are buried there. The royal mummies, resting in their heavy stone coffins in the deep waters, "defy the archæologists of to-day as firmly as they defied the robbers of olden time."

We start upon our homeward journey.

After two hours travelling we find ourselves once more at Dashoor, our old camping ground of happy memory.

We see again the white *marabout* tombs standing in the green groves, and the big sycamore tree under which young camels are playing.

This time we take the lower and shorter route to Sakhara, by the edge of the cultivation, passing swamps on which are numbers of ducks, herons, cranes, and snipe.

Farther on, as we cross a strip of desert, our curiosity is excited on seeing a number of men apparently excavating. Are we in the nick of time to see a mummy

"Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert" Photo., Crupi

Palm grove

unearthed, or jewels that have graced a queen four thousand years ago brought to light again? We arrive at the scene to find a busy horde digging for salt!

The heat is intense, and the sand-cart, though it had done extraordinary feats across country, is obliged to make long detours to avoid the fields of corn and *dourah*, which invariably have big banks with ditches surrounding them, calculated to try the jumping powers of an Irish hunter.

As we journey northwards there appears in the far distance, round a bend of the twisting river, the beautiful mosque of Muhommed Ali; poised like a shining jewel on the Mo Rattam hills, its slender minarets outlined against the evening sky. The city of Cairo in the plain beneath is hidden from us, a blur of green telling of its groves and long avenues of acacias.

Towards nightfall we pass near a large cemetery on the edge of the desert. Our

watchman Reshid being weary and wishing to make a short cut, carelessly walks through it, thereby tempting the powers of evil, with the unfortunate result that in the distance he sees a woman in black, who soon transforms herself into a woman in white. He then knows that an afrite has entered into him. "His blood changes," and from having been a happy, sunny youth, he becomes dejected, haggard, nervous. All the Arabs are sure he is possessed, but hope, as the afrite has only just entered him, that a holy man will be found with a charm potent enough to exorcise the evil spirit.

All Arabs firmly believe in the existence of these genii, or afrite who, as taught by the Koran, are an intermediate order of creatures who eat and drink, live and die, and in many ways resemble mankind. There are good and evil genii, and they can make themselves visible under the guise of animals and more especially snakes.

When passing through dark alleys, grave-

Photo., P. Dittrich

Prayer

yards, or likely haunts of the evil ones, an Arab will recite a verse of the Koran to

protect himself. At the great Day of Resurrection, the genii and animals will appear as well as men.

From a far minaret once more we hear the voice of the *muezzin*. Clear and sweet it rings out through the silence its hymn to the Great Creator; a sound to thrill, to inspire, to move its believing hearers to a reverent adoration—"*Allahu Akbar*," the call rises to heaven, and countless thousands prostrate themselves in prayer.

Fadlallah is anxious to have us camp in a large grove of palm trees which we can see in the distance, but our strength fails us some miles short of it. Even Toulba seems to be crying with fatigue, though he did not complain. He is limply sitting on his donkey and tears are slowly running down his dusty face, leaving lines of white where they flow. This may be due to some other cause, for he has again and again gone through days so arduous and tiring that they would have killed a

European child of his age. It is impossible not to be fond of the self-contained, little fellow. His never-failing pluck and self-control are admirable, and his most annoying pranks are undertaken with an almost sweet seriousness. We have seen him riding hour after hour, under the hot sun, through the burning sand, without a murmur. Contentedly playing near the camp, by himself or with his little slave; dancing with the men on moonlight nights, his stick valiantly raised above his head, a quaint imitation of his elders, in miniature. Never noisy, or querulous, or talkative; a serious baby, dignified and serene. The inscrutable dark eyes, in his soft round face, sometimes light up with a most winning smile, which almost takes one into his confidence—again one has all but grasped, at least, the infant soul of the East,—then it escapes.

So our last night is spent with the sand-hills of the desert rising in a semi-circle

around us, with a carpet of sweet-scented iris at our feet.

Our Arabs are in a cheerful mood. From their end of the camp come snatches of music, sounds of mild revelry. They have finished their frugal supper.

Reshid is reciting to them the history of Sidi Okba, — and the tale of this mighty warrior of Islam is one that never palls. Sidi Okba started his brilliant career as barber to the Prophet. After Mahommed's death he led a small body of Arab tribesmen into Egypt, which he speedily subjugated, and he never sheathed his sword till the whole of Northern Africa lay conquered at his feet. On reaching Morocco, he spurred his horse into the Atlantic, and mourned that the waves alone prevented his carrying his victories beyond. From sea to sea the faith of Mahommed triumphed.

Sidi Okba now lies in an oasis in the far

Sahara where a beautiful mosque has been built over his remains. He is one of the great saints of Islam, and there are numerous *marabout* tombs to do him honor, while his memory is venerated through the whole Moslem world.

By the light of the stars we can see the forms of our men dimly, as one after another jumps to his feet and dances.

We draw nearer to the gay party. Toulba who has completely recovered is holding a stick under his chin as he circles round, his small body shaking and quivering, his tiny brown feet shuffling on the sands. Ali claps his hands and gazes at his little master with fond admiration, while Saïd plays his reed flute and Ahmed beats the *derabukka*.

After a time all seek the shelter of their tents; gradually the sounds cease, save the faint throbbing of a distant *tom-tom*, and the monotonous, pulsating music seems

not so much to interrupt the stillness as to make it more felt. And even the luminous-low, hanging stars, seem listening to the silence.

XVIII

OUR JOURNEY'S END

Monday, March 13th.

WE step outside our tents and inhale the cool air of the morning, feasting our eyes on the splendor of the rising sun as it lights the hills and paints the valleys with colors unknown in Northern latitudes. The desert shakes off the blue cloak of night, its golden sands are bathed in a glow of sunshine. The far mountains to the east, rose-tinted with the birth of the sun, are

of an ethereal beauty; the colors glow and die to reappear in a mingling of purple and orange, which gradually in the noonday merge into the white radiance of heat.

At breakfast we notice that the smiles of our servants are broader than usual; their faces beam with joy. Abd-es-Sadak with simple dignity explains, "*Inshallah!* ere another sun has set I shall see my wife and baby daughter," while Ahmed appears equally anxious to return to the bosom of his family. At the same time, with innate good manners and tact, they assure us of their sorrow at leaving our service, that it is with grief they bid farewell to their patrons. It is somewhat of a surprise to hear that these two youths,

who scarcely number forty years between them, are the fathers of families.

These Arabs are generally devoted parents, and cases of cruelty to children are practically unknown. It is very pleasant to see their unfailing courtesy and thought for the young as well as for the old. It is enjoined upon them by the Koran to treat the aged, the sick, and the blind with special kindness, and to give of their wealth to the poor for "of whatever good thing ye shall give them in alms, of a truth God will take knowledge," but "a kind speech and forgiveness are better than alms followed by injury." And again, in the beautiful *surah* entitled, "Daybreak," those who, "because of their great and splendid possessions behave insolently in the land," are censured.

Nearly 1300 years ago, when Christian Europe was in a state of semi-barbarism, its literature dispersed or lost, the fine arts extinct, Islam arose, binding the wild

hordes of Arabia together in the brotherhood of a powerful faith. And in a short time these Arabs established brilliant centres of advanced civilization in the chief cities of Asia, Africa, and Southern Europe. Bagdad became the home of philosophers, poets, and men of letters; and in Cairo, Cordova, and many another city, libraries were collected, and schools of medicine, mathematics, and natural history flourished. Europe is indebted to Islam for the preservation of much of the classical literature of the ancient world.

To many an Arab his religion is a living thing, ever present in his daily life; a power to console in sorrow, a faith enabling him to face trouble with resignation, death without flinching. But the modern spirit of unbelief is beginning to attack the Mohammedan world.

We watch with pain our tents collapse for the last time. We sit as we have often sat before, in the sand-cart, while

our household gods are packed away on the backs of the kneeling camels, who

A tiller of the fields

protest with much groaning that they are being overburdened. This is a confirmed habit of the brute, as exemplified

in the case of a lady who opened her parasol, which she had been carrying furled; whereupon the camel decided that this was an extra burden, the proverbial last straw, and promptly knelt down groaning.

Some of the tillers of the fields came to watch our departure, among them a curious little creature of perhaps sixteen summers. Her dark hair had a yellow scarf wound round it, and with guileless simplicity the two plaits which fell from under it to her waist, were stained bright red with henna, as were the tips of her fingers. She had large ear-rings of blue beads, and many rows of them twisted round her neck. Although a daughter of the soil, a more keen, alert, self-possessed little person it would be difficult to find. Not so her husband, who was more like the peasant depicted by Millet; a lout with a sad, hopeless, brutalized expression; unlike the contented, intelligent look generally met with on the faces of the *fellaheen.*

" Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"
251

A Sakieh

Photo., Maass

Our Journey's End

We wend our way through the palm woods that we failed to reach the night before. We pass the *sakiehs* at work, the great wheel, forever turning, propelled by the patient oxen, while the creaking and wailing never ceases, and the lifted water empties itself into the little channels which run through the thirsty land.

Fields of sugar-cane rustle in the wind, and pigeon houses rear their heads like square towers among the mimosas and acacias.

A half veiled woman, a jar of water on her head, moves lightly through the palm woods; a *fellah* boy in blue cotton shirt and white skull cap is singing a dreamy song as he drives his goats before him; children with henna-stained hair and hands, glass bracelets on their tiny wrists, cluster round crying for *backsheesh*.

We reach Sakhara with all its well-remembered dirt and picturesqueness, its groups of solemn Arabs sitting cross-legged

on benches outside the tavern, drinking coffee, playing dominoes, smoking the *narghileh* or the more modern cigarette.

On the flat house-tops the women are cooking and gossiping with their neighbors, while in the narrow street below resound the cries of the sellers of water, sellers of bread, sellers of wonderful syrups.

We experience some difficulty in getting the sand-cart through the crowd, and our way is not made easier when we meet a string of camels whose burdens brush the houses on either side.

A fine-looking Arab, wearing the green turban that proclaims him a *Hadji*, steps from a white-washed house, and with Oriental hospitality offers us refreshment. He is the *sheikh* of the village and has twice made the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca.

On leaving Sakhara behind us, we find ourselves once more in the trodden world of tourists, galloping donkeys, blue

"Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"

goggles, white helmets, kodaks, and all the aids to modern sight-seeing.

After nineteen days of the simple life it is with mixed feelings that we enter again the rush and turmoil of civilization.

What have the past days held for us but endless variety, beauty, color, and interest; and every hour has had its charm. Truly the desert, like the sea, "washes away the cares of men."

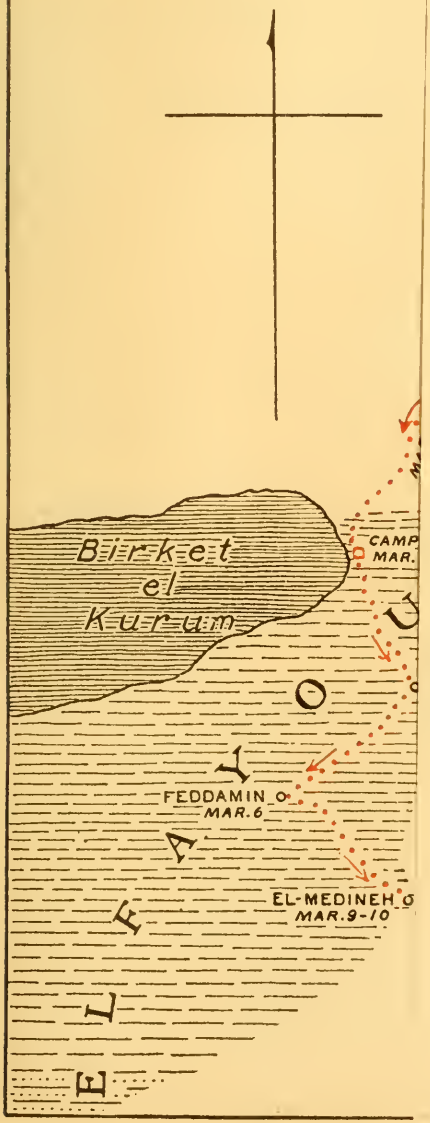
THE END

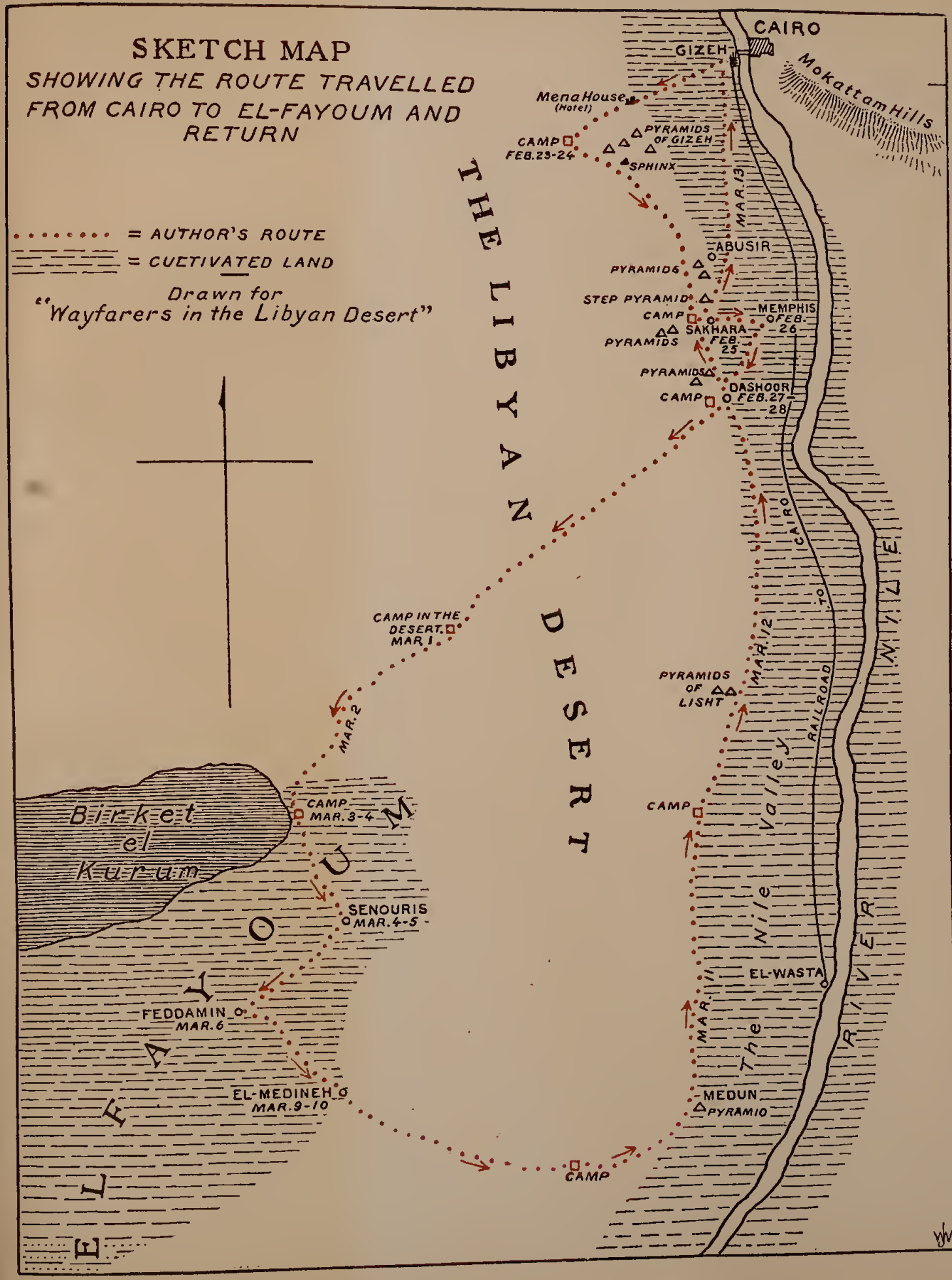
SKETCH MAP

SHOWING THE ROUTE TR
FROM CAIRO TO EL-FAYO
RETURN

..... = AUTHOR'S ROUTE
= CULTIVATED LAND

Drawn for
"Wayfarers in the Libyan




SKETCH MAP
SHOWING THE ROUTE TRAVELLED FROM CAIRO TO EL-FAYOUM AND RETURN
= AUTHOR'S ROUTE
= CULTIVATED LAND
Drawn for "Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert"
CAIRO
GIZEH
Mokattam Hills
Mena House (Hotel)
CAMP FEB. 23-24
PYRAMIDS OF GIZEH
SPHINX
MAR. 13
ABUSIR
PYRAMIDS
STEP PYRAMID
CAMP
MEMPHIS FEB. 26
SAKHARA FEB. 25
PYRAMIDS
PYRAMIDS
CAMP
DASHOOR FEB. 27-28
THE LIBYAN DESERT
CAIRO TO
MAR. 12
RAILROAD
CAMP IN THE DESERT MAR. 1
MAR. 2
PYRAMIDS OF LISHT
CAMP
Birket el Kurum
CAMP MAR. 3-4
SENOURIS MAR. 4-5
FEDDAMIN MAR. 6
EL-MEDINEH MAR. 9-10
CAMP
The Nile Valley
EL-WASTA
MAR. 11
MEDUN PYRAMID
RIVER NILE
EL FAYOUM