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E. BRANDARD. SCULPT.

EL HESWEH, WÂDY FEIRÂN.

PICTURESQUE
PALESTINE,
SINAI AND EGYPT.



Engraved by J. G. Thompson from a drawing by W. G. Bonington

PICTURESQUE PALESTINE

SINAI AND EGYPT

EDITED BY

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FORMERLY ENGINEER TO THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION SOCIETY

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A MAP OF EGYPT



PT AND SINAI.





RÂS ATÂKAH.

Râs is the same as our "nase" or "naze." This bold promontory, south of Suez, running out from Jebel Atâkah, on the western shore of the Red Sea, comes into every view of Suez.

SINAI.

SUEZ itself has no history, but it occupies one of the finest sites in the world. Up to it—not as an affair of yesterday, but always—must have come the sea-borne commerce and the enterprise of Asia, seeking fresh outlets. As to-day there is a tide of people passing by it on the way to India, China, and the newest countries of the newest continent, Australasia, so we may with reason suppose that the primitive peoples of the world sailed up the Red Sea in their rude ships, ever lured on with the idea that there must be some "happy islands" or some "land of the gods" beyond those glowing waters. To such the golden sands of Suez presented the first impassable barrier, and in the still air might the thoughts have had birth—

"Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more!"

There are no ancient buildings and certainly no modern buildings worth looking at in Suez. The Canal, the big ships, and all that pertain to them, these are the only things that one would care to see, and, perhaps, to watch the bustling ease with which the mails are

shipped from the train to the P. and O. steamer on their voyage to India, &c. Except to a novice the bazaars are not comparable with those of Cairo or Damascus or many other smaller cities. In them, beyond the wonderful and facetious donkey boys, one sees the nationalities of both sides of the Red Sea (Arabs, Nubians, Egyptians, Syrians, &c.) mingled with Greeks and Europeans of all sorts. One looks at piles of native silks and embroideries, there are carpets from Yeddah, stones and pebbles and beads brought by pilgrims from Mecca, and plenty of stores such as occur in every port which sailors or travellers frequent.

Still for the traveller who has rushed across Europe, the Mediterranean, and Lower Egypt in eight or nine days, or for him who slowly for two days past has been steaming down the "long ditch" called "The Canal," there is this interest in Suez: Here two worlds meet! Neither the Railway, nor the Canal, nor the Port, nor the Post Office, nor the Steamship Offices, nor the first-rate Hotel, nor the workshops full of all manner of mechanical contrivances suited for the repair of the sea-monsters in which modern civilisation delights, have altered the real town or changed its people. Suez is sunny, whitewashed, flat-roofed, narrow, inconvenient, and stocked with evil smells, although you may have to get out of the way of a locomotive every now and then, and though its harbour and roadstead be gay with the shipping of all nations. I say advisedly "of all nations," for just as we were in anxious hope yesterday of getting through to Suez before nightfall, we had to go into a "siding" to let seven large vessels pass us, and amongst others a Chinese merchantman manned and commanded by self-satisfied Celestials.

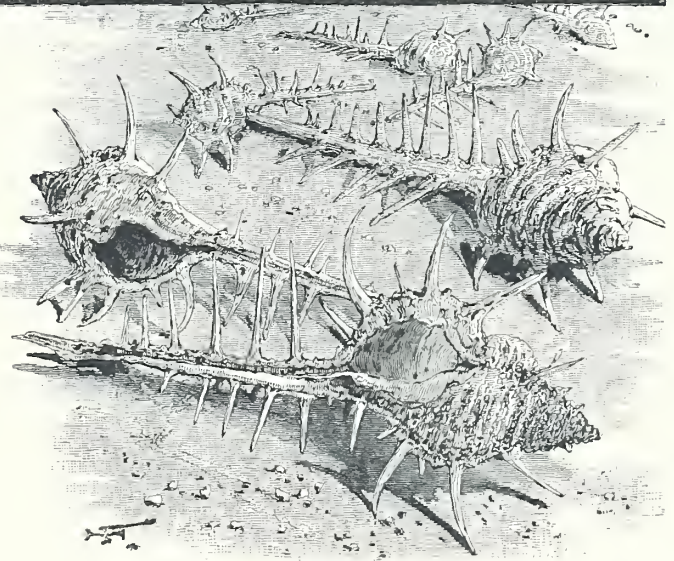
During our detention, battered by the pitiless chaff of the Suez donkey boys, who had swarmed down in order to induce some of us to make an excursion by land to Suez, instead of fretting our souls out against the bulwarks of our floating but not moving prison, one had ample time to examine the position of Suez. The blue bay is bounded by the weary grassless desert which ever shimmers and glistens in the almost rainless atmosphere. The town stands out on the right, with its tall minaret, from a forest of masts and yards of native boats, overhung by the massive purple form of Jebel Atâkah (see pages 1, 3); while to the left there is a long vista—beyond the nearer ridges of the desert—of broken lighter-coloured mountains, the outlying portion of the Sinaitic range.

One may feel impatient, or one may have worn off one's impatience in the Canal. The regulations of the Canal Company about passing ships, doubtless most wise and necessary, and about anchoring or mooring at sunset, cause a great deal of irritation to arise in one's suffering temper. It is so hot; the Canal banks are so uninteresting and monotonous; flamingoes and pelicans have become such common objects; the mirage even has worn itself out; while a stray Arab on his camel causes no excitement whatever. Yet how can one be impatient! Surely we are on classic ground! Let us try for a minute or two to keep under this impatience, to shut one's ears to the nonsense of the donkey boys, who have given to each donkey a new name suited to the stirring politics of the day at home and abroad, or even to the more domestic events with which for months past we have been feasted

by the Daily Press—and to meditate. And what will be the subject of our meditations! Surely none other than that which amused us and interested us and kept us quiet long ago, when we looked at the pictures in the big Bible at home—"the passage of Israel through the Red Sea." Many and many have been the suggestions made, and often has the solution seemed to be within reach, when it has vanished away, like the Indian's "Snow Maiden." The theory of Herr Brugsch, the able Egyptologist, set forth before the International Congress of Orientalists at London in 1874, proves conclusively that the modern Sân, near Lake Menzaleh, and distant about eighty-five miles north-west from Suez,



is the Pi-Ramessu or Raamses of the Bible (built as a temple city by Ramses II.), and that it almost occupies the ground of the ancient Zor, or Zoan. This city was the royal city of Ramses II. and of many of his successors, as in years gone by it had been the capital of those hated Hyksos kings, during whose time Joseph was sold into Egypt. From this city started the military roads which led, by "the way of the Philistines," to Phœnicia and the Hittite empire, and



JEBEL ATÂKAH.

so on to the Euphrates—or through the Negeb to Edom and Moab. From a "papyrus," which seems to be the detailed report of a subordinate to his superior of the pursuit of two fugitives who had escaped into the marches of the frontier land east of the Delta, the imagination of the learned German conjures up for us the probable route of the Israelites, placing "Baalzephon" at "Mount Casius," on the shore of "The Sea" (the Mediterranean). This is the extreme northern route proposed. There is another route, which, taking Memphis as the royal city of the Pharaoh of the Exodus, makes the Israelites journey on from the Land of Goshen till they reach the Red Sea at the foot of Jebel Atâkah. Two reasons, however,

are to be urged against a passage at this spot ; the width of the gulf, which would have required the lapse of hours and hours in order to traverse it, and the depth of the waters—for there would have been on either side the strange roadway, along the bed of the sea, a *mountain* rather than a *wall* of water, sixty or seventy feet high. But between these extreme points of conjecture there are several spots which a combination of circumstances make likely—such as (1) the ford across the attenuated arm of the Red Sea which runs up behind Suez (what vestiges remain of the ancient Kholzum, the ancestor of Suez, are close to this arm of the sea, and an island hereabouts is known as Jews' Island); or (2), better still, a spot near the "Crocodile Lake" (Lake Timsâh) and Ismailia, famous in modern story.

Let us leave now the happy land of conjectures, take this Arab dhow, which has been cleaned up at our dragoman's order, and with baggage piled round us sail across the head of the gulf and get on to 'Ayûn Mûsa, where camels and encampment are to wait for us. We shall have a good deal of trouble with the Quarantine authorities, for there is a strong military cordon drawn round 'Ayûn Mûsa this autumn (1881) in order to stop the expected return of pilgrims from Mecca, where the plague or cholera is said to have broken out ; so we must not be too sanguine as to reaching "the Wells" before sunset. Very lovely was the day when I made such a start. But the anticipations which force themselves on one block out of sight the clear air, the brightness of the sunshine, the deep but various blue of sky and sea. One has reached the desert and is going to lead a desert life, one has said good-bye to the restraints of civilisation and has become enfranchised ; the bondage of the Egypt of the nineteenth-century world is broken, at least for a time. 'Ayûn Mûsa, or "Wells of Moses," is a beautiful oasis in the desert, one hour's walk from the Red Sea and the new Quarantine ground, and, I should think, eight or nine miles from the town of Suez. There are several springs of clear but brackish water, sheltered by groups of fine tamarisk-trees and knotted palms, and surrounded by well-kept diligently tilled gardens stocked with lettuces, radishes, &c. There is one pool which is built round with ancient masonry. Summer-houses or Greek cafés (which can furnish sleeping accommodation), and the boisterous habits of its visitors, may justify the unhappy claim of this desert oasis to be the "Richmond" of Suez. One can turn one's back, however, on all this, and have the tent pitched near the solitary palm, beside the lonely, dark-coloured, brackish, scanty pool, on that sand hillock which lies away from the oasis proper. Here the real "genius loci" will meet one, and will whisper that after the Red Sea this was the first encampment, and that here Miriam taught the women of Israel "The Song of Triumph." (Exodus xv. 20, 21.) But here too henceforth there will arise a sadder memory ; for from this spot (where, as himself tells us, he who had for years been familiar with the literature of Arabia, and had read with a certain vague interest the descriptions of desert life, had had in 1868 at last all its reality brought before him) there set forth in the August of this year (1882) on a chivalrous expedition, viz. to wean the affections of the Bedawîn from the rebel Arabi, Professor Palmer with Captain Gill, R.E., and Lieutenant Charrington, R.N. Solitude is a true companion in such a place. One strolls towards the sea over the uneven space

of wind-tossed sand mounds, which form the entire landscape (see page 11). What marvellous shells!—the shells one has so often looked at in London fancy shops mounted as flower vases! What strange waifs and strays of sea and desert life! The lights are beginning to show in the mighty ships which are lying in the Suez anchorage, and there is a faintness of distinctness about the white buildings and the minaret which mark out the town itself (see page 10), lying at the feet of the purple mountain out of which the glow of sunset has just faded. That is Africa, and of that mysterious continent the strip of land—the valley with its mighty river—behind those mountains is the greatest marvel. Now let us turn and watch the stars, which seem so much larger and brighter than they are in the English sky, come out, from our encampment under the tall, ragged, weather-beaten palm-tree, which may have stood as a sentry looking over the thirsty desert, stretched across the whole base of the triangle of the Sinaitic peninsula, for countless ages.

The loneliness is very intense. Yet there is an intermittent murmur of laughter and merriment from the group of Arabs round the encampment fire, which begins to shoot forth a cheerful light on the white canvas of our two small English tents. And who are these Arabs? and why should one be obliged to have their company, or at any rate the company of any except those to whom the camels belong and who act as camel-men? The track is not hard to find, and the watering places are well known. These Arabs are the *ghufará*, or protectors, without whose escort the traveller would not be safe in the Peninsula or in the Desert. They belong to the tribes which have the legitimate right to give protection to the Convent and to travellers. The country under their protection is accurately defined and recognised by other Bedawín; and while under their care and within the limits of their protectorate one is safe. The name of the tribe occupying the Sinaitic peninsula is Towarah (sing. *Túrí*), from “Tor,” the seaport on the south-west of the peninsula, with which word is connected the old Arab term for the peninsula. The Towarah are divided into several tribes, the most despised of which is the Jibálíyeh, whom we shall find at the Convent acting as servants, porters, agricultural labourers, &c. There is a chapter in Professor Palmer’s “Desert of the Exodus” (chap. v.) which gives a capital description of them, etched in with the gentlest, most sympathizing, but most masterly hand. He points out that the prevalent idea of the nomade character of the Arabs is incorrect; no people wander less, and no people (the eager desire one’s Arabs display to reach home, when home is near, is the best evidence of this) are more attached to their native homes. So difficult to find in European languages, in Arabic we find a word corresponding with our “home,” viz. *watan*. They have, though innocent of many built villages and towns, summer and winter camping grounds, and make at the proper season a regular exodus from one to the other. The Arab has no history, because there is no nationality; and so one does not meet with any annals breathing of heroism and chivalry such as Scotland can produce. There is some clanship between the members of a tribe, and the fierce laws of blood-feud keep this up; but there is nothing more.

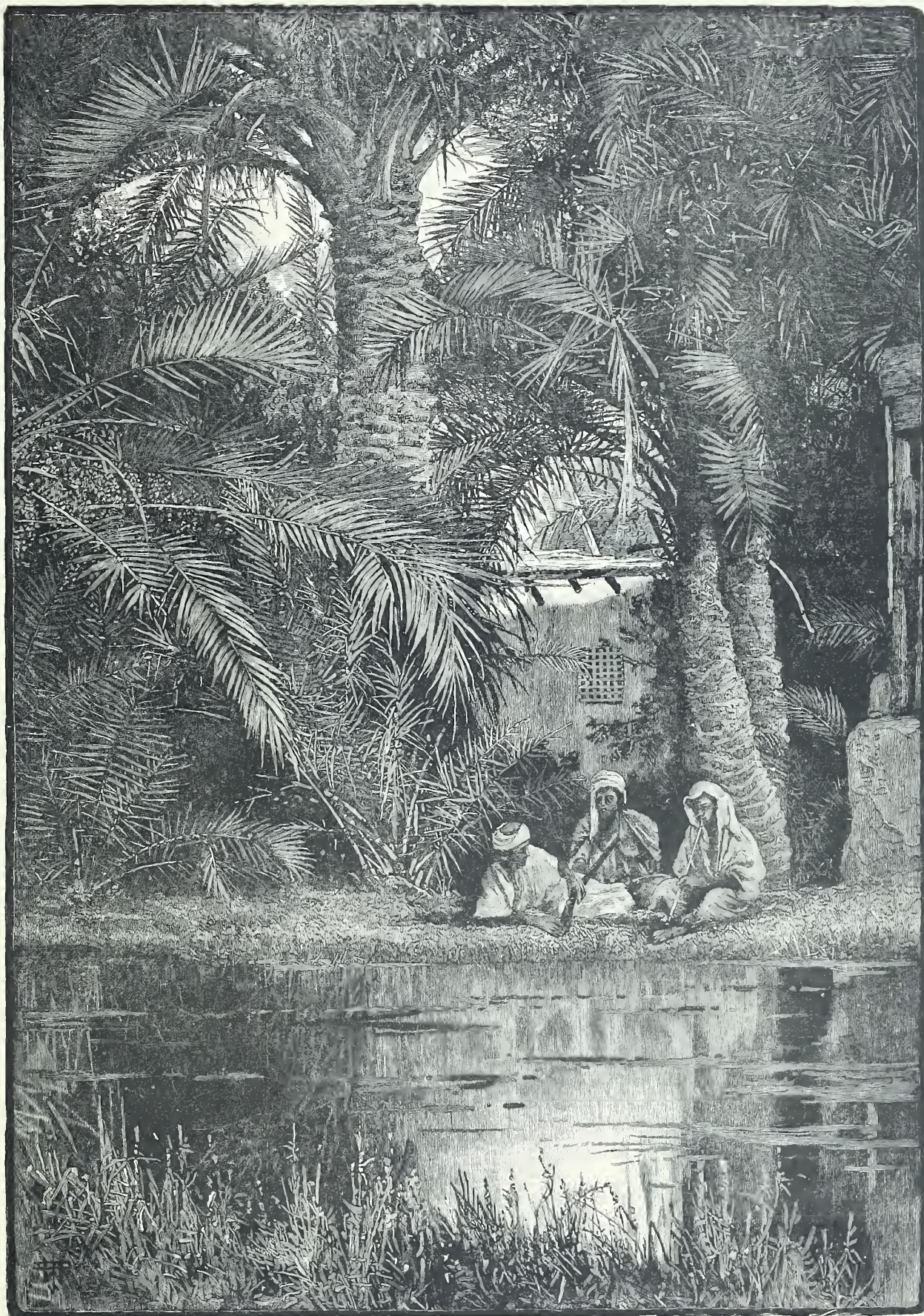
In frame and physique the Arab generally is a fine model. His step is elastic and his carriage marvellously upright. In running or climbing he would be a formidable competitor in our ordinary village games. On his simple food (so simple that beyond the coffee and great round unleavened cakes one does not know of what it consists) he thrives, and his white teeth, shining out between his smiling lips, remind one that to one ill at least of high civilisation he is not heir, and that dentists would be *nowhere* in the Desert. Very charming is the sound of Arab laughter, and, though one does not understand a word of it, the never-ending song, which seems capable of any amount of "gag," and not to be injured by constant interludes, does not really weary any one. Their demeanour is noticeably courteous, whether one observes the threefold salutation (by placing the right hand on the heart, the lips, the forehead or turban) with which they greet one another ordinarily, or such a salutation as took place between an old Arab who came up to our sheikh just now—he saluted him, embraced him, kissed him on either cheek, and then the two, with right hands clasped, said again and again, "Are you well?"—"Thank God, well!"—as Moses said probably to Aaron on the Mount of Salutation (Exodus iv. 27) or to Jethro in the wilderness (Exodus xviii. 7).

When they dispute, which is not infrequently in the day, and especially on the subject of adjusting the loads on the camels each morning, or on the question of agreeing to terms or apportioning the money, they are as violent, demonstrative, and abusive as the frequenters of Billingsgate. In the bargaining the Arab will lie right and left and overreach you; but, the bargain being made, his word is his bond.

The Arab woman does all the home work, and the unmarried girls tend the flocks and herds of an encampment and take them to pasture. Such occupation is derogatory for men. Here, therefore, we may note a relic of that contemptuous regard which was had for the flock-tender among the Israelites. David the shepherd boy, away from his home when Samuel goes down to Bethlehem to visit Jesse, is of no account among his brethren, as being employed in mere girl's work.

The religion of the Bedawín has yet to be explored. Very few, when travelling, are regular in their devotions. There is a strange superstitious awe which certain spots and tombs evoke, and constantly there will come to the surface little evidences of a deep religious feeling. For instance, I and my dragoman met with a bad accident one day. The next morning, when I went to pay my respects to our sheikh, he said, congratulating us, "You are now two days old." Our rescue from imminent peril was regarded by him as a new lease of life by Allah's will. Then one day I had to make a fresh agreement with my Arabs, having changed my route; they sealed, as it were, their promise to conduct me in safety by another way, by solemnly repeating the *Fâtiḥât* (the first chapter in the *Korān*).

I have said nothing about the dress of the Bedawín of Sinai; nor have I pointed out our sheikh, that is, the petty chief who commands our Arabs, and who is responsible for our safe conduct. There he sits almost undistinguishable, no staff or sword of office. He does more work, I think, than the others, and the others seem to get more angry with him than with any



UNDER THE PALMS, 'AYÚN MÚSA.

"It is a strange spot—this plot of tamarisks" (and palms) "with its seventeen wells—literally an island in the Desert, and now used as the Richmond of Suez—a comparison which chiefly serves to show what a place Suez itself must be!"—(STANLEY.)

one else. I notice, however, later on, that he can bring out a striped 'abba which looks more silky than the other 'abbas, and that he has a smarter turban. Well, these dignified Towarah are dressed in very poor rags. There is a white coarse surplice, or shirt, coming down a little below the knees, with very long pointed sleeves; this is fastened round the waist with a broad strong leathern belt; in the bosom of this shirt, or knotted up in the ends of the sleeves, the Arab carries any odds and ends of wealth he may possess. Most of them have a pair of sandals (the best are made of fish skin), though they don't always use them, perhaps hardly ever in the open desert. Generally they wear the turban and fez instead of the picturesque kefiyeh. The 'abba, a great straight garment about two and a half or three yards wide, with holes for the arms to come through, and usually with a capote or hood attached, is stowed away on the camel, but always ready to hand for storm or cold.

Colour in apparel is monopolized by the Arab men. The women, who are (partially, not strictly) veiled, are dressed in a long loose blue frock, with a large blue mantle to cover over head and all. Their chins are tattooed; and in the case of married women the hair is tied up into a kind of knot or horn in front, which is surmounted by a red bead, and seldom *untied*. The girls dress their hair in short curls over the forehead, across which is tied the *shebeikeh*, an ornament of red cloth with bits of mother-of-pearl sewn on.

For arms the Arab has a sword (those I looked at were European blades), which answers, like the kookree of the Ghorkas, for many purposes, and a long gun. Some also carry spears. But the armoury depends on the purse; and several of our Arabs had no weapons whatever, while amongst the Towarah, who are in many ways, owing to their isolated position in a peninsula, to be distinguished from other Bedawín, one does not notice many spears.

It was the middle of December, 1881, when I set out on my journey from 'Ayún Músa, and the mornings were become chilly. The dew in the night had been heavy, and the tamarisk-trees were misty with it, somewhat like trees with a slight frost on them in England. I venturously tasted it and found it quite salt.—The camels have been grumbling and growling for some time, and one is certain that this first start will be a troublesome affair, for each camel-owner wants to excuse his camel from taking so much of the baggage, and tries to make out that the load apportioned to him is in excess. Then there is the live stock (forty chickens and one hen turkey) to be looked after; and then, worst of all, some of the Arabs seem so apathetic that they won't leave the bivouac fire, notwithstanding the dragoman's objurgations, till every scrap is made ready for packing on the beasts by him, the servant, and the ever-active Sheikh (see page 11).

Professor Palmer thus describes ("Desert of the Exodus," vol. i. p. 30) his first camel-ride:—"The camel is a much overrated beast, and is the very incarnation of peevish ill-temper. Docile he is, but apparently from no other reason than sheer stupidity. No sooner do you approach him than he sets up a hideous snarling groan; the driver pulls his head forcibly down to the ground, and you seize the opportunity of jumping on to his back. But before you can secure your seat you are suddenly pitched violently forward, then as violently backwards, for

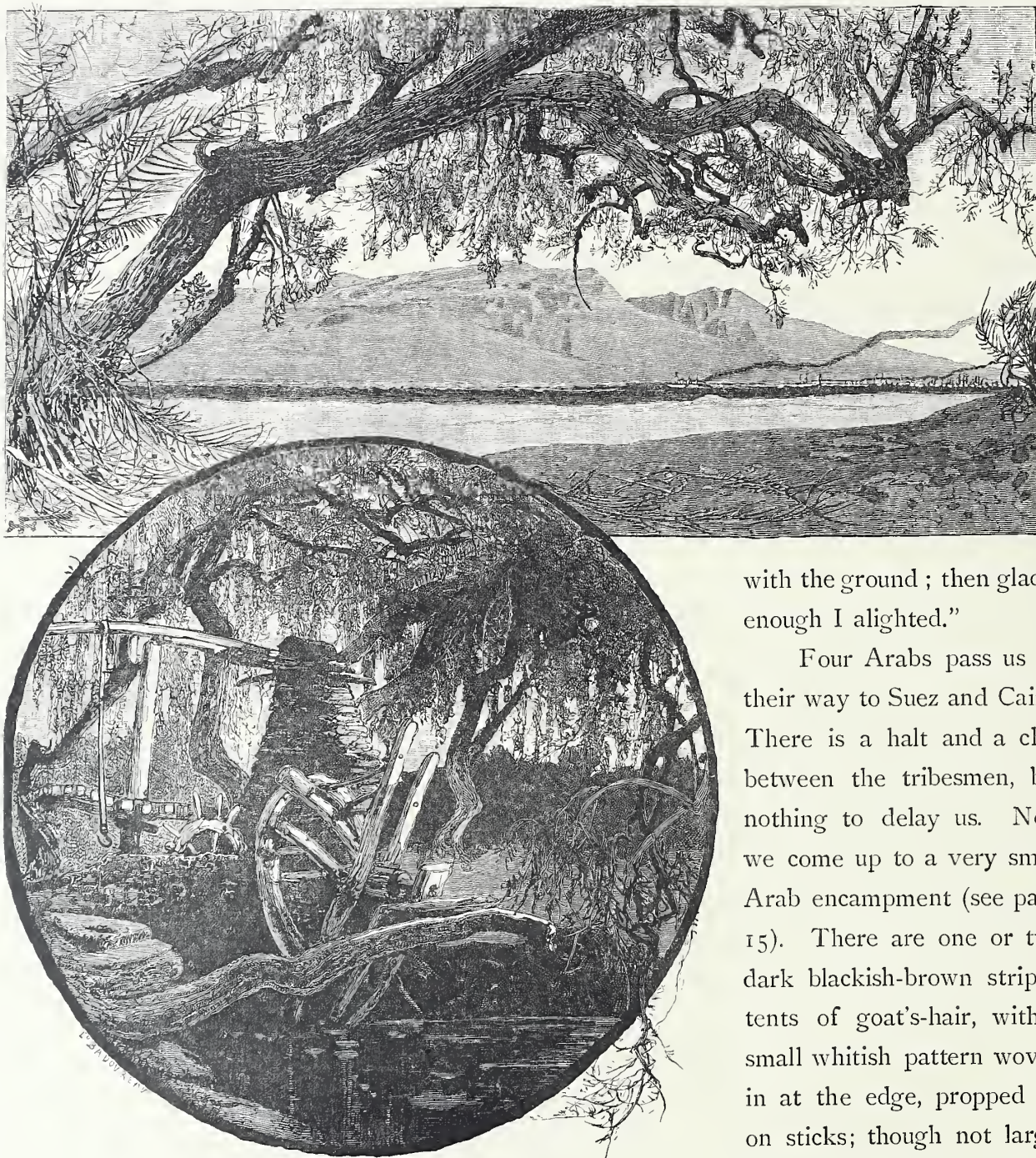
the creature gets up by jerks, and only half of him at a time. When once mounted the motion is not so unpleasant as it has been described, and a very few days makes you quite at home in your elevated seat."

And so the first day of real desert journeying commences! Our track keeps the sea on the right hand not very far off (see page 14), and on the left is the tableland, with the mountains which belong to it, of the southern portion of the great plateau, the "Wilderness of Tih." To this long ridge bounding a monotonous barren waste one thinks that the name Shur (meaning in Hebrew "a wall") might fitly have been given by the Israelites (see page 15). We are told that "they went three days in the wilderness and found no water" (Exodus xv. 22): *we* shall not reach Elim (Wady Gharandel) before the third day. There is not much to mark off or disentangle the days in this part of the journey. Shall we read as we ride along at this slow pace (not more than two and three-quarter miles in the hour), or meditate, or think of those at home? Despairingly one tries anything to make the time pass quickly under the burning sun, to which one has become a slave. Perhaps if there is a copy of it in the saddle-bags (for I suppose the crossbar wooden erection on the top of the camel's hump may be called a saddle; it is cunningly fashioned, and is divided in two parts, posts and all), it may be a consolation to see what the author of "Eothen" thought of the Desert and the camel. Here is what he says (chap. xvii.):—

"The earth is so samely that your eyes turn towards heaven—towards heaven I mean in sense of sky. You look to the sun, for he is your taskmaster, and by him you know the measure of the work that remains for you to do. He comes when you strike your tent in the early morning, and then for the first hour of the day as you move forward on your camel he stands at your near side and makes you know that the whole day's toil is before you; then for a while, and a long while, you see him no more, for you are veiled and shrouded and dare not look upon the greatness of his glory, but you know where he strides overhead by the touch of his flaming sword. No words are spoken, but your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, your skin glows, your shoulders ache, and for sights you see the pattern and web of the silk" (your head is supposed to be wrapped up in a silk kefiyeh, one of the things in which the traveller feels it to be *de rigueur* to invest at Cairo or Suez) "that veils your eyes and the glare of the outer light. Time labours on, your skin glows, your shoulders ache, your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, and you see the same patterns in the silk and the same glare of light beyond; but conquering time marches on, and by-and-by the descending sun has compassed the heaven and now softly touches your right arm, and throws your lank shadow over the sand right along on the way for Persia. Then again you look upon his face, for his power is all veiled in his beauty, and the redness of flames has become the redness of roses; the fair wavy cloud that fled in the morning now comes to his sight once more, comes blushing, yet still comes on, comes burning with blushes, yet comes and clings to his side.

"Then begins your season of rest. The world about you is all your own, and there, where you will, you pitch your solitary tent; there is no living thing to dispute your choice. When at

last the spot had been fixed upon and we came to a halt, one of the Arabs would touch the chest of my camel and utter at the same time a peculiar gurgling sound. The beast instantly understood and obeyed the sign, and slowly sank under me till she brought her body to a level



GULF OF SUEZ, LOOKING OUT FROM 'AYŪN MŪSA.

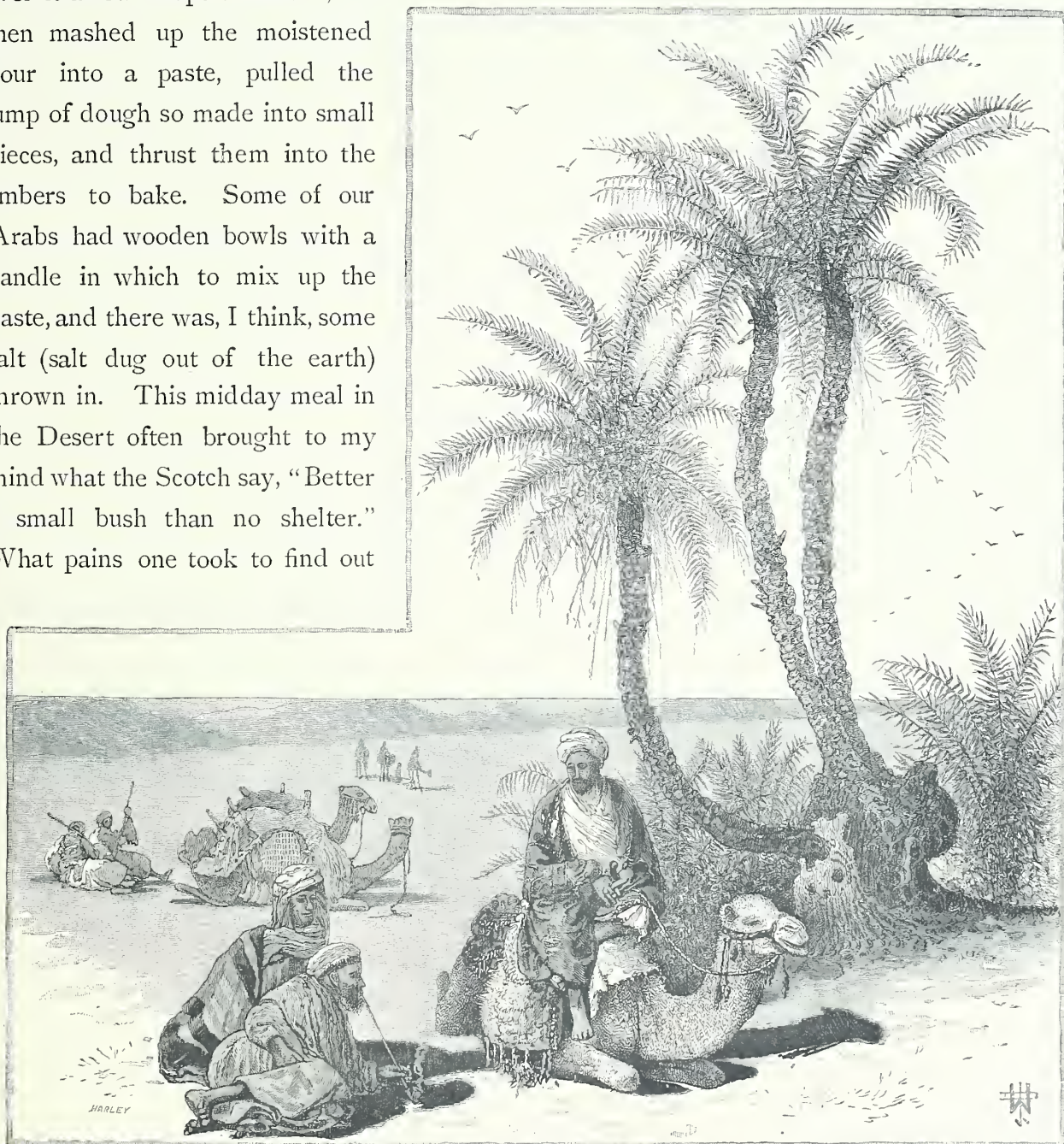
These complicated wheels and spars are a mixture of Egyptian shādoof and sākiah (water-wheel), by which the precious water is raised from the wells.

with the ground ; then gladly enough I alighted."

Four Arabs pass us on their way to Suez and Cairo. There is a halt and a chat between the tribesmen, but nothing to delay us. Now we come up to a very small Arab encampment (see page 15). There are one or two dark blackish-brown striped tents of goat's-hair, with a small whitish pattern woven in at the edge, propped up on sticks; though not large, they are divided in order to separate women and men.

So low is the tent and scanty is its accommodation, that a good-sized tent is rolled up round its proper sticks into a bundle not much bigger than those awful bundles of sticks and rugs which are thrust into first-class carriages at Charing Cross Station, to the annoyance of small travellers.

There was not much life in the encampment, and not much to observe. When we halted our camels, however, for the midday meal, and when, having had no breakfast, the Arabs had got their little fire lighted, I had an opportunity of watching their primitive mode of bread-making. One took some meal and held it in his hands, whilst his comrade poured over it a few drops of water; he then mashed up the moistened flour into a paste, pulled the lump of dough so made into small pieces, and thrust them into the embers to bake. Some of our Arabs had wooden bowls with a handle in which to mix up the paste, and there was, I think, some salt (salt dug out of the earth) thrown in. This midday meal in the Desert often brought to my mind what the Scotch say, "Better a small bush than no shelter." What pains one took to find out



'AYÚN MÚSA.

From this spot probably one commences the real desert journey.

the tallest bush. And then the arrangement of the baggage to eke out the pretence at shade, and the giving shade to different parts of the body in turn! In the rocky districts of the Desert this matter of shade did not concern one so much; and there it is that the traveller learns the full meaning of that expression, "As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah xxxii. 2).

It is at this part of the journey that one dreads a sand-storm (see page 15), the creator, so to speak, of those newly reared hills of sand and fresh dug out valleys, which we have been traversing all through the day. Such a storm overtook Dean Stanley's party in 1853. "The day after leaving 'Ayûn Mûsa was at first within sight of the blue channel of the Red Sea. But soon Red Sea and all were lost in a sand-storm, which lasted the whole day. Imagine all distant objects entirely lost to view ;—the sheets of sand fleeting along the surface of the Desert like streams of water ; the whole air filled, though invisibly, with a tempest of sand, driving in your face like sleet. Imagine the caravan toiling against this, the Bedawîn each with his shawl thrown completely over his head, half of the riders sitting backwards, the camels meantime thus virtually left without guidance, though from time to time throwing their long necks sideways to avoid the blast, yet moving straight onwards with a painful sense of duty truly edifying to behold. I had thought that with the Nile our troubles of wind were over ; but (another analogy for the *ships* of the Desert) the great saddle-bags act like sails to the camels, and therefore, with a contrary wind are serious impediments to their progress. . . . Through the tempest, this roaring and driving tempest, which sometimes made me think that this must be the real meaning of a *howling* wilderness (Deut. xxxii. 10) we rode on the whole day." ("Sinai and Palestine," p. 68.)

On the evening of the second day from 'Ayûn Mûsa we reached 'Ain Hawwârah (see page 18). There is a stunted palm-tree, or perhaps one might say a small thicket of stunted palms, shading a spring of brackish water on the slope of a ridge : and that is all. The dark green of the tree against the glaring sand makes it a conspicuous object for some distance. The Arabs say to you, looking wistfully at the spring, "Murrah" ("bitter") ; and it is this, probably, which has given rise to the conjecture that here is the spring "Marah," which the Israelites found to be bitter (Exodus xv. 23). The water at this spring varies in quantity and also in quality. Robinson ("Biblical Researches," vol. i.) thought the water unpleasant, bitter, and saltish in taste, but not worse than the water at the "Wells of Moses." His Arabs told him that it was the worst water in the district, but their camels drank of it freely. Professor Palmer found the water palatable. Mr. Holland, well acquainted with the spring, pronounced its purity to be very exceptional. Some glamour has been cast over the identification of this fountain with Marah from the fact that it has been incorrectly called 'Ain Hawarah, "Fount of Destruction," whereas its proper name, Hawwârah, signifies a "small pool," the water of which gradually sinks into the soil, leaving the residue unfit to drink. Some twenty minutes beyond this pool a little plain is reached in a hollow called El Fûl ("the Bean"). The water stands here after much rain, making a soil of rich loam. This patch of ground, the only spot fit for cultivation for miles round, is diligently cultivated by the Arabs, and, if there is rain, a good crop may be reaped of barley or beans, &c.

From this point one passes into broken country, and, were it not for the want of foliage, the change would be most refreshing. Crossing a bristly ridge, a fine view is obtained of the mountains of Hammâm Far'ûn, "Pharaoh's Hot Bath." Those great chalk cliffs look down into

the sea, and one knows that they must therefore mark a stage in our journey. And this reminds me that, under shelter of this ridge, above Wâdy Gharandel (see page 19), into whose thickets of tamarisk and palm, with its pleasant stream of water, we are going to descend, is a good halting-place whereat to make note of the peculiarities of the Sinai district, for it lies at the western extremity of the base line of the peninsula. This peninsula, naked of the gentler beauties of natural scenery, foliage, lake, running waters, does combine nature's three grander features—the sea, the desert, the mountains. Geographically its position is peculiar. Palestine, Egypt, and Arabia each have an interest in it, while from each it is kept distinct. Historically the interests embosomed herein are stupendous. From Sinai the very life of the human race takes a fresh departure. If, as great writers have suggested, Egypt with its prodigality of antiquarian information is yet a tomb whose occupants excite no interest, in the Desert—and the farther and farther we advance into it will the impression become more real—we feel that we are on the stream of continuous history. It will flow on and through the Desert; it will pass the hill country of Judah, till Jerusalem and Calvary and Olivet are reached, whence will issue fresh streams of life. Three clefts break in on that great waterless region, which we call generally the Desert, extending nearly from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. The westernmost is the Valley of the Nile, the second is the Gulf of Suez, and the Elanitic Gulf (the Gulf of 'Akabah) is the third (see page 224, vol. iii.). This last must have at one time communicated with the wide valley "El 'Arabah," which in turn communicates with that marvellous chasm, the valley of the river Jordan, running up into the heart of the Lebanon Mountains. The triangle formed between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of 'Akabah is Sinai, its boundary on the north, its base line being the plateau of the Tih, projecting into it somewhat like a blunt wedge. The area of this triangle is about twice the size of Yorkshire. South of the Tih a broad belt of sandstone crosses almost from shore to shore, and reaches down as far as Jebel Mukatteb. Very fantastic are the shapes and gorgeous is the colouring of the mountains in this district; the valleys are narrow and steep-sided, whilst there are many undulating barren plains of gravelly sand found at their mouths. In this formation are veins of iron, copper, and turquoise, in the mines of which Egyptian captives from the far south or from the northern Hittite country pined away their life, generation after generation.

South of this sandstone is a triangular mass of mountains, some of which reach to over eight thousand feet, nearly as high as the upper heights of Mount Hermon, in the north of Palestine. The two sides of this triangle are parallel with the sides of the peninsula itself, and meet in their common apex, Râs Mohammad. A strip of desert of very varying width bounds these sides, its greatest extension being at the plains El Markha (probably the "Wilderness of Sin") and El Ga'ah ("*the plain*"), on which is situated the little town of Tor. The dreariest portion of the peninsula is that which skirts the sea-coast from Suez to Tor. There are in it a few fine bluffs of limestone, but they are not more than two thousand six hundred feet high, and are altogether wanting in the colouring and picturesque outline of the sandstone and granite districts.

The grandest mountain groups are found in the centre of the peninsula, where granite, porphyry, sienite, gneiss, and mica schist occur. The granite district is fullest of fine scenery,



RED SEA, AS SEEN DURING THE FIRST DAY'S MARCH IN THE DESERT.

The proper adjustment of the load on the camel's back requires much skill. If it is unevenly balanced the poor beast suffers a good deal and begins grumbling until things are made ship-shape.

but the colouring of the doleritic dykes which streak the gneissic and schistose rocks always adds an extraordinary effect to the panorama. The tumbled group of granite mountains is divided



A HALT IN THE DESERT.

The Bedawin never trouble themselves with tents when on a journey.

into three clusters—on the west the Mount Serbâl pile, in the centre the Jebel Músa and Jebel Katharína group, and in the south the group which is dominated by Jebel Umm Shomer.

There are other mountains which attract attention—specially the range which shelves down towards the shore of the Gulf of 'Akabah—but not to the same extent. The long winding



IN THE WILDERNESS OF SHUR.

A small encampment of Bedawin, probably of the Terabin tribe, whose territory extends as far as Gaza.

valleys, which, in serpentine course, pierce the mountains, are very unlike the valleys in Switzerland. *There* there are perpetual streams and rivers, rushing with noisy violence on their way; *here* the silent valleys scarce have water in them at all, or, if there is any, it is merely a struggling, almost motionless, streamlet, unless some fierce storm bursts upon the mountains in



SAND-STORM IN THE DESERT.

The dreaded *khamseen* (wind and sand storm) very frequently overtakes the traveller in the region between Ayún Músa and Wâdy Amarah. Dean Stanley, Niebuhr, Miss Martineau, all encountered it here.

terrible flood. Such a storm and flood (a *seil*) is most destructive. The Wâdy Solâf, into which we shall come after we have passed through Wâdy Feirân, was the scene of a great flood

in 1867. An Arab encampment was then washed away and forty human beings, with camels, cattle, and sheep, perished. One still sees the marks of this flood, just as in most of the valleys one can trace the height to which the furious waters rise on more ordinary occasions. Mr. Holland was in Sinai at the time, and witnessed it. He has described the boiling, roaring torrent as filling the entire valley, carrying down huge boulders of rock as though they had been so many pebbles, with whole families swept by, hurried on to destruction by a volume of water powerful enough to transport the trunks of large palm-trees thirty miles from the place where they had grown. A simple thunderstorm with a heavy fall of rain dashing on the naked granite mountains will cause these dreadful effects, and in a few hours change a dry, level, listless valley into a mighty river.

But all the valleys are not barren. There are several perennial though not continuous streams. Wâdy Feirân contains a beautiful oasis of varied vegetation; and behind Tor is a magnificent grove of date-palms. The gardens in the Wâdy Lejâ are most fertile; and in the north-eastern district the oasis of Hudherah shows signs of being but the remnant of a very extensive cultivation. Myrrh, hyssop, fennel, thyme, and other fragrant herbs are found in the highlands; the rocks of the sides of the gorgeous coloured valleys are festooned with the elegant caper plant, and the caves are often draped with maidenhair fern; whilst the colocynth gourd runs over the ground amongst the gnarled roots of the *retem*, a white-blossomed broom (the "juniper" of the Bible), the shittim-tree (a species of acacia), and tamarisk. The *abeithirân*, a fragrant low-growing shrub, of which the camels are very fond, the *ghârkad*, a bushy, thorny shrub, producing in June small red berries juicy and acid, something like the barberry, the *kirdhy*, a green plant with small yellow flowers, also the *silleh*, a bluish thorny plant—grow all over the plain, as well as other dusty-looking plants, withered and worn and panting for moisture, and hardly distinguishable from the pale sickly green herbage which scantily covers portions of the valleys.

Round Serbâl, as round Jebel Mûsa and Jebel Katharîna, in the clefts of the mountain-sides, are many old gardens which tell of the industry of the former monkish population. Often so small as not to be perceived till one climbs up to them, the fence of stone and the imported earth must have acted as a sponge or dam to check the suddenly formed torrents coming down from the mountain-tops. Standing in one of these gardens, one thinks that possibly the whole peninsula, held by a powerful tribe like the Amalekites, may have been more fertile in the time of Moses, and that the resources of the country may then have been better developed than at present.

There are passages, such as Psalm lxxviii. 7—9, "When thou didst march through the wilderness . . . Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance, when it was weary," or Psalm lxxvii. 17—20, "The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: Thine arrows also went abroad," where the allusions are evidently to the life in the wilderness, when God "led His people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." These scattered evidences all go to support the supposition that in former

times this peninsula was better supplied with water, and that more land was cultivated, and in turn made capable of cultivation, than now.

Through the whole journey in the peninsula, or in the "Desert of the Wanderings," is noticeable in the clear luminous air the deep *silence*. The Arabs conducting the distinguished Niebuhr declared that their voices could be heard from shore to shore of the Gulf of 'Akabah. Exaggeration doubtless, but exaggeration of a fact—that in these silent regions the human voice travels a long way. Noticeable also is the fragrance of the Desert. Most of the low shrubs, which seem more dead than alive on one's stony path, are aromatic. But notice-worthy beyond everything is the desolation and mountain confusion. Most desolate, most barren—for the little oases of verdure we have mentioned are lost out of sight in any general view of the mountains—these hills of Sinai are the "Alps unclothed." A naked Switzerland, even though its glaciers and snows should remain, seems inconceivable; but Sinai is naked as to any verdure of forest tree, or fir, or pine, or moss, or flowery pasture. Strange lichens grow on the boulders and rocks in some parts, as weird in form as vivid in colouring. Such a path as that which leads up Jebel Katharína is all the world over much the same as a Swiss mountain-path, but the illusion vanishes when one looks for the shade of the trees which beguile the way up a ravine in Switzerland. Then the confusion—the intricate complication of peak and ridge! One traveller (Sir Frederic Henniker) says of the view from Jebel Músa, that it is as if "Arabia Petrea were an ocean of lava, which, whilst its waves were running mountains high, had suddenly stood still."

"The very nakedness of the rocks," says Professor Palmer ("Desert of the Exodus," page 27), "imparts to the scene a grandeur and beauty peculiarly its own. For as there is no vegetation to soften down the rugged outlines of the mountains or conceal the nature of their formation, each rock stands out with its own distinctive shape and colour as clearly as in some gigantic geological model map. In some wâdies the mountain-sides are striped with innumerable veins of the most brilliant hue, thus producing an effect of colour and fantastic design which it is impossible to describe. These effects are heightened by the peculiar clearness of the atmosphere and the dazzling brightness of the sunlight. One part of a mountain will glow with a ruddy or golden hue, while the rest is plunged in deepest shade. Sometimes a distant peak will seem to blend with the liquid azure of the sky, while another stands out in all the beauty of purple or violet tints; and, with what would seem the mere skeleton of a landscape, as beautiful effects are produced as if the bare rocks were clad with forests and vineyards, or capped with perpetual snows. Nature, in short, seems here to show that in her most barren and uninviting moods she can be exquisitely beautiful still."

But the joy at the nearness of water to drink is experienced by the camels as well as by one's self. Their pace has quickened, they move their heads and long necks from side to side, and when at last we come to the palms and tamarisks they hardly wait to be unloaded before they go to the water. Of course there is an abundance of noise, and shouting, and gesticulation, and argument; so while the Arabs fill the water-skins and load again we may rest our cramped

limbs on the sand in the shadow of this wild palm, and imagine the history of the valley. Wâdy Gharandel comes down from the western escarpment of Jebel et Tîh, the boundary



'AIN HAWWÂRAH.

This may be the spring "Marah" of Exodus xv. 23.

of the Et Tîh plateau (which, with its horizontal strata, may have suggested the name "Shur," as we have said), just like the Wâdy Amârah, which we crossed yesterday. Its distance from such a point as 'Ayûn Mûsa corresponds with the progress of the Israelites, as recorded in the

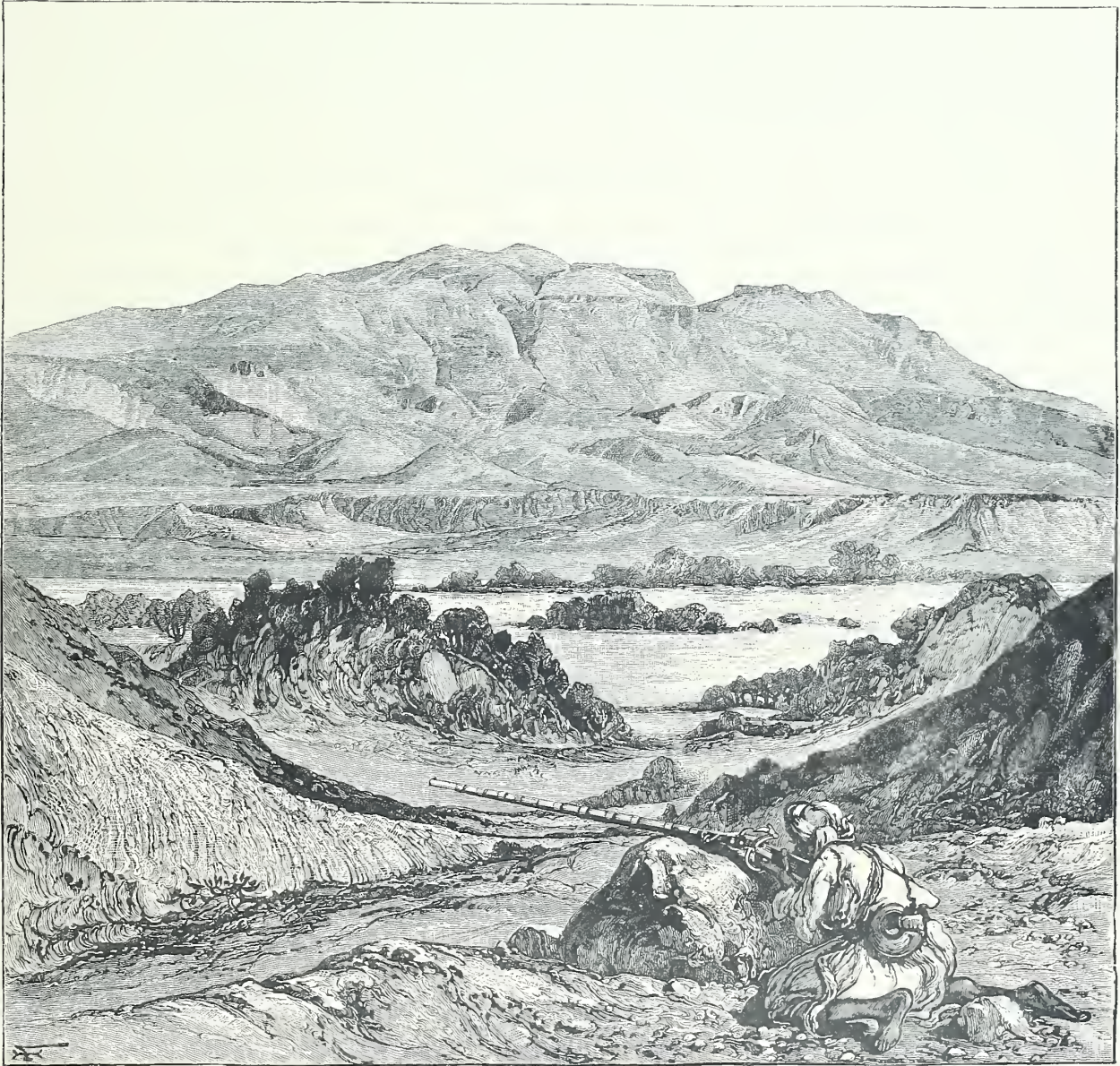


WÂDY AMÂRAH.

Of Wâdy Amârah, some forty miles from Ayûn Mûsa, Professor Palmer says, "There is no other water but this (at Bir Abu Suweïrah, twelve miles distant) in or near Wâdy Amârah." A proof that this wady is not to be identified with the Marah of the Bible.

Bible, to Elim. Here is water and here are palm-trees. In another valley, Wâdy Useit, farther on, there are some palm-trees, and also wells of water; but the valley is much smaller

and more rugged than Wâdy Gharandel. Supposing, then, that this is Elim, we can fancy the delight with which that great multitude, with its women and children, would hail the sight of green trees and verdure. Yet how barren must this valley have seemed when compared with the glorious fertility of the Delta. The illustration before us gives the shapes of the



ENTRANCE TO WÂDY GHARANDEL.

chalk hills in the valley, but their barren look and the aspect of desolation must be pictured from the scenery which such a coast as Dorsetshire or Portland affords us here in England.

Both Wâdy Useit and Wâdy Gharandel lead down to the hot sulphur springs which burst out under the northern side of Jebel Hammâm Far'ûn, nearly on a level with the sea. There is no way, however, except by a footpath high up the cliffs, to get round the mountain. One may be almost certain, therefore, that the Israelites crossed, as we are doing, Wâdy Gharandel (Elim) and Wâdy Useit, and so took their way to the Red Sea.

The Arabs place the passage of the Red Sea not only at 'Ayún Músa, but also at Hammâm Far'un. Here the unquiet spirit of the arrogant Pharaoh is still supposed to haunt the deep and keep alive the boiling sulphurous spring which started into being with his last drowning gasps of useless anger : and so the sea at this point is called Birket Far'un (" Pharaoh's Lake "). Great faith is placed by the Arabs in the virtues of the springs at the foot of the cliffs ; they believe them to be infallible in cases of rheumatism. Professor Palmer tried them. He says (" Desert of the Exodus," page 239) : " A few hours' walk (down Wâdy Useit) brought us again to the seashore, where we rejoined Captain Palmer, who had left us at Mukatteb, and while



THE SPRINGS IN WÂDY GHARANDEL.
Probably the "Elîm" of the Bible.

we were engaged at Sarábít el Khâdim had been occupied in surveying other parts. He had just returned from Jebel Bisher, at the base of the mountains of the Tîh, and was encamped by the Hammâm Far'un, or 'Pharaoh's Bath.' After the fatigues of the day a bath in a natural hot spring was very acceptable, and we made straight for the spot. A large bluff of white rock" (see page 27) "comes down almost into the sea, and at the base of this from several small fissures in the stone trickles a stream of nearly boiling hot water, which also bubbles up at intervals from the sand. The beach is covered with a white incrustation, and is so hot that one can scarcely stand upon it with naked feet, while a thick sulphurous steam exhales from the sand, making the whole immediate neighbourhood of the springs smell like

a medicated vapour bath. A dip at the point where the hot water meets the cool waves is delightful, as the temperature may be graduated at pleasure by moving a few feet either way. Our first bathe was brought to a premature conclusion by the appearance of a huge shark, which suddenly rose within a few feet of where I was standing, and continued to sail gracefully round and round the spot, waiting for a favourable opportunity to snap at the legs of the first person who should venture into the water. We watched his ominous black fin glittering for some time in the light of the setting sun and then turned back to camp."

Professor Palmer tells us that no Arab ventures to prove the efficacy of these baths for the too-frequent rheumatic pains to which he is exposed—owing not only to the bleak air of the mountains, but to the immense difference of the temperature of the day and the night—without bringing an offering to propitiate the angry ghost of the Egyptian king. This offering is usually a cake made of certain stated quantities of meal, oil, &c. He gives us at length, too, the Arab legend of the Baths :—

"When our Lord Moses had quarrelled with Pharaoh and determined to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, he found himself stopped by the salt sea. At the command of God Most High, however, he raised his staff and smote upon the waters, whereupon they parted on the right hand and on the left, and the children of Israel found a dry passage in the bottom of the deep. Then Pharaoh and his soldiery essayed to follow, but when they had come midway Moses again raised his staff, and, smiting the waters, said, 'Return, O sea, into thy former course!' and the waters closed over the Egyptians, and the children of Israel saw the corpses of their enemies floating on the waves. But Pharaoh was a mighty man and struggled with the billows; then seeing Moses standing on the rock above him, he waxed exceeding wroth, and gave so fierce a gasp that the waters boiled up as they closed over his drowning head. Since that time the angry ghost of the King of Egypt has haunted the deep; and should any unfortunate vessel come near the spot he rises up and overwhelms it in the waves, so that to the present day no ship can sail on Pharaoh's Lake."

The whole peninsula is a hot-bed of tradition and traditional sites, planted and carefully tended not only by Christian but by Mohammadan. Take those only relating to Moses, which are of constant recurrence, and which give a sort of atmosphere of evidence to the conjectures which establish the mountain of Sinai as the scene of God's conference with Moses and of the giving the Law.—There are the "Wells of Moses" from which we started on our Desert journey. In the Convent of St. Katharine (see vignette on title-page, vol. iii.) we have the Well where he watered his sheep, of which there is the Arab replica in the cool and shady cave on the side of Jebel Músa, higher up and above the convent, which the monks only point out as the hermitage of a cobbler saint (see page 237, vol. iii.). Any spot whose surroundings were strange or magnificent became associated in the Arab's mind with the grand figure of the Hebrew Lawgiver, even to the exclusion of Mohammad himself, and in this possibly there is a shadow of testimony for the greater antiquity of the Moses legends. The rivalry between the monks of Feirân and those of Jebel Músa would be sure to bring into existence a double series of

memorable spots at which it would be necessary for the pious pilgrim to make his devotions. Take another handful of the lesser traditions.—At the foot of the mountain above Tor the Arabs place “our Lord Moses’ Bath;” a natural hot spring takes its rise in the mountain, and trickles down by various canals into the midst of a large palm-grove belonging to the monastery of St. Katharine. Here a series of chambers similar in arrangement and construction to those of an ordinary Turkish bath have been built over the pool for the convenience of those who take the water, which is very similar to the waters at Hammâm Far’ûn. Then there are several Moses’ seats—(1) at Abu Zenimeh, some miles south of Jebel Hammâm Far’ûn, whence Moses is said to have watched the destruction of Pharaoh and his host; (2) in the pass of El Watîyeh, by which on the extreme east the great granite enceinte of the Jebel Mûsa district is pierced—here a rock is pointed out as having got its shape from the Lawgiver’s form; (3) in Wâdy ed Deir there is a boulder with an indentation which the Arabs say is the mark of Moses’ back; (4) on Jebel Mûsa itself you have, besides other marvels at the summit, a rock with a grotto, into which you creep to look at the impression of a man’s head and hand. The monks say that here Moses hid himself at the time when he received the Law. The Arabs say that he crept into this cave in obedience to the Divine command, when the Lord spoke to him, saying, “Creep thou in, O Moses, for thou canst not bear my glory!” While (5) in the rock, which serves as the foundation of the mosque hard by, is a small cave with a flight of steps leading down into it, which is said to have been the resting-place of Moses during the forty days of his sojourn on the mount.—Rocks, moreover, struck by or spoken to by Moses are very numerous also in the valleys round Jebel Mûsa.

One tradition connected with a spot—far off, indeed, but inseparable from the history of Moses, and assigning to that history the geographical boundaries of the Bible account—gives the name “Moses’ Well” (‘Ayûn Mûsa) to the spring just above the picturesque cascade on the steep slope of Jebel Neba (“Mount Nebo,” in Moab); not, however, so as to make confusion with the events in Moses’ life which the Red Sea and Pisgah severally witnessed.

Mohammadan tradition points steadily to Jebel Mûsa as the “Mount Sinai” of the Bible. The passage in the Korân (chap. xx.) reads thus :—

“Hast thou been informed of the history of Moses? When he saw fire, and said unto his family, ‘Tarry ye here, for I perceive fire; peradventure I may bring you a brand thereout, or may find a direction in our way by the fire.’ And when he was come near into it a voice called unto him, saying, ‘O Moses! verily I am thy Lord: wherefore put off thy shoes, for thou art in the sacred valley Towa. And I have chosen thee; therefore hearken with attention unto that which is revealed unto thee. Verily I am thy God; there is no God beside me: wherefore worship me, and perform thy prayer in remembrance of me. Verily the hour cometh: I will surely manifest the same, that every soul may receive its reward for that which it hath deliberately done.’”

The commentators on this passage say that Moses obtained leave of his father-in-law Sho’eib, or Jethro (who gives his name to the steep ravine at the north-east corner of Jebel

Músa, by which one descends from Rás Sufsáfēh to the mouth of Wâdy ed Deir), to visit his mother, and that Moses departed with his family from Midian towards Egypt; but coming to the valley of Towa, wherein Mount Sinai stands, his wife was taken in labour and delivered of a son in a very dark and snowy night. (One hardly thinks of snow in connection with Sinai, but when I made the ascent of Jebel Katharína there was a thin sprinkling of snow on the higher ranges; and when the Ordnance Survey party was engaged on the mountain, in 1868, there was heavy snow.) Moses had also lost his way, and his cattle were scattered from him, when on a sudden he saw a fire by the side of a mountain, which, on his nearer approach, he saw burning in a *green* bush.*

The sources from which Mohammad drew for the Korān, or Cor'ân, were for the most part Jewish. He was an enthusiast who, being confronted with strange and perplexing difficulties, tried to grapple with these difficulties by the light he saw and felt within himself. Ignorant, impressible, superstitious, carried away by circumstances, may we not think rather thus of him, than as a mere charlatan and impostor? His earlier life as a shepherd on the hills gave him the true shepherd's love for nature, and apprenticed him in those long soul-communings which equipped him to be the prophet of a nation. His later adventurous life as a camel-driver to the Syrian caravans must have brought him into contact with Jewish merchants and hānifs † who would visit the great markets. Jewish legends abound both in the Cor'ân and in the "Speeches," and one may suppose that these legends had been in part collected by Mohammad during his sojourn in Sinai, and in part learned from the Jewish tribe of Mecca, the Kheibari, whom Dr. Wolff supposed to be descendants of the Rechabites of Jeremiah's time. If this were so, then in these legends we possess very old Jewish folklore indeed.

Here are some of the legends strung together by Professor Palmer out of the commentaries on the Cor'ân, which may well be read as we make another halt to gaze seawards and sketch the form of Jebel Hammâm Far'ún. The Pharaoh of the Exodus was a just and vigorous prince, and his reign was protracted to an unusual length (this suggests Ramses II., the Greek Sesostri). He became infatuated with pride and rebelled against God, claiming for himself divine honours. He married Asia. Of such beauty and goodness was she, that it was said of her that God, when asked by the angels, marvelling at the beauty of the Houris of Paradise, whether he had created aught lovelier, answered, "Yea, I have created Asia and Mary and Fâtinah." Pharaoh was warned on first entering his wife's bridal apartment by an invisible monitor of his approaching end, and of the overthrow of his dominion by the hands of a prophet from among the sons of Israel. It was this that caused him to issue the fierce decree against the male children who should be born to the Israelitish women.

Then comes the mysterious midnight voice which tells him "Moses is born and Pharaoh's doom draws nigh." The soldiery are sent out everywhere to seek for and destroy the child,

* Taken chiefly from Sale's "Korān."

† Hānif, "incliner." Just before Mohammad's time there had been a strange stirring amongst the better classes of Arabs, who were dissatisfied with the low fetishism of their countrymen, and were seeking the "religion of Abraham," the father of their progenitor Ishmael. By these men (hānifs) a change was declared to be at hand, and a prophet about to arise.

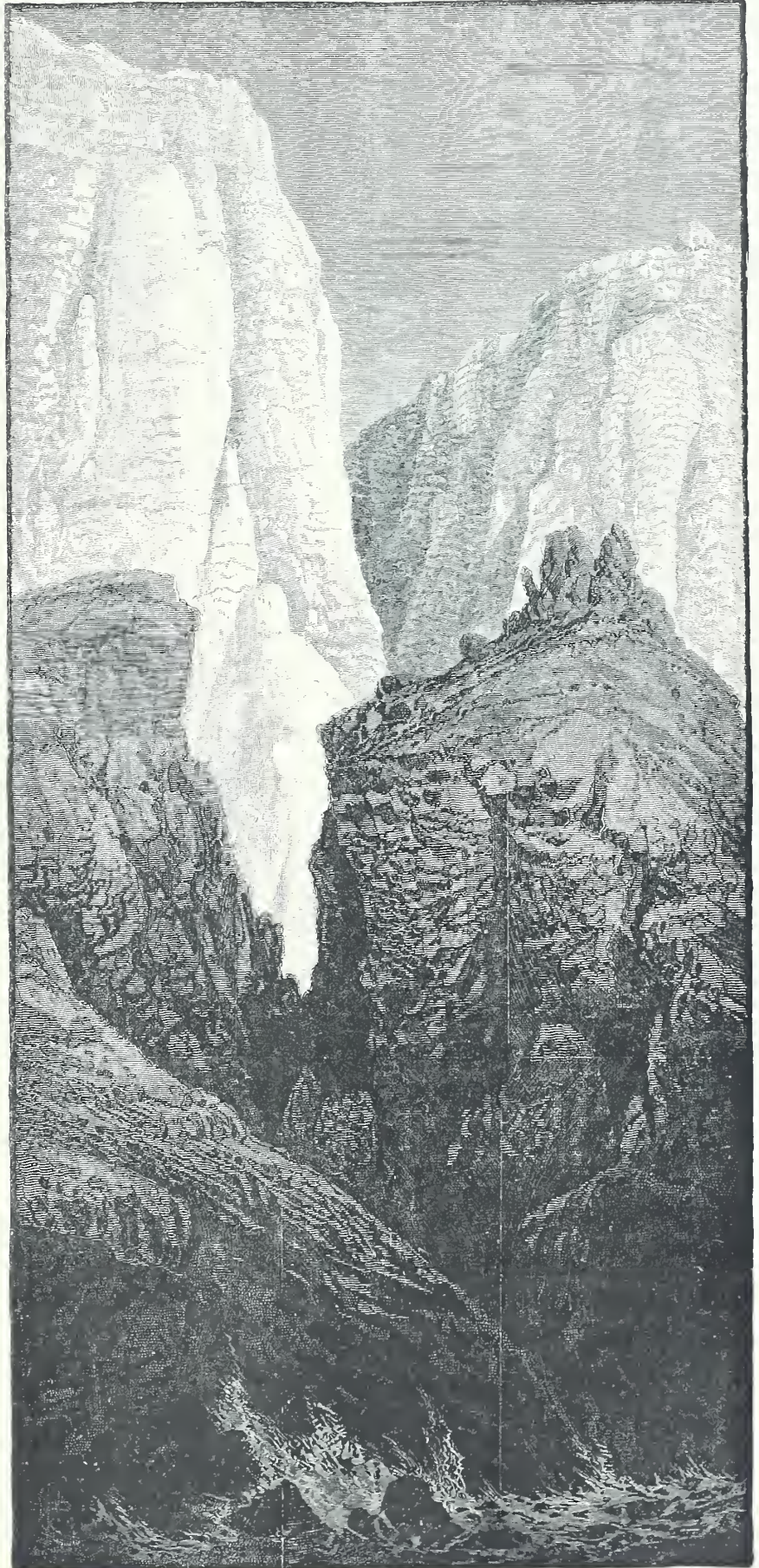
and so come to Imrân's house. The mother has hidden the child in the cold oven and gone out. Her sister, not knowing this, comes in and lights a fire beneath the oven in order to bake some bread. It was just when the fire had burned up that the soldiers forced their way in. Every nook and corner of the house is searched in vain—the heated oven is out of the question as a hiding-place. When they are gone the mother returns; she sees the oven heated—she tears her hair, beats her breast, scolds her sister. Then rushing to the oven to look at her roasted darling, she finds him alive and well and draws him forth without a scorch! After this she thinks she may entrust him to the care of the Nile. And so it is that at the end of three days (some say forty) the child is wafted by a branch canal into a tank in the midst of Pharaoh's Palace. Pharaoh's daughters (seven) were afflicted with various diseases: the wonderful child cured them all by his touch, and was, in consequence, promoted, after much coaxing of her husband on Asia's part, to be heir-apparent to the throne. When Moses reached the age of three years Pharaoh sent for him, and, captivated by his pretty childish ways, set him upon his knee to play. Moses immediately seized him by the beard with one hand and soundly boxed his ears with the other, at which sign of decided authority all his old suspicions were revived, and Pharaoh again determined on putting him to death. This good intention Asia soon divined, and excused the child's conduct on the score of infantile thoughtlessness and foolishness. "I will soon convince you," said she, "that the boy is incapable of judging between right and wrong." She ordered a silver basin to be brought containing a date and a live ember, and setting the basin before Moses, commanded him to choose. As he was about to select the date the angel Gabriel appeared before him, struck his hand upon the coal and made him carry it to his mouth. Of course his tongue was burned severely and he uttered dreadful howls. Pharaoh was now convinced that the boy was a fool, and from that hour Moses lisped in his speech.

The cause of Moses' flight from Pharaoh's court was the fear of the blood feud which would be the consequence of his killing an Egyptian who was abusing an Israelite. He went to Midian. At the watering place outside the city he acted the part of a chivalrous knight to the daughters of Sho'eib, the blind prophet of Midian. The shepherds, when they had finished watering their own flocks, rolled a great stone over the mouth of the well, so that Sho'eib's daughters should not share in the use of the water. Moses seeing this grew wroth, and gave the huge boulder such a kick with his foot as to send it flying full forty cubits from the spot, and Sho'eib's daughters watered their sheep. The two girls of course told their father of this, and he sent to invite the stranger to his house. Then there comes the contract of eight years' service for the eldest daughter Sâfura (Zipporah), and the suggested interval of quiet pastoral life.

We have already considered the tradition of the Burning Bush. The contest between Pharaoh's seventy thousand magicians and Moses assumes this shape:—The magicians are assembled, Pharaoh is seated on an eminence commanding a wide valley, on the sides of which all the fashion of the Egyptian world is grouped. The magicians had provided three hundred mule-loads of ropes and sticks, and had so sprinkled magic dust on the eyes of the

spectators that when these loads were thrown out in the valley they appeared like living and writhing snakes. But Moses put an end to the illusion, for his rod (the rod of which in the Cor'ân he says to God, "It is my rod whereon I lean, and with which I beat down leaves for my flock, and I have other uses for it, such as to drive away wild beasts from my flock, to carry my bottle of water, to stick up and hang my upper garment on to shade me from the sun") when cast down devoured all the rest, so that even the sorcerers believed. Pharaoh became exceedingly angry, and said, "Verily he is the great sorcerer who has taught you all, but ye shall suffer for this."

The Cor'ân describes certain plagues which were inflicted for a special act of impiety on Pharaoh's part. He had had a great tower made, and from it had shot an arrow into heaven; this fell at his feet covered with blood, and he said, "I have slain the God of Moses!" An interval of forty days occurs between each plague. The taking away of one plague Pharaoh declared to



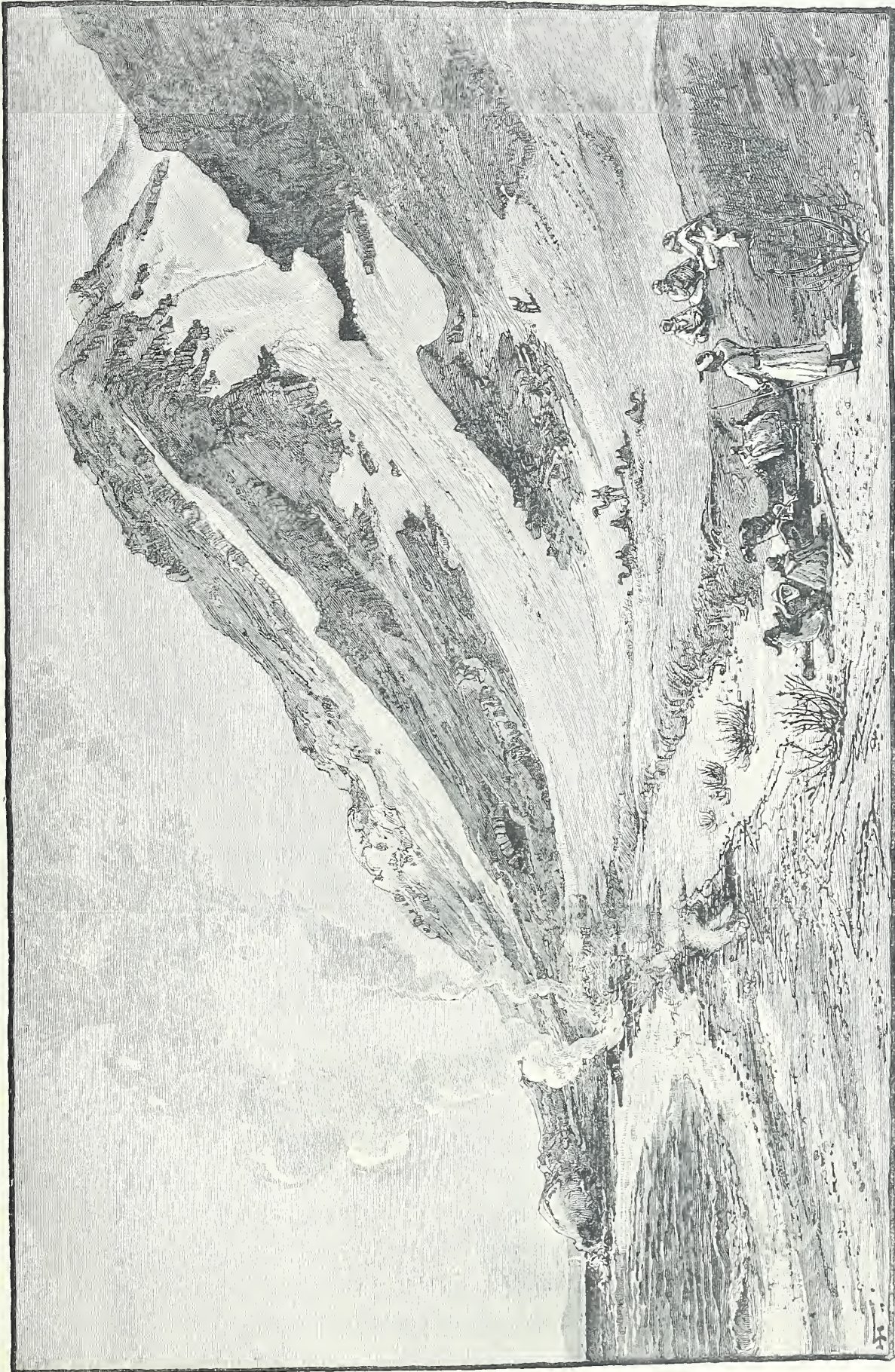
THE CLIFFS OF JEBEL HAMMÂM FAR'ÛN.
The altitude given in the "Ordnance Survey Map" for Jebel Hammâm Far'ûn is 1,576 feet.

be a miracle of his own, and commanded the people to adore him. Thereon the angel Gabriel was sent to him in the likeness of a goodly youth, and addressed him thus : " I am one of the servants of my Lord the King, and I desire sentence on a servant of mine own. For I have heaped benefits upon him, and he hath rebelled against me, and denies my right over him, and lays claim to my name and power." Pharaoh answered, " Let him be drowned in the sea ! " and gave a warrant under his own hand and seal that this should be done. On this the angel left him. The Exodus soon followed, and the passage through the Red Sea, before Pharaoh's pursuing army, of the twelve tribes of Israel by twelve suddenly-revealed paths.

Pharaoh's horse refused to take the unusual road, it is said, until Gabriel appeared mounted on a charger to lead the way. In the middle of the sea Gabriel approached the king and drew forth the royal warrant which has just been mentioned. Pharaoh on reading it understood the hidden meaning of Gabriel's proceedings and knew that the hour of his doom had come. He would fain repent, but it was too late ; and the waters closed in on Pharaoh and his armies.

Such traditions linger in these drear valleys, then, belonging to a very remote period ; and by these Mohammad's impressionable mind was instructed. The Arab of to-day and the Arab of former ages has always been fond of story and song. As we all know, the happiest memories of our own childhood's imaginative years connect themselves with stories which come from a far-distant and mysterious Arabia. A legend slight and fragmentary attaching to some cave or rock would soon get magnified and contorted so as to be scarcely recognisable by those who first told it ; passed on from one to another, it would gain power, and at length become an article of faith. A further reason why legend and tradition should grow rapidly and so readily in this Desert district is to be found, perhaps, in the seclusion of the Arab's life from the outer world. He lives far from the madding crowd. Monotonous is the journey of his life. One day is so much like another, and one journey is so undistinguishable from another, that anything with a pretence to singularity is sure to be remarked on and treasured up.

Soon after leaving Wâdy Gharandel one notices two heaps of stone called Mangaz Hisân Abu Zena (" The leap of Abu Zena's horse ") ; and this is the story. An Arab named Abu Zena was riding a mare in foal, and notwithstanding her condition was riding at a furious pace. When he came to this spot he dug his spurs into her sides, and the mare made a tremendous leap and fell down dead. Abu Zena, in amazement at the immense length of the stride which the horse had taken, marked the distance with two stones, and afterwards related the incident to his friends. The matter was soon noised abroad, and every Arab who passed that way with a comrade would discuss the marvellous leap, and trace out again the distance, as Abu Zena himself had done. Thus the stone heaps grew. Admiration for the mare's performance soon increased with the pagan Arabs of that time. She became at length an object of veneration, and was worshipped as a deity, offerings of corn being brought to the spot. But when the Arabs forsook idolatry for the worship of the true God they came to look upon their former gods as devils, and turned their pagan observances into an expression of aversion for the



JEBEL HAMMÂM FAR'ÛN.

The hot springs bubble up at intervals from the sand, and also issue from several fissures in the rocks. The temperature of the water is 160°.



ROCK FORMS IN WÁDY HAMR.
This valley leads up to Jebel et Tih.

demon who, as they supposed, haunted the accursed spot. Then instead of bringing the usual offering of corn they threw stones on the heaps, and kicking a little dust on them with their feet, would cry out, "Eat that and get thee gone!" This custom is still kept up. Each of my Arabs, so far as I could see, threw a stone, and kicking the dust over it said contemptuously, "Begone and feed!" If one may credit this tradition, it would go at least to prove that at one time horses were not uncommon in the peninsula; and, if so, there must have been pasture for them.

The scenery as one approaches Wády Taiyebah is fine. Very noteworthy is the perfect network of little white chalky wádies running into and from the Tíh ridge, which meet in Wády Shebeikeh and give it its name, "The Net." It is here that a decision has to be come to as to which of two routes one will follow in order to reach Mount Sinai. The one leads by Sarábít el Khâdim, with its most interesting Egyptian ruins; the other leads down the Wády Taiyebah to the Red Sea and the Wilderness of

Sin, and then turns inland again to strike the Wâdy Feirân. We shall eventually take the lower route, but here branch off awhile to explore the wonders of the upper route.

Wâdy Hamr is a broad valley with precipitous sides of limestone. The mountains on all sides abound in salt, and it is amazing to see how quickly the Arabs find and scoop out great lumps. Rough and coarse it is, but beautifully white. In front of us now rises the pyramidal peak of Sarbût el Jemel, naked, desolate, and seeming to bar all further progress. The sandstone district commences here, and we see the first specimens of those Sinaitic inscriptions with which one becomes so familiar on the sandstone rocks in Wâdy Mukatteb.

Now these inscriptions are a most interesting study. Diodorus (B.C. 10), referring either to the palm-groves of Tor or to Feirân, says that "there is also an altar of solid stone very old, inscribed with unknown letters." About A.D. 518 Cosmas, the Indian traveller, visited the Sinaitic peninsula. He noticed that at all the halting places all the stones in that region which were broken off from the mountains were written with carved Hebrew characters, and these were explained to him by his Jewish companions "as written thus: 'the departure of such and such a man of such a tribe, in such a year, in such a month;' just as with us some people often write in inns." The mistake here made (Stanley points it out, but it would occur to any one) is that the writing is not ordinary Hebrew.

The varying explanations of these inscriptions are—(1) that the greater part of the ancient inscriptions are in a dialect of Arabic, and are the greetings and names of Christian pilgrims; (2) that they are of earlier date, and are the work of pagan pilgrims to a shrine on Mount Serbâl; (3) that the characters are Egyptian, that the rude accompanying figures illustrate the characters, and that they record the chief events of the Exodus, being of Israelite origin.—The wide district over which these inscriptions are spread must always be taken into account in any attempt to explain their origin and purport, as also the very different dates at which some of them were written. I can hardly think that those which almost cover the conspicuous rock, Hudheibat el Hajjâj, on the tableland above the valley of 'Ain Hudherah, are of the same date as those in Wâdy Mukatteb. Dean Stanley has given an account of the impressions which the inscriptions, from their position and variety, left on his mind—prepared as it was by acquaintance with the remarks of those ancient and modern writers who have written of them. Judging from the localities, he assigns many of them to pilgrims visiting sacred shrines, specially those in Wâdy Lejâ, on the way to Jebel Katharína, and those in the Wâdy Aleyât leading up into Serbâl, and those on the top of Serbâl itself. In these valleys there is no thoroughfare, so that either the places themselves or some spot in near vicinity must have been the objects of the visit.

In a general way one would say of the inscriptions, looking at their slight workmanship, that they were written by ordinary passers-by. Most of them are on sandstone, which, as every one knows, is very easily figured. Those which are on granite are faintly and imperfectly scratched. Very few are so out of reach that they might not have been written by an ordinarily venturesome climber to kill the time, say, whilst his caravan was preparing to start.

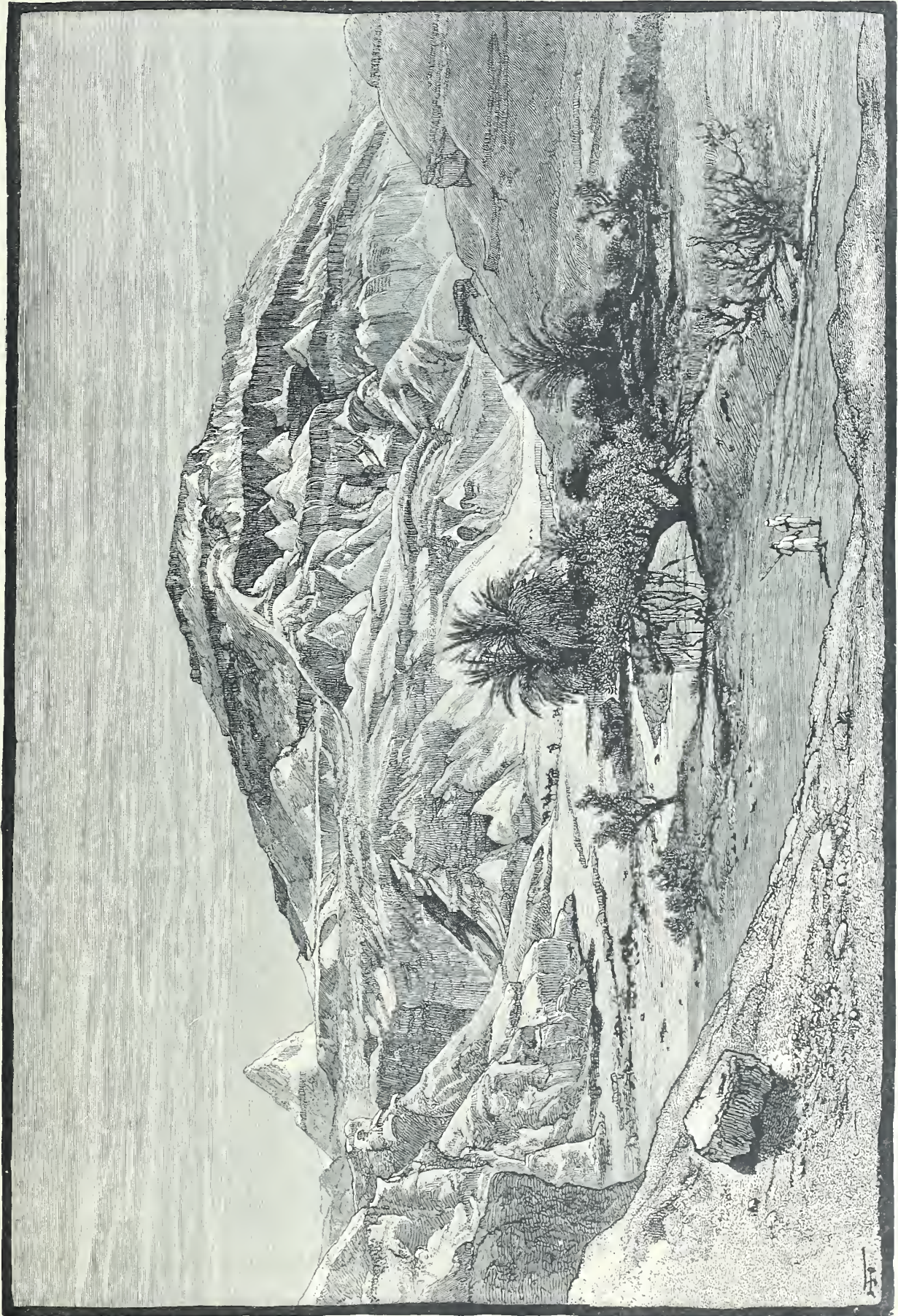
Professor Palmer considers that the Sinaitic inscriptions in Wâdy Mukatteb were the work of idle loungers, and he pronounces them to be as unimportant as the Arab, Greek, and European *graffiti* with which they are interspersed. The language used is Aramean, that Semitic dialect



WÂDY USEIT.

One can get down to the sea-shore by this valley, but the path is hardly passable for camels. There are clumps of stunted palm every here and there, and some brackish water.

which in the earlier centuries of our era held the place now occupied by Arabic. To him they seemed in style much like the performances of our cockney tourists in some favourite holiday resort. Wâdy Mukatteb is on the high road through the country, and has the largest share of



WÂDY TAIYEBEH.
 "The Valley of Good" (Water and Pasture). Through this valley most probably the Israelites journeyed to their encampment by the Red Sea.

the inscriptions. In more flourishing times—and especially during the monkish occupation, when Feirân was so important a centre—there must have been *sûks*, or public markets, there, and even permanent colonies of traders, to supply the wants of the inhabitants. Those frequenting such fairs, writing and speaking the prevalent dialect of the East, would be as likely to leave notices of themselves and their birthplace, &c., as do their successors in other parts of the desert to-day. “I imagine,” he says (“Wilderness of the Exodus,” page 193), “that the greater part of these inscriptions are due to a commercial people, traders, carriers, and settlers in the land. No less than twelve of those which we copied were bi-lingual, being written in Greek and Sinaitic by one and the same hand. The existence of one of these was previously known; it differs from the rest in being carefully cut with a chisel and enclosed by a border line. That many of the writers were Christian is proved by the number of Christian signs, crosses, &c., which they used, but it is equally clear from internal evidence that a large proportion of them were pagans. They must have extended far down into the later monkish times, possibly until the spread of El Islâm brought the ancestors of the present inhabitants, Bedawîn hordes from Arabia proper, to the mountains of Sinai, and dispersed or absorbed that Saracen population of which the monks stood in such mortal fear.” In some such way, too, would Professor Palmer perhaps account for the inscriptions on Serbâl—that they are possibly the work of those who had to tend the beacon fires which were lighted on the highest point (El Madhawwa, “The Lighthouse”) to tell of approaching invaders, just like those at Hazeroth above 'Ain Hudherah, or those on the road from Syria to Egypt.

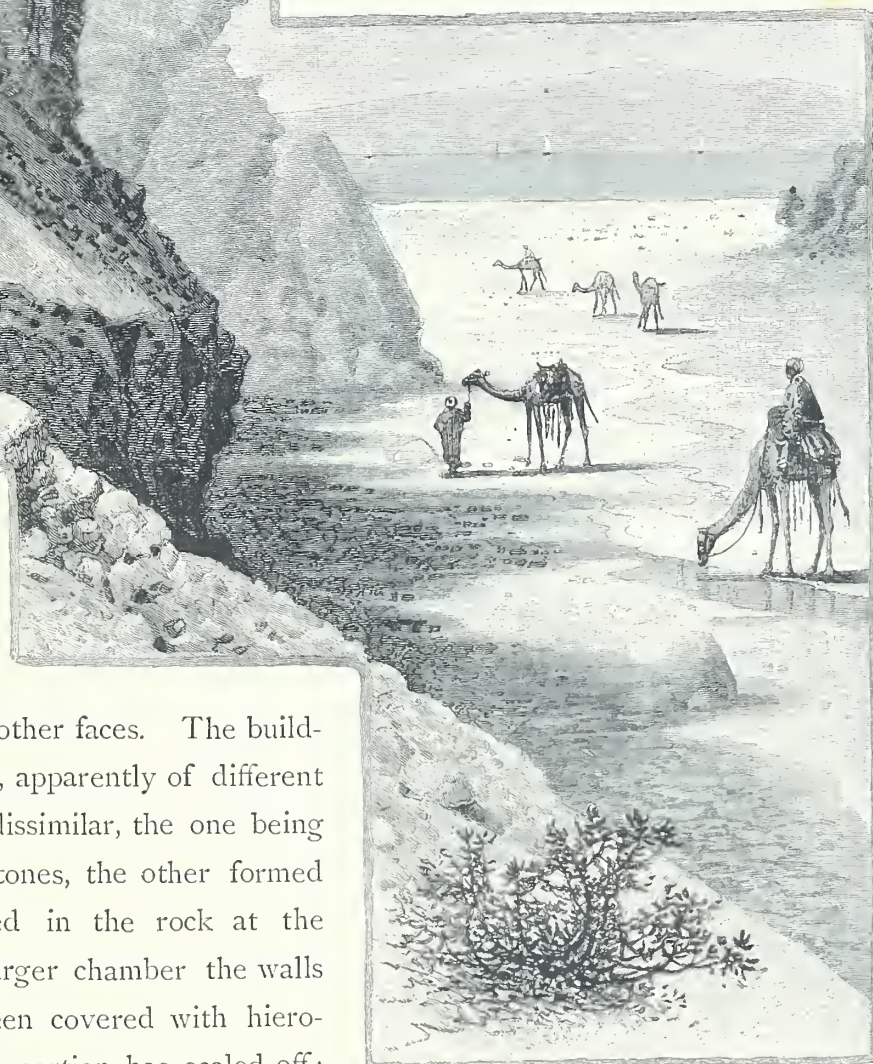
Passing on, then, from the encampment near Sarbût el Jemel, we halt again at the mouth of Wâdy Nasb (“The Valley of the Sacrificial Stone”). This name suggests rites of some ancient religion. There are here great heaps of slag and other vestiges of the Egyptian miners who once colonized the place, and whose workings for copper, manganese, and turquoise cover the neighbouring sandstone hills.

A few hours' ride from this encampment brings one to the foot of the mountain (six or seven hundred feet high) of Sarâbît el Khâdim (“The Heights of the Servant.”) This name, the Arabs say, was derived from a black statue representing a “slave or servant,” which was removed by the French during their occupation of Egypt, but for which, amongst the ruins, a suitable pedestal was found by Professor Palmer. The Professor also suggests that a female foot carved in black stone, which belonged to Major Macdonald, and was found in this very spot, may have been a portion of the statue itself. The ruins of Sarâbît el Khâdim were discovered by a chance in 1761 by Niebuhr. The mountain is of precipitous sandstone, mostly red, and the climb up its sides is a trying one: there is a scramble over a slide of loose sandstone—a sloping ledge of rock overhanging a precipice—and a steep ravine! Then a level ridge is reached connected with a high tableland of sandstone, intersected in every direction by sudden ravines and broken up by rising knolls. On one of the highest of these are the singular and mysterious ruins we have come to see. There is a small enclosure contained by the débris of a wall of hewn stone, about one hundred and sixty feet long from east to west, by seventy



broad. Within are broken columns and numerous (about fifteen) *stelæ*, in shape like ordinary English gravestones, standing up at irregular intervals. These stones vary in height, as do other similar stones outside the enclosure, from seven to ten feet; they are from eighteen inches to two feet in breadth, and from fourteen to sixteen inches in thickness. They are rounded off on the top, forming an arc over the broadest side. On one face appears generally the common Egyptian symbol of the winged globe with the two serpents, and one or more priests making

offerings to the gods, while various cartouches (some of them being those of the earliest Egyptian kings) and hieroglyphics cover the other faces. The buildings consist of two temples, apparently of different date. The construction is dissimilar, the one being built up entirely of hewn stones, the other formed by two chambers excavated in the rock at the easternmost end. In the larger chamber the walls look as if once they had been covered with hieroglyphics, though the greater portion has scaled off; at the upper end is a small niche, probably for the altar, beside which is a carved figure in bas-relief.



WÂDY TAIEBEH,

With the Red Sea in sight. The lower part of the valley is very picturesque. The horizontal strata of the cliffs and their bright colouring make a deep impression on one fresh from the Desert.

Another niche is seen at the right-hand corner, and in the centre of the chamber is a pillar cut in the solid rock and covered with hieroglyphics. The paint still remains on some of these—emerald green inside the characters, with a red and black band above and below. It is supposed now that these monuments were connected with the working of copper-mines in the neighbourhood, and that the temple probably presented to the miners and their guards the worship of the national gods of Egypt. Mines are very numerous in the neighbourhood. Although Robinson failed to find them, Mr. Holland discovered them, and the Ordnance Survey party certified them. The manner of worship of the Egyptians in outlying districts is still a matter about which we know very little. We seem to be approaching towards the Egyptians' religion in great sacerdotal and royal centres like Thebes or Abydos : but it was never a *popular* worship—rather a pageant of religion set forth in the presence of the people by an exclusive priestly caste. The mines were so extensively worked that Sarâbît el Khâdim may have been made a religious centre on account of them. Or it is possible that, like Mecca to Mohammad and his followers, this may have been a sacred place of pilgrimage for the ancient Egyptian world. To it certain kings may have made pilgrimages, and they may have erected each of them a votive column, with his name inscribed. Moses' demand, therefore, that the Israelites might go three days' journey into the desert (which seems to have excited no surprise whatever as a demand) to do sacrifice, may have been based on national customs existing amongst the Egyptians.

The inscriptions in the mines about Sarâbît el Khâdim range from the twelfth dynasty of Egyptian kings down to (though they become very rare at this date) Ramses IV. of the twentieth dynasty, a period of twelve or thirteen hundred years. Between Ramses IV. and his ancestor, Mineptah II. (son of Ramses II.), the Pharaoh in whose reign probably the Exodus took place, is a space of a hundred years. We may suppose, then, that while the Israelites were marching through Wâdy Taiyebah to the Red Sea these mines were in full work in the hills to their left, and that the worship of Hathor, "queen of heaven and earth and the dark depths below," or of Supt, "the lord of the East," was being punctually and carefully rendered. It is almost certain that Senoferu, "a good king," who is buried under the ancient pyramid so conspicuous from the Nile near Meidoum, was the conqueror of the mountainous peninsula of Sinai—long coveted for its mineral wealth—and that permanent works at the mines were established by him.

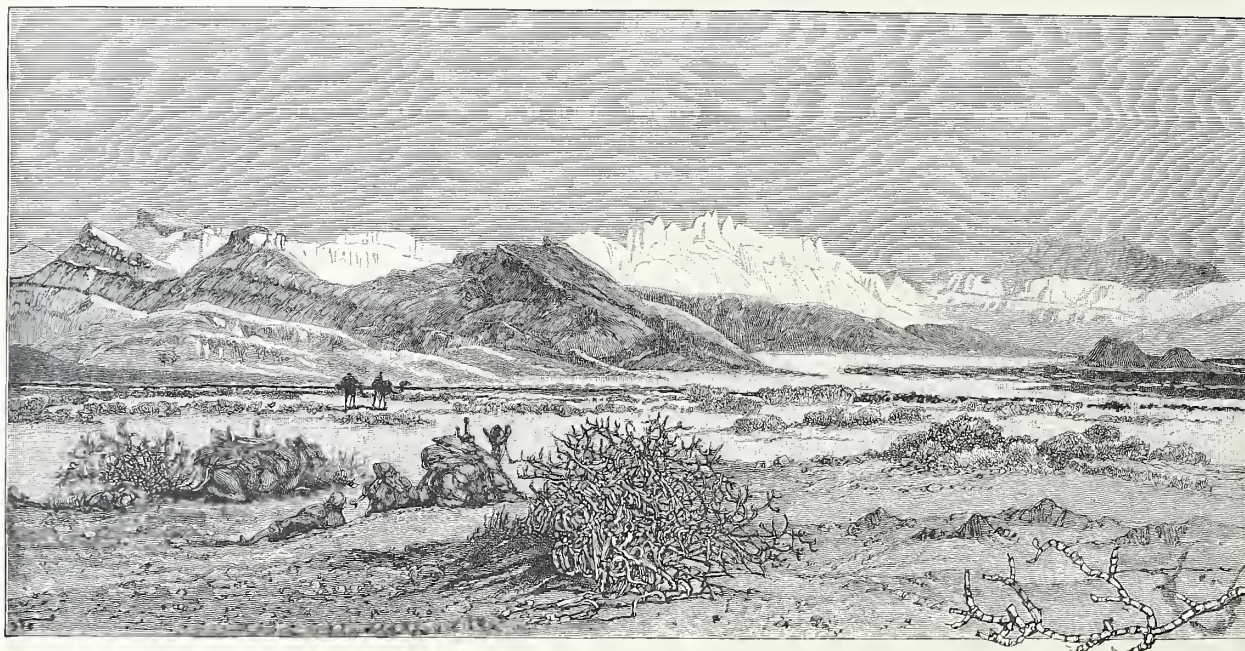
Before turning our backs on Sarâbît el Khâdim let us read one of the inscriptions by Professor Palmer's help. It refers to a certain Har-ur-ra, superintendent of mines, who arrived at his post in the month Phamenoth (January or February), in the reign of one of the kings of the twelfth dynasty (B.C. 2466—2266). The author of the inscription tells us that he never once left the mine, and he exhorts the chiefs to go there also. "If your faces fail the goddess Hathor will give you her arms to aid you in the work. Behold me, how I tarried there after I had left Egypt; my face sweated, my blood grew hot, I ordered the workmen working daily and said unto them there is still turquoise in the mine and the vein will be found in time.

And it was so ; the vein was found at last and the mine yielded well. When I came to this land aided by the king's genii I began to labour strenuously. The troops came and entirely occupied it, so that none escaped therefrom. My face grew not frightened at the work, I toiled cheerfully. I brought abundance, yea, abundance of turquoise, and obtained yet more by my search. I did not miss a single vein."—Is it not strange to read such a record referring to a time about four thousand years distant from us ? There is another inscription given also by Professor Palmer, which may, perhaps, date from 3766 B.C. It runs thus : "I came to the mines of my lord. I commenced working the *mafka* (turquoise) at the rate of fifteen men daily. Never was like done in the reign of Senoferu the Justified."

But we have to retrace our steps in order to follow the lower route by Wâdy Taiyebbeh. Possibly we may startle in these mountains a herd of gazelles, and our Arabs may get a shot. In "Eothen" (page 308, chap. xxiii.) the Arabs surprise in her sleep a young gazelle, and take the darling prisoner. "I carried her," the description runs, "before me on my camel for the rest of the day and kept her in my tent all night ; I did all I could to gain her affections, but the trembling beauty refused to touch food and would not be comforted. Whenever she had a seeming opportunity of escaping she struggled with a violence so painfully disproportioned to her fine delicate limbs that I could not go on with the cruel attempt to make her my own. In the morning, therefore, I set her loose, anticipating some pleasure from the joyous bound with which, as I thought, she would return to her native freedom. She had been so stupefied, however, by the exciting events of the preceding day and night, and was so puzzled as to the road she should take, that she went off very deliberately and with an uncertain step. She was quite sound in limb, but she looked so idiotic that I fancied her intellect might have been really upset. Never, in all likelihood, had she seen the form of a human being until the dreadful moment when she woke from her sleep and found herself in the gripe of an Arab. Then her pitching and tossing journey on the back of a camel, and lastly a *soirée* with me by candlelight. I should have been glad to know, if I could, that her heart was not broken!"—The gazelle is called roe and roebuck in our version of the Bible. It was reckoned among the clean animals of the law and was held in high esteem, Solomon's table being specially furnished with it (1 Kings iv. 23). Swift, graceful, gentle, timid, these are the characteristics of the pretty little animal. You see them often in small herds, but Canon Tristram mentions herds of one hundred in number. As to their swiftness, Asahel, Joab's brother, whom Abner slew at last in self-defence, is said (2 Samuel ii. 18) to have been "light of foot as a wild roe" (*i.e.* gazelle), while amongst the mighty men who flocked to David in the wilderness the Danites are described (1 Chronicles xii. 8) as "men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes [gazelles] upon the mountains." As to their timidity, it supplies a metaphor to the great prophet describing man's fear in the day of the Lord, when (Isaiah xiii. 13, 14) He "will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger ; And it shall be as (with) the chased roe [gazelle] and as (with) a

sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land."

The chief reasons why Moses is not likely to have conducted the children of Israel by



THE PLAIN EL MARKHEIYEH.

At the mouth of Wâdy Taiyebah, looking south and south-east towards the mountains of the Serbâl group. The plain takes its name from the long white range of chalk hills called El Markhâ.

the upper route past Sarâbît el Khâdim to Horeb, leaving out of sight the mysterious form of the column of cloud which went before the host to lead it, are (1) because its rugged passes,

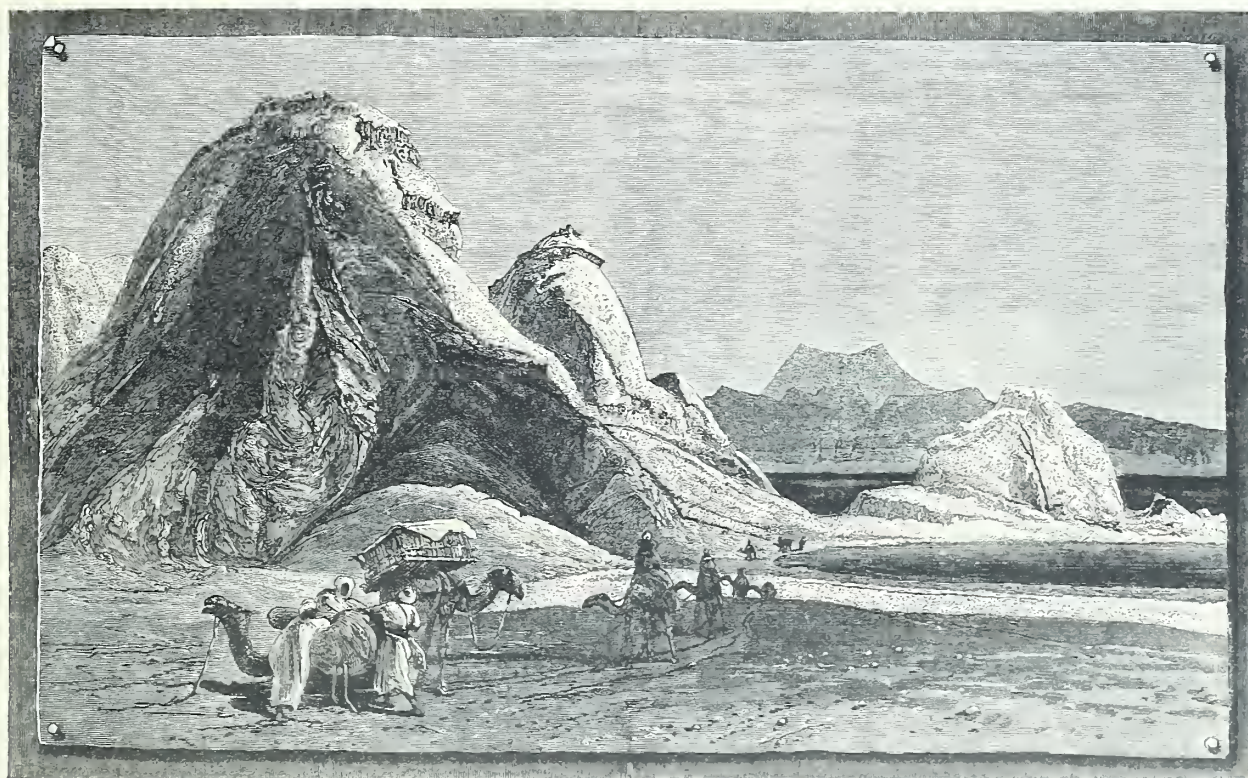


NEAR THE MOUTH OF WÂDY TAIYEBEH, LOOKING NORTH-WEST.

narrow valleys, and intricate windings would have presented most gloomy difficulties to a large caravan, encumbered with women and children, flocks and herds, and baggage; (2) because there would be detachments of Egyptian soldiers (though, perhaps, not in very large numbers)

guarding the captives at work in the mines. As much stress must not be laid on the capabilities for attack of military outposts engaged on such duty (for one can well imagine that the marvellous news of the destruction of the Egyptian army would precede the slow march of the Israelites), the first reason seems the better one ; while the conjecture (almost a certainty) that the Israelites descended Wâdy Taiyebah corresponds, as to the camp stations mentioned, with the Scriptural account.

The entrance to this valley (see page 31), which at first looks broader and more verdant than it really is, strikes one as lovely and, in its contrast with the ground which we have been lately traversing, homelike. Some think that here, and not at Gharandel, we have "Elim."



RÂS ABU ZENIMEH.

On a low promontory running out somewhat farther into the sea is placed the tomb of the saint. Unless it is rough the camels are made to take to the water instead of climbing the cliffs.

The forms of the cliffs on the left hand are very beautiful. There are horizontal bands of colour in the sandstone, which the declining sun lights up marvellously ; and the luxuriant caper plant is like a dab of glistening green thrown on anyhow every here and there, as it strikes out and makes festoons from each cranny. Whilst the Arabs were pitching the tents I climbed up the north side of the valley to watch the sunset. All sunsets are beautiful, and all poetical descriptions, rich in suggestion as they may be, fail to bring back to one the reality. There is, however, a description by Shelley of a sunset amidst very different scenery—where there was no grand sea, and the mountains were much more near than those shadowy hills of Egypt stretching before me in the fading distance—in which I seem to catch again glimpses of

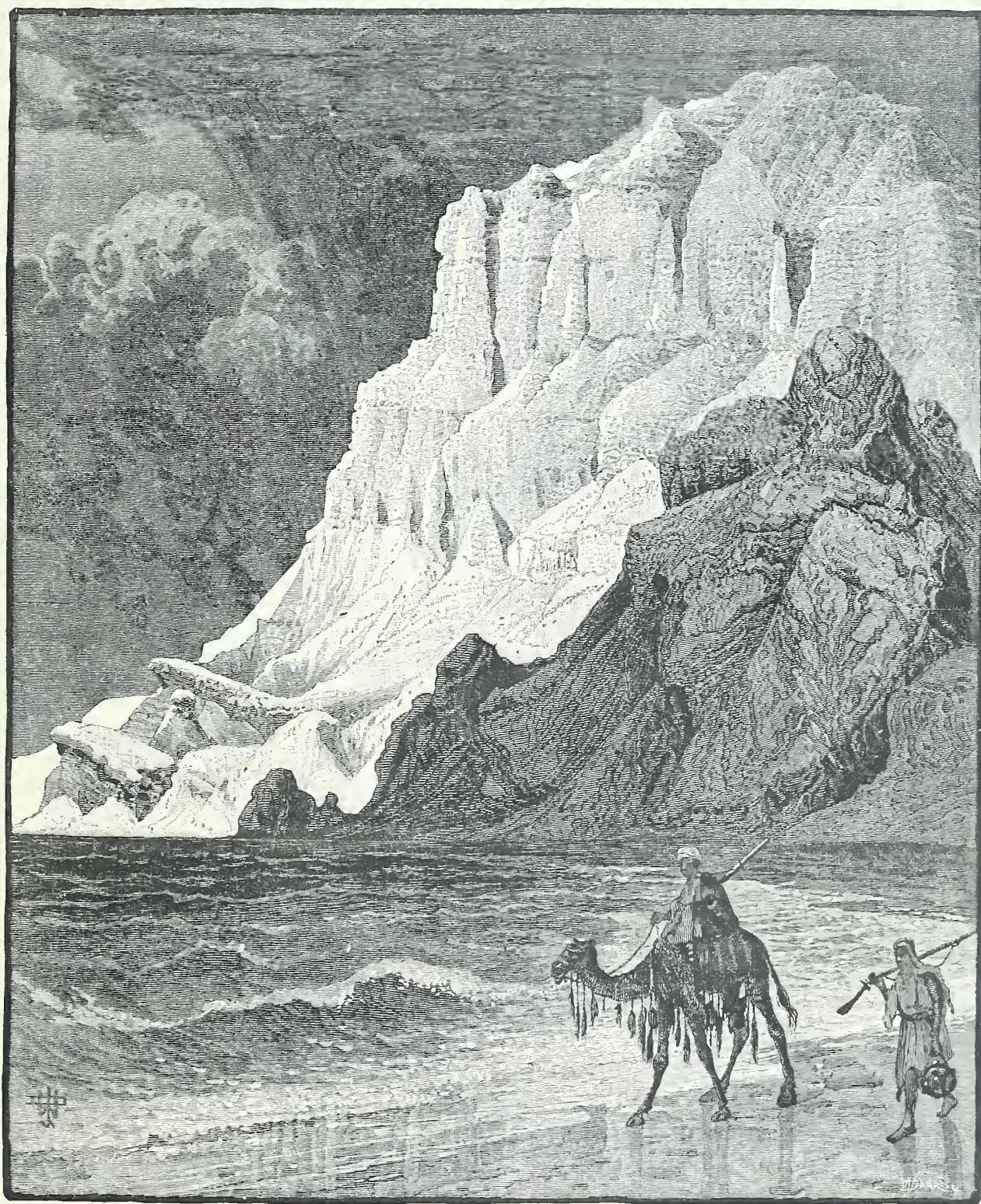
the sunset vision of that evening walk above the Wâdy Taiyebbeh. The lines occur in "Julian and Maddalo," a conversation piece drawn near Venice :—

We stood
 Looking upon the evening and the flood
 Which lay between the city and the shore,
 Paved with the image of the sky ;
 and half the sky
 Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry,
 Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew
 Down the steep west into a wondrous hue,
 Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent
 Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent
 Among the many folded hills ;
 And then, as if the earth and sea had been
 Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen
 Those mountains, as from waves of flame,
 Around the vaporous sun, from which there came
 The inmost purple spirit of light, and made
 Their very peaks transparent."

I think it was the music of the jackals which reminded me to get back to camp, and the thought, too, that perhaps a hyæna might be near. This music begins in a sort of low long-drawn wail, rising and swelling higher and higher until it conquers all other sounds. One solitary brute seems to begin, and then, when one thinks it has satisfied itself or has got some plunder, it seems to be reinforced by a whole troop of jumping, prancing friends, whom night has let loose to yell and scream and bark and wail. The jackal, though it slinks out of the way to let one pass, will boldly enter a town, and will come sniffing up in the silence of night to the very canvas of one's tent. The hyæna comes next to the jackal as a common desert beast of prey. Most unclean of all animals—prowling about cemeteries exhuming bodies, and even where the grave is protected by heavy stones burrowing alongside to get out the miserable corpse—the hyæna is a coward, though the Arab believes him to be extraordinarily cunning. The Arab will tell one how a hunter lay down to sleep, with his dog and powder flask beside him, when the hyæna of whom he was in quest seized the opportunity and the dog ; devoured the latter, and walked off with the powder flask without disturbing the hunter !

Amongst the tamarisks, which bend gracefully over the stream, and amid the tall trunks of the palms, some wild and unkempt and some of better appearance, as if they had been cultivated for dates, the Arabs and the tents look most picturesque. We shall come to much finer tamarisks or tarfah-trees at Feirân, and again in Wâdy es Sheikh, still we may make some notes about them here. When we reach the convent we shall persuade the Œconomos to sell us some "manna," which is the highly prized exudation of the tamarisk-tree. In name, but in nothing else, there may be a connection with the miraculous food which fell round the tents of the Israelites. Like hoar frost it fell on the ground, and the Hebrews said, "What is this?" (*Man hu?*) The Arabs call the gummy substance, which is tapped from the tamarisk by the puncture of a small insect, "Munn." Other trees in other countries produce such manna. The harvest is very uncertain ; for unless the season has some rain there will probably be no manna. It ought to drop for about two months, commencing at the same time as the apricots.

The Arabs declare that it falls only by night, and that in moonshine there is a more plentiful supply; while if a goat approach the tree the manna will dry up and disappear. It is found in



JEBEL EL MARKHÂ.

This ridge of limestone, about nine hundred feet high, separates the two plains El Markheiyeh and El Markhâ.

the form of shiny drops on the twigs and branches. What is shaken down on the sandy ground is of no use. It has the appearance of gum, is sweet to the taste, and must be gathered early

in the day, as it melts in the sunlight. The Arabs cleanse and boil it, strain it through a cloth, and put it by in leathern bottles. They eat it with their unleavened bread like honey or butter, but they never make it into cakes or eat it by itself.—Well, a good fire has been lighted, the baggage is piled to windward of it, the camels are all brought in near, and a great deal of coffee-pounding and smoking and talking is going on. Several of the voices are very pleasing, and—as there seems to be no quarrelling as yet—the murmur is by no means disagreeable in the still air. One does not know the language, so one need not attempt to understand what they are talking about. I think, however, from a few familiar words, that they are discussing the terms of the agreement made between us at Cairo, for the hated word “Bakhshish” (the curse of Egyptian and Arab and Fellah) comes in pretty often. A few

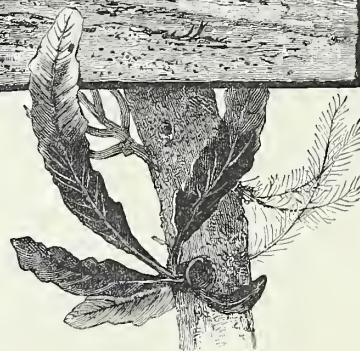


THE PLAIN EL MARKHÂ.

This weary plain of flinty barrenness slopes gently to the sea, the glare from which and from the limestone cliff is almost overpowering.

stories about the Bedawín, therefore, may not be out of place, as the fire lights up their brown features and plays upon their picturesque clothing. Mrs. Finn, who has made the Fellah of Palestine her study, tells us what an implacable animosity exists between Bedawín and Fellahín. The Bedawín say—

“ The townsman is the table of the world (provider),
The peasant (Fellah) is the donkey of the world (menial),
The Bedawy is the sultan of the world (ruler). ”



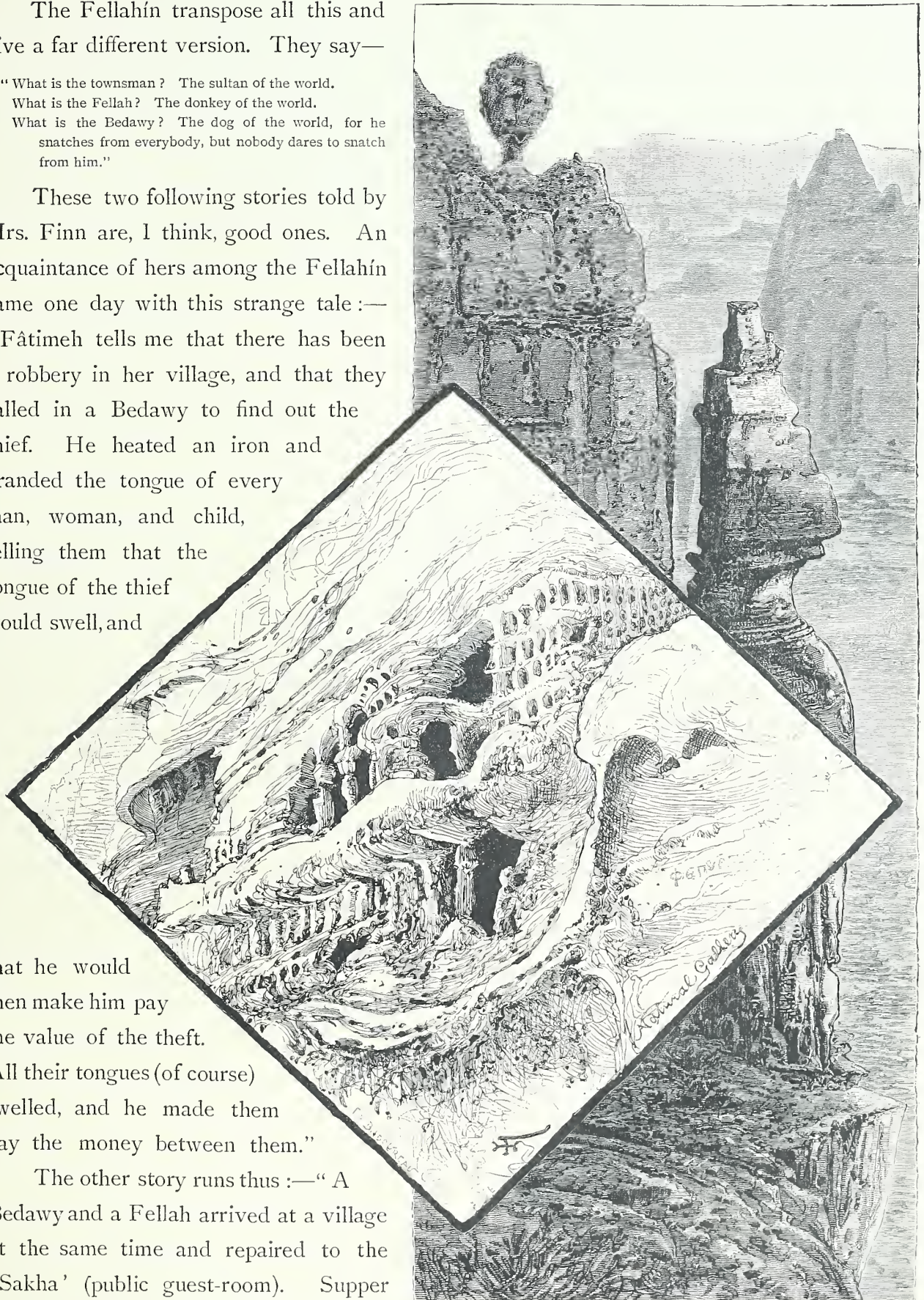
The Fellahín transpose all this and give a far different version. They say—

“What is the townsman? The sultan of the world.
What is the Fellah? The donkey of the world.
What is the Bedawy? The dog of the world, for he
snatches from everybody, but nobody dares to snatch
from him.”

These two following stories told by Mrs. Finn are, I think, good ones. An acquaintance of hers among the Fellahín came one day with this strange tale:—
“Fâtimeh tells me that there has been a robbery in her village, and that they called in a Bedawy to find out the thief. He heated an iron and branded the tongue of every man, woman, and child, telling them that the tongue of the thief would swell, and

that he would then make him pay the value of the theft. All their tongues (of course) swelled, and he made them pay the money between them.”

The other story runs thus:—“A Bedawy and a Fellah arrived at a village at the same time and repaired to the ‘Sakha’ (public guest-room). Supper was set before them, and the Bedawy observed that it was only enough for one.



ROCKS IN THE RAVINE OF SARÂBÎT EL KHÂDIM.
And a natural gallery in the same ravine. Wind and storm have worn these sandstone rocks into the most fantastic shapes.

He accordingly engaged the Fellah in talk, asking, 'What presents do you give to the bride at a Fellah wedding?' 'What presents? Why, we give a silk robe, and a cotton robe, and silver ornaments; and then we give so much in money to the father, and so much to the brother, and so much to the uncles and aunts.' By the time that he had got to the uncles and aunts he perceived that the Bedawy had eaten up three-quarters of the supper, so he in turn asked the Bedawy what they gave the bride at a Bedawy wedding? The Bedawy replied bluntly, 'A tob (robe), a veil, a necklace, and a headdress.' He continued eating till all was finished, leaving the Fellah still very hungry and done out of his supper."

I think I ought to place by this the next story told by Mrs. Finn, in which the tables are turned on a Bedawy. It happened that a Bedawy came to a village one evening in the summer and entered the public room of the guest-house. For supper amongst other things the Fellah host set before him some prickly pears—the fruit of the great cactus, which forms the hedges for enclosures so common in Palestine, &c.—which he had never seen, and which was then in season. In mockery of his ignorance they did not shell the prickly pears, but left them in the husk all covered with their innumerable sharp spines. The Bedawy, unsuspecting, took up and ate the fruit as he was accustomed to eat cucumbers; after supper his host asked him how he liked them? "God be praised for them, they are very refreshing," said the man; "only the hair upon them is rather sharp, it is rougher than the hairs on cucumbers, and it sticks to my tongue and smarts."

Mr. Palgrave, in his "Central and Eastern Arabia," warns one not to accept without much allowance the favourable pictures which travellers draw sometimes of the good faith and the hospitality of the Bedawín. Of the first he writes—*

"Deeds of the most cold-blooded perfidy are by no means uncommon among these nomades, and strangers under their guidance and protection, nay, even their own kindred and brethren of the desert, are but too often the victims of such conduct. To lead travellers astray in the wilderness till they fall exhausted by thirst and weariness, and then to plunder and leave them to die, is no unfrequent Bedawín procedure. . . . Thus, for example, a numerous caravan, composed principally of wealthy Jews on their way across the desert from Damascus to Bagdad, was, not many years since, betrayed by its Bedawín guides. The travellers perished to a man, while their faithless conductors, after keeping aloof till they were sure that thirst and the burning sun had done their work, returned to the scene of death, and constituted themselves the sole and universal legatees of the moveable goods, gear, and wealth of their too-confiding companions. I myself, during my stay at the town of Ha'yel, in Central Arabia, met with a large Hebrew folio, once the property of one of these unfortunate Israelites. The Bedawy, to whose lot it had fallen amid his share of plunder, had brought it thus far in hope of rendering his treason so far profitable by the sale of a work all the more valuable in Eastern opinion for being totally unintelligible."

Of their hospitality he says: "Nor do I wish to deprive them of all credit for these

* Palgrave's "Arabia," vol. i. 3, 36.

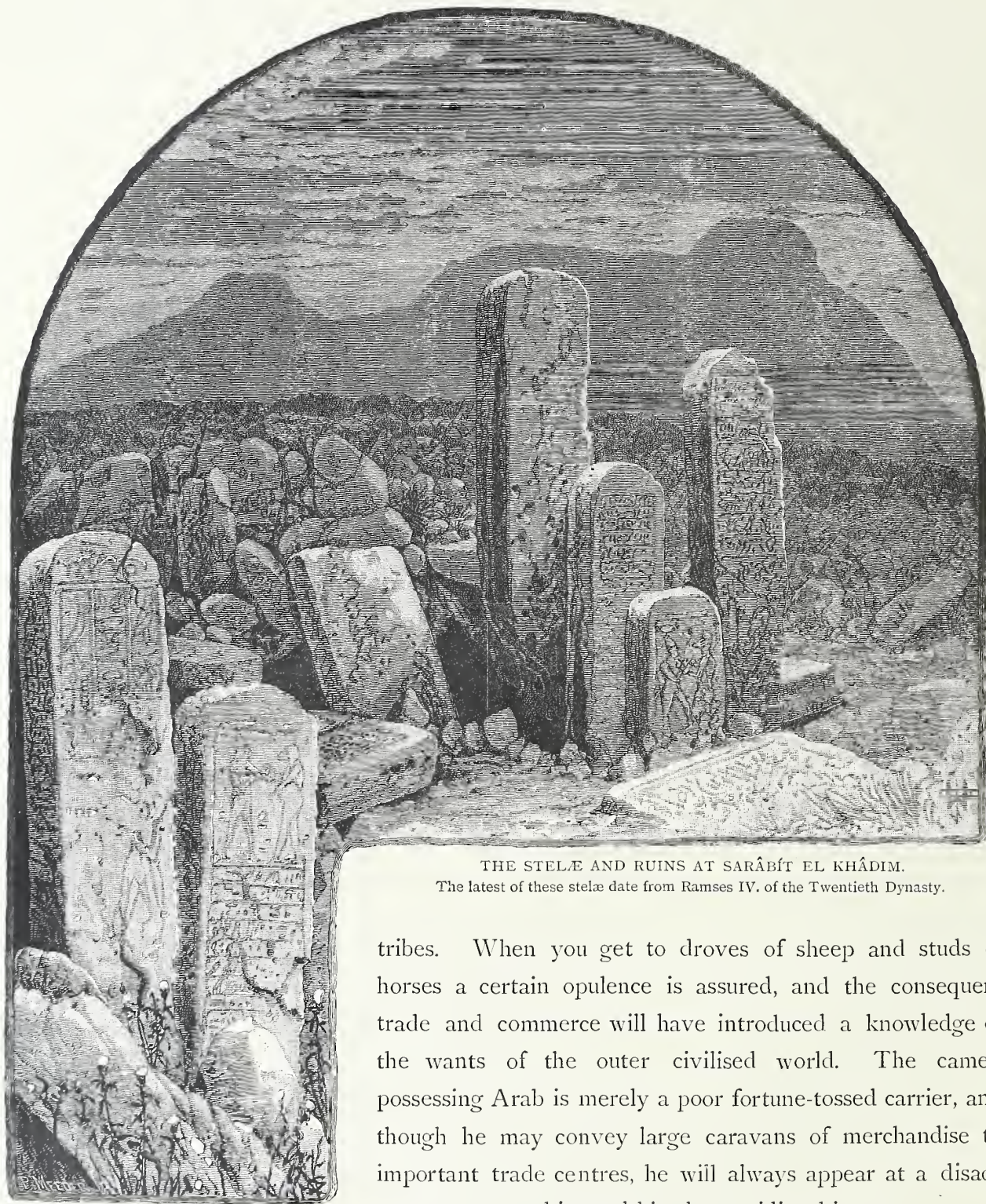
good qualities (hospitality and generosity). But their open-handedness often springs more from the childish levity of the savage than from true and praiseworthy liberality of character. Like an infant that stretches out its small hands and opens its little mouth for whatever comes within its reach, be it a guinea or a cherry, and with almost equal readiness lets its new acquisition drop no sooner than grasped, the Bedawy is at once rapacious and profuse, coveting all he sees, without much distinction of its worth, and lightly parting with what he has already appropriated from very incapacity to estimate or appreciate its value. To give, to beg, or to plunder are for him correlative acts, all arising, in the main, from the same immense ignorance of what property really is and what its importance! . . . Besides, he has in general but little to offer, and for that very little he not unfrequently promises himself an ample retribution by plundering his last night's guest when a few hours' distant on his morning journey. Still a certain kindness of feeling towards strangers—the same which forms a very prominent feature in the Arab family likeness—is not wholly extinct in the breast of this half-savage; and what he offers in the way of hospitality is accompanied by a heartiness of welcome and an uncouth attempt to please which certainly has its merit, and often obtains encomiums very agreeable to Bedawín ears. But he is at best an ill-educated child, whose natural good qualities have remained undeveloped or half stifled by bad treatment and extreme neglect."

There will be differences of opinion as to the moral qualities of the Arabs, just as there will be much disagreement about a proper definition of their country. The Arab will tell you that that is his country wherever Arabic is spoken. This gives a wide expanse of dominion. Your donkey-boy at Cairo, for instance, will be indignant if you call him an Egyptian,* and will say at once, "Me, Arab!" At Damascus the bazaars and squares will be full of Arabs, come in probably from the Haurán; then away to Palmyra and on to the Great River you will scarce hear of any other people. Not only the country which we usually term Arabia Proper, but the northern parts of Africa, between the Sahara and the littoral of the Mediterranean, seem to be given up to them. The truth is, we mix together all the nomades of this part of the world, and, losing sight of their differing tribal characteristics and habits, believe that the vast territory (larger than all France and Spain together) lying between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf must, as the cradle of the race, be inhabited by a like people. Hardly do we care to realise what a difference exists between the sheikh of some district in Central Arabia and the Bedawín chief of a desert tribe, who exhibits nature almost at its lowest stage. The accounts of savages in other parts of the world certainly throw out in strong relief the Bedawy, and make him appear almost a civilised being, but reflecting that he has always lived on the fringe of Western civilisation, one wonders how his education has never made progress, while further observation soon does away with any admiration which may have been excited by him.

Possibly the romance and poetry which surround our idea of the Arab has something to

* The country people in Egypt are El-Fellahin, a term which Turks and townspeople often use in the abusive sense—as "the boors," "the clowns," "the country louts," although there are many pure Arab settlers in the country, while town Arabs are really a somewhat mixed race.

do with the animals pictured by his side. The horse—the noblest of animals—and the Arab seem inseparable; but there are many Arab tribes without horses, and altogether dependent on that most unromantic beast, the camel. These tribes are the most miserable of Arab

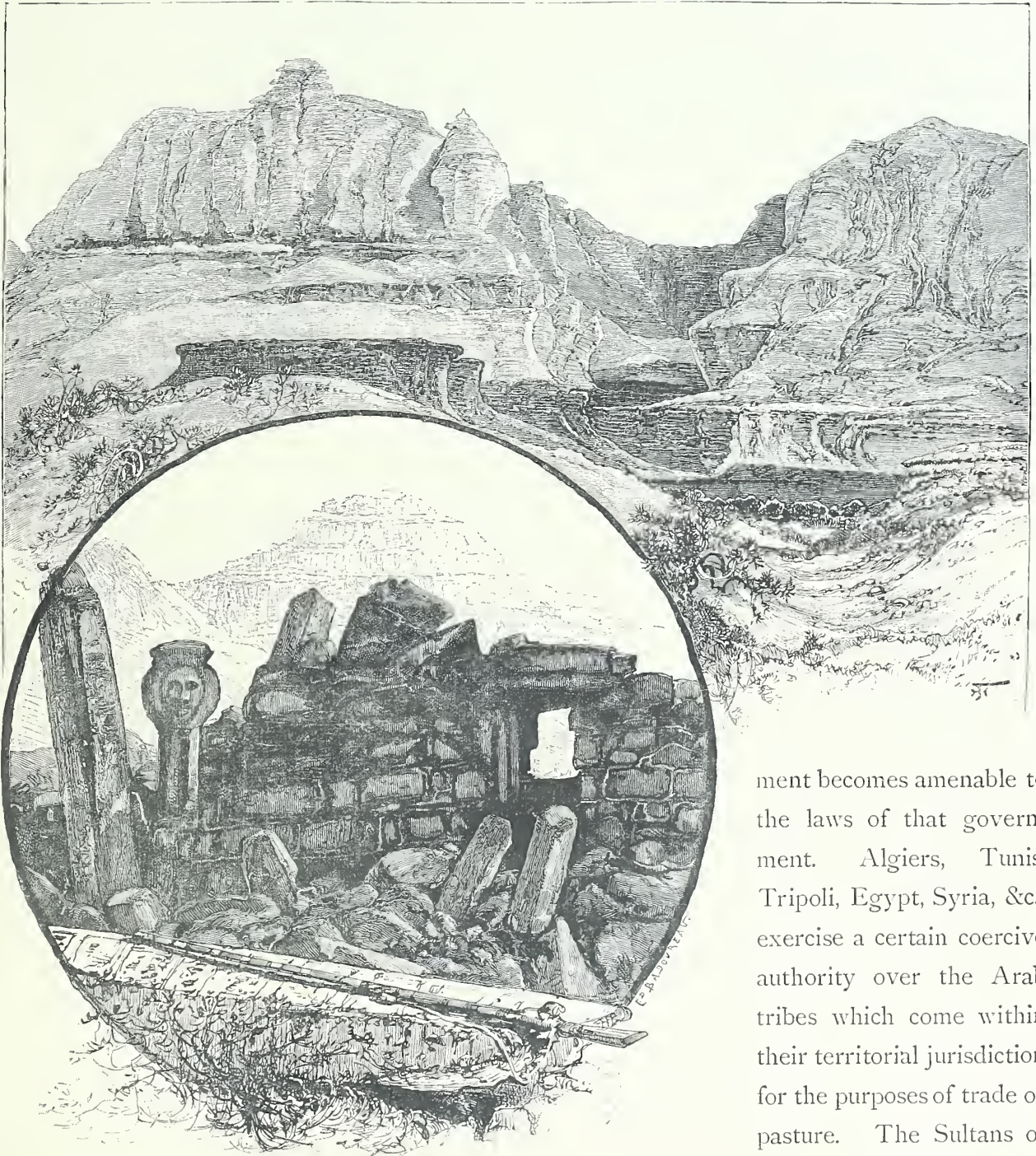


THE STELÆ AND RUINS AT SARÂBÎL EL KHÂDIM.
The latest of these stelæ date from Ramses IV. of the Twentieth Dynasty.

tribes. When you get to droves of sheep and studs of horses a certain opulence is assured, and the consequent trade and commerce will have introduced a knowledge of the wants of the outer civilised world. The camel-possessing Arab is merely a poor fortune-tossed carrier, and though he may convey large caravans of merchandise to important trade centres, he will always appear at a disadvantage among his wealthier horse-riding kinsmen.

The desert has again and again been compared with the ocean—wild, boundless, uncontrollable. The comparison may well be further extended in observing that as the

portions of the sea which border a powerful coast are rightfully said to belong to this or that flag, whose symbol must be respected by ships trafficking there, unless they are strong enough to dispute its rights, so the desert where it adjoins and touches the confines of orderly govern-



THE ROCKS AT SARÂBÎT EL KHÂDIM; AND THE TEMPLE ENCLOSURE.

There are two temples, of different dates. The one not shown here is formed of two chambers excavated in the rock, having a walled continuation in front.

ment becomes amenable to the laws of that government. Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Egypt, Syria, &c., exercise a certain coercive authority over the Arab tribes which come within their territorial jurisdiction for the purposes of trade or pasture. The Sultans of Shomar, of the Wahhabee, and of Oman—in Central and Eastern Arabia

Proper—in like manner wield a considerable amount of real power. Within these governments the Arab is seen almost at his best, and becomes a foil to the Bedawy. The nomade tribes, without real country, without much honour, without perceptible religion, whose only object in

war is to plunder, or to occupy a poor bit of pasture land, or to get the use of some wretched wells of brackish water, are but withered unsightly branches of a far nobler trunk. They are a pastoral population grown out of and round the real fixed nation. The circumstances of the country and the difficulties of the climate compelled them to wander, and so to encroach (as is noticeable in the early history of the Egyptian Delta) on lands which from their fertility and capabilities had attracted the primæval colonists of the human race. Possibly, at first, these encroachments, not resulting in permanent occupation, would escape notice; and this negligence would give encouragement to insolence and rapine, until the very civilisation which should have checked or absorbed the Arabs seemed to them to be but a contemptible thing, because possessed by a people willing to be preyed upon and pillaged.

Anything which may be said of the Arab tribes and their nationality suggests the beginnings of the Israelite people. The symmetry of the later Jewish commonwealth sometimes blinds us and prevents us from imagining that there ever could have been a "ragged edge." For instance, we seldom think of the twelve tribes or clans, unequal in size and strength, as being divided between themselves or engaged in tribal wars. We hardly ever picture the tribesmen in the full strength of their manly independence. They always appear as being *led* by opportunist leaders; for the life of the nation in the time of the Judges is so confusedly put before us that even in that interval we seem to be reading the history of a homogeneous nation, living under an orderly government, however weak and powerless in the presence of stronger neighbouring people. Mr. Palgrave bids us see the Arab tribes as almost from the first split up, each and all, into two branches, correlative, but unequal in size and importance. The larger portion became townsmen and villagers with permanent occupations, gendering necessarily culture. The smaller portion gave itself up to the pastoral life in that hard desert land, whose valleys are only distinguishable by less degrees of barrenness. The one division of the clan under the favourable circumstances of settled life advanced, the other retrograded, till at length it bore the same relation to the rest of its fellow-countrymen (though pure in descent, and competent to trace out a line of ancestors for a genealogical tree which would intoxicate the European pedant in heraldry) which a wild crab offshoot below does to the thriving and fruit-laden branches above.

It is in the midst of his description of his life at Hofhoof, far away near to the coast of the Persian Gulf, that Mr. Palgrave, having given a most lucid account of the conventional term "Nabathæan," points out how confusion likewise has burdened all our conceptions of the Arabs with inaccuracies and misapplications. The passage is too pointed to bear condensation. He says: "The European public is deluged with accounts of Arab customs, Arab ways, Arab qualities, houses, dresses, women, warriors, and what not; the most part from materials collected in Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, 'Irāk, perhaps Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco, or at the best at Djiddah and on the Red Sea coast. Sometimes a romantic spirit will furnish scenes among the hybrid Bedawīn of Palmyra as portraits of Arab life; sometimes we are invited to study Arab society in a divan at Cairo or Aleppo. Such narratives, however

accurate they may be for the localities and races they describe, have not an equal claim to the title of correct delineations of Arabs and of Arab customs. The case appears to me much as if the description of a backwoodsman of Ohio should be given for a faithful portrait of a Yorkshire farmer, or the ways and doings of Connaught for a sketch of Norfolk life and manners. Syria and Egypt, Palmyra and Bagdad, even less Mosoul and Algiers, are not Arabia, nor are their inhabitants Arabs. The populations alluded to are, instead, a mixture of Kurds, Turcomans, Syrians, Phœnicians, Armenians, Berbers, Greeks, Copts, Albanians, Chaldeans, not to mention the remnants of other and older races, with a little, a very little Arab blood—one in twenty at most—and that little re-diluted by local and territorial influences! That all more or less speak Arabic is a fact which gives them no more claim to be numbered among Arabs than speaking bad English makes an Englishman of a native of Connaught or of Texas. For the popular figure of the Bedawy, I must add, that even were he sketched, as he rarely is, from the genuine nomade of Arabia, it would be no juster to bring him forward as an example of Arab life and society than to publish the ‘Pickwick Papers’ or ‘Nicholas Nickleby’ with ‘Scenes in High Life’ or ‘Tales of the Howards’ lettered on the back. These unlucky and much-talked-of Bedawîn in the Syrian, also miscalled Arabian, desert, are, in fact, only hybrids, crosses between Turcoman and Kurdish tribes, with a small and questionable infusion of Arab blood, and that too none of the best, like a wine-glass of thin claret poured into a tumbler of water. In short, among these races, town or Bedawîn, we have no real authentic Arabs. Arabia and Arabs begin south of Syria and Palestine, west of Basrah and Zobeyr, east of Kerak and the Red Sea. Draw a line across from the top of the Red Sea to the top of the Persian Gulf: what is below that line is alone Arab; and even then do not reckon the pilgrim route (*i.e.* the Hajj route to Mecca from Damascus, Cairo, &c.), it is half Turkish; nor Medinah, it is cosmopolitan; nor the sea-coast of Yemen, it is Indo-Abyssinian; least of all Mecca, the common sewer of Mohammadans of all kinds, nations, and lands, and where every trace of Arab identity has long since been effaced by promiscuous immorality and the corruption of ages. Mascat and Kateef must also stand with Mokha and ‘Aden on the list of exceptions.” (Palgrave’s “Central and Eastern Arabia,” vol. ii. p. 162.)

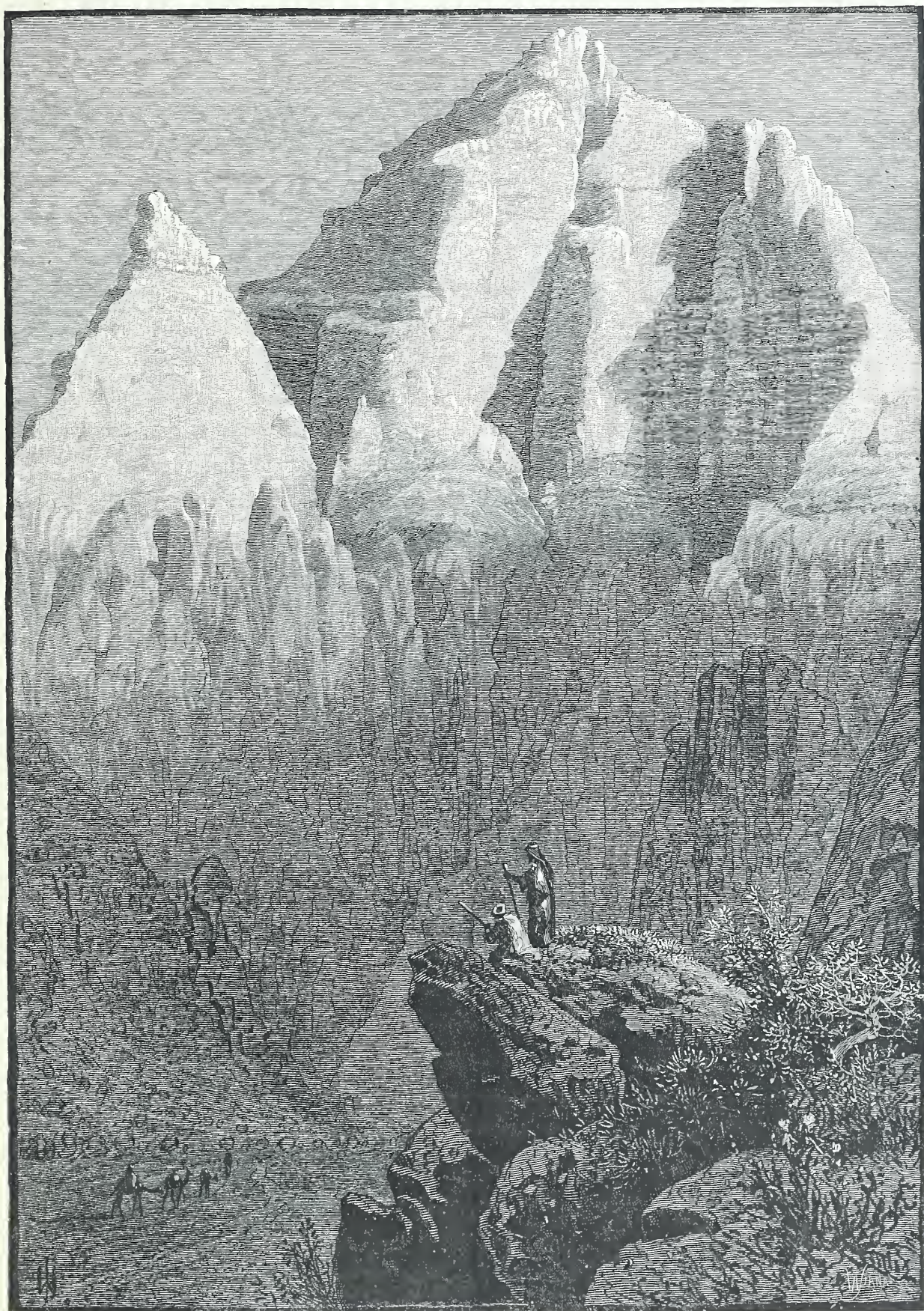
But to return to Wâdy Taiyebah (see pages 31 and 33). A few bends the valley makes, and then, set in a frame of white cliffs, with horizontal bands of varied colouring on the one side and darker-tinted cliffs on the other, the deep blue waters of the Red Sea come in sight. The description of the Israelite march is clearly given in Numbers xxxiii. 10, 11: “And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea: and they removed from the Red Sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin.” If we can imagine the sloping terraces of the mountain black with the great moving multitude of people, may we not imagine that here, on the quiet shore of the sea, they first realised the *completeness* of that deliverance which God had wrought for them. Before them was their enemy and their friend, the mysterious sea, beyond which there was one more last glimpse of Egypt; behind them was the Desert, promontory after promontory stretching out into these waters. They had on their

right (see page 36) the threatening form of Jebel Hammâm Far'ûn, and on their left (see page 36) beyond the wilderness of Sin, and beyond the trending line of beach where the waves break laughingly, the distant view of the mountains which close in to form the outposts of Serbâl.

Here then, or a little farther on, may have been the "encampment of the Red Sea." There is a sandy cape, very lonely, jutting into the sea, about a mile from the mouth of Wâdy Taiyebah (see page 37), called Râs Abu Zenímeh, from a saint of that name who lies buried there. The well, or tomb, is a rude hut built up of very light materials, well white-washed, part wreckage, part palm-branches, and covered with coarse matting, but is a somewhat conspicuous object on the lonely shore. Inside there is a strange collection of offerings, principally maritime—bits of rag, of rope, of matting, with meat tins, fish-bones, and lamps intermingled. There is a picturesque desolation about the place to which the dry stunted shrubs on the banks of the sloping shore add character. Many and beautiful are the shells, amongst which grows or drifts the so-called rose of Jericho (*Anastatica hierochuntina*), its stiff stem and its tiny clustering branches, with their bibulous flowers, looking like a grey withered twig stuck into the sand.* This portion of the coast is called El Markheiyeh (the diminutive of El Markhâ), and forms the last narrowing section of the undulating plain of gravel which, as we said before, in a measure bounds the triangle of Sinai on its south-western side (see page 13). It is separated from the plain called El Markhâ by a long white spur of chalk hills which runs down to the sea till within a few feet of high-water mark. The illustration (see page 37) shows the position of this ridge and the unwilling camels, who yet will have to wade for a few minutes through the sea, so as to avoid a long détour over the hill. In its far angle there is one scanty spring, but the water is undrinkable. Our course will lie across the plain in a line from the extreme sea end of the ridge to Seih Bab'a, six miles distant. But this taste of its extreme dreariness, without shadow of shelter in the full light of the midday sun, the sea glaring on the one hand, and the white unpicturesque hills glaring on the other hand (see page 40), will be, even if the sirocco wind does not rise up against us, as trying as any piece of work before us in our whole journey.

Seih Bab'a is the debouchure of the Wâdies Bab'a and Shellâl. Great slag heaps mark the entrance; and the traveller—wearied of the dry, baked, glowing plain—gladly turns aside by them to make his way to Magharah, Feirân, and the convent by the pass of Nagb Buderah. The Israelites in all probability followed a more open route, skirting the edge of the low white cliffs, with the sea still on their right hand, until the entrance of the Wâdy Feirân was reached, some eighteen miles farther south. The shorter way through the mountains is neither oversteep nor tortuous, but it leads into a mining district where in former days, as at Sarâbît el Khâdim, Egyptian soldiery would be stationed.

* This plant has nothing to do with that mentioned in Eccles. xxiv. 14, &c. It derives its botanical name from its power of opening its minute flowers, when plunged into water, many months after it has been pulled up. "Jericho" may have been added to "resurrection flower" (*anastatica*) because it is found in the sand in the hot plains by the Dead Sea. The pilgrims, who prize it as a relic, may in irony have called it "the rose of Jericho."



WÁDY SIDREH.

The Wádies Mukatteb, Sidreh, and Igné all debouch into the Seih Sidreh.

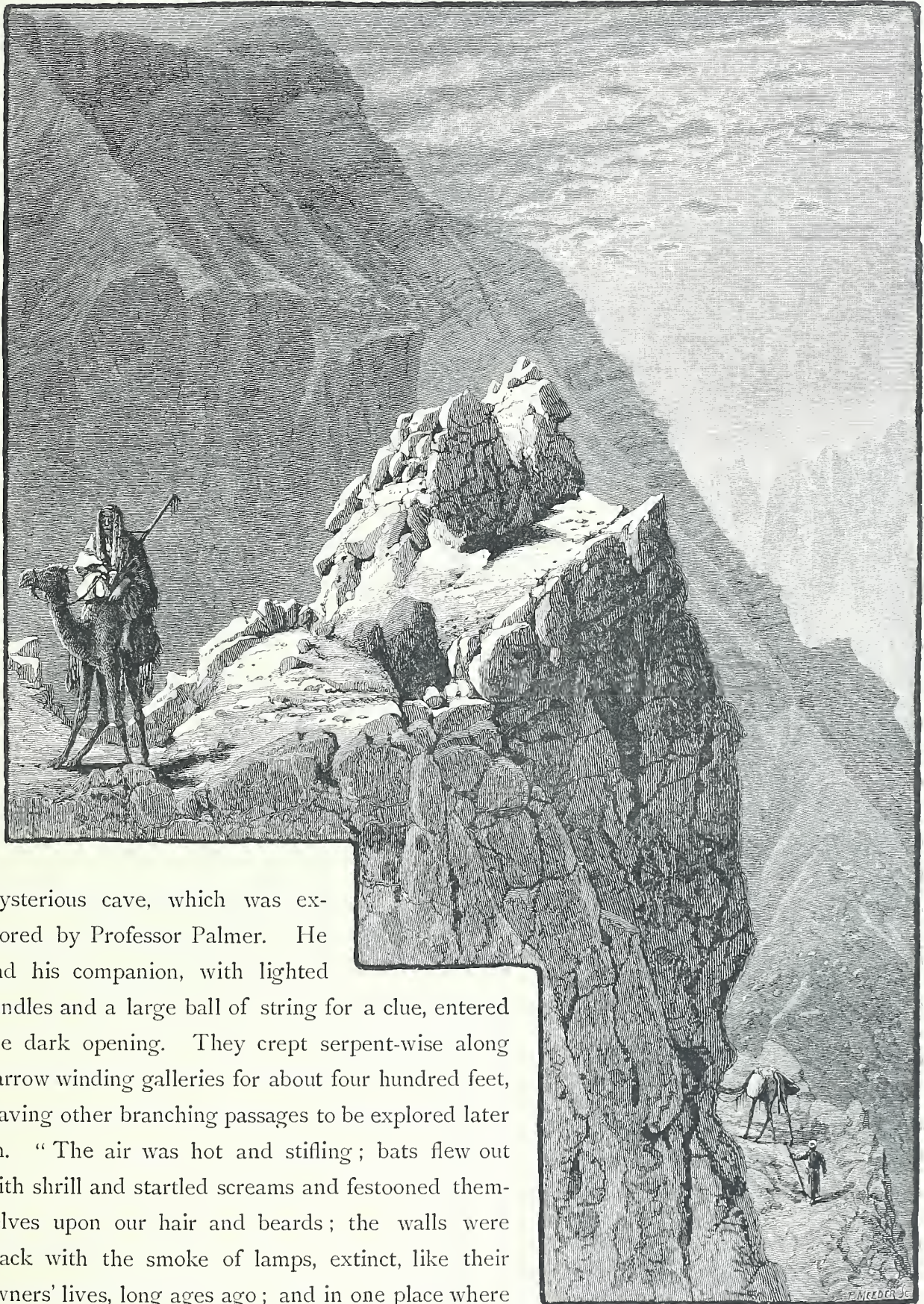
Wâdy Bab'a and Wâdy Shellâl (see page 57) are both picturesque, and their rock scenery is a relief after the tamer formations of the cretaceous mountains which immediately bound the plain El Markhâ. Following up Wâdy Bab'a, which trends a little to the left some two or three miles from the entrance of Seih Bab'a, we feel at last that we have reached the long-wished-for mountain district, whose forms and colouring have been so frequently described. The valley contracts after one or two bends into a wondrous gorge, guarded by a stupendous mass of rock some forty or fifty feet high, which seems to have been splintered from the mountain but yesterday. The walls of the gorge are sometimes only eight feet apart, and are so lofty that the sunlight scarcely penetrates through the narrow chasm. Farther on there is a barrier of great boulders, which almost forces one to climb the side of the valley to a ledge where some ruined huts look as though they may have been a military guard-house to prevent egress from the upper parts of the valley—a region yet to be explored. Then there is a narrow gut to be threaded, reminding one of the defiles at Bad-Pfeffers. A small stream of brackish water finds its way through, and here and there is a stunted palm or a patriarchal seyal tree. To this gorge a more open valley succeeds, flat and desolate, and then the track leads into the wâdy by which the sanctuary and the mines at Sarâbît el Khâdim were approached by us.

From the appearance of a great bank—which almost looks artificial—of rounded water-worn stones at its mouth, the stream of Wâdy Shellâl (the name means “Valley of Cataracts”) at a far distant period may have broken through, like an impetuous cataract, the mountain ridges which enclosed it, and—reinforced by the drainage from Nagb Buderah (which the Arabs describe as the “stair-way” called up by Lord Moses in order to extricate the children of Israel from these valleys)—may have scooped out a course for itself through the soft limestone to the Seih Bab'a.

To the crown of the pass of Nagb Buderah from Seih Bab'a is a distance of seven or eight miles. Wild and solitary is the road, and the silence is only broken by the whirr of a covey of partridges disturbed by the noise of the caravan, or the timid rustle of a light-coloured hare. The zigzag camel-track up the front of the pass deserves the name of a road, and was constructed, or re-constructed, by the late Major Macdonald, who lived at Maghârah and worked the mines. Access to the sea is obtained by it, and many a weary mile is saved by using it instead of going through Wâdies Mukatteb and Feirân.

The plain, opening out when the top of the pass is reached, is marked by confused heaps, looking like the refuse of old mines worked quite near the surface. Maybe we shall have pushed on before our baggage, and have caught sight of the morning glow on the mountain world through which we are passing. The sunbeams striking on the various heights of white and red remind us, as Dean Stanley suggests, of the effect which must have been produced on the children of Israel as the vast encampment broke up dawn by dawn in these mountains with the shout, “Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee” (Numbers x. 35).

Through the Wâdy Nagb Buderah the track leads into the Seih Sidreh (see page 53). There is on the left a small wâdy called Umm Themâin, and in the side of this wâdy is a



mysterious cave, which was explored by Professor Palmer. He and his companion, with lighted candles and a large ball of string for a clue, entered the dark opening. They crept serpent-wise along narrow winding galleries for about four hundred feet, leaving other branching passages to be explored later on. "The air was hot and stifling; bats flew out with shrill and startled screams and festooned themselves upon our hair and beards; the walls were black with the smoke of lamps, extinct, like their owners' lives, long ages ago; and in one place where a small side cutting had been made the miners had propped up the roof with a branch of shittim wood.

THE ROAD UP NAGB BUDERAH.

By this pass travellers generally approach Mukatteb from Egypt.

There it stood, dry and brown enough certainly, but as perfect in shape as when it was first set up—perhaps before the Great Pyramid was built” (“Desert of the Exodus,” page 205). In this cave or mine no trace of metal or turquoise was found, so the object of those ancient miners who worked it out could not be conjectured. In the valley below are two hieroglyphic tablets which prove its Egyptian origin, and these tablets, unlike those in the neighbouring valley, are so time-worn that the sacred writing is illegible.

After this break Wâdy Igné, or, as it is sometimes called, Wâdy Maghârah, is soon gained, and a fresh scene opens out on this ever-varying route. Hardly had I got abreast of the mouth of the wâdy before half-a-dozen Arabs, springing from nowhere—so undistinguishable at first were their bronze forms from the red-tinted rocks—ran down the mountain-side, thinking that I might be a merchant come to purchase turquoise. These few miners are the representatives, as it were, of the thousands who had toiled here ages ago for Pharaoh.

In the left-hand bank of the steep sandstone wall of the wâdy are the principal mines, and in the walls of these caverns and in the fissures and cuttings in the rock are the marks of the many chisels (probably of bronze or other hard metal) of the ancient captives who here searched for turquoise. The tablets—some *in situ*, some overturned and half destroyed—are of the familiar Egyptian type: a Pharaoh of gigantic proportions slaying his enemies; priests presenting offerings to hawk-headed deities; troops of captives, &c. Not unnaturally, as one stoops and shuffles along these gloomy caverns, one thinks of the scene so vividly portrayed in Professor Ebers’ “Egyptian Princess,” and almost hopes that one may come across the ghosts of the creatures of his subtle brain. On the little hill behind the remains of the late Major Macdonald’s house are the ruins of some small stone huts, where possibly superintendents and military guardians of the captive miners lived. There is a tablet in the rocks above the mines which represents a group of miners at work, equipped with ordinary chisels and a kind of swivel hammer. The soldier guarding them is armed with a bow and arrow, and is, Professor Palmer suggests, “the prototype of the present Egyptian police officer, who is still called a cawwâs, or archer.” Another tablet on the hills opposite the mines and near the mouth of the valley, discovered by Professor Palmer, represents in rude style a miner taking a walk with his wife and son. Ah, how little varied is human life! As to the dates of the inscriptions, Senoferu, of the Third Dynasty, records here his conquest of the country and his discovery of the mines, while the latest of the tablets belongs to the Eighteenth Dynasty, and mentions an expedition to the mines set on foot by Tothmes (or Thutmes) III. The mines evidently were worked at intervals during a period of more than two thousand years, and probably to a later date than that assigned to Tothmes III.; but we may suppose that some three thousand years have elapsed since Maghârah ceased to be a penal settlement of the Egyptians.

Wâdy Mukatteb (the “Written Valley,” or “Valley of Inscriptions”), so far as scenery goes, is not over-interesting. One seems to leave the finer scenery as one emerges from Wâdy Igné and crosses the Seih Sidreh. The valley is broad and open; on one side are low sloping hills, and on the other some fine ranges of mountain. Beneath the low hills are several isolated

plains, and from these have become detached the masses of sandstone on which are found the well-known inscriptions. Some of these rocks have got weather-worn into fantastic shapes.



THE OUTLET OF WÂDY NAGB BUDERAH, IN THE SEIH SIDREH.

The *Acacia seyal* is the shittah or shittim tree of the Bible. The "seyal" is the only timber tree of any size in the Arabian Desert.

Here one traces the gigantic profile of a man's face ; there we find a horizontal layer jutting out so as to form a sort of umbrella. Here are cool caves, seeming all the more cool in this fierce

sunlight ; while there one fancies a regular set of stone benches and tables has been arranged by giant hands for giant travellers. This sandstone is so inviting in its softness that one begins unconsciously to scratch a record of one's visit, as thousands may have done centuries ago. Allusion has been already made to these inscriptions, consisting for the most part of a word or two, and then some rough figure of a man, or of animals like the camel, or of birds like the ostrich. There are undoubtedly a very great number of them, and this may be accounted for either by the probable supposition that in this valley (in some respects more convenient than Wâdy Feirân) must have been large markets to which would have been attracted a great concourse of foreign merchants—or else that at one period, for some reason or other, this valley was occupied by a foreign migratory people, driven here, perhaps, by the exigencies of war or persecution.

In itself there is nothing in the valley, either traditionally or otherwise, which would have made it an object of pilgrimage. There is no shrine, no temple ; and there is no legend of any such shrine or temple as would have drawn worshippers to the locality. One knows how deep-seated is the love of scribbling in most people. Some go further than this—for I remember seeing a traveller at Philæ who, armed with hammer and chisel, had begun cutting his miserable name on the imperishable stones of the celebrated inner propylon ! These Mukatteb inscriptions damage nothing ; there is no “bad taste” about them, except it be their apparent valuelessness. Most of them are dotted in with a sharp stone ; and altogether the impression is conveyed that one day some more lounging spirit than another commenced writing his name in a sort of haphazard manner, and that this grew into a fashion and habit of the place. Of course fresh light may yet be thrown on these inscriptions. Possibly a tragic story may be connected with some of them ; a long interval of years, sufficient for a hundred tragedies to have been enacted here, detaches large groups of them from their neighbours—but as yet the missing link has not been found which will bind them to history.

From the watershed of Wâdy Mukatteb the view is very fine. Jebel Mukatteb, taking its name from the wâdy, as is so commonly the case in Arab nomenclature, is a large bold mountain on the right hand, and rises about two thousand four hundred feet from the Wâdy Feirân, which it forces out of its course. This wâdy, one of the grandest and longest in the peninsula, exhibits best the peculiar features of a wâdy. It is not altogether correct to speak of wâdies as being the same as our valleys, for there are striking points of difference. The word means properly a “hollow between hills, whether dry or moist,” and is derivable from a verb signifying radically “to perforate by water.” There is no limit as to length, or depth, or breadth ; while the constancy of the mountain torrent by which they may have been grooved out is immaterial. For a few days or weeks in winter some of these valleys have the appearance of rapid streams. The Wâdy Shellâl, for instance, bears every trace of water at some seasons rushing down its floor.

Their usual aspect, however, is naked and waste. Possibly the barrenness is increased by the constant signs and indications of water which is no longer seen. The great river beds in

Switzerland in the early summer present sometimes something of the same appearance as one nears their glaciers. Dean Stanley reminds us that these wâdies were the only conception of rivers in the mind of the Arab conquerors of Spain. The consequence is that we find the name as introduced by them still attached (1) to the water-courses of Southern Spain, which, like the valleys of Arabia, are dried-up confused hollows of stones and boulders, until the snow melts or the sudden fierce showers descend ; and also (2) to mighty rivers, to which the streams of the desert, even when forced into life by the winter storms, could at best furnish only a *general* parallel. "Guad-al-quiver," grand and imposing river, pride of the Spaniard—who knows, or troubles himself to know, that this name breathes of the far-off desert air of Arabia, and that it is, with little variation in the spelling, the "Guad-al-Khebir," *i.e.* the "Great Wâdy!" The process of reasoning by which this similarity would be established is by no means far-fetched. Wâdy Feirân, which we strike at right angles, certainly does resemble a mighty river ; and one almost expects to hear the roar of its rush, or even to see the light play on the dull tawny-coloured waters. There is a further point of resemblance between the river and the wâdy. The wâdy is the highway of the desert. From the fact that the watersheds are frequently low and narrow one might thread one's way through the peninsula by merely following the courses of these valleys, when once one had mastered the general direction of the main arteries. The great Wâdy es Sheikh, for instance, which Stanley calls "the queen of the 'Sinaitic rivers,'" is not really separated from Wâdy Feirân ; and by means of the two valleys you may bring a road of easy communication from the sea to Jebel Mûsa, however lengthened out by the numerous windings. Suppose the Thames to be drained dry and its sides bordered by great mountains, we should have something very like a Sinaitic wâdy, and put it to the same use. Water and verdure, in any great extent, are wanting ; and so the distinguishing names for the wâdies, as for the mountains, are taken from the noticeable presence of that which is so scarce. The second highest mountain in the peninsula is called Umm Shomer, *i.e.* the "Mother of Fennel ;" Râs Sufsâfeh is the "Head or Peak of the Willows," from the group of two or three scant willows growing in the hollow beneath the last ascent ; Sinai may have taken its name from the tree "seneh" (Hebrew), which the Arabs call "seyal ;" Wâdy Taiyebah means the "Wâdy of Goodly Water," with its consequent vegetation ; Wâdy el 'Ain, the "Wâdy of the Fountain," or "Well ;" Wâdy Tarfah, the "Valley of the Tamarisks ;" Wâdy Sidreh is named from the bushes of "sidr ;" Wâdy Saal, from the splendid "seyal" trees it contains, &c., &c. A spring of water, a tree, a few shrubs, these are the points of greatest interest to the poor Arab, and these form his distinguishing landmarks in these intricate valleys.

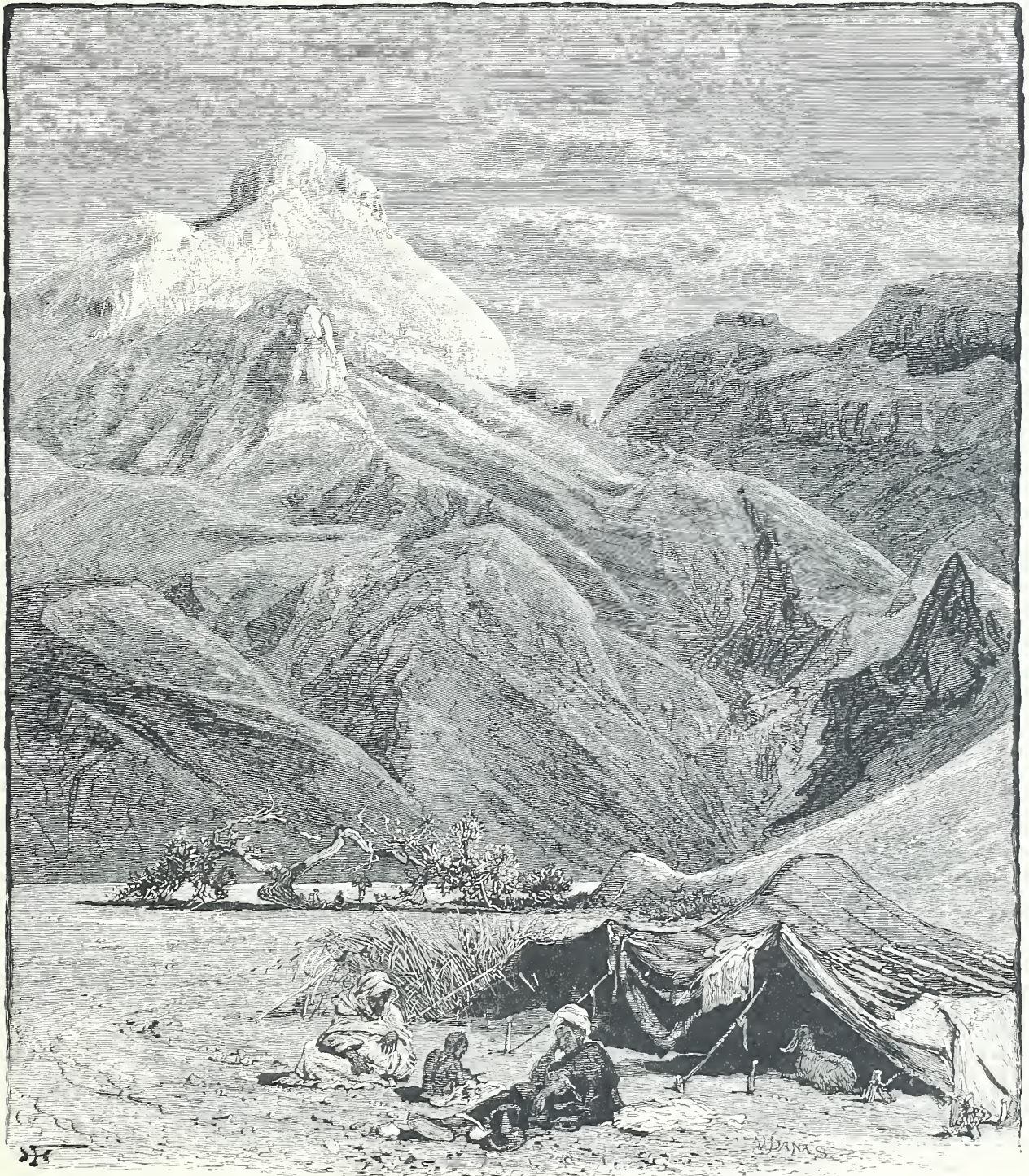
Soon after descending into Wâdy Feirân, the course bearing east or a very little south of east, at the entrance of Wâdy Nisrîn, are some fourteen or fifteen stone circles and cairns. These circles are from ten to twenty feet in diameter, and in the centre of each is a cist about four feet long by two and a half broad, and of the same depth, composed of four stones and a covering slab. Inside some of these have been found human bones, teeth, &c., and in one a small copper bracelet, lance and arrow heads, and a necklace of marine shells. The

outline of a body could be seen in some of these cists; and this outline, thus traced, as it were, in human dust, showed that the body had been buried in the most ancient manner, on its left side, doubled up so that head and knees met. We shall come to other similar circles and to traces of the altars at which the offerings of the dead were sacrificed and offered, and to the huts and dwellings called *nawâmîs*, in which the people lived who buried their dead in such wise. But who were they? The mode of burial proves their great antiquity. May they have been the Amalekites, the people who fought Israel at Rephidim? or may they have been the homes of some still more ancient people?

The change from sandstone to granite as one leaves Jebel Mukatteb and winds along Wâdy Feirân is very striking. "Even," says Dean Stanley, "to the most uneducated eye the colours tell their own story of chalk and limestone and sandstone and granite, and these portentous appearances" (the mountains streaked from head to foot as if with boiling streams of dark red matter poured over them, the vast heaps of seemingly calcined mountains, the detritus of iron in the sandstone formation, the traces of igneous action on the granite rocks dating from their first upheaval) "are exactly such as give the impression that you are indeed travelling in the very focus of creative power. I have looked on scenery as strange and on scenery more grand, but on scenery at once so strange and so grand I never have looked, and probably never shall again."

In Wâdy Feirân, there can hardly be a doubt, with the reports of the Ordnance Survey and the opinions of its able conductors lying before us, that we are again on the track of the main body of the Israelites. Their course was followed by us to the encampment in the Wilderness of Sin; then *we* made a *détour*. The two next encampments mentioned are those of Dophkah and Alush (Numbers xxxiii. 12, 13), and after these Rephidim, "where was no water for the people to drink." From the point at which we escaped from the thirsty plain El Markhâ, and turned up between the white bare-looking hills of Seih Bab'a, to the mouth of Wâdy Feirân is about nineteen miles; from the mouth of Wâdy Feirân to the stone circles at the entrance of the little Wâdy Nisrîn is another seventeen miles as the crow flies, or say twenty miles, a long day's march for such a host. Except, however, from the weariness of the plain and the distress caused by the heat of the sun, this route presents no difficulties. Some four or five miles below the stone circles which we have already described there is another group of them. May they not have been the sites of Amalekite villages, and occupied in that day when Israel passed by as outposts to the great force gathering at Rephidim to bar their further progress? The limestone hills between Seih Sidreh and Wâdy Feirân are so low that, though the ground is broken and not always easy for travelling, we may rightly suppose large bodies of the Israelites to have made a cut across them in order to save going all the way round by the valley's mouth. "Familiar as we had grown with desert scenes," writes Professor Palmer of his journey from Seih Sidreh to this mouth of Wâdy Feirân, in the month of March, 1869, "we were not prepared for such utter and oppressive desolation as this; the blue waters lay calm or rather dead before us, a realisation of the 'Ancient Mariner's' dreary vision, whilst on

either hand, as far as eye could reach, there stretched a dull flat sandy waste, unrelieved by any green or living thing—the barren wilderness and the still more ‘sterile sea’ side by side. It



WÂDY SHELLÂL, "VALLEY OF CATARACTS."

This valley bears, both in name and aspect, every trace of wintry cascades. It leads up to the pass of Nagb Buderah.

was as though nature had left this spot to point out to man how awful indeed were the fulfilment of the ancient sentence, ‘Cursed is the ground for thy sake,’ did not her bounteous and regenerating hand temper the dreadful doom.” It is indeed a difficult task to find words to

describe what such a march is. Hands and faces are blistered—there is no shade, and any attempt to halt without shelter in the glare of such a sun means *sunstroke*!

The mouth of Wâdy Feirân is almost on a straight line of twenty-four miles with the immense Serbâl cluster of mountains, and this recedes some eight or nine miles from the limestone hills which form a barrier-wall to the plain El Gâ'ah, draining gradually towards Tor. In this section of the wall (from the entrance of the Feirân valley to opposite Tor) there are at least two gorges which, coming unexpectedly upon one with their exuberance of vegetation and all the features of grand landscape, relieve the monotony of the desert and give hope to the traveller. One of these is called Wâdy Dhaghadeh. Into this valley, from a home amidst wondrous little peaks of sandstone, there flows a clear cool stream bordered by palm-trees. Such a secluded valley occurs—and there may be many like it only waiting to be explored—in the immediate neighbourhood of Wâdy Shellâl. The other is farther to the south, Wâdy Sigillîyeh, into the débouchure of which comes the system of valleys which drain the southern, *i.e.* the seaward, face of Serbâl. The gorge which leads up to this valley is impassable, and the Arabs declare that in the great floods it is sometimes filled from top to bottom with the torrent, a depth of more than four hundred feet. That the gorge is impassable is not altogether a correct statement: for Professor Palmer and his companions got into the glen beyond the gorge by crossing over the lower mountains. They there found fenced in and concealed by precipitous cliffs a lovely mountain valley through which,

“ With many a break and many a fall,”

over a pavement of smooth white granite, and overshadowed by fantastic rocks draped with ferns and desert plants of richest green, murmured a tiny stream.

The lower part of this wâdy has the name Jebâah, and its *upper* part is called Sigillîyeh. To make their way *out from* this happy valley of mountain solitude the explorers determined to essay the passage of the mysterious gorge. On one side was a wall of granite about fifteen hundred feet high, on the other a rock of some thirty feet, as smooth as though it had been polished by a lapidary: and between them was a pool of water breast deep on one side, twelve feet deep on the other. Two of the party took to the water, the other scaled the rock; the old Arab guide, Salem, sat down and groaned until his misery was terminated by being sent back by the way they had used in the morning to reach the valley. Safe through one pool of water, they came to a rock with an abrupt drop of about fifteen feet, down which they had to lower themselves in acrobat-fashion. A smooth ledge of sloping rock, overhanging a precipice, brought them next to a large flat slab or pavement of rock terminating in a yawning chasm two hundred feet deep.

The sun had dipped behind the hills and night was fast coming up, when luckily they discovered a kind of broken path, the remains of an attempt apparently to make a way in former times to reach the upper pools from the mouth of the gorge. Along this they scrambled, and so reached at length the open country, and then their encampment. The Arabs were enthusiastic in their congratulations on their escape from the ravine, which human eye had

never before explored, and till a late hour they heard Salem relating how they had swam



VIEW FROM THE TURQUOISE MINES OF MAGHÂRAH.

Wâdy Maghârah is another name for Wâdy Igné (properly Gena). The mines are high up on the left side as one ascends the narrow wâdy.

through huge lakes and mounted slippery precipices "by making ladders of themselves," and how they were as mad as mad could be.

From the stone circles at Wâdy Nisrîn to a palm-grove called El Hesweh in Wâdy Feirân is ten or twelve miles in a straight line. A little before one reaches this, however, a certain amount of verdure appears, and low stunted tamarisks break the monotony of the foreground. Nothing can be finer than the mountain scenery of this part of the valley. The colouring of the steep sides is very beautiful, while the unexpected turnings give depth and variety of vista. Above all, Serbâl is constantly to be seen rising beyond these nearer mountains through which the valley conducts one.

It is just before the fertile portion of Wâdy Feirân is reached that one comes to a strange rock called "Hesy el Khattatîn" (see page 67), surrounded by small heaps of pebbles placed upon every available stone in the immediate neighbourhood. Thus runs the legend :—"When the children of Israel had drunk of the miraculous stream which God had supplied to them from this rock, thirsty, wayworn, and ready to die, they rested here awhile and amused themselves by throwing pebbles upon the surrounding pieces of rock." The Arabs of to-day keep up the custom, for Moses is supposed to be propitiated thereby, and any one having a sick friend thinks that if a pebble is thrown here in his name he is assured of speedy relief. Now the history in the Bible describes Israel murmuring in the Wilderness of Sin from hunger. "In Egypt," say they, "we sat by the flesh pots and we ate bread to the full. But now in this wilderness what are we to do? You have brought us out here to kill us!" Then God gave them the quails and manna. The seventeenth chapter of Exodus commences with the journeying towards Rephidim, a place "where was no water for the people to drink." The people thirsted there for water, and murmured once more against Moses, that he had brought them and their children and their cattle out of Egypt to kill them with thirst, and they proposed to stone him and his brother. Moses cried unto the Lord, and the answer was, "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." The scene of this murmuring is called "Massah," because they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" and also "Meribah," because of the chiding of the children of Israel.

The initial difficulty here is "Horeb." When Feirân, the episcopal city of the district, had perished, and Jebel Mûsa with its conventual establishments began to take its place in the popular estimation of sanctity, the monks felt that they must transplant the tradition of the "Stricken Rock" to their own ground. Consequently you have under the immediate shadow of Jebel Mûsa—the scene of the punishment of Korah, then at a little distance from the mountain you have a Rephidim pointed out, and—as being only in proper accordance with the words of the Bible—you have also a "Stricken Rock," the most famous of all the Sinaitic relics, the Rock of Moses, in the Wâdy Lejâ. In Bible usage Horeb seems to be applied to the whole district as well as to the mountain: "Thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb" (Deut. iv. 10); "Also in Horeb ye provoked the Lord to wrath" (Deut. ix. 8). The derivation of

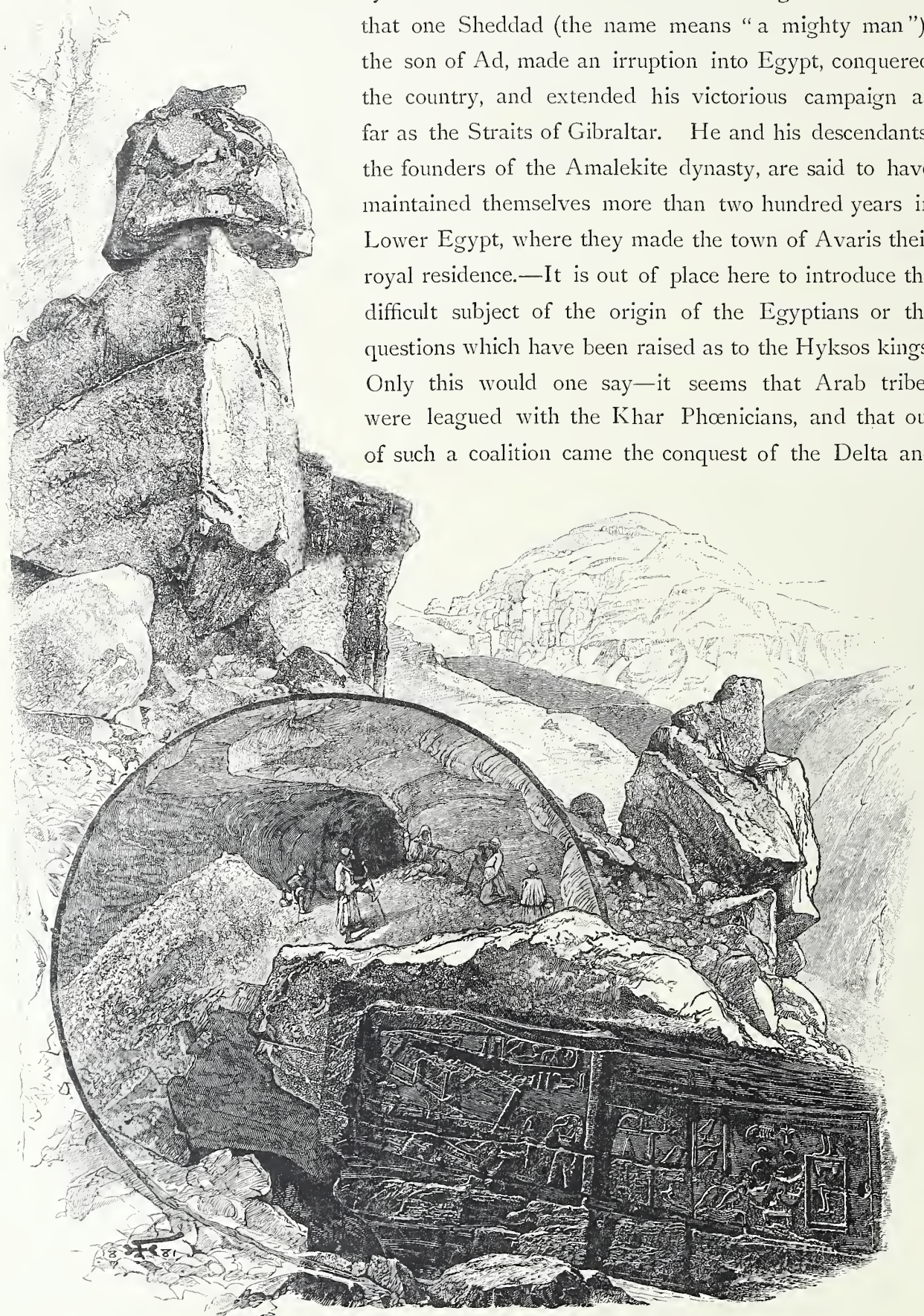
the word—"ground which has been drained and left dry"—suggests not mountains only, but the plains or valleys surrounding them. As mountain names of daily Bedawín use "Sinai" and "Horeb" have disappeared; nor do we trace any vestige of the words, unless we may argue that Jebel 'Aribah, on the other side of the convent valley, has some etymological affinity with Horeb, and that Jebel Sonâ, the conspicuous mountain which rises over against Râs Sufsâfeh, and commands a view of both the plain Er Râhah and the Wâdy es Sheikh, recalls legitimately the word Sinai. To some it seems probable that the name Horeb has been introduced by a later writer into Exodus xvii., if not into Exodus iii. as well. For such process of difficulty-climbing there may be an insufficiency of evidence to go upon. Better, therefore, to adhere to the assumption that the whole of this portion of the desert was known at first as Horeb, and that the name was attached subsequently to the mountain alone.

But this encampment at Rephidim is famous not only for the miraculous supply of water from the rock, but also because the Israelites here first saw war. "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim" (Exodus xvii. 8). Something of the nature of the warfare adopted by the mighty desert tribe is told us in the fragment which occurs at the end of Deut. xxv. The Amalekites met Israel by the way. Like the Afghans in the fatal Khyber Pass, they hovered round them, and untiringly harassed the hindmost of them, the feeble ones of that great multitude, so faint and so weary. The scenery and characteristics of the valley give a meaning to the attack of the Amalekites. Feirân is to-day the Paradise of the Bedawín. What the oasis of Ammon is in the western desert of the Nile, so is Feirân in the Sinaitic peninsula. Quite marvellous is its beauty, for the stream is perennial, being fed by the waters collected on the northern and eastern sides of Jebel Mûsa, and drawn off by Wâdy es Sheikh into Wâdy Feirân. The tamarisks, the palm-trees, the nebbuk-trees, the tall reeds by the side of the running brook, the sound of the singing of birds, the life of growing things—and all this made more conspicuous by the desert which has been one's home so many days! As now there is a sacred tomb for the Bedawín devotees, and some approach to a permanent settlement with enclosed gardens and plantations, so in those ancient days for the Amalekites this must have been a centre of their tribal existence, and not improbably a sanctuary of their gods. Scouts had told them then of the strange moving mass coming out of Egypt, not as captives to toil in the mines, but with all the pride of a victorious people laden with rich spoil glittering in gold and silver and jewel. The cry "To arms!" had echoed through the hills. From out the valleys, such as we have seen running up beneath the southern side of Serbâl, from the plains of the northern plateau of the Tih, the tribesmen had flocked in towards Feirân's oasis, in order to protect the most prized of all the districts of their mountain territory.

And these Amalekites! it is very noticeable with how lengthily a period in the Bible story they are connected. They are like an "evil genius" to the early life of the people of God. Whence came they? are they met with in the annals of other nations? Herr Brugsch, in his account of the Hyksos kings of Egypt,* tells us of an ancient tradition preserved

* Brugsch's "Egypt of the Pharaohs," vol. i. p. 266.

by the Arabian historian of the Middle Ages. It relates that one Sheddad (the name means "a mighty man"), the son of Ad, made an irruption into Egypt, conquered the country, and extended his victorious campaign as far as the Straits of Gibraltar. He and his descendants, the founders of the Amalekite dynasty, are said to have maintained themselves more than two hundred years in Lower Egypt, where they made the town of Avaris their royal residence.—It is out of place here to introduce the difficult subject of the origin of the Egyptians or the questions which have been raised as to the Hyksos kings. Only this would one say—it seems that Arab tribes were leagued with the Khar Phœnicians, and that out of such a coalition came the conquest of the Delta and



THE CLIFFS, MINES, AND EGYPTIAN TABLETS OF MAGHÂRAH.
These mines were worked more than four thousand years ago.

the long tyranny over the people of Upper Egypt, which causes the gap of shame during five hundred years in the chronology of the dynasties of the Egyptian kings. One might go



WÂDY MUKATTEB, THE "WRITTEN VALLEY," OR "VALLEY OF INSCRIPTIONS."
The celebrated Sinaitic inscriptions abound in this valley on the right-hand side as one passes down.

beyond this, and assert that of the sons of Ham Cush migrated from the East to the southern parts of Arabia and the opposite coast of Africa; that from that Southern Arabia, "the land of God," three bodies of emigrants went forth,—one, led by Nimrod, penetrated to the Euphrates

country, another crossed the Red Sea and occupied the country to the south of Egypt, and a third went on to the north of Egypt and founded the Shasu kingdom.

It is certain, from Balaam's words (Numbers xxiv. 20), that the Amalekites were much more than a mere handful of Bedawîn. The great regenerator of Egypt, Thotmes III., may have driven them out, may have recovered the rich mines of the peninsula, and may have crushed their power by frequent campaigns; but they still remained a powerful nation, commanding two great roads of commerce, the one from Phœnicia and the Canaanite countries to Egypt, the other to Southern Asia, Arabia, and Africa, by the Elanitic arm of the Red Sea. In the expedition of the four kings under Chedorlaomer, described in Genesis xiv., after the rebellion of the King of Sodom and his confederates, the Amalekites are mentioned in connection with the mountain tribes whom the great king punished previous to the campaign against the King of Sodom. This goes to prove that the idea which derives the Amalekite nation from Esau's grandson, Amalek, is erroneous; and it also accounts for the silence in the Bible as to there being any relationship between Amalekite and Edomite, or between Amalekite and Israelite. God's anger against Amalek is not grounded on Amalek's faithlessness to the obligation of consanguinity, as in the case of Edom ("because he did pursue his brother with the sword," Amos i. 11, or Obadiah 12), but on the insolent arrogance of Amalek, who feared not Jehovah.

At Rephidim, we may be certain, the children of Israel expected to be able to get water for themselves and their cattle; and at Rephidim they found this water strictly guarded by the terrible enemies who, for the last two days, had been harassing their flanks and rear. The valley becomes very tortuous after passing Hesy el Khattatîn, making it six miles of travelling before one has accomplished three and a half miles of direct progress. One skirts the pretty palm-grove of El Hesweh, three miles from the Stricken Rock, where, in all probability, the first line of the Amalekites would be drawn up. The general direction of the valley is still a very little south of east, and runs parallel with the mountain. Its southern side is here formed by the northern slopes of Serbâl and its mighty granite outworks. The mountain is drawn back some three or four miles, and lies, not north and south, but east and west—a magnificent pile, forming at its summit a ridge three miles in length. From the extremities of this northern front two plainly defined valleys (Wâdy 'Ajeleh on the west, and Wâdy 'Aleyât on the east), rough, stony, and inhospitable, stretch down like long arms to Wâdy Feirân. They enclose in their grasp a tumbled mass of mountains, of no distinct shape, called Jebel el Muârras,* which rises above Feirân some two thousand five hundred feet. There is no wide plain at the base of Serbâl, and the Amalekites must have been crowded together in the valley bed, opposing to the Israelites a front of less than a quarter of a mile. At the mouth of Wâdy 'Aleyât, which is wider and more noticeable than the exit of Wâdy 'Ajeleh (two-thirds of a mile to the west of it), is the mound El Maharrad, where are the ruins of the ancient city Pharan (Feirân). On the northern side of the narrow valley, exactly opposite the city, is Jebel Tâhûneh (the

* The highest point of this lower mass of Serbâl is called Jebel Abu Shîah.



C. COUSEN. SCULPT.

JEBEL KANATA. WADY MAGHARRAH.

6. 18. 18. 18. 18.



“Mountain of the Windmill”). It is not a high mountain—some seven hundred feet only of scramble—but its position is marvellous! The beautiful valley meanders at its feet with the limpid stream flowing past the ruins of the ancient city; beyond and right in front, overpoweringly grand, is seen the whole form of Serbâl: to the north there is a mighty basin of red rocks, out of and above which the tall peak of Jebel el Bénat rears itself; while, far away to the south-east, is seen the long range of the Jebel Mûsa mountains, blue against a deeper blue sky.

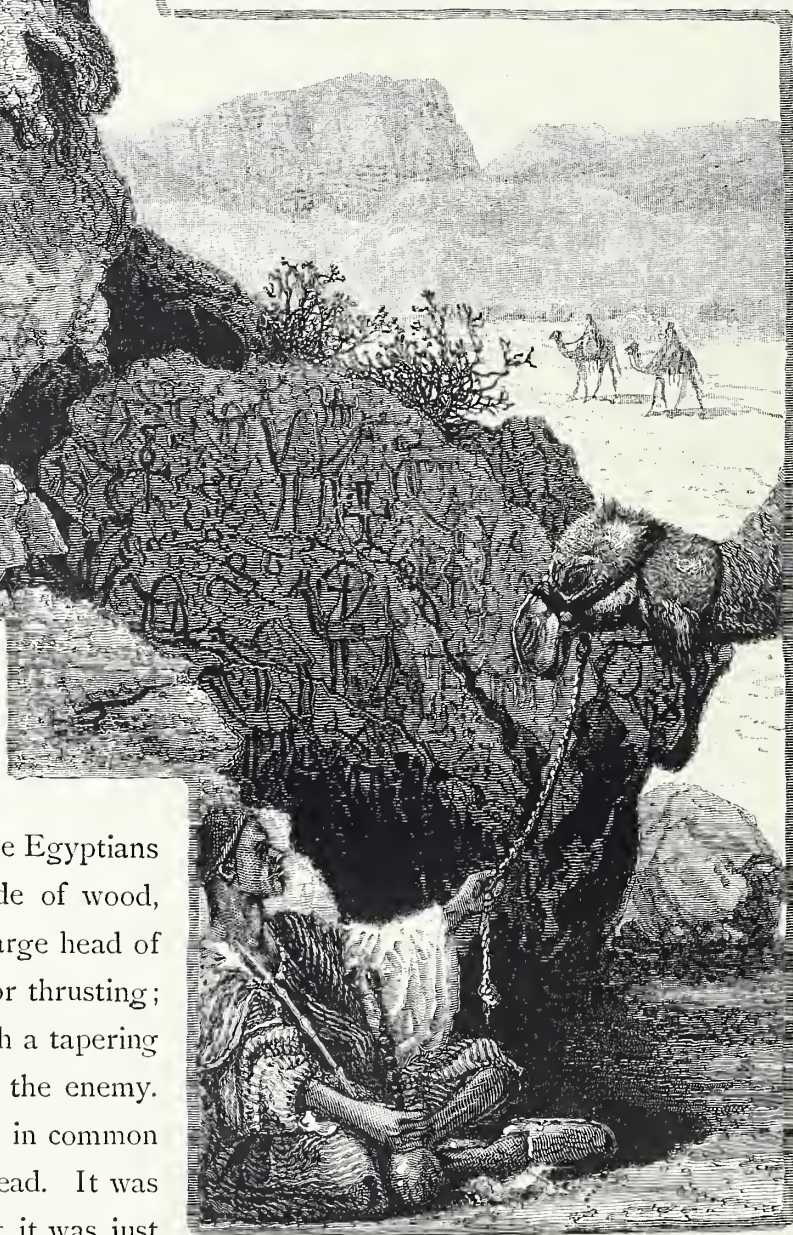
Jebel Tâhúneh is the mountain from which traditionally Moses viewed the battle with Amalek, climbing up to it by a path which commences just before the grove of El Hesweh is reached. The tradition as to this site was current in the days of Antoninus Martyr (circ. A.D. 600), for in his Itinerary he says: “So we came to the city of Pharan” (this translation occurs in the Appendix to the “Desert of the Exodus”), “where Moses fought with Amalek, where is an oratory whose altar is set on those stones which, while Moses was praying, they put under him. In this very place is the city, fortified with walls of brick, and a place very barren, except in the neighbourhood of the wells.” If Feirân be Rephidim, no hill to which Moses would have access could be so suitable. He would have before him the whole plan of the Amalekite defence in the two valleys, Feirân and 'Aleyât, and from here he would be seen by the advancing Israelites with his hands upraised to heaven till the sun went down.

Of course there is no way of estimating the numbers of the Amalekites. At this present time the Bedawín of Sinai number, according to their own accounts, about four thousand males; for the Arab does not count the females nor the younger boys of his family in a census of the tribe. As to the arms used by them, one may make a conjecture from the descriptions of the wars of the Egyptian kings, from the bas-reliefs, &c., of the tombs and temples of Egypt, and from passages in the Bible itself. They had their weapons of the chase—the bow and arrow, such as Esau used, or the sling, so commonly seen now in Upper Egypt. These were used as weapons of war, in addition to spear and sword and shield. Swords and spears were the principal weapons in later times, and are made memorable in the wars between the Israelites and Philistines. The *Egyptian* infantry at this period (for we need not consider the horsemen and chariots) were divided and classified as bowmen, spearmen, swordmen, clubmen, and slingers. Their various defensive arms consisted of bow, spear, two species of javelin, sling (the sling was a thong of leather or string, plaited like those used to drive away the birds from the corn-fields of Upper Egypt, broad in the middle, and having a loop at one end by which it was fixed upon and firmly held with the hand, the other extremity terminating in a lash, which escaped from the finger as the stone was thrown), a short and straight sword, dagger, knife, falchion, axe or hatchet, battle-axe, pole-axe, mace or club, and a curved stick, like those in use now amongst Egyptians and Arabs, and called *lissan*, “tongue.” The falchion, a short sword of a curious curved shape, must have been a most formidable weapon, as also the axe, which Ramses II. is seen so often to wield, when with gigantic force he smites his smiling enemies. The curved stick seems the most insignificant of these arms, but it is not so. It is about two and a half feet long, and made of tough acacia or other hard wood; and tribes who are armed



with this, and with shield and spear, think themselves a match for their more civilised rivals who possess guns. Of defensive weapons, the principal one with the ancient Egyptian was undoubtedly the shield. The quilted helmet even was of less consequence, and the cuirass made of metal plates or quilted with metal was of secondary consideration. From the idea of the army of the Egyptians in the time of Ramses II., which the paintings and

sculptures in tombs and on temple walls enable us to form, we may picture the armed figure of the Amalekite. It seems that the Egyptians had two kinds of spear, one made of wood, six feet in length, stout, with a large head of iron or bronze, to be used only for thrusting; the other, lighter and shorter, with a tapering head, capable of being darted at the enemy. Besides these there was a javelin in common use, made of reed, with a metal head. It was altogether an inferior weapon, but it was just the weapon—akin to the long tufted spears one sees in the hands of the Adwân Arabs—



WÂDY MUKATTEB.

The strange shapes of the weather-worn sandstone rocks are almost as noteworthy as the Sinaitic inscriptions. In the inscriptions represented in this illustration the camel recurs frequently.

for the Amalekite guerilla. In the Feirân brook, as in the stream coming down Wâdy Lejâ, he would find the reeds ready to hand; and the mines in the mountains of Maghârah and elsewhere in the peninsula would supply him with metal for the spear-heads, &c.

Here, then, we have an outline of the battle. The Amalekite skirmishers have fallen back on the two lines of defence, the one protecting the groves and pools of water at El Hesweh, the other barricaded, perhaps, with trunks of trees and branches of the prickly *sidr*, covering the approach to the more important oasis lying farther east beyond the mound El Maharrad. And that oasis *is* worth a struggle! No finer dates are produced in Egypt than are grown here. To-day every single tree has an owner (the property being the tree, not the soil in which it grows). The dates, when gathered, are moistened with oil or butter to preserve



WÂDY FEIRÂN.

The rock supposed to have been struck by Moses is in the right-hand foreground. The Arabs call it Hesy el Khattatin.

their freshness and flavour, and then pressed tightly into bags of goat-skin, to be sold at a high price. Besides the palms there are the *sidr* trees (which bear a small bright rosy yellow fruit called *nebbuk*, something like the Siberian crab to look at, and not at all unpleasant to the taste), and—above all—the groves of tamarisk. Lepsius (A.D. 1845), speaking of Feirân, which he visited after he had been to Jebel Mûsa, says, “Everything that we had hitherto seen, and what we afterwards saw, was naked stony desert compared to this fertile oasis abounding in wood and water. For the first time since we had left the Nile valley we once more walked on soft black earth, obliged to defend ourselves with our arms from the overhanging leafy branches, and we heard singing-birds warbling in the thick foliage.” Lepsius thought that in very ancient times, judging from the deposits of earth which extend up the sides of

the valley to a height of eighty or a hundred feet, the valley must have been closed in at Feirân, and that, as all the northern waters of the mountain system of Jebel Mûsa flow into Wâdy Feirân, a considerable body of water must have accumulated here until at length the barriers were burst by the pressure, and the torrent rushed down in a devastating volume into the lower portion of the valley.

The battle is fiercely contested! There is some hidden spring of malevolence and hatred against the people of Jehovah which fires the Amalekite princes. The words of Exodus xvii. 15, 16 are remarkable words. The altar is called "The Lord my banner" (Jehovah nissi), and then there is a description, as it were, of the attitude of Amalek in "Because the hand of Amalek is against or upon the Throne of the Lord." Joshua has carefully selected his fighting men; the Israelites are marshalled in some sort of array of battle, such as they had often seen on the review grounds of Tanis, whilst they toiled as slaves in making brick for the buildings of the royal temple city. Far behind them, spread over a long distance, is the people, who had thirsted and murmured and longed to die from weariness of the way. All day long they fought; all day long Moses lifted up his hands in prayer! He is faint; he can stand no longer, as he boastingly said he would, on the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand! He sees the people yielding before the maddened fury of the mountaineers. Aaron and Hur, the most trusted of his comrades—the men to whose care afterwards at Sinai he will commit the people—bring a stone and put it under him. Still he is too weak; his arms, his hands must be stayed up; and then with evening glow upon the mountains, casting a long shadow on the battle-field, Amalek is discomfited with the edge of the sword!

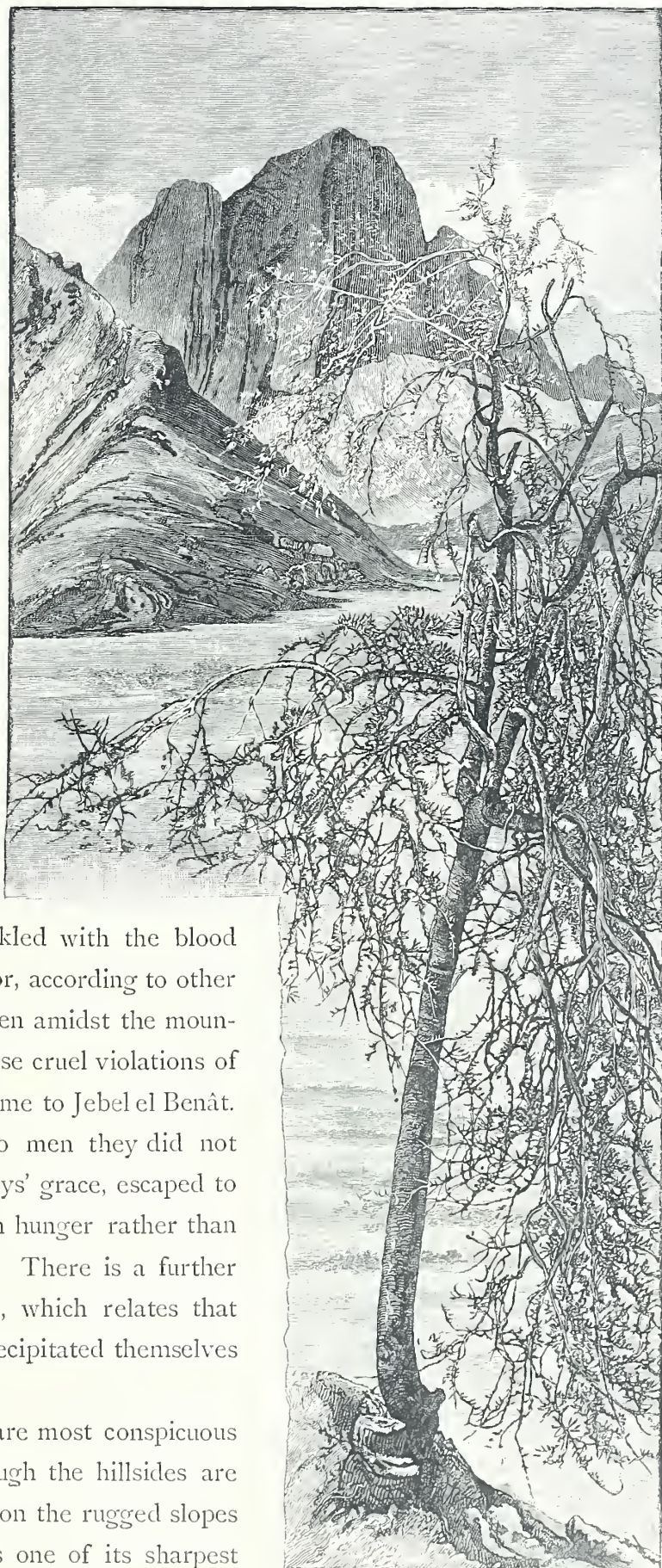
Mysterious words breathe now through the air. Miriam leads no chorus of women; but the awful voice of God speaks to Moses, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua."

It is the memory of this battle which is preserved by the church which was built on the summit of Jebel Tâhûneh. The plan of the church is easily traced, and the ruins of the subordinate chapels and stations remain by the side of the path leading up the hill. The original building of the church was of dressed sandstone, but a later edifice was built over this, constructed of rude stones taken from the mountain itself, and the orientation of the church was changed so as to look towards Jebel Serbâl, that is to the south. This noticeable change of the plan of the church, the shifting, as it were, its whole position, indicates that the builders of the *first* church saw nothing to reverence in Serbâl, that there was no tradition to make of it a holy place, and that the idea of its being the Mount of God (the Mountain of the Law) had not then been published. How many pilgrims must have climbed this hill! These hermits' cells, these innumerable tombs in the furrows of these desolate mountain-sides, of what a strange side of life do they tell the story! Yet, maybe, one should think more of the ancient Israelites pressing forward to overcome their foes beneath the banner of Jehovah than of these men, who shunned the dangers of temptation, and avoided the fatigue of life's rough

warfare by a mere existence of contemplation of God in the fancied presence of the memories of the past.

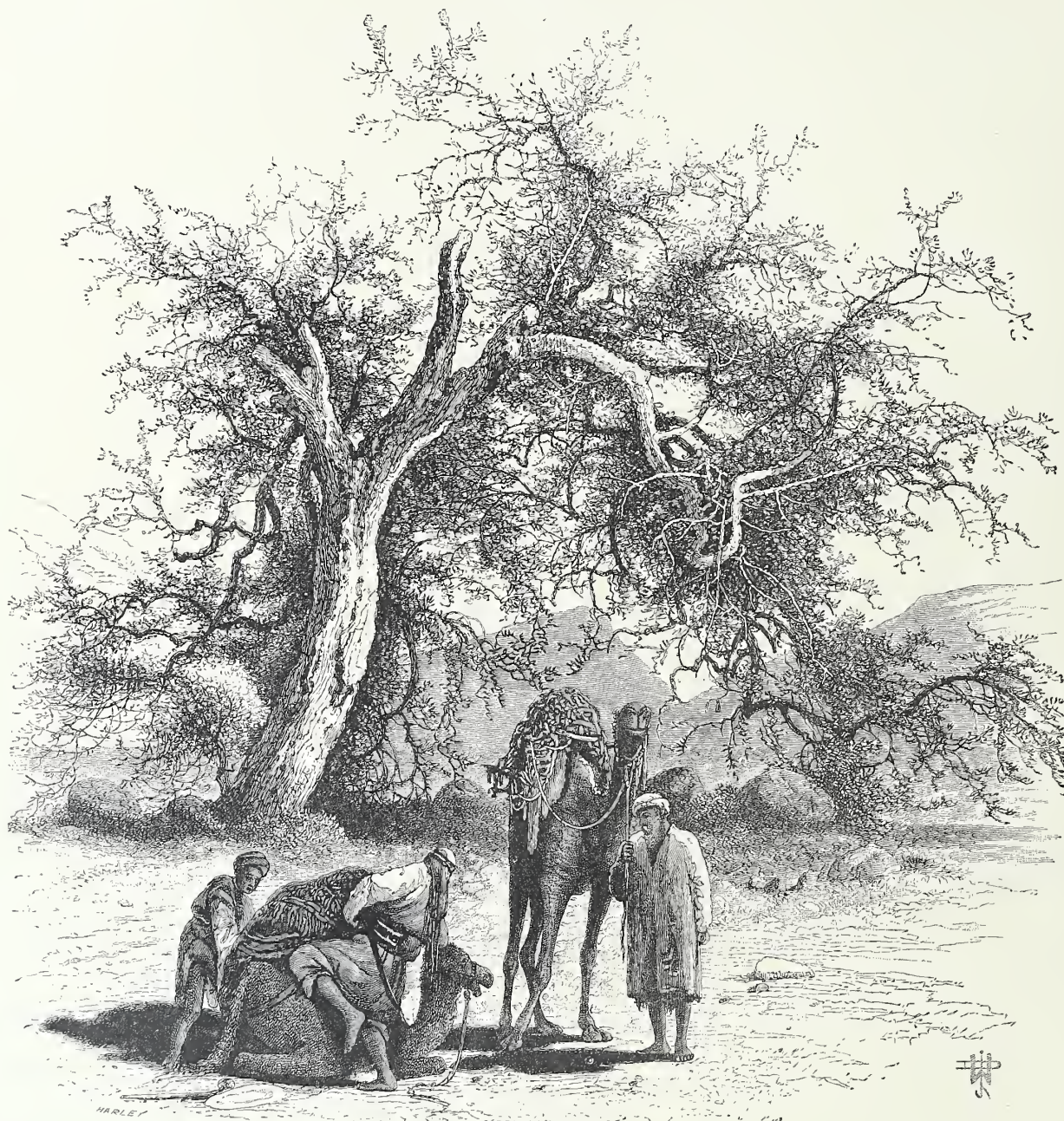
Before we descend into the valley let us look well at the graceful peaks of El Benât and El Jozeh. Ever since we came from Mukatteb we have seen El Benât, the "Girls' Mount," and admired it. There is a story connected with it which illustrates the marriage customs of the Bedawîn in these parts. The betrothal of a girl is a mere mercantile transaction between the girl's father and the proposed bridegroom. It is only when this is completed that the girl is made acquainted with the transaction. There is then a three-days' grace. This is spent by the girl, according to the rules of some tribes, in a tent near the father's tent, after she has been sprinkled with the blood of a sheep sacrificed for the occasion; or, according to other tribal customs, it is spent by her hidden amidst the mountains. It was a rebellion against these cruel violations of free choice which gave a story and a name to Jebel el Benât. Two girls who were to be married to men they did not like, taking advantage of the three-days' grace, escaped to this mountain, and there perished with hunger rather than prove faithless to their real lovers. There is a further detail sometimes added to the story, which relates that they twisted their hair together and precipitated themselves from the cliffs.

The vestiges of the ancient city are most conspicuous on the mound already mentioned, though the hillsides are dotted over with ruined houses, while on the rugged slopes to the east of the valley, which makes one of its sharpest bends soon after passing El Maharrad, are extensive



JEBEL EL BENÂT, "GIRLS' MOUNTAIN."
Stands some seven miles to the north of Serbâl.

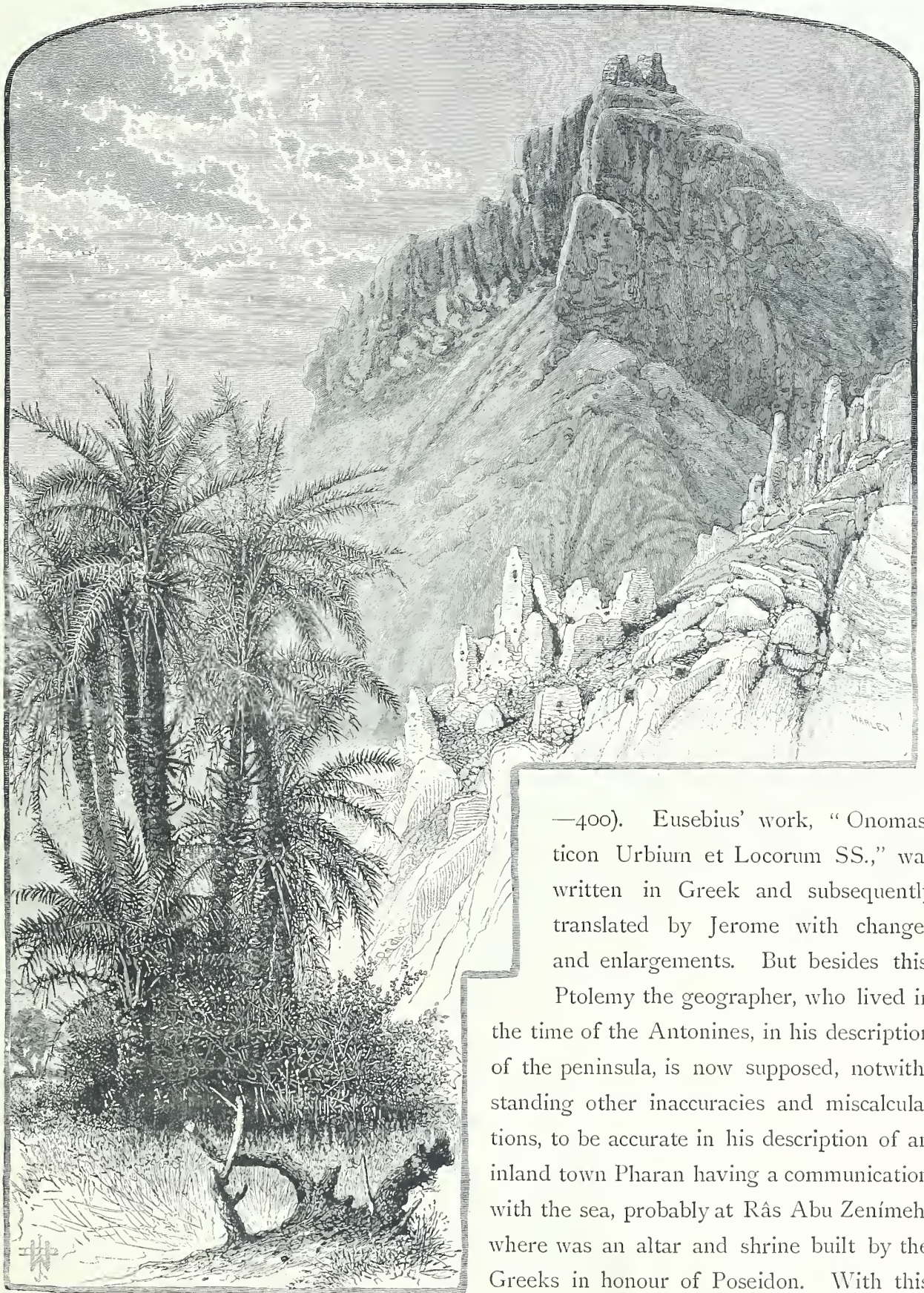
remains of what might have been a suburb of Pharan. It may be well to sum up the scraps of information which we have about this city. (1) As to the present name: the difficulty the Arabs have in pronouncing the letter P explains the substitution of Fâran for Paran or Pharan. Fâran might easily degenerate into Feirân, the "Valley of Mice," which again



WÂDY FEIRÂN.

Acacia seyal is the same as the shittim-tree. The Arabs lop these trees for charcoal, &c., in the cruellest and most unscientific manner.

might have its origin in the resemblance of the monkish cells and tombs on a large scale to the burrows of the field mice or jerboas. (2) The Hebrew word Rephidim means "Rest." If we cannot connect the names Pharan and Rephidim together, we may, without asking too much, suppose that Pharan is taken from some Amalekite name for the famous oasis. (3) That Pharan was a well-known place we have the evidence of Eusebius and Jerome (circa A.D. 330



JEBEL TÂHÚNEH, THE "MOUNTAIN OF THE WINDMILL."
Opposite Serbál, on the north side of the Feirán valley. The ruined city
Pharan, or Feirán, lies at its foot.

—400). Eusebius' work, "Onomasticon Urbium et Locorum SS.," was written in Greek and subsequently translated by Jerome with changes and enlargements. But besides this,

Ptolemy the geographer, who lived in the time of the Antonines, in his description of the peninsula, is now supposed, notwithstanding other inaccuracies and miscalculations, to be accurate in his description of an inland town Pharan having a communication with the sea, probably at Râs Abu Zenímeh, where was an altar and shrine built by the Greeks in honour of Poseidon. With this Pharan too there is mention of palm-groves.

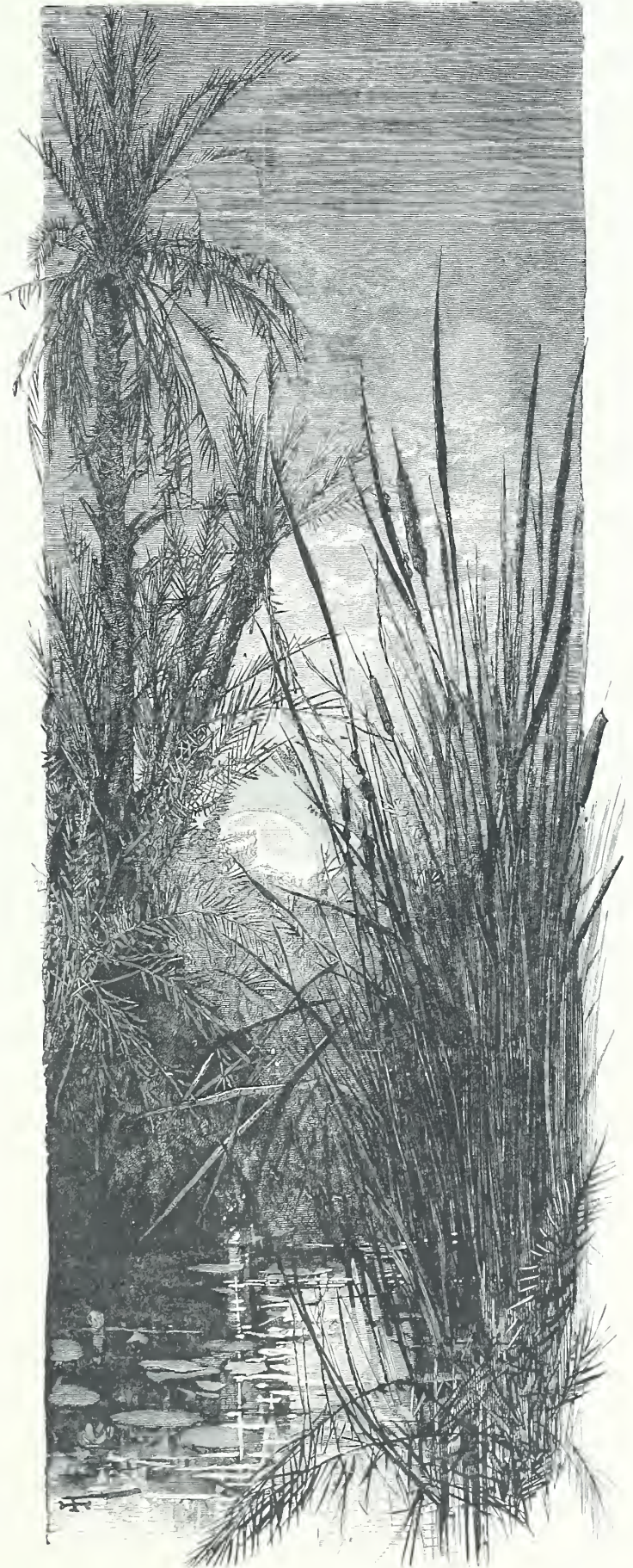
(4) Whichever of the two, Jebel Músa or

Jebel Serbâl, be the Mountain of the Law (our commonly accepted Sinai), it could not be that Moses would have left in his rear a place like Feirân, the most fertile spot in the peninsula, which as such must have been occupied by some colony of Amalekites, besides being probably the most hallowed of their sanctuaries. Even were we to allow that the great battle did not take place at Feirân, but at El Watiyeh in the Wâdy es Sheikh, it would still be most unnatural that no mention should be made of an encampment at Feirân, marked out naturally to be a camping ground for a host of people—journeying as were the Israelites. And these conventual buildings and the remains of the churches and the hermits' cells—what date shall we assign to them? There is an old make-up story which tells us that the town of Pharan was converted to Christianity in the middle of the fourth century. When Justinian, in A.D. 527, countenanced the foundation of a convent at Jebel Mûsa, he did not break new ground. A chapel, ascribed to the Empress Helena, had been built there in years long passed away, and the small conventual establishment attached to it seems to have been regarded as an outpost resting on the church at Pharan for support, and terribly exposed to the attacks of the Saracens. The cause of the decline of Pharan and the growth of the monasteries of Mount Sinai is not very clear, but there is amongst the subscriptions at the council of Constantinople, A.D. 536, the name of Theonas, a presbyter and legate of the holy Mount Sinai, the desert Raithu, and the holy church at *Pharan*.

Of the old monastic establishment on El Maharrad there are the foundations, part of the walls of its church, the remains of a tower, and a few broken columns and entablatures. Amongst the latter Professor Palmer found a stone with a carved representation of a seated man with his arms raised, probably meant to be Moses at the battle of Rephidim. Many of the stones of the church are to be found in the walls of the small houses of roughest construction which rise up on all sides, specially on the other side of the valley. The hill-tops abound with small square *nâwâmîs*, which may have been hermitages and graves together. In one, opened by Professor Palmer, were traces of a coarse shroud and wooden coffin. Above the body was a flat stone forming a shelf in the upper part of the tomb, but this did not seem to have been used for a second interment. The bodies in these *nâwâmîs* are buried east and west. The burying-ground of the present little Arab village is beautifully situated, secluded in the palm-grove a little way from the stream. One grave is ornamented with a white marble tombstone carved in a lily pattern, evidently brought from the ruins of the convent church. In the cemetery is the tomb of Sheikh Abu Shebîb, the patron saint of the district. It is a small stone building, and on the actual tomb is a cotton pall. To swear by this tomb is considered so solemn an oath as to be clear proof of a man's innocence. Abu Shebîb is reported to have appeared to a hunter who broke his leg on Jebel el Benât and to have conveyed him safely to his own home, and further to have demanded bakhshish in the shape of a white-faced sheep to be offered yearly at his tomb. The Arab regards his patron saint with the same reverence which the Neapolitan shows to St. Januarius. In every so-called village of the Arabs there is a consecrated shittim (acacia) tree, whose branches are not hacked and

lopped as is the case with other like trees. The tree is left to grow naturally, and the pods even (which when ripe form a favourite food for the camels) are only shaken off after the permission of the saint has been asked at his tomb.

Wâdy 'Aleyât, that right-arm valley which stretches down from Serbâl, is filled with dark green acacia-trees, and at the upper end are small groves of palm. Here, from beneath a great white boulder, rises a tiny mountain stream amidst moss and fern. Near this spot the Arabs point out a hole, in which they say that once a large treasure was discovered by a Maghrabî soothsayer; just as they say that on El Maharrad, from the cave or well on the north side there is communication with vaults beneath the convent ruins, where there are stores of wheat and treasures of immense wealth. Half-way up the valley there is, as at Sinai, a mountain called Jebel Moneijâh—the "Mount of the Conference." To this mount the Arabs attach more sanctity than to Serbâl itself, for every year they sacrifice to Moses on it. There is an enclosure of rough stones on the summit where they deposit votive offerings, beads, human hair, camel ropes, &c. A little before one turns out of the way in order to climb Jebel Moneijâh, on the western side, is the mouth of a valley called Nakheleh. It is possible by following it to cross over the watershed into Wady 'Ajeleh. There are remains also of an ancient causeway, along the sides of which are to be seen a number of Sinaitic inscriptions. Wâdy 'Ajeleh



A SPRING IN WÂDY FEIRÂN.
To the Bedawin of Sinai, Feirân realises Paradise.

is more rough and steep than Wâdy 'Aleyât, and much less picturesque. There are on one of its farther mountains the remains of a building, probably a fort. This Professor Palmer thinks may be the Jebel Latrum, to which the monks of the whole district were wont to retreat when harassed by the Saracens. The position is a strong one, and it seems that in addition to other defences large stones have been placed so that they could be hurled down easily on the advance of a hostile force. From the source of the little stream in Wâdy 'Aleyât it will take three hours to reach a ridge between the two highest of the many peaks of Serbâl. Five peaks the Arabs count. They rise so column-like from the broken ground, which seems to form the mountain base, as to appear inaccessible from the starting-place. Wâdy Abu Hamad ("Valley of the Father of Wild Figs"—there are a few stunted fig-trees in the ravine) is the easiest course to follow; though easy is a purely relative term. Three-quarters of an hour will bring one, over smooth blocks of granite whose coarse grain affords just a little foot-hold, and at the last helped on by loose stones arranged in some sort of path—(fashioned by human hands, yesterday or two thousand or three thousand years ago, of Bedawy, or of monk, or of Amalekite, or of Egyptian—who shall say?)—with a final scramble up a narrow natural chimney, to the summit.

"The topmost peak of Serbâl," says Professor Palmer, "consists of a series of rounded crags separated by deep and rugged ravines, and commanding a fine view of the country around: (the Red Sea bounded by the Egyptian hills in the hazy distance—the awful waste of El Gâ'ah to the south, with the village and grove of Tor like a dark line drawn with a chalk on the shore—to the east the Sinai group, the peaks of Jebel Katarîna, and beyond those again Jebel Umm Shomer). The highest point is called El Madhawwa (the 'Lighthouse,') and is covered, as well as the roads leading up to it, with Sinaitic inscriptions. Some of these have been executed in white paint or whitewash, and owing to their sheltered position on the walls of a cavern have perfectly withstood the ravages of time. On the lower of the two bluffs of which the summit consists is a ring of stones, the remains of an erection on which beacon-fires were lighted at the approach of invaders, or other danger, when Sinai was better populated than it is now." The word Serbâl is not a corruption of Ser Ba'al (Lord Baal), and the mountain was not even consecrated, as far as we know, to Baal worship, as was Hermon. Nor has the name anything to do with the Indian god Shiva. The word signifies simply "a shirt," and is often used by the Arabic writers to describe a body of water pouring over such smooth rounded surfaces as those composing the summit of this mountain. We ourselves use the expression "a sheet of water;" and one can fancy the tops of Serbâl with a light covering of thin snow or ice glittering in the sun like a great white shirt, and so suggesting a proper name whereby to distinguish it.

The southern (seaward) side of Serbâl, though it has no open valley like Wâdy Feirân, would be the most familiar to the early Christian world and to the pilgrims of the Middle Ages. Unless one were anxious to follow the steps of the Israelites, the natural way to reach the two rival mountains, Serbâl and Jebel Mûsa, would be from the port of Tor. A



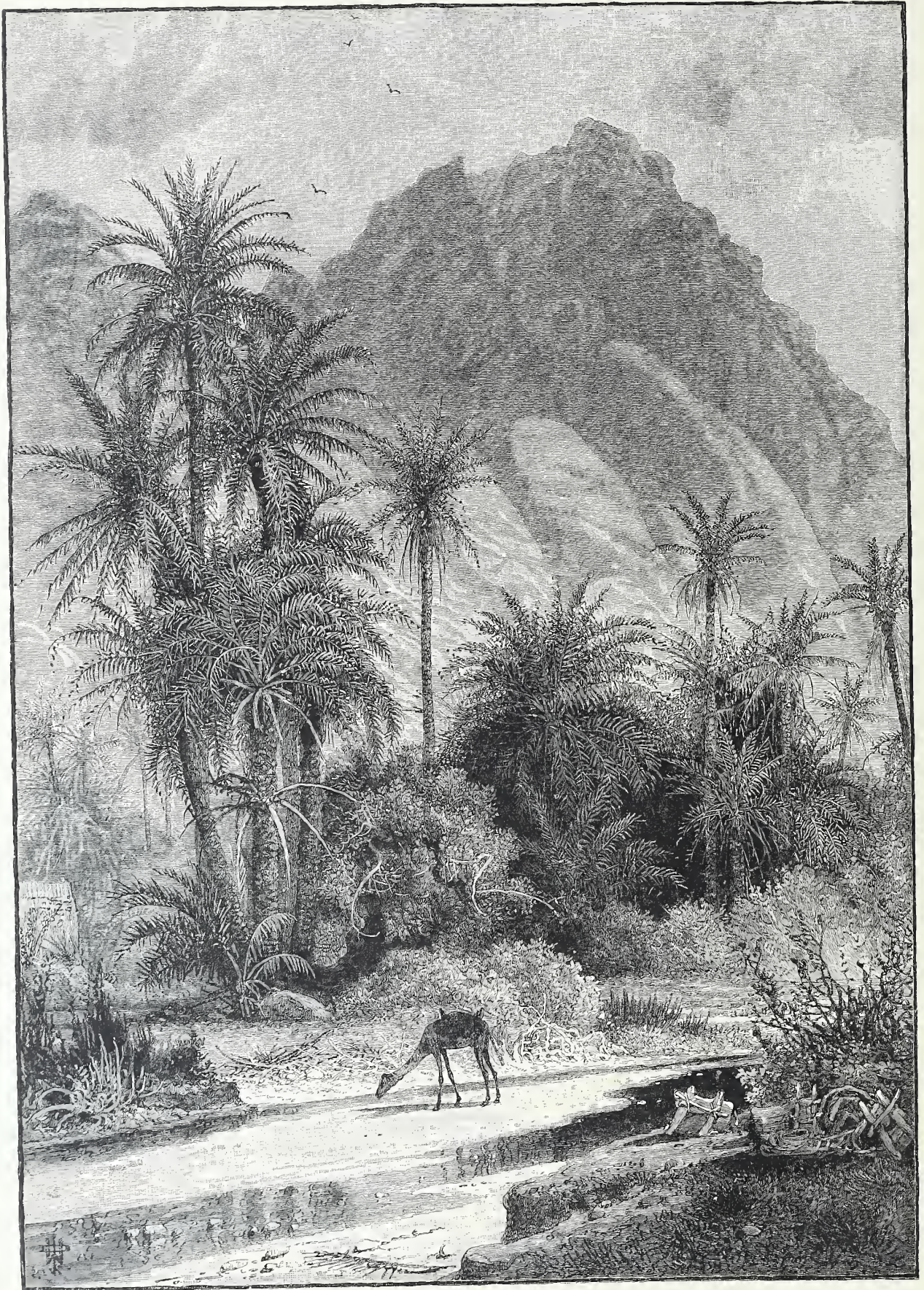
J. D. WOODWARD, PINX.

S. BRADSHAW, SCULPT.

MOUNT SERBÁL--FROM WÁDY FEIRÁN.

very little expenditure of time and money would make a small harbour here, and drain the marshy ground. At one time it must have had a certain amount of life and bustle, and to this the chapels and cells in the hills behind the town bear witness. The hot springs, the pleasant palm-groves, the comparative propinquity to Egypt—these combine to make Tor not an unlikely place to which pilgrims and anchorites would resort. On the opposite coast of the Red Sea, some ten or fifteen miles inland and fifty miles to the north-west, are the famous convents of St. Anthony and St. Paul. There is every reason to suppose that we may place the regular constitution of the monastic order at the close of the third century, and that Egypt was the cradle of monasticism in its Christian garb. Monasticism was not the invention but the *inheritance* of Christianity. The human mind seems always to have had a desire to flee away to the wilderness and be at rest. Retirement and solitude, quite apart from any teaching of Christianity, have again and again, at different ages and in different climates, suggested themselves as the safer conditions under which frail man may be able to obtain conquest over self, and attain to the perfection of God. It does not matter whether the result has been successful, or whether men—who have thus retired from the world—have lost sight of the discipline which God has ordained for us by stationing us *in* the world. The fact remains that to a variety of dispositions, and under the most opposed circumstances of life, separation from the world has suggested itself as the only panacea for the diseases of the soul.

Look at the Buddhist order of mendicants; call to mind the life of Elijah, the vows of the Nazarites, the story of Jonadab the son of Rechab, the influence of Essenes and Therapeutæ—the monks of Judaism! At far-off places in the history of humanity will be found abundant proofs of the widespread conviction that withdrawal from the world is the first step towards mastery of self. From the cell of the anchorite to the stately building of the monastery the transition is easy! The struggles of “the athletes of penitence” drew disciples not only in the times of persecution, when the far-off caves inhabited by holy men might serve as a refuge, but much more in the time of the Church’s peace. The luxury and the profligacy of the Roman empire seemed a worse enemy than the cruelty of tyrants. The one was open, visible, fearful; the other secret, gentle, honey-mouthed, captivating in form and habit. The one was like the blast and roar of a terrible tempest, the other like the soft scented breeze of summer evenings. Take then the history of Anthony, “the father of asceticism,”—young, rich, noble, of honourable Christian parentage, living in the balmy climate of Upper Egypt. More than one thousand six hundred years ago he chanced to hear read in church the words of the Gospel, “If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me!” He applied the words to himself. His parents being dead, he made provision for his only and dependent sister, and sold his estate. Giving the price of it to the poor, he plunged into the desert to work out his own salvation. By macerations, fasting, prayer (prayer as long as the night), incessantly struggling against the devil and the flesh, he overcame at last the enemy which wars against the spirit. Twenty years he spent near the Nile, now shut up in a ruined castle for months together with only bread and water



WÂDY FEIRÂN.

Professor Palmer describes the walk through Wady Feirân, with its shade of palms, tamarisks, and sidr-trees, and with its running water, as one of the most delightful in Sinai.

to sustain him—now issuing forth to instruct and encourage the multitudes who flocked to hear him. Pilgrims of all nations—as of old the people brought from every town and village their sick and dying ones to the feet of Jesus—brought to him the troubles of their souls to be remedied. The subtle philosopher came with his perplexity and doubt to find not an ignorant recluse, but a man ingenious and eloquent, well able to explain and to defend the mighty mystery of Redemption. Thus he became the head and chief of the anchorites of the Thebaid. His next work was to fashion these disciples into cœnobites (from κοινός, “common,” and βίωω,



“EL MAHARRAD,” PHARAN (FEIRÂN).

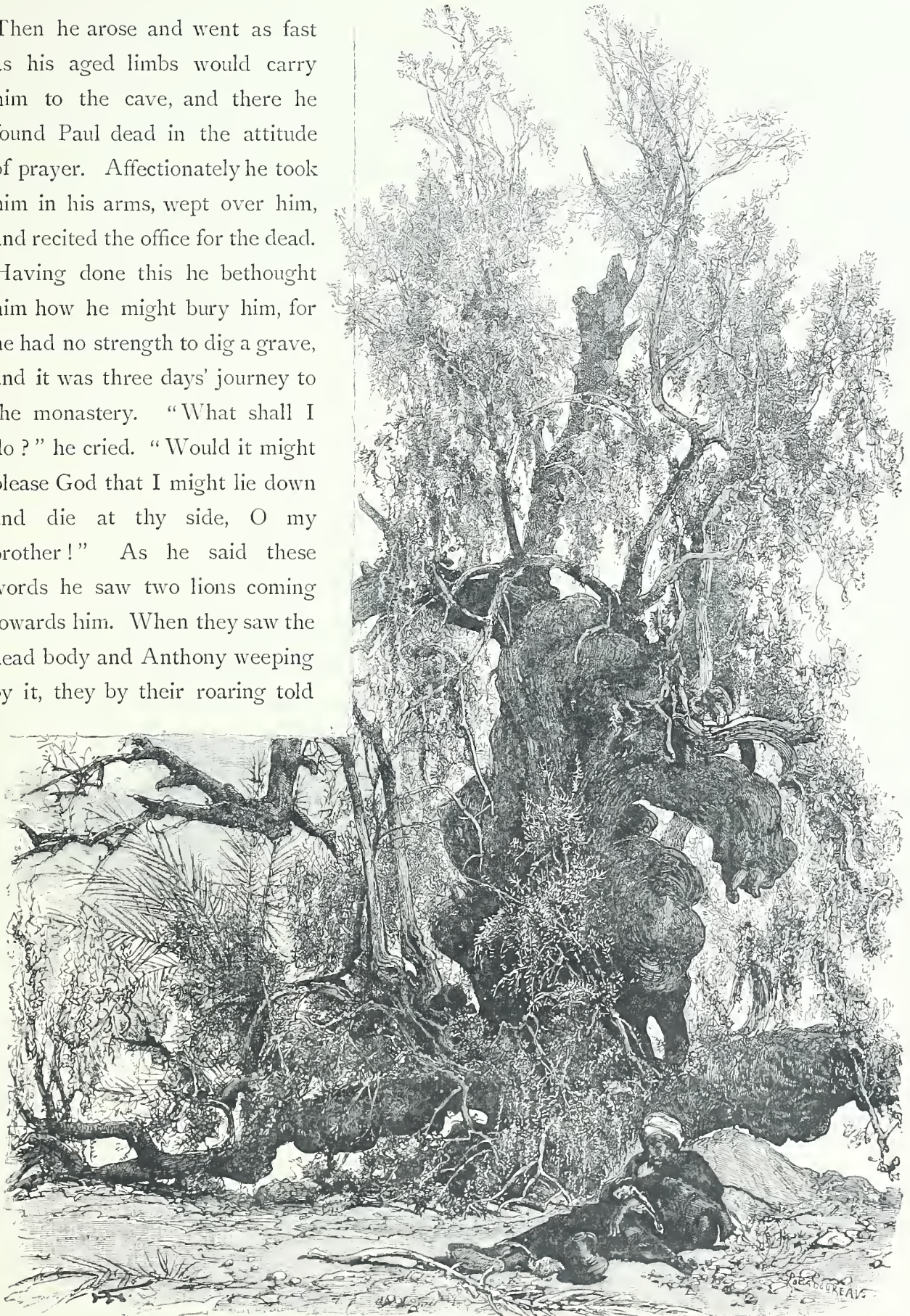
These ruins are all that remain of the great church and old monastic establishment of Pharan. The Bedawin grow small patches of maize, bearded wheat, and tobacco about here.

“to live”), for he saw the necessity of substituting for a life of isolation that life in common—so difficult to endure, but which is so wholesome for the breaking down of pride and the bringing into active being religious fervour. Anthony’s influence was great even with Constantine, who, as well as his sons, wrote to him as to a father, recommending to him the destinies of the new Rome. During Maximin’s (A.D. 311) persecution he went down to Alexandria to comfort and encourage the martyrs there; and again he paid the great commercial city a visit at the request of his friend Athanasius in A.D. 335, in order to preach against the Arians. But his stay could not have been long, for “fish die,” said he, “when

they are drawn to land, and monks lose their strength in towns; let us return quickly to our mountains, like fish to the water."

The name of St. Paul the hermit is inseparably connected with St. Anthony's. Seventy years had Anthony lived in the Thebaid, and the thought began to steal over him that no one before had ever lived such a life of solitude and self-devotion. But in the night's silence he heard a voice, "There is one holier than thou art, for Paul the hermit has served God in solitude and penance for ninety years!" On waking, Anthony determined to go and seek this Paul. As he journeyed across the desert he met a creature, half man half horse—a centaur, of whom he asked the way. Further on in a deep valley he met a satyr. The satyr bowed before him and said, "I am one of those creatures who haunt the woods and fields, and who are worshipped by the blind Gentiles as gods. But we are mortals, as thou knowest; and I come to beseech thee to pray for me and my people to thy God, who is my God and the God of all." When Anthony heard these words of the satyr the tears ran down his venerable face, and he stretched out his hand towards Thebes and cried, "Such be your gods, O ye pagans! Woe unto you when such as these confess the name of Christ, whom ye, blind and perverse generation, deny!" At length on the third day he reached a cavern overhung by wild and savage rocks, with a palm near and a fountain trickling at its roots. There he found the hermit Paul, to whom this cave had been a home for near ninety years. Paul would hardly break his solitude to receive St. Anthony. At length he admitted him, and the two aged men held long communion with each other beneath the shade of the palm-tree. While they talked on the state of the world and of idolatry in the presence of Christianity, time was forgotten. There came, however, a raven and alighted on the tree; then after a little while the bird flew away—but to return, carrying in his beak a small loaf which he dropped between them. Paul lifted up his eyes and blessed the goodness of God, and said, "For sixty years every day hath this raven brought me half a loaf, but because thou art come, my brother, lo! the portion is doubled, and we are fed as Elijah was in the wilderness." Then they ate, and drank of the water of the fountain, and returned thanks. After this Paul said to Anthony, "My brother, God hath sent thee here that thou mightest receive my last breath and bury me. Go, return to thy dwelling, bring here the cloak which was given thee by that holy bishop Athanasius, wrap me in it, and lay me in the earth." Anthony was amazed, for the gift of this cloak some years before was unknown to every one. He could only do as Paul begged him; so kissing him he returned to his monastery. Arrived there he took down the cloak and hastened on his way back, fearful lest in the meanwhile Paul might have died. When he was three hours' journey from the cave he suddenly heard a sound of ravishing music. Looking up he beheld the spirit of Paul, bright as a star and white as the driven snow, carried up to heaven by the prophets and apostles and a company of angels, who were singing hymns of triumph as they bore him through the air. When all had disappeared, Anthony fell on his face and wept, and threw dust on his head, exclaiming, "Alas, Paul! alas, my brother! why hast thou left me? Why have I known thee so late, to lose thee so early?"

Then he arose and went as fast as his aged limbs would carry him to the cave, and there he found Paul dead in the attitude of prayer. Affectionately he took him in his arms, wept over him, and recited the office for the dead. Having done this he bethought him how he might bury him, for he had no strength to dig a grave, and it was three days' journey to the monastery. "What shall I do?" he cried. "Would it might please God that I might lie down and die at thy side, O my brother!" As he said these words he saw two lions coming towards him. When they saw the dead body and Anthony weeping by it, they by their roaring told



TAMARISK-TREE, WÂDY FEIRÂN, SINAI.

"And the sleep in the dried river channel, where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well."—BROWNING'S "SAUL."

forth their sympathy, and began with their paws to scoop out a grave. When Anthony saw this he was awe-struck, and blessed them, saying, "O Lord, without whose divine providence no leaf can stir upon the tree, no little bird fall to the ground, bless these creatures according to their nature, who have thus honoured the dead!" Then Anthony took up the corpse, wrapped it in the cloak of St. Athanasius, and laid it reverently in the grave.

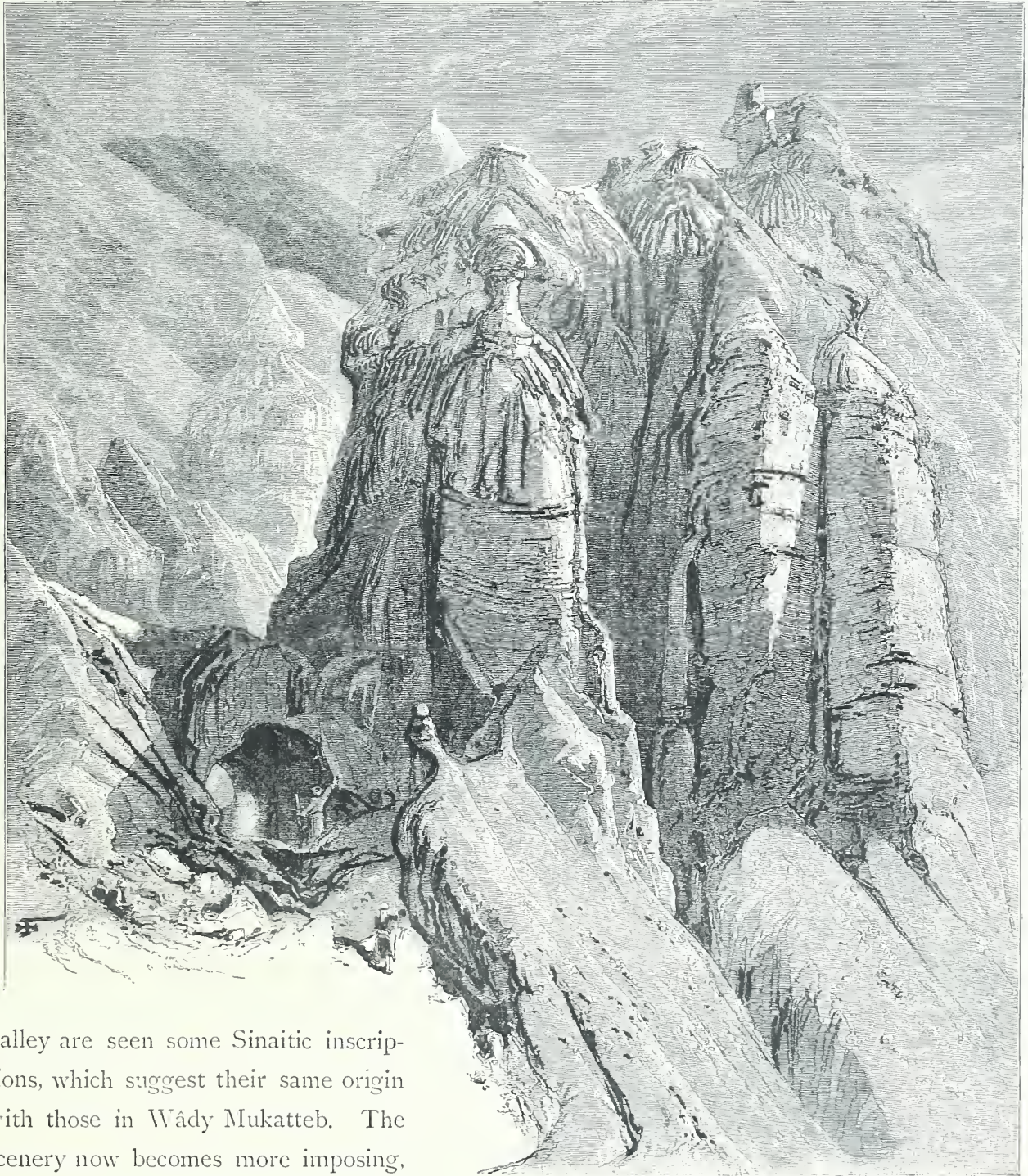
After this Anthony lived fourteen years, till his one hundred and fifth year. Feeling at length that his end was near, he summoned his disciples and took leave of them. With a few monks he retired to a more solitary place. There, having exacted of them a promise that they would not reveal the place of his burial, whilst they prayed around him, he gently drew his last breath.

It is to St. Anthony, then, "the father of abbots," and to St. Paul the hermit, that the two monasteries are dedicated. The Dayr Mar Antonios is reached from the Nile by following a broad valley called Wâdy el Arraba, which opens out nearly opposite Benisooéf. This valley takes its name from the carts (*âraba* or *âroba*, "plaustrum") which used to carry the provisions to the two monasteries—but there is also a tradition that it is so called from the chariots of Pharaoh, who pursued the Israelites down this valley as they fled away to the Red Sea. The monastery claims to be the oldest in Egypt. The lofty walls enclose an irregular pile of buildings, as well as a large garden where there are date-palms, carob-trees, &c., and an abundance of vegetables—for the garden is well watered from a spring which bursts out from the rock behind the convent. In this spring Miriam, Moses' sister, is said to have bathed at the time of the Exodus. There are some five or six churches in the convent and a large twelve-domed church in the garden; in one of these, dedicated to St. Anthony, there are some very old and curious frescoes. High up in the cliff is the Cave of St. Anthony, from which there is a grand view of the Egyptian desert, the Red Sea, and the Sinaitic range beyond. How often in this desert among these barren wastes must have ascended to heaven the evening hymn and the vesper prayer of monks and hermits. "Everywhere, all at once," suggests Montalembert, "the air echoed the hymns, the prayers, the songs pious and solemn, tender and joyous, of these champions of the soul and conquerors of the desert. . . . then the traveller, the pilgrim, and especially the new convert stood still—lost in emotion and transported with the sounds of that sublime concert—and would cry aloud, "Behold, this is Paradise!"

From Egypt the monastic spirit overflowed into Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. Sinai was occupied by hermits and monks almost as soon as the Thebaid. The mountain where God gave His law to Moses was the scene of a constant struggle between Saracen or Arab and monk. But the destroyers tired sooner than the monks, and in a measure became converted by the gentle teaching of St. Nilus—the great monastic coloniser of Mount Sinai—and by the example set them in the piety of his followers.

Tor, with its oasis, seems, as we have said, to have been chosen by the monks for their chief landing-place. Close down to the shore, and also in the hills to the north, are the remains of

hermits' cells. In some the plaster adheres to the walls, and here and there a cross with an inscription tells the story of the life of a former occupier. The march across the plain to the mouth of Wâdy Hebrân, about eighteen miles, is a tiring one. At the entrance of the



ALLUVIAL DEPOSITS, WÂDY FEIRÂN.

These strange deposits serve as a "meter" to measure the height to which the Feirân stream may once have reached. At Philæ, &c., in the valley of the Nile, the same deposits may be observed.

valley are seen some Sinaitic inscriptions, which suggest their same origin with those in Wâdy Mukatteb. The scenery now becomes more imposing, and there are groups of palms, tamarisk-trees, and seyals fringing the course of the half-hidden stream. The

late 'Abbâs Pasha, whose unfinished palace is so conspicuous from Jebel Mûsa—built on the near summit of Jebel Tîniyeh,—commenced a road from Tor to Sinai. Some portions remain,

having survived neglect and floods. To any one inexperienced it would not seem a difficult matter to carry a mountain road through Wâdy Hebrân, and so, penetrating by Nagb Hawa, make on one hand the Sinai group accessible, and open out, on the other hand, through Wâdy Solâf the Serbâl district. Apart from all biblical and historical associations, the scenery of the peninsula is very fine, the air is delicious, and, if the desert journeys could be shortened by the selection of better routes, the surroundings of travel are not over-fatiguing.

Sinai as it was in the days of—what we may term—the Monkish Invasion and Occupation, and Sinai as it is, must be very different! Most countries change for the better, cultivation improves, locomotion is made easier, intercourse with the outside world is encouraged; *but* in the Sinaitic peninsula everything has been reversed. It would be rash to say that these valleys were ever filled with an exuberance of life even in early Christian times, or that colonies of monks and the renowned sanctity of certain places made the land ring with the sound of busy commerce or the activity of thriving industries; but there was movement, and there was some attempt to make the “desert rejoice and blossom as the rose!”

The watershed of Wâdy Hebrân, where is a vast collection of the primitive dwellings (*nâwâmîs*) of a forgotten people, is some eight or nine miles from the entrance of the valley. A fine view is obtained from it of Serbâl, with Jebel Shinénîr as a supporting buttress, and Beidhat Umm Tâkhah as its near neighbour. A visit to the conventual ruins in Wâdy Sigillîyeh shows one the scenery of the southern side of Serbâl, and completes the circuit of the monastic establishments of which that mountain is the centre. Burckhardt did not visit these ruins, but heard that they were spacious and well built, and that there was in them a well, plentifully supplied with water. Lepsius thinks that the convent in Wâdy Sigillîyeh, from which a rock road led to Feirân, constructed with much skill and difficulty, is probably the oldest and, perhaps, the most important in the peninsula.

Professor Palmer encamped in Wâdy er Rimm—which descends into the great trunk valley Wâdy Solâf, near a favourite camping ground of the Towarah Arabs. The traces of the camel-road, made centuries ago by the men who had probably been trained by the advice and example of St. Anthony himself in the Thebaid, are almost destroyed, and a rough walk must be endured before the head of the valley is gained. Hence is seen the corresponding valley, most difficult of access, at the base of a precipice twelve hundred feet high, into which the road must have led so as to reach the Sigillîyeh convents.—“After a few yards of loose gravel we came upon a portion of the old road, composed of large blocks of granite arranged as a flight of steps, but this presently terminated in an abrupt precipice, where the floods had broken away the ground, and it was at least half an hour before we could find a practicable path. Arrived at the bottom we found another admirably constructed road, quite a model of engineering skill, which ran along the shoulder of the opposite mountain, and shortly brought us to our destination. Here we stood upon the brow of a hill looking down into a deep ravine filled with palm and other trees indicating the presence of a living stream of water, and amidst the verdure were the walls of a small convent—the ruins which

we were seeking. Descending into the ravine we made a careful examination of these, and then partially retracing our steps we went out on to a projecting spur of the hill and found behind it another glen, still wilder and more beautiful than that which we had left, and also filled with ruined monkish dwellings and garden walls. Looking across the wâdy, too, we saw a third ravine, with palm-trees and tall rushes peeping above its winding walls, and evidently containing similar dwellings to those beneath us, since the road along the mountain-side leading to it was the counterpart of that by which we had ourselves reached the ruins. Southward was the Wâdy Sigilliyeh—far away in the distance could be seen the narrow gorge whose difficulties we had so recently experienced—and beyond this stretched the burning plain El Gâ'ah. A more wildly picturesque and secluded retreat than this it would be difficult to conceive, and with the luxuriant vegetation that fills the wâdy bed, and the almost inaccessible nature of the place, it forms the very ideal of a Bedawî 'Happy Vale.' Judging from the fact that we found numerous Sinaitic inscriptions at the bottom of the pass in Wâdy er Rimm, that is, as far as camels could have been brought when the roads were better kept, and none at all after the part at which the real difficulties of the ascent commence, I should conclude that the Saracen carriers gave in at this point, allowing the worthy monks to fetch their stores over the mountains themselves, and were occupied in the interval with carving their autographs upon the rocks, since no other mischief was left for their idle hands to do." ("Desert of the Exodus," p. 225.)

Here, then, in a space measuring less than a square mile, are situated the ruins of three convents. By the difficult gorge leading from the plain into Wâdy Sigilliyeh, and by this road through Wâdy er Rimm, are the only apparent approaches to them. In Principal Tulloch's "Pascal" there is a description of Port Royal, which, far removed, indeed, by its nobler associations, suggests to us something of the life which *should* have animated the recluses of Jebel Serbâl. "The famous valley of Port Royal lay before us. It was a quiet and peaceful, yet gloomy scene. The seclusion was perfect. No hum of cheerful industry enlivened the desolate space. An air rather as of long-continued neglect rested on ruined garden and terraces, on farmhouse and dovecot, and the remains as of a chapel nearer at hand. The more minutely the eye took in the scene, the more sad seemed its wasted recesses and the few monuments of its departed glories. The stillness as of a buried past lay all about, and it required an effort of imagination to people the valley with the sacred activities of the seventeenth century. A rough wooden enclosure has been erected on the site of the high altar, surmounted by a cross. . . . It was here alone that the recluses from the neighbouring Grange met the sainted sisterhood, and mingled with them the prayers and tears of penitence. Otherwise they dwelt apart each in diligent privacy, intent on their works of education or of charity. All the ruin and decay and somewhat dreary sadness of the scene could not weaken the life of thought and faith and hope and love that had once breathed there; and never before had I felt so deeply the enduring reality of the spiritual heroism and self-sacrifice, the glory of suffering and of goodness, that had made the spot so memorable!"

Breaking up the camp at Feirân with no slight regret, and hungrily longing to penetrate those recesses which have yet to be explored, we resume our march towards Sinai and Jebel Mûsa. The valley is narrow, and for some distance its bed is filled with groves of fine tamarisks, palms, and nebbuk trees. Bulbuls (nearly allied to our thrush, and rivals in song of the nightingale) are flitting about from branch to branch, making sweet music: while the softness of the air fascinates one into forgetfulness of the gloomy desert which encloses this Bedawîn paradise (see page 76). A tamarisk can be exceedingly picturesque. I, for my part, had no conception that it ever grew to such a size, knowing it only as a useful hedge-tree



EL BUWEIB, THE "GATE" OF FEIRÂN.

A narrow passage between the rocks, about one hundred feet long by twenty wide.

in the sandy district of Cornwall and the southern parts of England. Its feathery foliage, which seems so insignificant in the small shrub, groups and arranges itself in a variety of graceful forms, which are set off by the contrasted colouring of the leaf-stem and trunk; and when the tree is in blossom in spring the spikes of light pink bloom must add a further charm to its appearance. Through this grove, which fills up the valley bed for some miles, the traveller passes on under Jebel Moneijâh, and gradually works eastward of Serbâl.—Are we then leaving the true Sinai—the Mount of God—and the scene of the proclamation of the Law, or are we really following the track of the Israelites, and taking a proper course for the mountain on which God

had told Moses, when He appeared to him in the bush, that Israel should worship Him? The three main considerations which must be kept in view in any attempt—with our present knowledge—to decide whether Jebel Músa or Jebel Serbâl be the “Mount of God,” or, as we generally term it, “Sinai,” are—(1) tradition; (2) geographical position as to the requirements of the biblical account of the great march of the Israelites through the Peninsula, and as to the references to Horeb and Sinai in other parts of the Bible; (3) the capacities of the ground.—One does not expect to be able to exhibit any new arguments, or to make any suggestion by which old athletes on this old battle-ground of biblical topography will be induced to desert their opinions. This were presumptuous! It may be worth noticing, however, that if Serbâl be the true Sinai, there is no reason at all why the Israelites should have journeyed farther south to Jebel Músa.

(1.) As to the traditions:—we have already considered many of them at different stages of our journey, and have seen that, however mixed be the Arab and Mohammadan traditions about Moses, they still do hold in solution, as it were, very ancient Jewish folk-lore. Some of these stories have been manipulated by the monks, and thus fashioned have been cunningly and carefully nurtured by them in the Arab mind, in order that a certain magical atmosphere may be shed round the convent, so as to restrain the lawless instincts of the Bedawín. Josephus (“Antiq.” ii. 12) speaks of Mount Sinai as being regarded with awe from the rumour that *God dwelt there*, and as being the highest of all the mountains in that country,—the whole passage having reference to Moses driving up Jethro’s sheep to feed on the slopes of Sinai, a pasturage which had ever been deemed sacred. Suppose that this mountain “Sinai” was Serbâl:—Moses, then, would drive his sheep through the upper portion of Wâdy Feirân, right into the home of the Amalekites, and in their face would turn up Wâdy ’Aleyât to pasture them on the rare herbage of Serbâl; for the city of Jethro’s tribe in Midian is placed, it must be remembered, by Josephus on the Red Sea! We have already seen that Pharan as a centre, with its palm-groves, was a known place in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (circ. B.C. 280): that it was a chief city of the ancient Amalekites is a matter of conjecture certainly—but there are plausible grounds for the conjecture. There is no evidence, on the other hand, that the valleys of Jebel Músa were ever inhabited to any great extent; rather the reverse. Its seclusion and its comparative isolation therefore would not unnaturally foster the belief that some peculiar sanctity attached to the mountain.

Two inscriptions on marble exist at the convent itself referring to the foundation of the building. They are let into the external wall facing the garden; one is in Greek, the other in Arabic. These two inscriptions relate, with some variation, that, “The holy convent of Mount Sinai, where God spoke to Moses, was built from the foundation by Justinian, the lowly king of the Romans (dependent on God, and hoping in the promise of his Lord), in eternal remembrance of himself and of his consort, Theodora. It was completed in the thirtieth year of his reign, and he placed a chief in the same, one of the name of Dulas, in the year 6021 since Adam, 521 since Christ.” These inscriptions are not more than seven or eight hundred years

old.—But there is also another tablet, with an ornamental Roman margin. Although the inscription is illegible, it is apparently the oldest record in the building, and possibly the other two tablets are translations, or at anyrate memoranda, of its contents. Not much stress is to be laid on these inscriptions!—There is an account, however, of the foundation of the convent in the Annals of Eutychius, Patriarch of Alexandria in the latter half of the ninth century, which is given at length by Robinson. In this there is a great deal of information; not conclusive, indeed, but of such a nature that one cannot help thinking that there may be something in the traditions imbedded therein. He describes the monks of Mount Sinai as imploring Justinian to build them a convent, that so they might have a common home, and be protected from the wandering sons of Ishmael. The monks speak of themselves as living scattered upon the

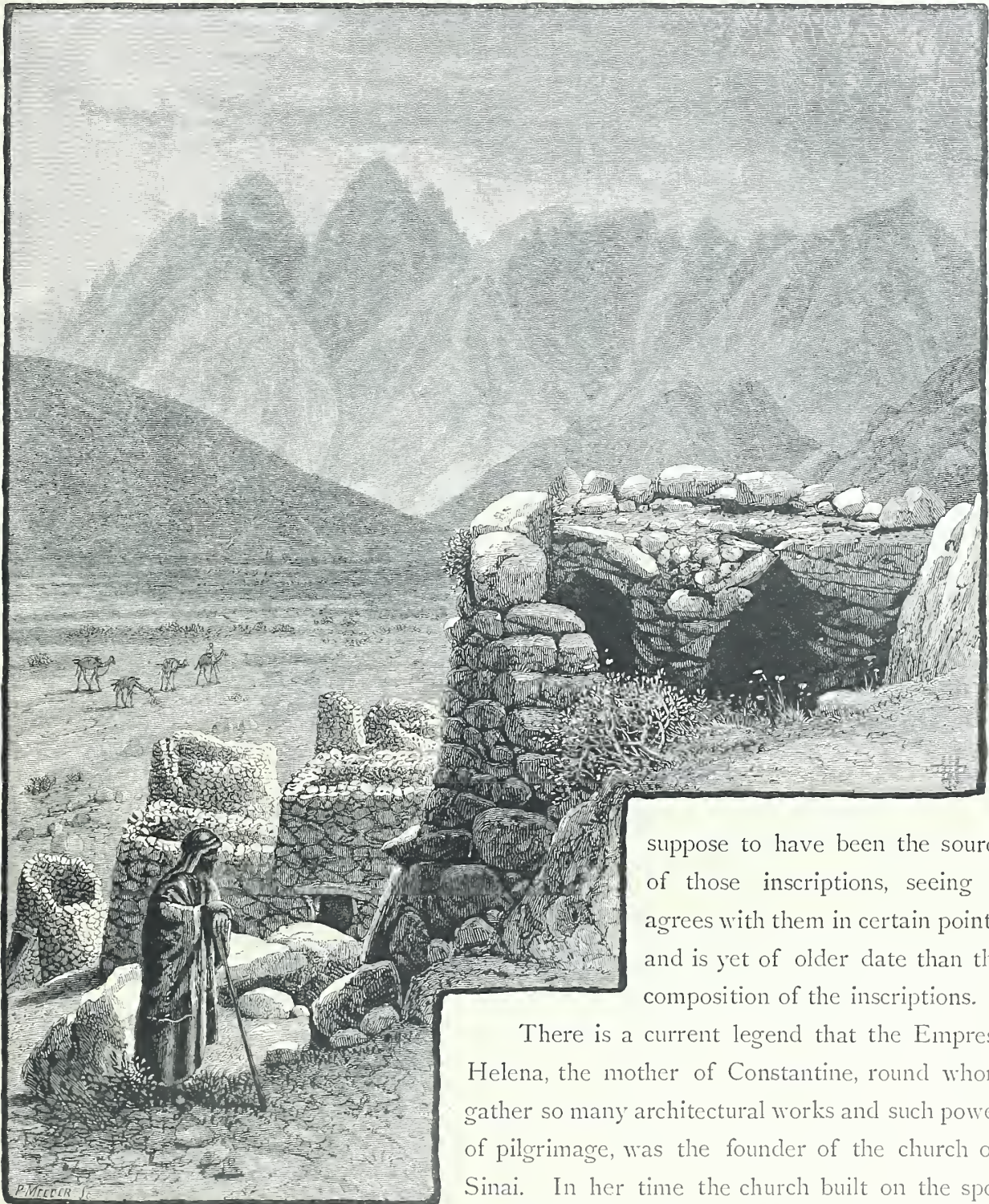


WÂDY SOLIEF OR SOLÂF, SINAI.

In the foreground is a shittim-tree, whose branches the Arabs are lopping off in the roughest fashion for their camels and for fuel.

mountains and in the valleys round the sacred bush “out of which God—His name be praised—spoke with Moses.” The Patriarch states that the monks had constructed a tower of refuge above the bush, and that in it was the church of St. Mary. This tower and the bush, according to the description, were in a narrow place between two mountains where fountains of water sprang up. The Emperor’s legate built the convent so as to include the tower,—but in such a position that any one on the top of the mountain could throw a stone into the midst of the convent. This is doubtless a spiteful exaggeration:—he placed it in that position because of the propinquity of the bush, and because there was a necessity put on him to avoid blocking up the valley and so preventing the rush of the torrents. He also built a chapel on the top of the mountain on the spot where Moses received the Law. The name of the first prior is

mentioned here likewise as Daula (Dulas). Such evidence as this is no more decisive than that of the inscription in the convent wall; but possibly it may tally with some tradition which we may



NÂWÂMÎS IN WÂDY SOLÂF.

Nâwâmîs (singular *nâwîs*), or "mosquito houses," are said by the Arabs to have been built by the Israelites as a shelter from a heaven-sent plague of mosquitoes!

suppose to have been the source of those inscriptions, seeing it agrees with them in certain points, and is yet of older date than the composition of the inscriptions.

There is a current legend that the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, round whom gather so many architectural works and such power of pilgrimage, was the founder of the church on Sinai. In her time the church built on the spot where God first spake with Moses, and built, too, to commemorate that crisis in the history of man, was dedicated probably to Mary the mother of God

The burning bush was, and is still, not an uncommon symbol of the Incarnation, and the church built on the holy ground of God's revelation to Moses would not be unfitly dedicated to her

of whom was born the Saviour of the world. The chain of evidence is weak ; for the Annals of Eutychius (he wrote about A.D. 932—953) are somewhat fabulous.—Still there is no higher authority in favour of Jebel Serbâl being the scene of this momentous event. Lepsius, a fierce advocate for Jebel Serbâl, points out that the testimony of Procopius, the contemporary historian of Justinian, a dexterous but by no means hearty admirer of the Emperor, should be considered valuable* in any question of Justinian's buildings on Jebel Mûsa. Procopius tells us that "Justinian built a church to the mother of God, not on the summit of the mountain, but a considerable way below it." And the spot hereby indicated is, Lepsius surmises, the plain in the hollow of the saddle between Jebel Mûsa and Râs Sufsâfeh, where Elijah's chapel now stands near the famous cypress-tree. Quite apart from this church Justinian built, at the foot



BEIDHAT UMM TÂKHAH, A NEIGHBOUR OF MOUNT SERBÂL.
In the foreground is the usual scene of preparation for a night's bivouac.

of the mountain, a very strong castle in order to check the incursions of the wandering sons of Ishmael referred to in the monks' petition to the Emperor. We have, then, references to three churches on Jebel Mûsa : (1) Helena's church or chapel of St. Mary near the bush, and protected by, if not enclosed within, the tower ; (2) the church or chapel on the top of the mountain, built by the legate of Justinian ; (3) the church which Procopius says Justinian built a considerable way below the summit—(a convent having been built near the bush and the old tower). There is, however, another group of traditions, already referred to, which gives some little weight to the testimony connecting the great event of Moses' life with

* Dean Stanley says of the Emperor Justinian and his wife : "Two great and wicked sovereigns, than whom perhaps few could be named who had broken more completely every one of the laws which have given to Sinai its eternal sacredness."

this mountain. Professor Palmer has cleverly pieced together and arranged for us the real story of the mark of the camel's foot near the summit of Jebel Músa, which is an object of such peculiar veneration amongst the Bedawín.* There is of course a first prejudice to be got over—for every one supposes that the name of the rock-mark, Athar Nágat en Nebí, "the footprint of the Prophet's she-camel," must refer to Mohammad, and also to his night journey to heaven. But the marvellous animal he used for his marvellous journey was Borâk. Prophets, it is said, were wont to use that kind of animal for their peregrinations. Partly ass, partly mule, it had the face of a man and the body of a horse. Milk-white was its colour; its mane was of the finest pearls, its ears emeralds, and its eyes sparkling jacinths. Its whole body, the wings with which it was furnished, and its flowing tail, bristled with the richest jewellery. Of its swiftness, not only its name, which signifies "Lightning," but the events of Mohammad's journey are sufficient proof. The hollow in the rock may be artificial, as the monks declared it was to the prefect of the Franciscan convent at Cairo, who visited them in the eighteenth century; but it has a very natural appearance, although the eye must be educated to perceive at once the shape of a *camel's foot*. In the Cor'ân, however, Mohammad has a legend that a certain prophet Sâleh, a messenger of God to an incorrigibly impious tribe named Thamúd, gave them, on their importunity, a sign of his mission by causing a she-camel, big with young, to come forth from a rock. This Nebí Sâleh of the Cor'ân is, we may conclude, the Nebí Sâleh of Wâdy es Sheikh, whose tomb is the great shrine of the religious worship of the Bedawín of the peninsula; and further we may argue that the prophet of the camel's foot-print on the summit of Jebel Músa is Nebí Sâleh of the Cor'ân and of the adjacent valley, and that the Thamúdites, the tribe to which Nebí Sâleh himself belonged, were a primitive people, the early inhabitants of Sinai.

But who was Nebí Sâleh? The word Sâleh is connected with "righteous," and for a moment one thinks of Melchizedek, King of Salem. But pass this by. The Bedawy has but a vague idea as to the individuality of Moses, Eliás, or Sâleh. When one looks at the sign given, and considers, too, the veneration in which Nebí Sâleh is held, may it not be conceivable that Sâleh is Moses himself? The stories in the Cor'ân which surround the miracle worked by Sâleh are childish and ridiculous; still it is well to note the stricken rock after prayer producing a live camel, the greatest of Bedawy blessings,—the subsequent rebellion of the people to whom the prophet addressed his warnings,—and the terrible destruction sent by God upon them.

The Cor'ân says that the tribe of Thamúd inhabited Hejer, a mountainous district, where they had cut out for themselves habitations in the rocks. It is described as a territory in the province of Hejaz, between Medina and Syria,—a loose definition, but applicable to the country on the east coast of the Gulf of Akabah,—and consequently very little removed from the peninsula proper. From the commentaries on the Cor'ân we gather that the Thamúdites defied Sâleh

* The Bedawín girls, when tending their flocks on these mountains, will often milk their goats into it, as being a sure means of obtaining increase and prosperity. The Arabs sometimes say that this mark is the impress of the dromedary on which Moses rode up and down the long ascent to Jebel Músa.

to bring down on them the vengeance he had denounced for their impiety. He had told them, after they killed the miraculous camel, that on the morrow their faces should become yellow, the next day red, and the third day black, and that on the fourth God's vengeance should light on them. The first three signs happened, and the people at once prepared to put Sâleh to death. God delivered him from them and sent him to Palestine. Some add that he died



TARFAH OR TAMARISK GROVE, WÂDY ES SHEIKH.

This fine grove is called Tarfat el Gidarain. The wâdy itself cuts through the granitic wall which fences in Sinai.

at Ramleh, and was buried at the spot where the White Mosque stands, to which is attached the famous tower. Mohammadan geography is not trustworthy: no traditions connected with Sâleh have taken root at Ramleh. One may therefore credit the well in Wâdy es Sheikh (the valley itself probably acquired its designation from him) with being the real tomb or cenotaph of the prophet Sâleh, the great saint of the Bedawîn, who had retired to this valley from Hejer.

In the expedition of Tabûc, a town situated on the route to Damascus, which Mohammad undertook against the inclination of his people, "who inclined heavily towards the earth," the Prophet passed by Hejer, the country of the ancient Thamûdites. Though they were much distressed by heat and thirst he forbade his army to draw any water there, but ordered them if they drank of that water to bring it up again, or if they had kneaded any meal with it to give it to their camels. He himself wrapped his face in his garment and spurred on his mule, crying out, "Enter not the houses of those wicked men, but rather weep lest that happen unto you which befell them!"—Thus much for the traditions of Jebel Mûsa!

(2.) The geographical position of Jebel Mûsa, with reference to the Bible narrative, must, of course, be an important factor in every attempt to settle which mountain should be "the Mountain of the Law." This is the account of the movements of the Israelites. In Exodus, chapter xix. (which one may suppose to be either Moses' own writing, or to contain at least the first record which he made of the march from the Red Sea), we have, "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai," that is, on the same day of the month—the nicety of the chronology, so like what one finds in the Egyptian monuments and *papyri*, is much more evident than accuracy as to the geography and the stations on the route—"for they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain," &c. Now except in chapter xviii., recording the visit of Jethro, the only historical "Mountain of God" which is brought before us by Moses is that Horeb where God appeared to him in the burning bush, and of which God said emphatically (Exodus iii. 12), "Certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a *token* unto thee that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." The narrative of Moses' successive interviews with the Pharaoh leaves an impression that from day to day he did not know what mode of deliverance God would adopt, nor what would be the route taken, nor the manner of conducting the people when delivered in order to establish them in the Promised Land. All was vague and misty. There was Egypt, the house of bondage, near at hand; far off was the land where Abraham, two or three centuries ago, had lived merely as a great pastoral chief, with no defined country or territorial boundaries: in between, as it were, was a stupendous enterprise, sufficient to have taxed the organizing powers and endurance of the greatest of generals,—illumined only by that assurance of the Divine leadership of which the after-worship at Horeb was to be the token.

The thirty-third chapter of Numbers is undoubtedly a most important document. The second verse tells us, "Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord: and these are their journeys according to their goings out." The words naturally convey to the reader that the several breakings up of the encampment indicate the progress of their march, and that the length of the halt is of no consequence. It is not Serbâl, it is not Sinai, which is to be remembered, but it is the moving on to the goal, viz. the

inheritance of the Promised Land. Let the critic, then, dissuade us from our old belief—that the Pentateuch was entirely, with the exception of the concluding verses of Deuteronomy, the work of Moses! While pointing out that we may stand on firm ground if we note that the historical portion does not *profess* to be written by Moses, he still leaves us certain passages to which is attached an express declaration that they *are* Moses' work. Under the guidance of modern criticism, we abandon the notion that every leader of Israel wrote down by Divine authority the events of his own time, happening under his very eyes, which would make of the Old Testament a sort of day-book, constantly written up to date: for we can see, *e.g.*, that the mention of "Dan" in Deuteronomy xxxiv. 1. (as in Genesis xiv. 14) proves that this chapter is not contemporary



HAJAR EL LAGHWEH, "THE SPEAKING STONE."

A rock covered with Sinaitic inscriptions in Wady Berrah, "The Valley of the Passer-out."
From this valley you pass into a more open country, and leave the sandstone district.

history; *but* the list of the encampment after the Exodus is another matter! This list *is* Moses' writing, and it describes the great work of his life. Written long after that time when "Israel pitched in Succoth,"—written, perhaps, in the evening of the solemn day, with the recollection of the mysterious ceremonial fresh on his mind, when Aaron, stripped of his high-priestly garments, had died on Mount Hor,—it is

the indisputable chronicle of the encampments in the wilderness. What do we learn from it? The Israelites broke up their camp at Rephidim, and the next great halt was made in the wilderness of Sinai. The description raises a difficulty, and it removes one. If Jebel Serbál be

the Mountain of the Law, and Feirân, near the ruins of the episcopal city (see page 77), be the scene of the great battle with the Amalekites, the Israelites would have been practically as near and as well in sight of the mountain in an encampment placed at the foot of Jebel Tâhúneh as if they had moved on six or seven miles to the head of Wâdy Feirân, near El Buweib, the "gate." This is a very short and apparently unnecessary march. The victory gained, and Amalek in retreat, it would seem natural—it would be almost a necessity—that the Israelites should occupy at once the whole oasis. There is no open plain, and the bed of the valley is filled even now, as we have said, with flourishing groves of palms and tamarisks, which at that date were probably much more abundant.—Some days would be spent in this encampment called Rephidim, as there were distant settlements and villages of the Amalekites to be reconnoitred. Then would come the move forward to the ground immediately surrounding Jebel Músa (which we may safely designate "the Desert of Sinai"), because Jehovah was to be worshipped there.

But from Feirân proper—that is, from the episcopal city of Pharan—Jebel Músa could hardly be reached by any large body of people, encumbered with baggage, in a day's march! The road is comparatively broad and open up to Nagb Hawa; it is a distance, however, as the crow flies, of some sixteen miles, which means twenty-two or twenty-three through the windings of the valleys: Nagb Hawa, moreover, would have to be reckoned—if the requirements of the Exodus narrative demand that the Desert of Sinai be reached the same day as Rephidim or Feirân is left—as the *gate*, and so the commencement of this Sinai wilderness.—Of course all this becomes simple, if it is conceded that the principal encampments *only* are mentioned by Moses, and that halting-places merely for the night are not included always in his itinerary, unless some village or well-marked spot be reached. There is another way out of the difficulty, suggested by Professor Palmer, which may set at rest the scruples of those who insist on regarding the passage in the Book of Numbers as positively specifying each day's camping-ground. He tells us that—"It is quite possible that Moses and the chiefs of the elders took the short road through the pass (Nagb Hawa), leaving the rest of the caravan, with the heavy baggage, to follow them round Wâdy es Sheikh, and come into camp next morning. Captain Wilson and myself, being desirous on one occasion of pushing on to Jebel Músa by a certain day, actually adopted this expedient."—There is something like special pleading in another suggestion of his, that the Israelites may have made a forced march, and have crowded the toil of nearly two days' march into twenty-four hours. Arabs travelling are accustomed, it is true, to make tremendous marches in their own country—"a dreary land of death, beset by drought and danger." Palgrave commences the story of his great journey with a careful description of the incidents of a day's march: "And now began a march during which we might have almost repented of our enterprise, had such a sentiment been any longer possible or availing. Day after day found us urging our camels to their utmost pace for fifteen or sixteen hours together out of the twenty-four, under a well-nigh vertical sun, which the Ethiopians of Herodotus might reasonably be excused for cursing, with nothing either in the landscape around

or in the companions of our way to relieve for a moment the eye or the mind. Then an insufficient halt for rest or sleep, at most of two or three hours, soon interrupted by the oft-



MAGÂD EN NEBÍ MÚSA, "SEAT OF THE PROPHET MOSES."

This large detached rock, which from one point looks something like an arm-chair, occurs in the gorge El Watiyeh. Near here is pointed out the place where Moses' sheep grazed.

repeated admonition, 'If we linger here we all die of thirst,' sounding in our ears; and then to remount our jaded beasts, and push them on through the dark night, amid the constant

probability of attack and plunder from roving marauders. . . . The days wore by like a delirious dream, till we were often unconscious of the ground we travelled over and of the journey on which we were engaged. One only herb appeared at our feet to give some



A RECOLLECTION OF SINAI AND THE MOUNTAINS OF THE PASS OF THE WIND.

"On Horeb, with Elijah, let us lie,
Where all around, on mountain, sand, and sky,
God's chariot-wheels have left distinctest trace."—KEBLE.

appearance of variety and life: it was the bitter and poisonous colocynth of the desert." (Palgrave's "Arabia," vol. i., page 12.)

Anything like rapid travelling would have been quite impossible for such a multitude as

followed Moses.* The movement of the pilgrim caravan on the yearly journey to Mecca is always a marvel, but this does not usually number more than a small fraction of the "armies" of the Israelites who came up out of Egypt. Men, women, and children—the old and infirm, the young and the sickly—all have to be reckoned in with this host. Then, too, the imagination must conjure up, not a country of vast rolling plains or steppes, but a mountainous district, full of narrow winding valleys with steep precipitous sides.

There is a third point to be considered when the claims of the two mountains are being examined, viz., What is the capability of either for the encampment of the Israelites, and also for the giving of the Law, under the conditions of the Bible narrative? It must be remembered that it was in the second month of the second year that the camp was broken up at Sinai (Numbers x. 11), and that *then* commenced the direct march to the Promised Land, which was destined to end so miserably in the punishment of the long years of wandering in the wilderness of the Tih. For such a prolonged halt, during which the ritual of worship and the orderly government of the people was laid down and adopted, a roomy camping-ground, it may be supposed, would be indispensable. This is found in the immediate neighbourhood of Jebel Músa, but *not* in the valleys of the Serbâl district. The great plain of Er Râhah, in front of Jebel Músa, was carefully measured at the time of the Ordnance Survey by Captain Palmer, and his measurements proved that "the space extending from the base of the mountain (*i.e.* from the foot of the bluff Râs Sufsâfeh) to the watershed or crest of the plain is large enough to have accommodated the entire host of the Israelites, estimated at two million souls, with an allowance of about a square yard for each individual." At the watershed the breadth is about nine hundred yards. From here to the foot of Râs Sufsâfeh the distance is about one mile and a third, while the northern slope of the plain is about two-thirds of a mile in length. Apart, however, from the commodiousness of Er Râhah for an encampment, its gradual slope to Jebel Músa, and the grand view which is always had of the mountain rising at once out of the plain—not in gentle slopes, nor in steep gradations, but abrupt and precipitous—forces one to recognise the superior claim of the block of mountains which is bounded by Jebel Músa—the highest point—at its southern or south-eastern extremity, and by Râs Sufsâfeh at its northern end, to be the scene of the giving of the Law.

As to the narrative of Jethro's visit to Moses, in Exodus xviii., with its several references to the Mount of God, we may with reason suppose that it may not be in its proper historical position. The visit would not have been made until it was known that the Israelites had permanently encamped; and unless we argue that Jethro had been waiting in the neighbourhood for some time, it is not likely that he would move from Midian into the territory of the Amalekites before certain news had reached him of their defeat and enforced withdrawal from Feirân and the neighbouring valleys. The chapter is very complete in itself, and in no wise suffers from being removed to a position in time subsequent to the giving of the Law, when Moses and the people were busy in preparing the tabernacle, ark, &c., &c. The Jethro episode

* The Israelites had waggons even with them: cf. Numbers vii. 3.

would suit an encampment at Jebel Músa or at Rephidim,—provided the point of time “when he heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, his people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt,” is maintained, and the place can be fairly identified with the wilderness where Moses encamped at the Mount of God.

There is another hero whose life at one point touches Horeb : Elijah was driven thither by the Spirit after the victory over Baal. Ahab told Jezebel, in the palace at Jezreel, all that Elijah had done. Some pageant of death, we conclude, was to be exhibited by the indignant



ARABS.

These Arabs are Towarah, who generally prefer the turban and fez to the gaily-striped *kefiyeh*. One of them has in his hand the head of an ibex (*bedan*).

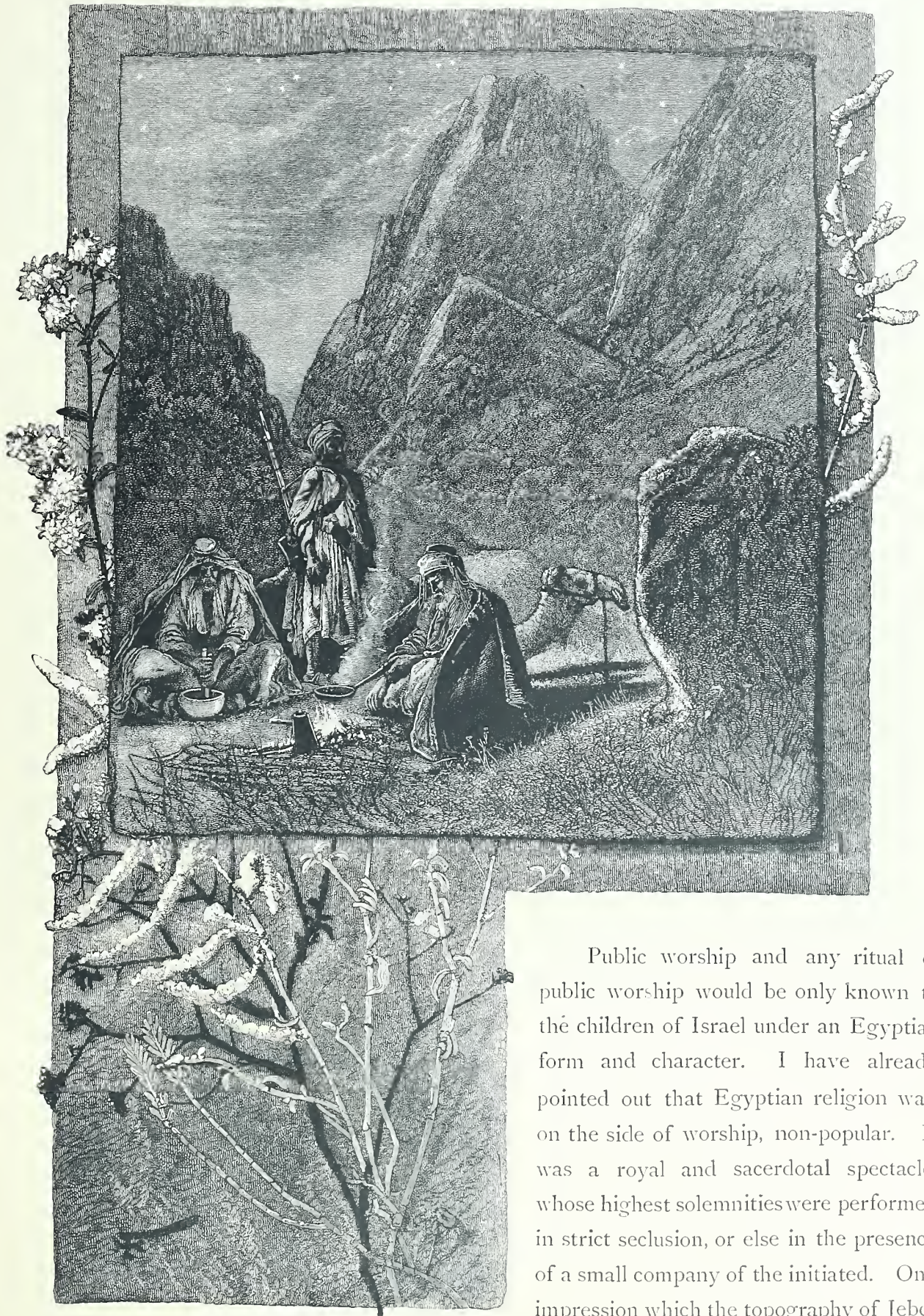
Queen, so as to counterbalance the awful tragedy at the brook Kishon. Confident of her own power she does not have the prophet at once executed. As in Naboth's case, so now, she will propose a certain legal procedure, in order to win the halting people to her side. In the presence of this new danger Elijah flies for his life to Beersheba and its sanctuary. *Yesterday*, perhaps, he fancied that he had won the King to the side of Jehovah. Baal, the god of an allied people—the god for whom, at his wife's request, Omri's son had built the famous temple at Samaria—had been exhibited a contemptible idol, and the statecraft of Ahab had been proved weak and unsound in the presence of the better policy which was based on the principle that

Jehovah was King of kings, and Israel his people. But *to-day* there is a pitiful reaction. The King has yielded to Jezebel, and the prophet, the "representative of Jehovah's personal claims on Israel," * must retire before the qualms of the near-sighted politician. He had propounded the proposition that where Jehovah is worshipped no other god can be acknowledged in any sense. The maintenance of such a proposition, or the introduction of it into the affairs of State and into the intercourse of Israel with foreign nations, meant political isolation, because friendship and alliance with other peoples was impossible if their gods were proscribed in Samaria and the royal cities. Ahab, the Israelite, had, Elijah was certain, some drops of the blood of Abraham in him. He aspired, may be, to act the rôle of Solomon—but there was not yet extinguished in his heart a feeling of awe at the majesty of Jehovah, and of pride in the unique position which the people brought up by Jehovah out of the land of Egypt were destined to occupy. What might he not have achieved, if, now under Elijah's tutelage, he had shaken off the thrall of the Syrian Jezebel? Overwhelmed, then, at the very moment of the triumph of Jehovah's cause, the prophet seeks in hot haste an asylum on the extreme boundaries of Judah.

But there he was not safe! From a passage in Amos (v. 5, and viii. 14) we are led to infer that at Beersheba, as at Dan, Bethel, and Gilgal, there were idolatrous shrines, with the almost necessary concomitance of heathen licentiousness. Such a place would not long tolerate the presence of Jehovah's prophet, fresh from the execution of the priests of Baal. If no rumour had already reached Beersheba of what had happened on Mount Carmel, there would be the inquisitive inquiry (just as there would be to-day) on the part of the townsmen into the business of the prophet and his servant. So Elijah, leaving his servant behind him, goes on farther, into the Negeb. In point of time Jebel Serbâl or Jebel Mûsa would be equidistant from the prophet as he starts on his journey in the strength of the miraculous food, while the difficulty of the route to be followed to either mountain would be the same. Arrived within reach of them, the solitariness of Jebel Mûsa would attract the fugitive. Even supposing the mines at Maghârah at this data to have been disused,† and that the Maghârah district was denuded of Egyptian soldiers and their captives, we have no right to strip the fertile Wâdy Feirân of inhabitants. Repeopling the peninsula then, and trying to conjure up its life in the times when Ahab was king of northern Israel, one would have to regard Jebel Mûsa as more withdrawn from the noise and bustle of the little world than Serbâl. To "the Mount of God" Elijah is led by the Spirit. On the "Mountain of God" the children of Israel, according to God's promise, had worshipped Him. The situation and circumstance of Jebel Mûsa afford a suitable locality for Moses' and Elijah's critical interviews with Jehovah. Do not its physical features mark it out as specially adapted for the gathering together of a great multitude convened for a religious service?

* Robertson Smith's "Prophets of Israel."

† As we have said, the latest of the inscriptions as yet found at Sarâbit el Khâdim have the date of Ramses IV. of the Twentieth Dynasty, B.C. 1200—1166. But the Assyrian Sargon, in B.C. 711, after the conquest of Asdud, made a tour of the mining districts and visited the copper-mine of Baalzephon—by which is meant probably Sarâbit el Khâdim.



WÂDY SH'REICH.

One of the peaks in Wâdy Sh'reich is called Jebel Abu Mahrûreh, "The Thunder-stricken Mountain," a large portion of its summit having been detached by a thunderbolt.

Public worship and any ritual of public worship would be only known to the children of Israel under an Egyptian form and character. I have already pointed out that Egyptian religion was, on the side of worship, non-popular. It was a royal and sacerdotal spectacle, whose highest solemnities were performed in strict seclusion, or else in the presence of a small company of the initiated. One impression which the topography of Jebel Mûsa leaves on the mind is that this mountain presents the form of a pro-

digious temple, to which Râs Sufsâfeh is the propylon, while the plain Er Râhah is the open space outside the temple wall, from which the people might observe and mark in silent adoration the intercourse between the god and men. Just as within the farthest recess of the temple at Abou Simbel, in the presence of the four statues whose utter lifelessness even now fascinates one, the great Ramses, offering sacrifice to the gods of his dynasty, was supposed to receive inspiration from them through such communion, so Israel would apprehend that to this mountain Moses, as their leader and their representative, went up to hold communion with Jehovah.

Dr. Robinson ("Biblical Researches," vol. i., page 89) thus describes his approach to the



NEAR THE MOUTH OF WÂDY SH'REICH.

The scene of the worship of the golden calf was placed by early tradition at the mouth of this valley.

convent by Nagb Hawa : "As we advanced, the valley still opened wider and wider with a gentle ascent, and became full of shrubs and tufts of herbs, shut in on each side by lofty granite ridges with rugged shattered peaks a thousand feet high, while the face of Horeb rose directly before us. Both my companion and myself involuntarily exclaimed, 'Here is room enough for a large encampment!' Reaching the top of the ascent or watershed, a fine broad plain lay before us, sloping down gently towards the south-south-east, enclosed by venerable mountains of dark granite,—stern, naked, splintered peaks and ridges of indescribable grandeur,—and terminated at the distance of more than a mile by the bold and awful front of Horeb (*i.e.* Râs

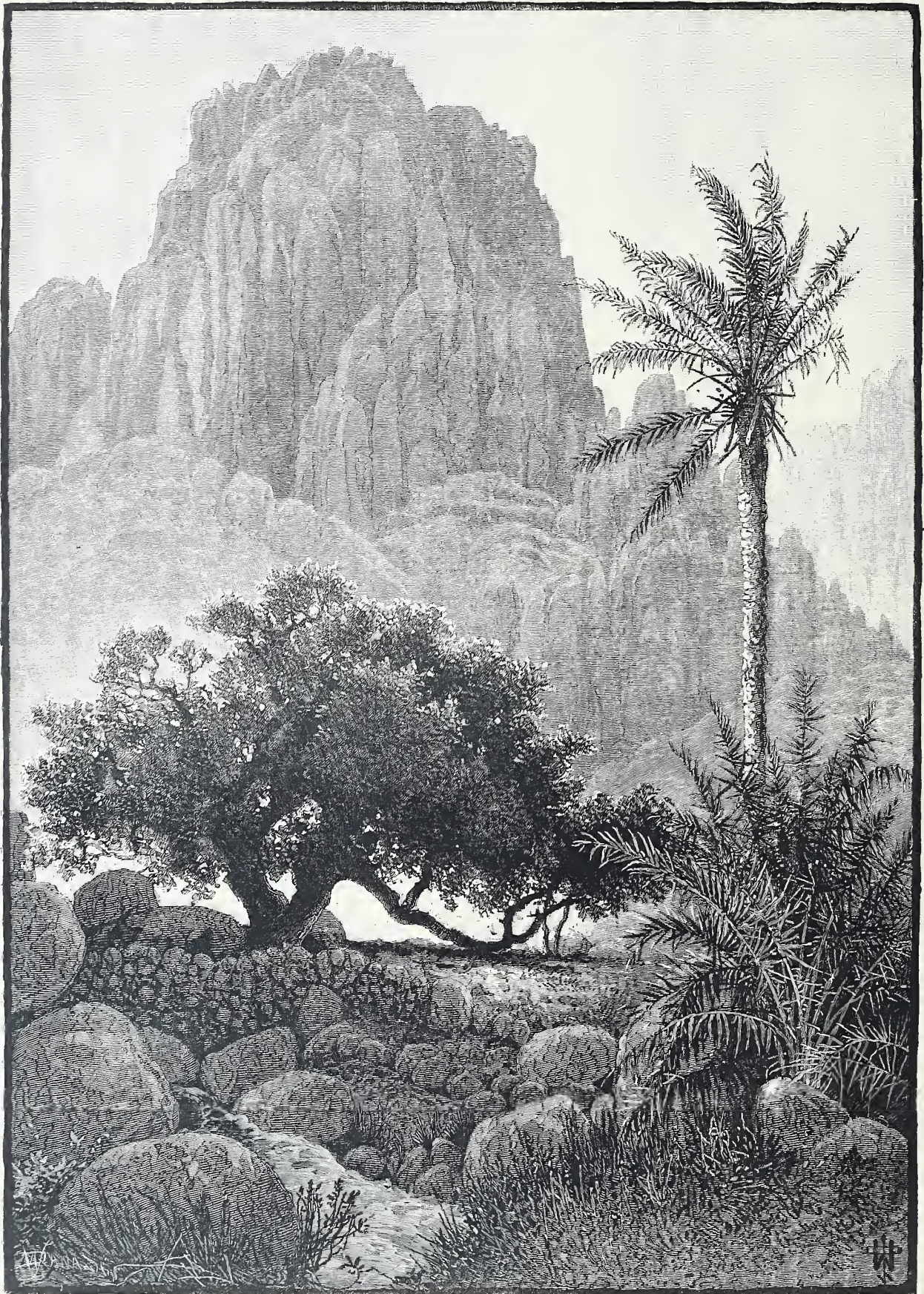
Sufsâfeh) rising perpendicularly in frowning majesty from twelve to fifteen hundred feet in height. It was a scene of solemn grandeur wholly unexpected, and such as we had never seen, and the associations, which at the moment rushed upon our minds, were almost overwhelming."

Stress, too, should be laid on the fact that Jebel Mûsa is a mountain which may be touched. Râs Sufsâfeh rises from the plain with no intervening slopes of débris, while in Jethro's valley on the eastern side of Jebel Mûsa, where stands the Convent of St. Catherine, the cliffs tower so immediately above the convent buildings that one wonders how a pathway may be discovered by which to scale them. How different is the style, manner, and appearance of Jebel Serbâl! There is no plain worthy of mention; the winding valley never opens out in such wise that a compact or properly ordered encampment could have been formed there, while the mountain could not be described graphically as "a mountain which may be touched." To those who think that in Wâdy 'Aleyât—the eastern valley of Serbâl—there should be room for a large encampment, it is sufficient to point out that the floor of this steep valley is thickly strewn with great boulders, and is so worn and broken up by the torrents which have constantly rushed through it that it is difficult to pick one's way along, while there are few places where even a *few* tents could be pitched. As to the space between Wâdies 'Aleyât and 'Ajeleh, we have already seen that it is filled by a rugged mountain mass!

We are following, then, the track of the main body of the Israelites when we and our camels journey on through Wâdy Feirân. After some five miles the verdure of the oasis is lost to us, and the scenery is made dreary by a succession of banks of alluvial deposits called *jorfs** (see page 81), cut through by the stream in flood, and exhibiting the former levels of the valley-bed. In these sinuous wâdies it were rash to say off-hand what is the distance from point to point, or what is the bearing of our course to the "king of Sinaitic mountains." The general direction of the valley is south-east, while the distance between Serbal and Mûsa-Katarîna is twenty-one miles. Before the natural gateway, El Buweib, is reached a picturesque valley called Khabar runs into Wâdy Feirân. It might properly be termed a continuation of Wâdy el Akhdhar, which strikes the important valley of Berrâh at right angles. Wâdy Berrâh gradually ascends in a north-west direction to the watershed, whence Wâdy Lebweh descends to its trysting place with Wâdy Bark. Thence to Sarâbît el Khâdim is a day's journey. Sinaitic inscriptions abound in these valleys, and from this fact we may argue, not only that formerly they were more populous, but that they were much frequented by travellers and merchants bound for Feirân, or for the sea *via* Wâdy Hebrân.

In Wâdy Bark, a steep toilsome valley with an abundance of seyal-trees, are the remains of a wall of loose stones, built by the Towarah to keep out Mohammad Ali's soldiers. It is a poor affair and easy to be turned. The Bedawîn deeming that their privileges in the matter of "convoy" had been violated by the Egyptian government, attacked and pillaged a

* Masses of distinctly stratified alluvium are lodged at the sides and mouths of the watercourses. They are cut through so as to present vertical faces, and are weathered into many a fantastic and imposing form. They are forty, sixty, and a hundred feet high, sometimes in long stretches, and sometimes in detached cones and blocks.



WÂDY T'LÂH, MOUNT SINAI.

This wâdy runs parallel with the plain Er Râhah, but flows in a contrary direction. It is marvellously beautiful and picturesque.

laden caravan on the road from Cairo to Suez. The Pasha did not trouble himself about the rights of one paltry set of Bedawín as against another set, nor would he interfere with the traders' choice as to escorts. He sent his soldiers to punish the rebels, and also left an abiding mark on them—in the shape of a yearly tribute of ten shillings!—Wâdy Lebweh is noticeable for nothing but a fine overhanging rock with a narrow cleft called Shagík el 'Ajúz, "The Old Woman's Cleft" (the word 'Ajúz may refer to the Egyptian Queen Delúkah), in which is a delicious spring. The watershed, however, presents an example of a class common in the peninsula, in which the valleys instead of rising steeply to sharp ridges fall gradually either way from open summit plains. The conical peak with the quaint name, derived possibly from its peculiar form, Zibb el Baheir Abu Baharíyeh, which rises to a height of one hundred and sixty feet on the north side of the watershed, commands a superb view. From this vantage ground are seen the hills upon the African coast, the long white range of the Tíh Mountains, the solemn peaks of Serbâl, Katarína, and Umm Shomer; but above all that most characteristic feature of the central Sinai group, the huge granite wall which shuts it off from the western cluster.

Two miles down Wâdy Berrâh, opposite to the mouth of a small valley with another refreshing spring called Erthâmeh, stands a great rock, looking as if it had been divided by a clean cut from a smaller boulder at its side. It is called Hajar el Laghweh, or "The Speaking Stone" (see page 92). According to the legend, Moses and the children of Israel were stopped in their career by this rock. A companion urged the prophet to smite it with his sword. When he hesitated a voice came from the stone itself bidding him strike. He struck, and immediately the rock was cleft through from top to bottom, "as though it had been but a piece of flesh!"

Three miles farther down are the two massive bluffs of red granite standing like sentries, from which the valley takes its name, "The Valley of the Passer-out;" and so we come into the plain called Erweis el Ebeirig (there is another plain farther to the eastward called by the same name, on which Professor Palmer locates Kibroth-Hattaavah), across which runs Wâdy el Akhdhar, passing on its way to the south-west.

The long granite escarpment just mentioned, stretching from Jebel Tarbúsh on the south-west to El Watíyeh on the north-east, a distance of fourteen miles, fences in, as it were, and protects the Sinai group of mountains. There are but three points at which this barrier is passable. The westernmost is Wâdy Emleisah, which, suited only for pedestrians, is one of the most beautiful of the mountain glens of Sinai. Immediately to the west of Nagb Hawa a narrow cleft in the gigantic wall discloses the entrance to this wâdy. The glen is about fifty yards across, and is hemmed in by towering mountains from one thousand to two thousand five hundred feet high. About a mile from the mouth of the gorge a tiny trickling stream fringed with vegetation—wild fig-trees, palm-trees, rushes, reeds, &c.—reveals itself. Here there are some old monastic buildings and gardens. As one slowly ascends the vegetation becomes more plentiful; the tiny stream is now a rivulet, here falling in spray over great ledges of



WÂDY KATARÍNA, SINAI.

This rocky glen, which goes by the name of Shagg Músa, leads up from the orchards and gardens of the Convent of El Arba'in.



CLIFFS OF JEBEL KATARINA.

Of the three peaks of the Jebel Katarina cluster, Jebel Zebir is the central; Jebel Katarina lies half a mile to the north of it; and Jebel Abu Rumail a mile to the south.

rock, there forming deep pools which invite one to bathe in their cool waters, reflecting green ferns and mosses. Just where Wâdy Bugíyeh—"the valley through which water rushes with the sound of a trumpet"—flows in from the neighbouring pass of Nagb Hawa the vegetation is seen in its utmost abundance, and the ruins and gardens are most numerous. In the midst of the savage grandeur of such utter desolation these gardens smiling with vines, olives, apple and pear-trees, fig-trees, *nebbuk*, apricots, mulberry-trees, &c., &c., almost make one forgetful of the surrounding wilderness. The main defile is named Wâdy Emleisah, "The Slippery Valley," and the traveller is prepared for hard work amongst its smooth boulders polished by the running waters. Just below Wâdy Bugíyeh an old monastic path affords a little help. Two miles above this tributary there is a bifurcation, and the valley takes the name Wâdy T'lâh,—(*Talâh* is the opposite to *Salâh*, "righteous"—the inaccessible nature of the valley once made it a favourite resort of robber bands). The principal and fertile branch turning southward subdivides into many little valleys, which climb the slopes of Jebel Katarína to their sources; the other branch, a mile long, terminates in a steep *nagb*, with an immediate descent into Seil Lejá, not far from the foot of Râs Sufsâfeh. In this Wâdy T'lâh are the remains of the convent of SS. Cosmas and Damian, and of the prison convent of St. John Climax.

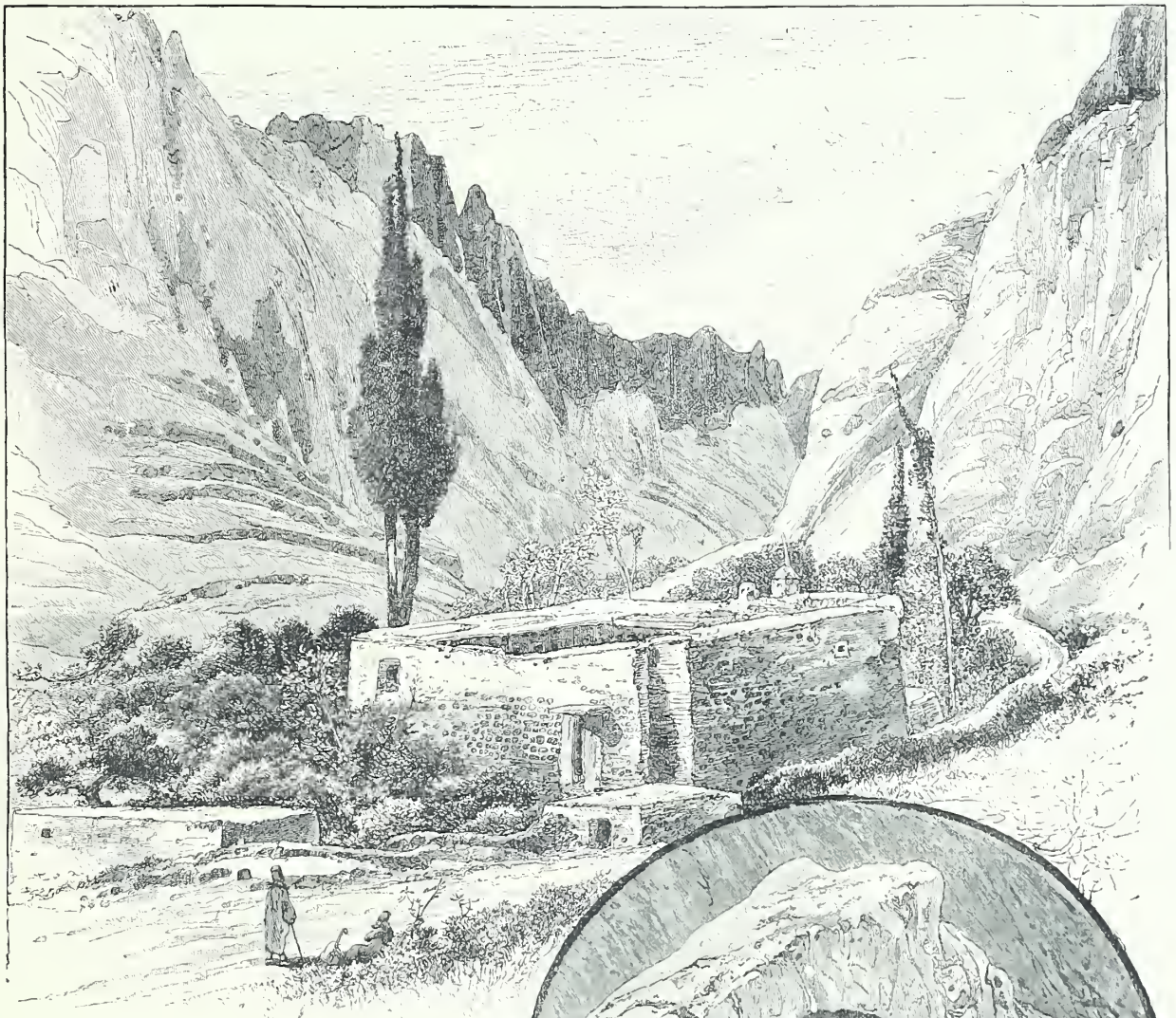
The central passage, Nagb Hawa, "Pass of the Wind," may be reckoned as being fifteen miles from the commencement of Wâdy Feirân. It can be traversed by very lightly laden or riding camels, but a large caravan must necessarily take the road by Wâdy es Sheikh. The pass commences near the head of Wâdy Solâf (some three thousand five hundred feet above the sea). A large cluster of ancient stone circles and *nâwâmis* is soon reached, called Matabb ed Deir el Gadím, "The Site of the Ancient Convent," and then the ascent begins. It is steep and difficult at first, for the old way paved with flags, passing in and out amongst tremendous boulders and blocks of granite detached from the heights above, has been partly destroyed by torrents. The defile varies in breadth from two hundred to three hundred yards, and is like a long straight passage, through which the winter storms from the north-west must rush with tremendous fury. It is a tedious two hours' journey, though only four miles direct from the foot of the *nagb* to the watershed—about one thousand five hundred and seventy feet above the head of Wâdy Solâf. After the watershed is crossed, there is a rapid descent and then another ascent through Wâdy Abu Seileh. Following the course of a feeble stream till the crest of the pass is gained (five thousand one hundred and forty-one feet above the sea), the entire plain of Er Râhah is seen stretched before us, and we are face to face with Râs Sufsâfeh, two miles away, and the majestic pile of Jebel Músa.

This mountain block, composed mainly of red or pink syenitic granite, has for the traveller coming from the north a direction south-east. Its length is rather more than two miles and its breadth a mile. Wâdy ed Deir, "The Convent Valley," sometimes called Wâdy es Sho'eib, "Jethro's Valley" (see steel plate), in which stands the Convent of St. Catherine, separates it on the north-east from Jebel ed Deir; while on the south-west a deep, narrow ravine, Wâdy Sh'reich, divides it from the subordinate ridge of Jebel Ferâ, which is itself cut off from the



WADY SHOLEB - JETHRO'S VALLEY.

huge red bluffs of Jebel el Hamr, "The Red Mountain," by the grand valley Wâdy el Lejâ,



"Valley of Refuge." This valley, at whose head is situated the lonely convent El Arba'in, after a course of two miles to the north-west, sweeps round the end of Jebel Ferâ, and, *now* called Seil Lejâ *now* Wâdy ed Deir, runs north-east for more than three miles beneath the precipices of Râs Sufsâfeh and the steep slopes of Jebel ed Deir to Wâdy es Sheikh. Here there is a confluence as it were with Wâdy es Sudûd, which comes down from the south, being the continuation of Wâdy Seba'iyeh.



CONVENT OF THE ARBA'IN (OF THE FORTY), WÂDY LEJÂ.
The situation of this convent is most secluded and picturesque. The celebrated "Moses' Rock" loses its claim to notoriety, if Rephidim be located in Wâdy Feiran.

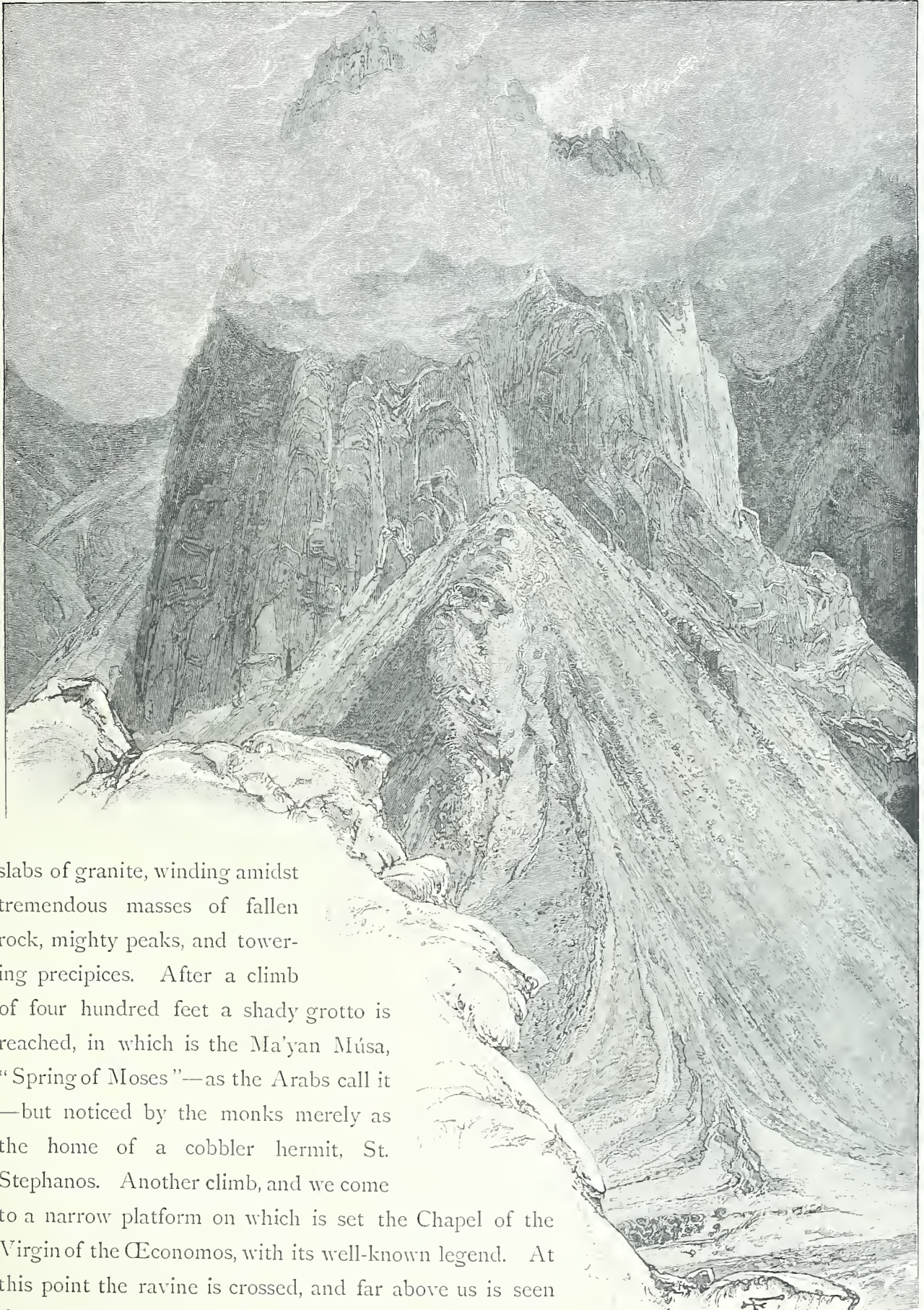
At the mouth of Wâdy es Sho'eib is a low rocky mound called Hârûn, "Aaron's Hill," where there is a small building consecrated by Arab sacrifices in honour of Moses' brother on the spot where he set up the golden calf. Passing under this, and beyond the remains of the barracks of the soldiers of 'Abbâs Pasha, the picturesque pile of the convent, built right against the mountain-side, and rising out from a mass of variously tinted foliage, comes at once into our view. It is a medley of buildings combining the strength of a mediæval fortress with the flimsiest superstructures of an Italian monastery, all built on different levels, in the midst of which stand, side by side, the mosque and the church with its conspicuous campanile. The fertility of the convent garden—less beautiful and fertile than the garden at El Arba'in—affords proof that the neighbourhood of Mûsa-Katarîna is the best-watered in the whole peninsula. The convent has two copious springs, and there are five or six springs in the cliffs above Wâdy ed Deir, besides those in Seil Lejâ. In Wâdies Sh'reich, Lejâ, T'lâh, and Abu Seileh (to the north of Er Râhah), as well as in Wâdy Zawâtîn ("The Valley of Olive-trees," coming down from the western slopes of Katarîna), are streams of water. Springs and streams, too, are constantly met with in the surrounding hills and valleys, which must have always occasioned a certain amount of pasturage. The Deyset Fur'eiah (a mountain plateau or *fersh*, loved of Bedawîn), enclosed by that great ring of granite peaks called El Fur'eiah, fronting Jebel Mûsa and Jebel ed Deir on the north, is one of the most extensive pasture grounds in the country, and abounds in desert herbs and grasses; while the upper slopes of Jebel Katarîna have the appearance of well-clothed downs.

Encamped under Mûsa-Katarîna the Israelites would have a perennial natural supply of water and a fair amount of pasturage; they would be protected, moreover, on the west and north-west from any renewed attack on the part of the Amalekites by the granite wall to which we have so often alluded as enclosing this central group of mountains, while the country to the east would be in the occupation of the friendly Midianites.

The convent, with its church and library and ancient refectory, has been already described. Let us, therefore, set off on our pilgrimage to the holy places. The basin below the summit of Jebel Mûsa may be reached by five tracks or paths.* Along the Sikket Syednâ Mûsa—worn by the feet of monks and pilgrims for centuries—the lay-brother furnished by the convent authorities as a guide will lead us. Behind us is Jebel ed Deir† with its rugged pathless sides; one little ledge noticeable for a solitary cypress springing up from a heap of stones (the ruined convent of St. Episteme), which seems a mere dark green thread against the glowing grey of the mountain. Before us is a rough flight of steps formed of huge uneven

* 1. 'Abbâs Pasha's road which zigzags up the south-eastern face of the mountain. 2. Sikket Sho'eib, "Path of Jethro," a sort of scramble from Wâdy ed Deir to the basin behind Râs Sufsâfeh. 3. A path leading up the western cliffs from Wâdy Sh'reich, which according to early tradition is the path used by Moses. 4. A winding and easier track leading from El Arba'in to the south-western corner of the basin. 5. The well-known Sikket Syednâ Mûsa, ascending immediately above the convent.

† A statement made on page 61 on the authority of Dean Stanley as to Jebel Sunâ or Sonâ preserving a vestige of the name Sinai seems to be incorrect. Professor Palmer says the name means "Mount of Artisans," and is derived from a clever artisan who once dwelt there. Jebel ed Deir has several names; amongst others "Mountain of the Burning Bush," a legend connecting it with the sunbeam which on one day in the year darts into the "Chapel of the Burning Bush." Dean Stanley seems to derive its commoner name not from the convent of St. Catherine in the valley, but from the nunnery which once existed on the mountain itself!



slabs of granite, winding amidst tremendous masses of fallen rock, mighty peaks, and towering precipices. After a climb of four hundred feet a shady grotto is reached, in which is the Ma'yan Músa, "Spring of Moses"—as the Arabs call it—but noticed by the monks merely as the home of a cobbler hermit, St. Stephanos. Another climb, and we come to a narrow platform on which is set the Chapel of the Virgin of the *Æconomos*, with its well-known legend. At this point the ravine is crossed, and far above us is seen the cypress which stands by Elijah's Chapel. A long

MOUNTAINS AT THE HEAD OF WÁDY LEJÂ.

flight of steps (see page 236, vol. iii.) leads us up to it, through two archways. At the gate of the first sat in ages past St. Stephen the porter (whose skeleton now guards the dismal charnel-house far below in the convent garden), to shrive pilgrims and pass them on for further examination to the confessors, who were stationed at the second gateway with its illegible



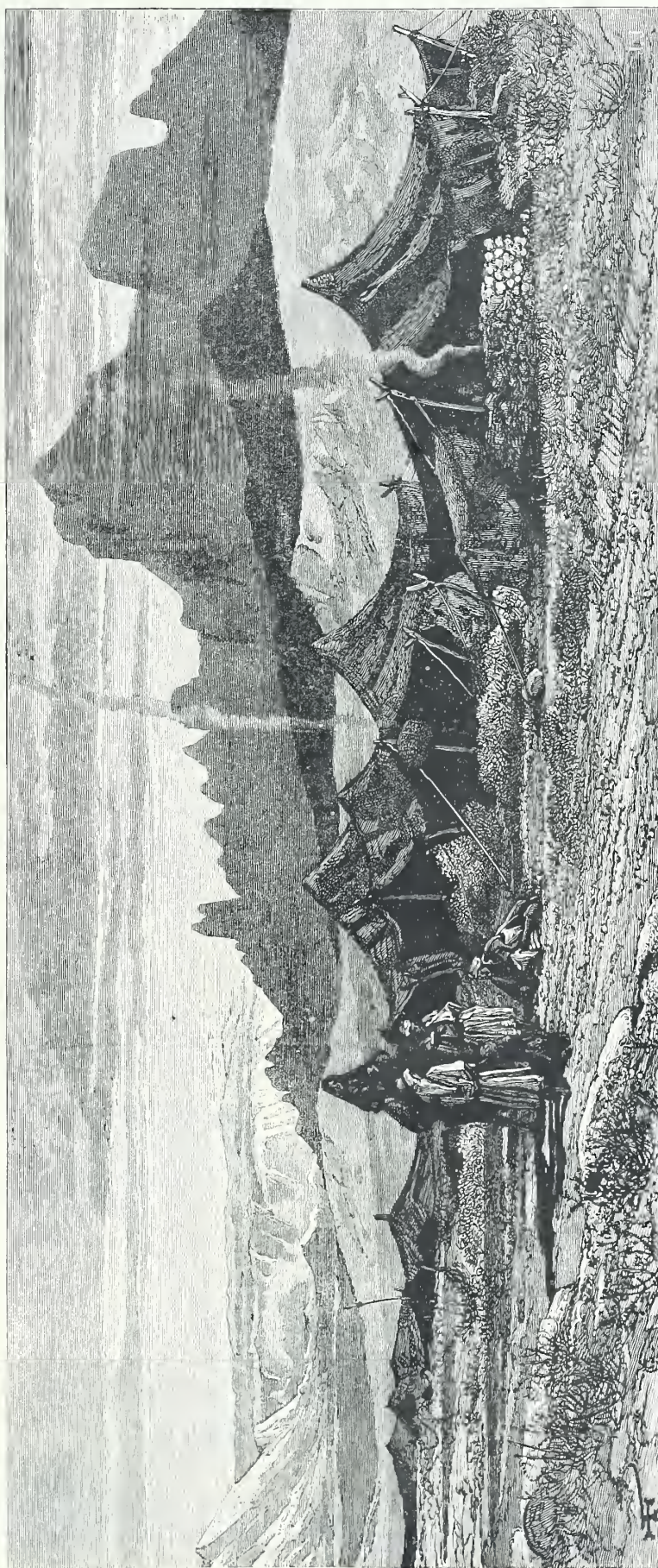
GARDENS NEAR THE MOUTH OF WÂDY LEJÂ.

The winding road seen in the cliffs leads up to Jebel Tiniyeh, where are the remains of the half-finished palace of the late 'Abbâs Pasha.

inscription in Greek characters. This gateway opens on to the plateau, and gives immediate access therefore to the holy places. On this mountain plain stands a small building containing two chapels dedicated respectively to Elijah and Elisha; and on the right of the altar of the inner chapel is the grotto in which the prophet is said to have dwelt during his sojourn on Sinai.

A world-renowned spot it is, with its remains of chapels and gardens, and with its well and the tree which tells of foreign ascetics, who may have planted it to remind them of a far-off birth-place in Attica or Corcyra ! The five paths converge here, and then one path leads, passing by "the footprint of the prophet's camel," and the stone which marks the spot where Elijah was turned back as unworthy to tread the holy ground above, to "the top of the mount" (Ex. xix. 20).

Here on the summit are two buildings within a few yards of each other, which are almost always visible whenever the peak itself is to be seen. The one is the Christian chapel near the cleft in which Moses was placed when the glory of the Lord passed by ; the other is the mosque built over the cave in which he is said to have lived during the forty days and nights. Both chapel and mosque are constructed of hewn blocks of red granite taken from the ruins of an earlier church or convent, many fragments of which, such as lintels, jambstones, and capitals, lie scattered over the grey mountain-side. The view, though not so extensive nor so picturesque as that from Jebel Katarína, can



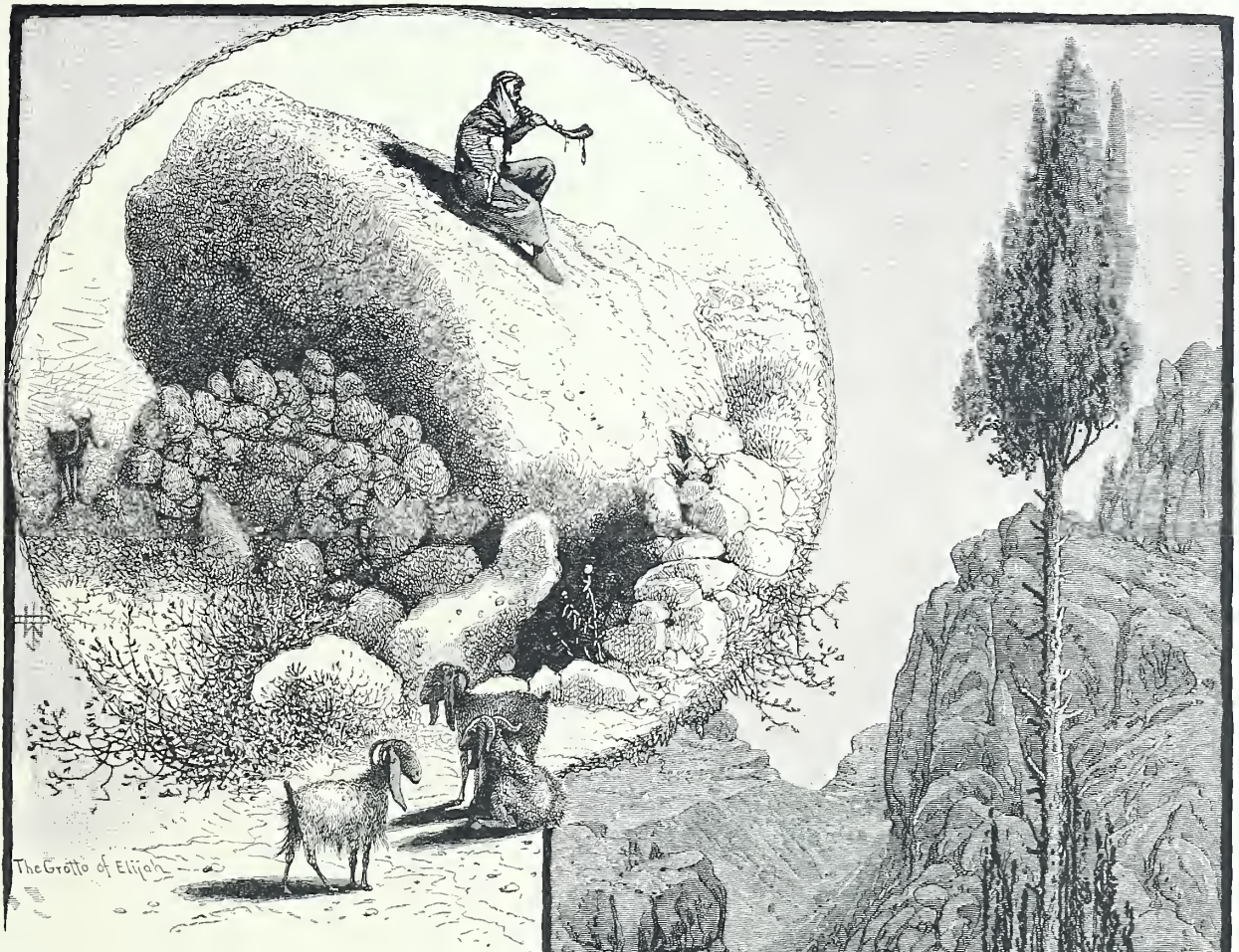
BEDAWÍN ENCAMPMENT, WÁDY SEBA'ÍYEH, SINAI.

This valley has been mentioned as a likely camping-ground for the Israelites, because of the view afforded of the summit of Jebel Músa. There is no open space, however, for a great multitude.



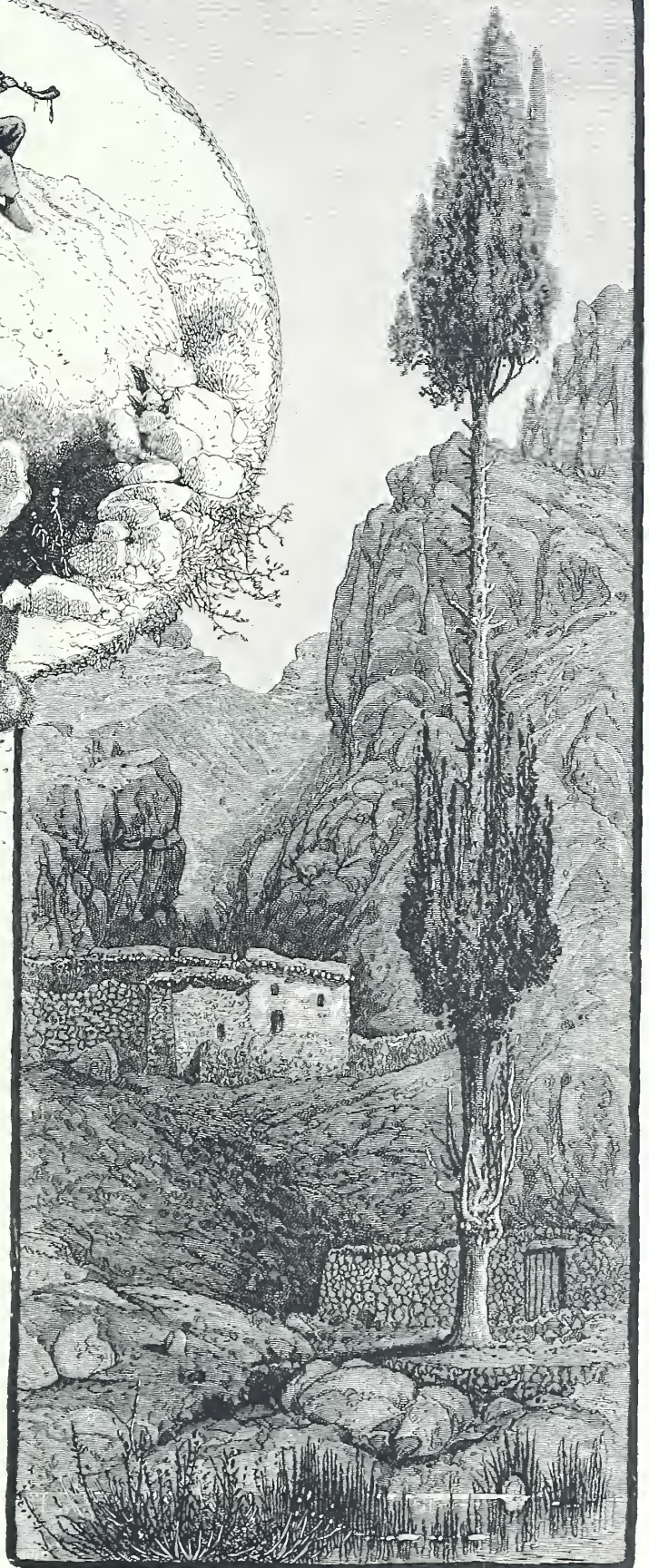
JEBEL MÚSA FROM THE SOUTH, SINAI.

Wády Seba'iyeh, through which the way passes to Jebel Umm Shomer, offers the traveller a splendid view of the steep southern extremity of Jebel Músa.



never in its solemn desolation be forgotten, even should one be callous and steeled against all its sacred associations.

As we gaze entranced and awe-struck the question is sure to arise—Is this the spot whence the Law was given to Israel? Jebel Músa is not a single peak, but is, as we have said, an almost isolated block, its northern extremity rising in inaccessible cliffs from the great plain Er Râhah, whilst its south-eastern extremity presents an abrupt front to Wâdy Seba'iyeh. This south-eastern peak (the highest point in the mass) is very imposing from the valley beneath, but a single glance shows that no large body of people



THE CHAPEL AND GROTTTO OF ELIJAH, JEBEL MÚSA.

This gigantic cypress is one of the world-famous trees. In Niebuhr's time there were two of them.



LOOKING EAST FROM RÂS SUFSÂFEH, SINAI.

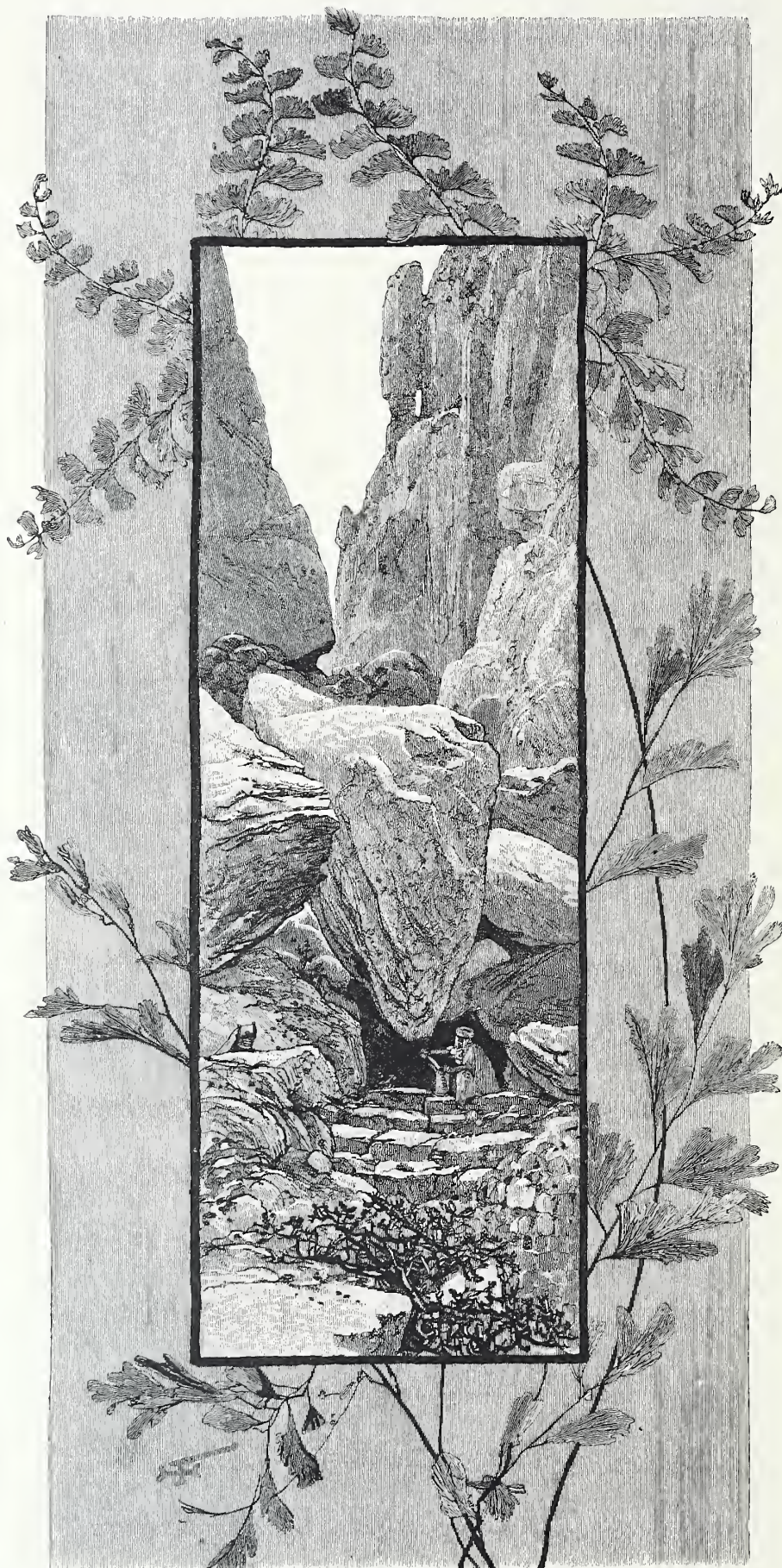
In the smaller illustration is represented the summit of Jebel Músa, with the chapel and the less conspicuous mosque.

could have encamped either there or in the neighbouring valleys. One turns then to Er Râhah, and though the actual summit of Jebel Músa be not visible from the plain, one reasonably concludes that here the people stood and that from Râs Sufsâfeh Moses proclaimed the Law to them. This conclusion is in no wise contrary to the Bible narrative. Sinai is to be

regarded not only as the mountain on which Jehovah spake with Moses and with Elijah, but also as the mountain from which the Law was published to Israel. For these two transactions the mountain is well adapted by its physical characteristics. To the rear of Râs Sufsâfeh is a basin, in which stands the Chapel of St. Mary of the Zone, shaded by some hawthorn-bushes and by the weather-beaten willow which gives its name to the Râs, and where are remains also of chapels, &c., dedicated to St. Gregorius, to St. John the Baptist, and to St. Anne. To this little plain the path called Sikket Sho'eib leads up from Wâdy ed Deir. Here we may picture Moses as bidding farewell to the Elders; then taking with him only Joshua, he would traverse the gorge which occupies the central portion of the mountain block, now ascending, now descending—between enormous piles of granite, which suggest that some mighty earthquake long ago upheaved and shattered them—till he came to the open ground in front of Elijah's Chapel. There on the seventh day he would leave Joshua "when the Lord called him up into the mount." As for the people we know that they stood at the *nether* part of the mount (*ὑπὸ τὸ ὄρος*), and that bounds were set to guard any approach to the mountain through the surrounding valleys. We also know that, terror-struck at the sight of the mountain burning with fire unto the midst of heaven, the people removed and stood afar off, and besought Moses to speak to them in the place of God. May we not then with reason suppose that from such a position as the cleft in Râs Sufsâfeh he would proclaim to the children of Israel the Law which God had delivered to him?

It is a rough scramble from the Chapel of Elijah to the Chapel of St. Mary of the Zone; then there is a breathless climb over great loose stones—apt to roll treacherously under one's tread—with much labour of hands and arms and knees and legs, up a ravine steeply inclined, for three or four hundred feet, which splits in twain the westernmost bluff of Râs Sufsâfeh. Then the crest—a narrow chasm between tremendous walls of rock—being reached, we find ourselves suddenly standing above Er Râhah! The view is glorious; but by courageously ascending the mass of granite on the left (see page 114) to its topmost peak it is made more complete. The great grey plain stretching down to the foot of the headland on which we stand, from its crest two miles away, is seen extending into the lateral valleys, which carry it on into the wide Wâdy es Sheikh, while the stately hills framing it blend with the cliffs of Nagb Hawa and the wave-like ranges of mountains beyond. Immediately beneath us is the curiously curved mound 'Ujrat el Mehd, where the princes of Israel may have been stationed; behind is the peak of Jebel Mûsa with its many traditions, crowned with the memorials of its double sanctity;—on all sides is a troubled sea of confused mountain forms.

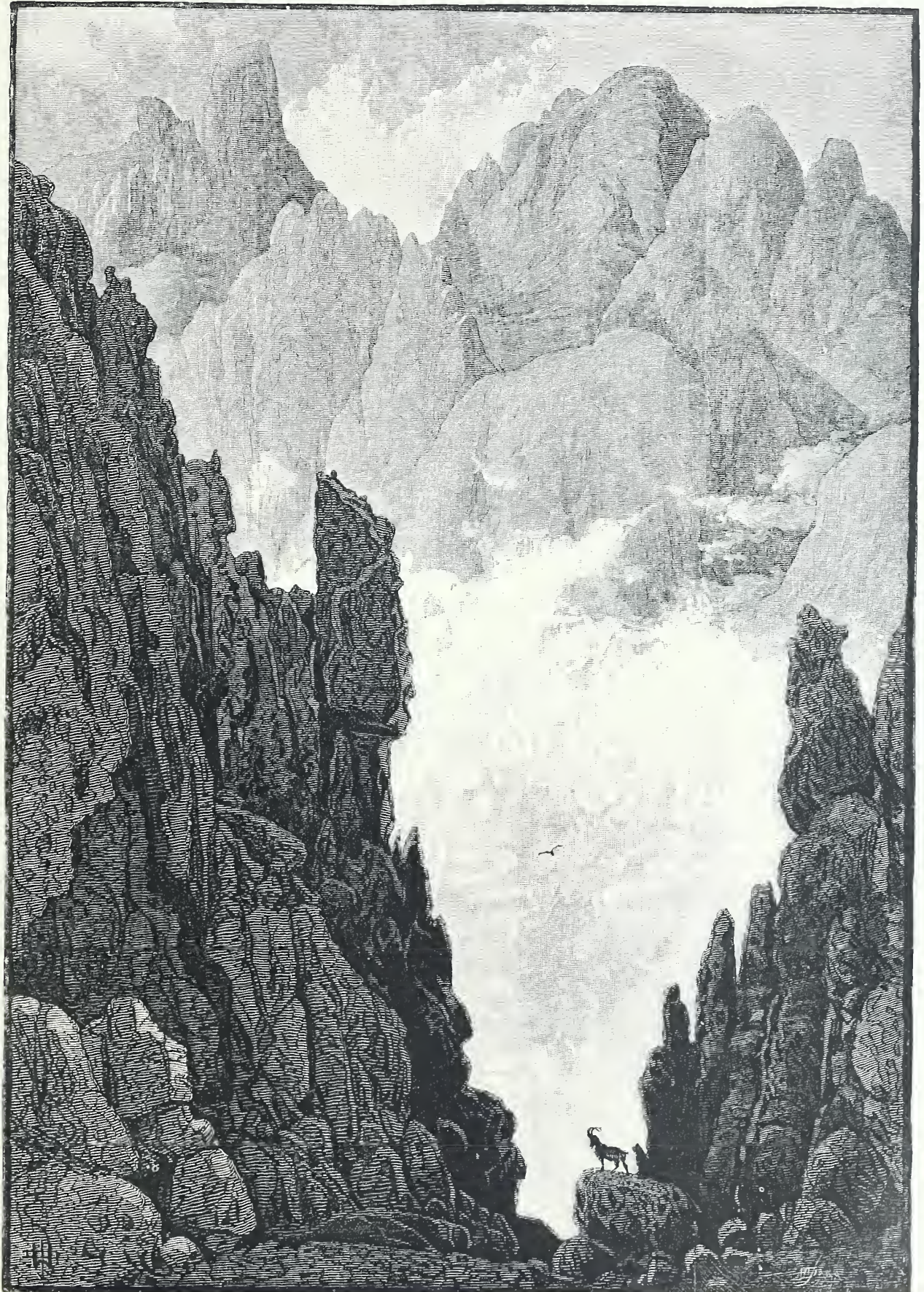
Retracing our steps to the plain of Elijah's Chapel, we descend into Wâdy Lejâ by the path usually taken by the Russian pilgrims. Nearly at the head of this valley—fronting the rocky glen Shagg Mûsa, "Moses' Cleft," up which the path to Jebel Katarîna climbs in a south-western direction—stands the secluded convent (lately restored and set in order) of El Arba'in, dedicated to the Forty Martyrs of Cappadocia, surrounded by a magnificent garden and a fine grove of olive-trees. This convent is regarded with superstitious reverence by the Arabs.



MA'YAN MÚSA, THE SPRING OF MOSES, SINAI.

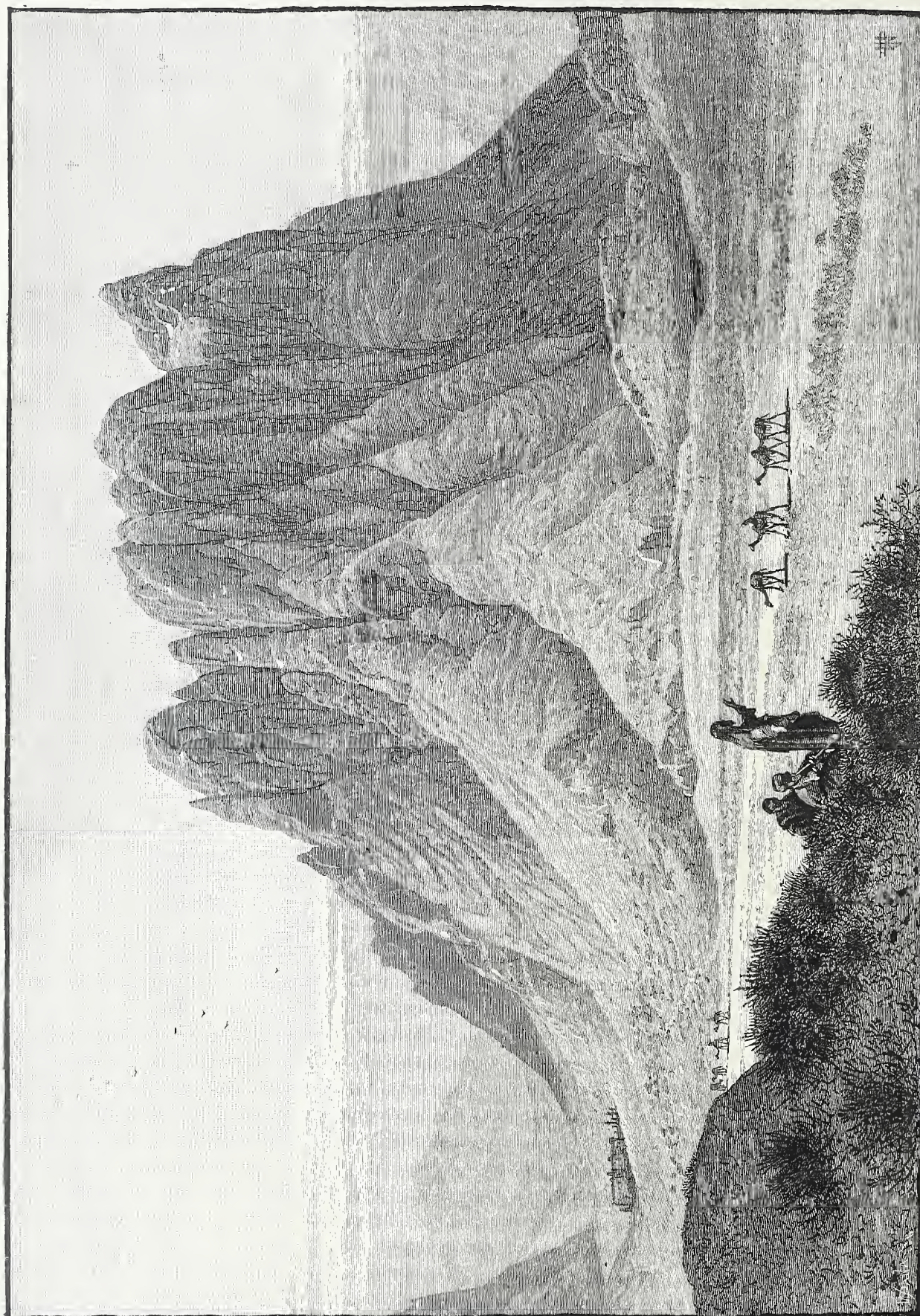
At this spring, rising up in a cool shady rock-grotto, the Bedawin believe Moses to have watered Jethro's flocks.

In the garden is shown the hermitage and chapel of St. Ounfrius; while lower down on the western side of the valley are the ruins of the Convent of the Twelve Apostles, sheltered by the towering form of Jebel er Rabbah. Ammonius, an Egyptian monk writing in the fourth century, tells of a slaughter of Sinaitic monks by the Saracens, and mentions that twelve corpses were found in the monastery of *Gethrabbî*. This word may easily be traced in the present name of the mountain, which is abbreviated by the Arabs into Jerrabbah. In Wâdy Lejâ monkish zeal has localised such a medley of memorable events (*e.g.* the site of Korah's rebellion, the mould in which the golden calf was cast, the spot where the broken Tables of the Law were buried, and above all the "Rock in Horeb" with its twelve fissures, which Moses struck) that the patience is sorely tried. Still one cannot look without some reverence at the places to which these traditions are attached, although we may



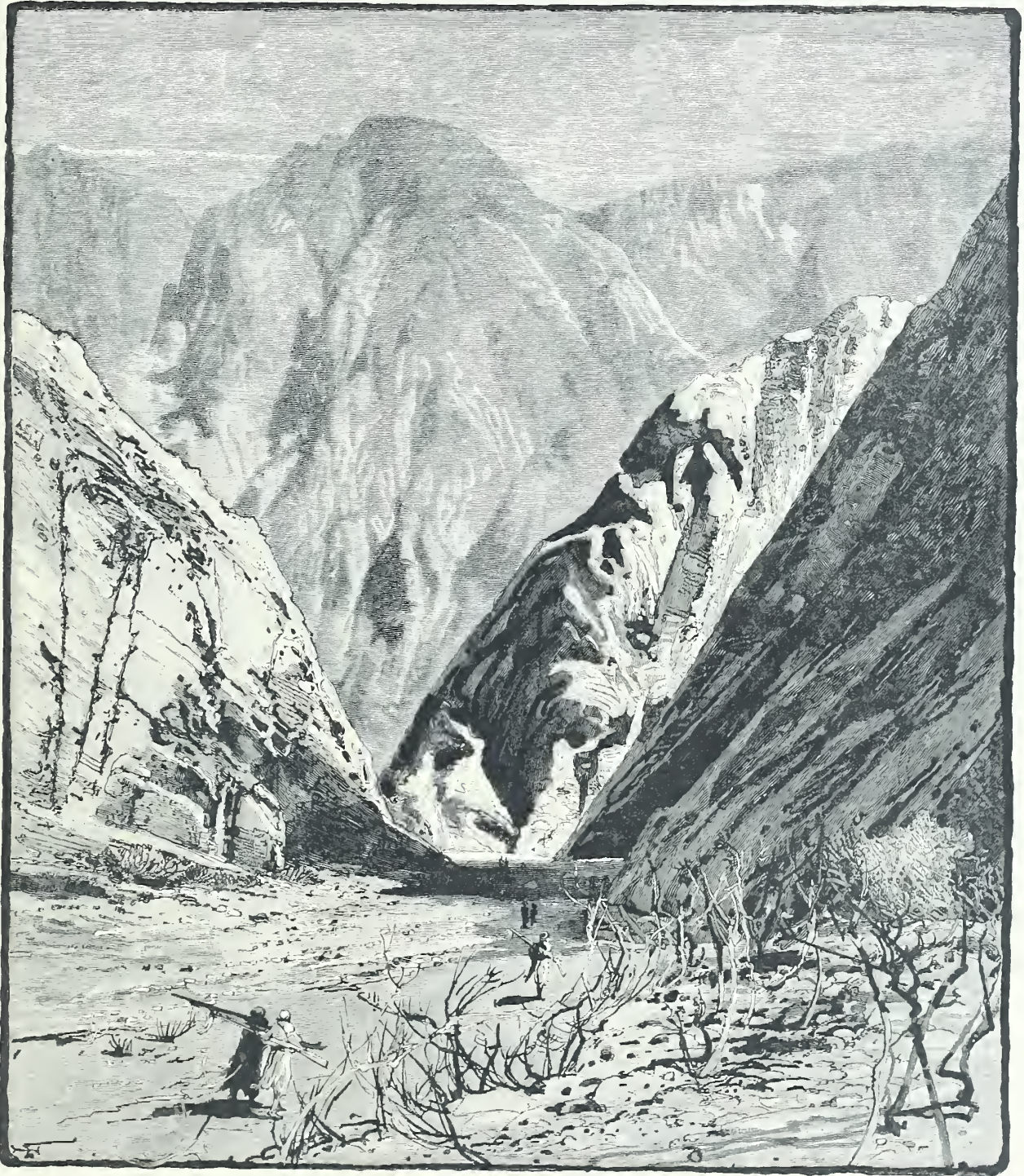
JEBEL SUNÂ, FROM SIKKET SYEDNÂ MÚSA, "THE PATH OF OUR LORD MOSES."

The path is very steep and difficult; it reaches the basin at the back of Râs Sufsâfeh after a climb of one thousand five hundred feet.



RÂS SUFSÂFEH (MOUNT SINAI) AND THE PLAIN OF KÂHAH (REST).
 Beyond the convent is seen Jebel Moneijâh. The summit of Jebel Mûsa is hidden behind the overwhelming mass of Râs Sufâleh.

be able to question their authenticity.—It seems hard to turn away from Jebel Katarína! The mountain culminates in three peaks, of which Jebel Zebír, eight thousand five hundred and fifty-one feet above the sea (according to Arabic interpreters this name refers to “God



DEFILE OF THE JEBEL TÍH.

The long white range of the Tih mountains, mostly of the same average height, forms the southern and south-eastern boundary of the great “Wilderness of the Forty Years’ Wanderings.”

speaking with Moses on the mount,” being derived from a root which means “to write” or “engrave”), is the highest point in the country; Jebel Katarína, so called from the legend that St. Catherine of Alexandria was buried here by angels, being twenty-five feet lower.

The prospect from the mountain-top—a huge naked block of strangely shaped syenitic granite on



JEBEL ED DEIR, SINAI.

which is built a chapel dedicated to the saint—discloses three-fourths of the peninsula: from Hammâm Far'ûn on the north-west to Wâdy el 'Ain on the north-east—from Jebel Mûsa to the glimmering waters of the twin gulfs, and the hills of Arabia and Africa on either hand beyond. Serbâl is seen in all its grandeur; Umm Shomer and Zebîr break the view southwards; and, though Râs Mohammad is invisible, the two arms of the Red Sea are almost seen at the point of separation. Wonderful are the effects of the colouring! Delicate are the gradations of light and shade! Intense is the silence!—The warmer tints are even now deepening; the shadows are lengthening; as the sunlight fades speechlessly out of these mountains where God spake with man, and proclaimed the Law which is more everlasting than the hills themselves!



SUEZ.

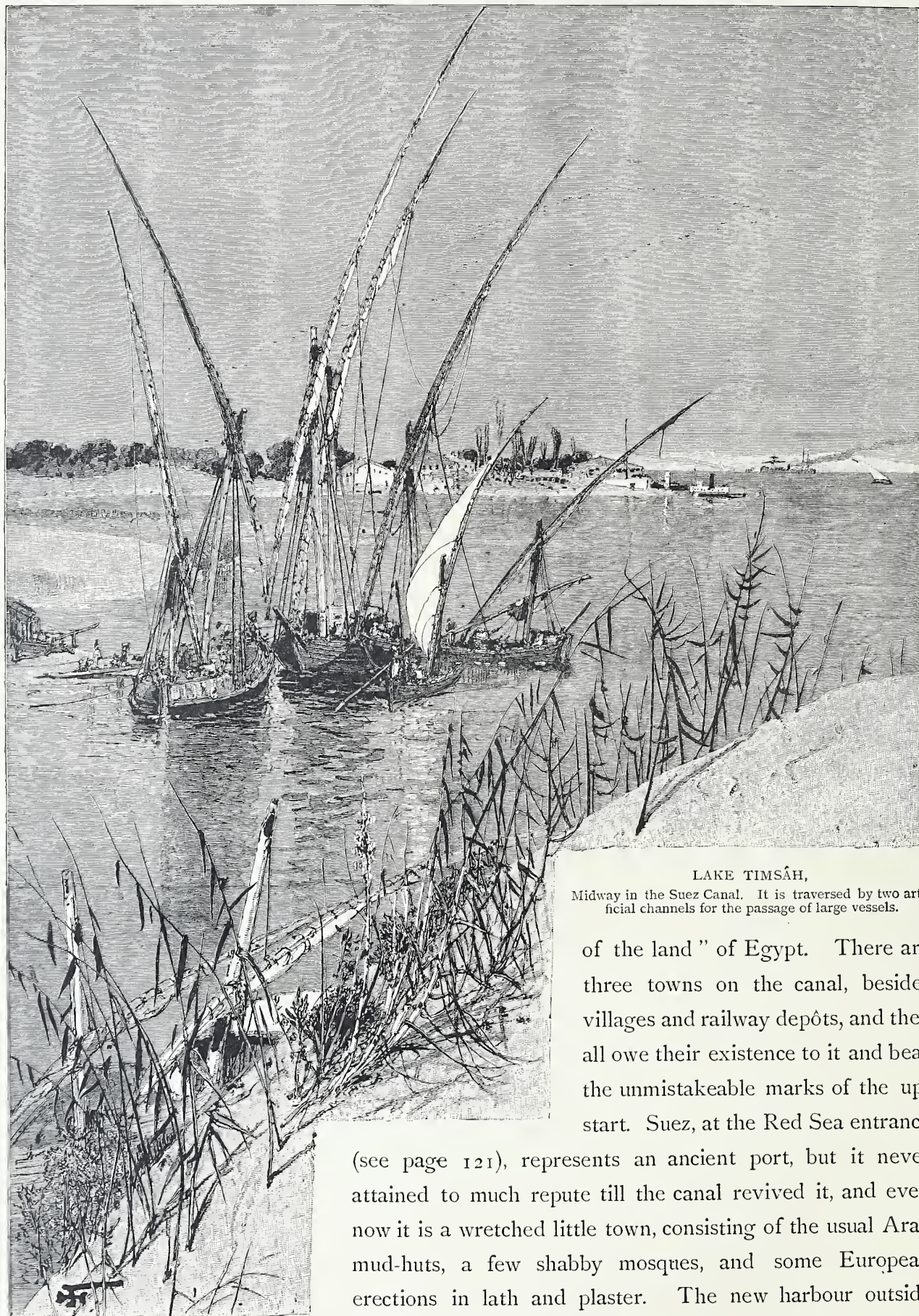
The approach to the Suez canal from the south is by an artificially deepened channel in the gulf. A stone pier one mile and three-quarters in length, erected on a sand-bank, runs from Suez to the entrance of this channel.

THE LAND OF GOSHEN.

ON the wall of a tomb at Beny Hasan is a painting of a family coming to settle in Egypt. They are different in countenance from the people of the country; their dress is richer, and they are armed; one of them plays upon his lyre as he journeys, the women follow, and the children and goods are carried upon asses. It is a picture of a Semitic household, such as Jacob brought with him from Canaan; and it was thus that neighbouring tribes, like the Hebrews, in time of dearth and necessity, came to sojourn in the strange land where the fertilising river gave food to all who approached its waters. After the dreary wastes which sever Egypt from Palestine the wanderers lighted suddenly upon the rich fields of Goshen, "the best of the land;" and when the Hebrew historian wished to laud the "well-watered" plain of the Jordan, as it was in the days of its prosperity, he could only compare it to "the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as thou comest unto Zoan." *

The wall-painting at Beny Hasan shows the journey into Egypt as it was more than four thousand years ago. In the present day we travel otherwise and see other sights. In the monotonous length of the Suez Canal and the sterile land which borders it on either side there is little to rejoice the eye. From the giant breakwaters of Port Sa'id, through the melancholy expanse of Lake Menzeleh, the sandhills of Kantarah, and the chain of lakes which map out the former junction of the Red Sea with the Mediterranean, and which have suggested to all the rulers of Egypt—Pharaoh or Ptolemy, Napoleon or Khedive—the design of an intermarial communication;—through the hundred miles of the cutting, so admirable in engineering and so unsightly in nature and art, there is nothing to indicate "the garden of the Lord," or "the best

* Genesis xiii. 10, where Zoar must mean Zoan in Egypt.

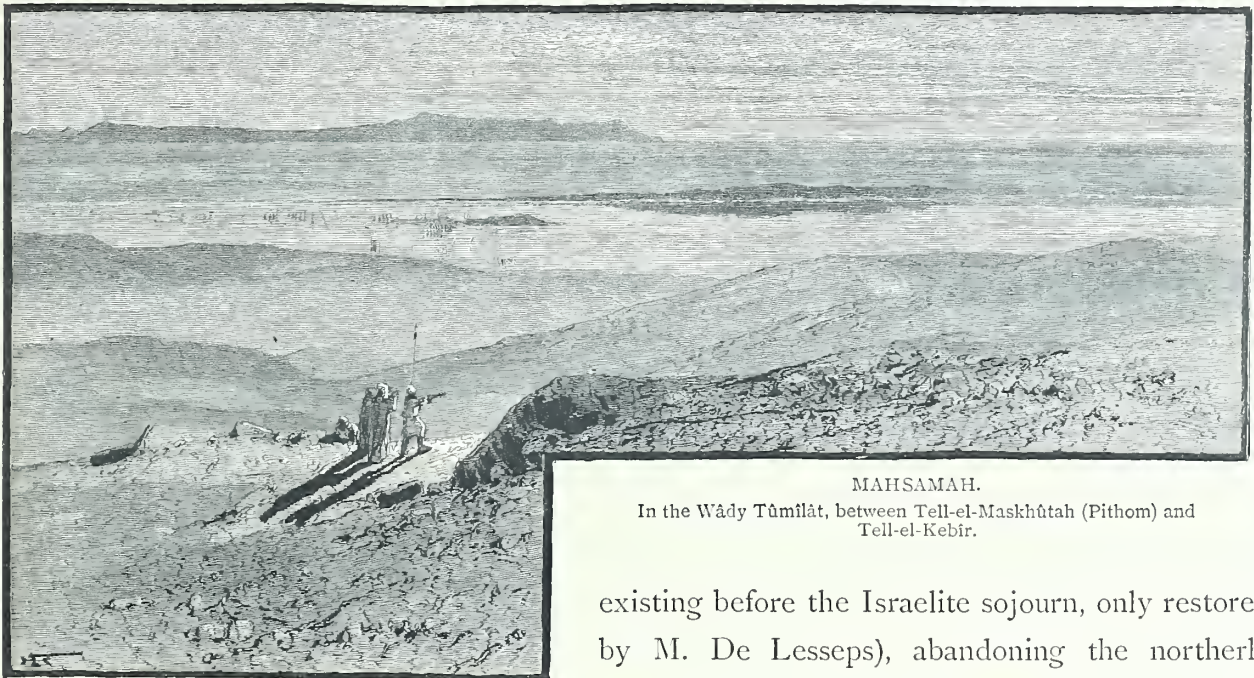


LAKE TIMSÂH,

Midway in the Suez Canal. It is traversed by two artificial channels for the passage of large vessels.

of the land" of Egypt. There are three towns on the canal, besides villages and railway depôts, and they all owe their existence to it and bear the unmistakeable marks of the upstart. Suez, at the Red Sea entrance (see page 121), represents an ancient port, but it never attained to much repute till the canal revived it, and even now it is a wretched little town, consisting of the usual Arab mud-huts, a few shabby mosques, and some European erections in lath and plaster. The new harbour outside the great swamp that stretches in front of the town, and

the beautiful mountain of 'Atâka that overhangs the west coast, are the only notable things about Suez besides the canal that made it famous. Port Sa'id, at the other end, is the counterpart of Suez with European improvements, and owes its existence simply to the circumstance that where it now stands the approach to the coast is deepest; and its site was therefore selected, in 1859, on one of the strip of islands forming the sea wall of Lake Menzeleh, as the best place for the exit of the canal, and it was christened after the patron of the enterprise, the Viceroy Sa'id Pasha.* Between these two, on Lake Timsâh (see opposite),—which was formerly a reedy pond of brackish water, but has become by the influx of the Mediterranean an expanse of six square miles of clear blue water,—stands the third of the brand-new cities of the canal, Isma'îliâ, so named after Sa'id's successor, the ex-Khedive. Isma'îliâ marks the angle where the railway and also the Freshwater Canal (an ancient work



MAHSAMAH.

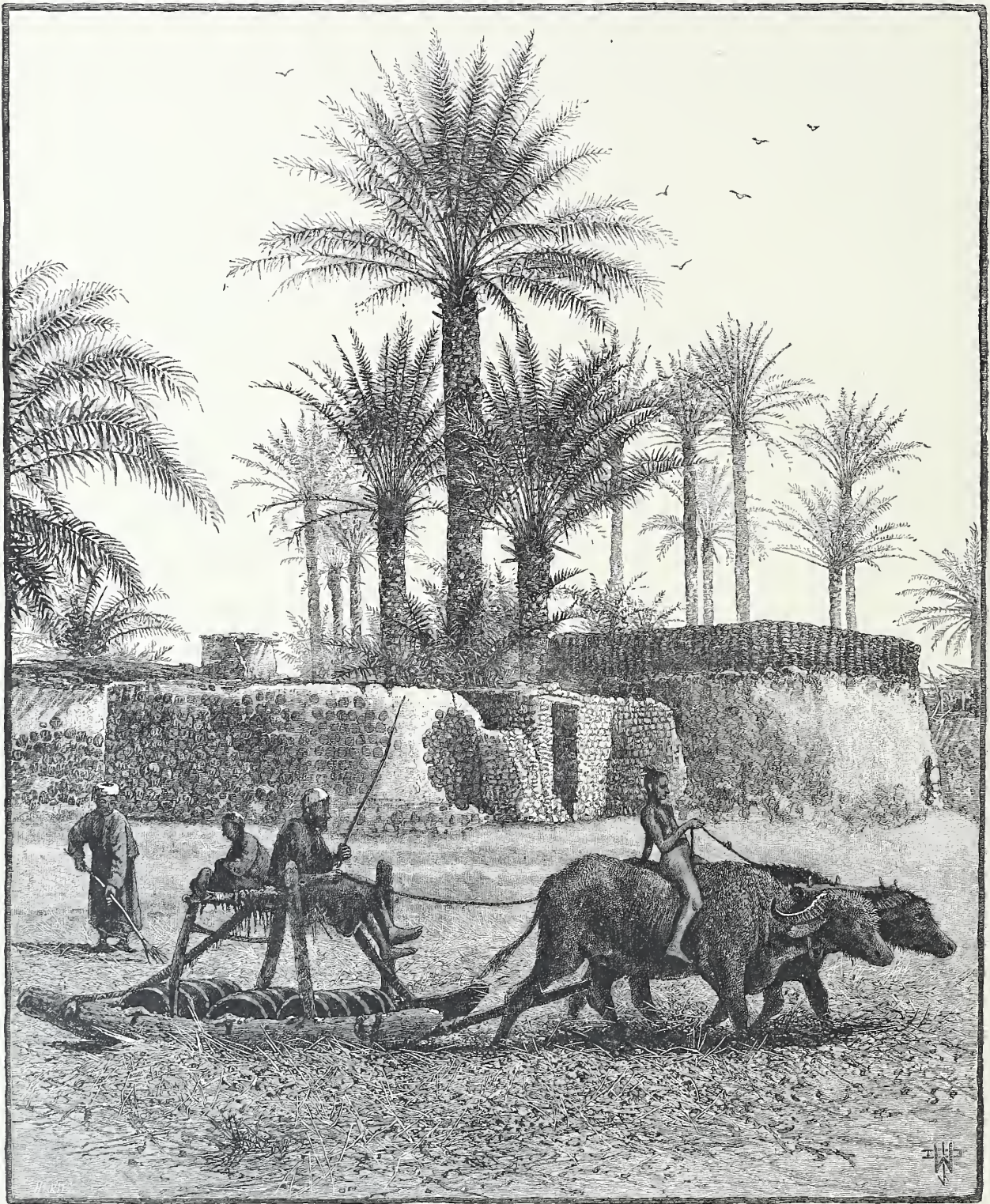
In the Wâdy Tûmilât, between Tell-el-Maskhûtah (Pithom) and Tell-el-Kebîr.

existing before the Israelite sojourn, only restored by M. De Lesseps), abandoning the northerly course they pursue from Suez to Lake Timsâh, turn off through the Wâdy Tûmilât, by way of Tell-el-Maskhûtah, Mahsamah (see above), Kassasîn, Tell-el-Kebîr, and other places which (in sundry pronunciations) the late Egyptian campaign has rendered familiar to the English ear, and strike across the Delta by Zakâzik to Cairo. Until near Zakâzik the country is still a naked desert, and it is difficult to realise that the bare waste which stretches between the Suez Canal and the Tanitic arm of the Nile (whose dwindled volume and neglected channel are the prime causes of the change) was once the fertile tract of Goshen and the "field of Zoan," washed by a thousand canals, whose plentiful waters needed little aid to spread their fertilising alluvium over the soil or supply the villagers at the wayside well (see page 127).

This border-land, however, which bears scarcely a trace of its former prosperity, is the most interesting part of all Egypt to the Biblical student. It was at Zoan, "the Alexandria of

* "Egypt," by S. Lane-Poole, page 117 (Low's "Foreign Countries").

primitive Egypt," the great trade-mart at the Tanitic mouth of the Nile, where caravans from Midian and cargoes from Tarshish brought the merchandise of the East to meet the traders



A VILLAGE THRESHING-FLOOR.

Showing a primitive threshing-sledge drawn by buffaloes, and a peasant separating the chaff from the grain with a winnowing-fork. The huts of the village are formed of mud and sun-dried bricks, roofed with palm-tree rafters thatched with stalks of Indian corn, palm-leaves, and old mats. The dark patches on the mud walls represent cakes of fuel made of dung and straw; when thoroughly dry they are stored for use.

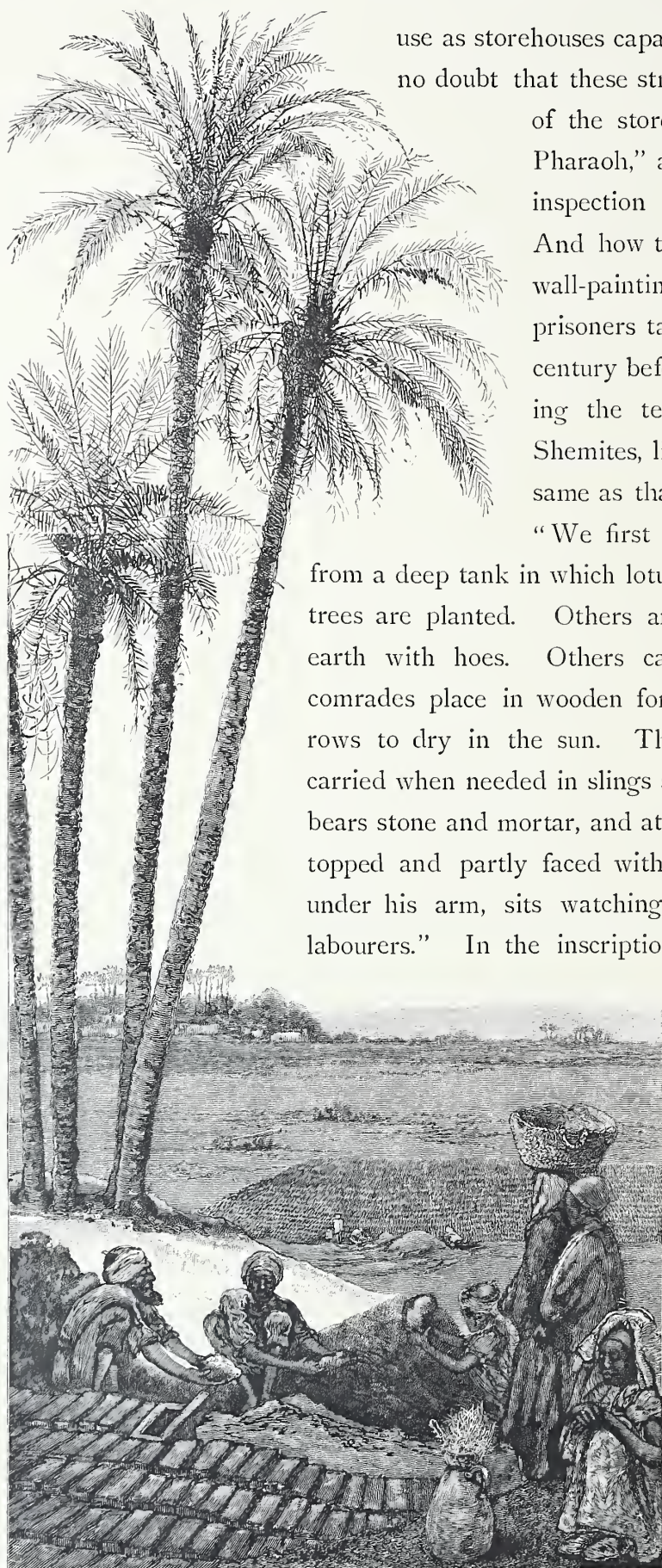
of Memphis, that the first scene of the Hebrew sojourn in Egypt was laid. When the famous Twelfth Dynasty had died away in a woman, a mysterious race of foreign warriors conquered

the border-land, which has now so little to invite conquest. These were the shepherd kings, or Hyksos. "When they invaded the country, how they conquered it, how long they ruled it, we do not know. All we can say is that towards the close of their dominion they raised the monuments we see at Zoan, the great works of Apepi, who reigned about seventeen centuries before our era, and seems to have been the Pharaoh of Joseph."

Not only was Zoan the capital of the Hyksos Pharaoh who made Joseph his regent and hospitably entertained his kindred, so that under his reign the children of Israel prospered and multiplied, tilled their land in peace and contentment, and threshed out their harvests with the primitive heavy waggon still employed by the fellahin (see opposite); it was at Zoan also that Rameses II., Pharaoh the Oppressor, "who knew not Joseph," was wont to reside after his re-conquest of the border-land and expulsion of the Hyksos. From the palace at Zoan the orders went forth to the Egyptian taskmasters to compel the Hebrews to find their own straw for their bricks. Here Moses confronted Meneptah, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, and worked his "wonders in the field of Zoan," and from the same memorable city did the Children of Israel set forth on the night of the first great Passover.

An Egyptian poet of the time of Pharaoh the Oppressor describes Zoan, or Rameses as it was then called, in terms of almost ecstatic admiration: "She is beautiful, beautiful. There is nought like her among the monuments of Thebes. Her fields are full of lovely places, abounding daily in the produce of food, her pools are full of fish, her ponds of ducks, her meadows are verdant with herbage, the bower with blooming garlands. The granaries are full of wheat and barley heaped up as high as heaven; . . . sweet wine there is which one mixes with honey. Her ships go and come daily, laden with provisions. The joys have there fixed their seat, there is no word of want, the small are there as the great." And he describes the festival of the fourth month, and how the people came with branches and garlands, and the fowler with birds, and they stood waving garlands at their doors, "for the king is making his entry in the morning."

This was Zoan after its restoration by the children of Israel, who "built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses" (Exodus i. 11). This was the scene of the oppression, when "the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field" (i. 13, 14). The very bricks for which the Hebrews were ordered to "gather straw for themselves" (Exodus v. 7) are still to be seen; there is one in the Museum at Berlin, stamped with the name of Rameses II. himself, with the straw still visible in it. At Tell-el-Maskhûtah, which M. Naville's recent excavations have proved to be the Pithom-Succoth of the Bible, and the Heroöpolis of the Greeks and Romans, we can see the very store chambers which the children of Israel built. The greater part of the fortified enclosure of Pithom is occupied by numerous square chambers, which have no doors, and must, therefore, have been entered from above, as a store-room might be, whilst their massive walls, three yards thick, and constructed of large and well-made bricks laid with great regularity, also point to their



BRICKMAKING.

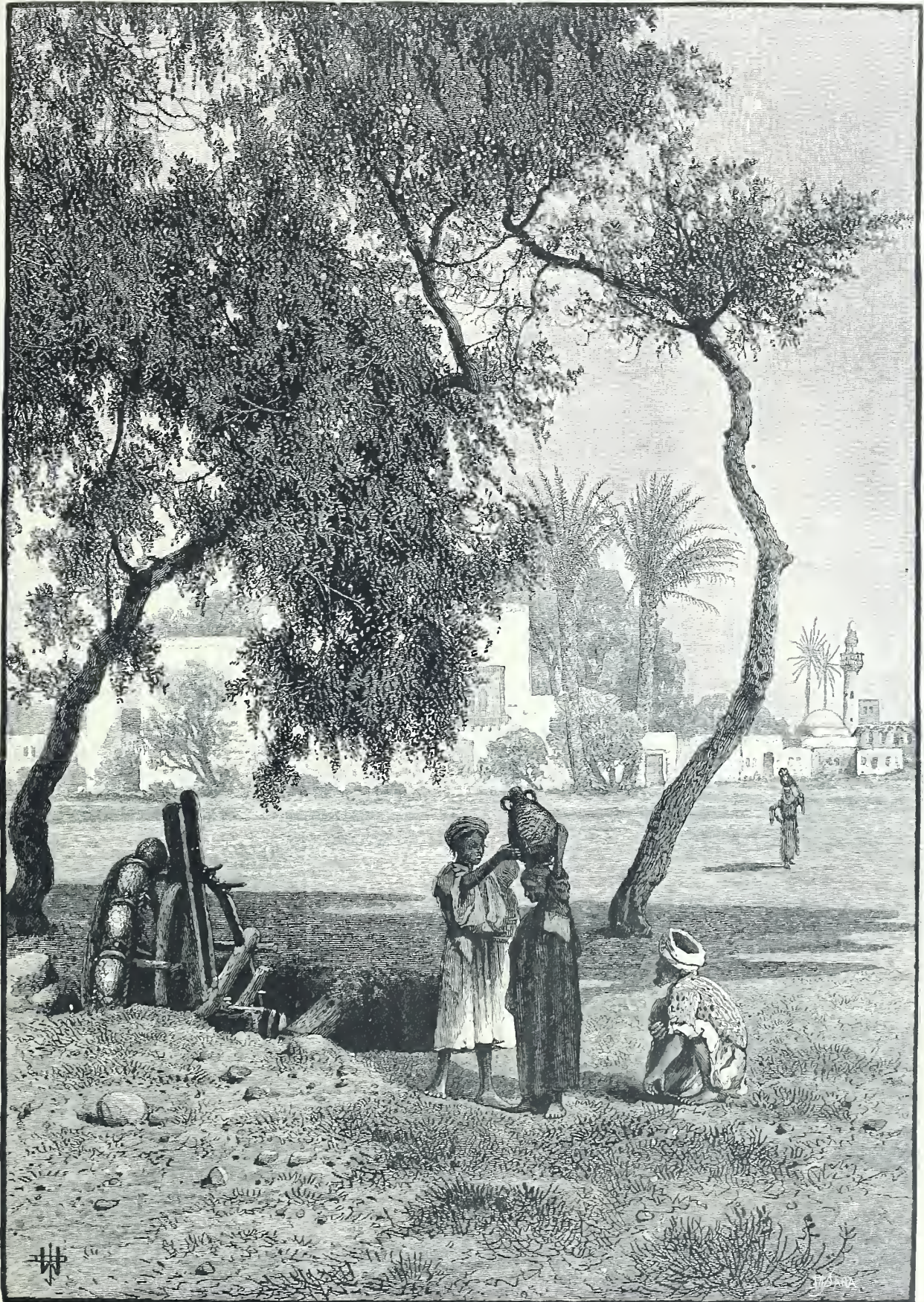
A wooden frame is placed in position, ready to receive the clay.

use as storehouses capable of resisting attack. We need have no doubt that these strange square strong chambers are part of the store city which the Israelites "built unto Pharaoh," and we are able to affirm from personal inspection that they were excellent bricklayers. And how the bricks were made we can see in a wall-painting in a Theban tomb, in which some prisoners taken in war by Thothmes III. (quite a century before Moses' birth) are depicted as building the temple of Amen. The labourers are Shemites, like the Hebrews, and their work is the same as that against which the Israelites rebelled.

"We first see the captives drawing water in jars from a deep tank in which lotus lilies are blooming and around which trees are planted. Others are engaged in breaking up masses of earth with hoes. Others carry the moistened clay, which their comrades place in wooden forms and arrange the shaped bricks in rows to dry in the sun. The bricks when dried are stacked, and carried when needed in slings suspended from yokes. Another gang bears stone and mortar, and at the end is a carefully constructed wall topped and partly faced with stone. One overseer, with his staff under his arm, sits watching; another, staff in hand, follows the labourers." In the inscription accompanying the picture the task-

master is made to say, "The stick is in my hand, be not idle;" and we are reminded of those other task-masters who "hasted them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks," and of Pharaoh's reproach, "Ye are idle, ye are idle" (Exodus v. 13, 17).

In the present day brick-making goes on in the same manner as when Israel built the house of Pharaoh. Unburnt brick, merely dried in the sun, is still the staple of building material, but the old bricks were better and more carefully made than the modern. The most ancient bricks were bound



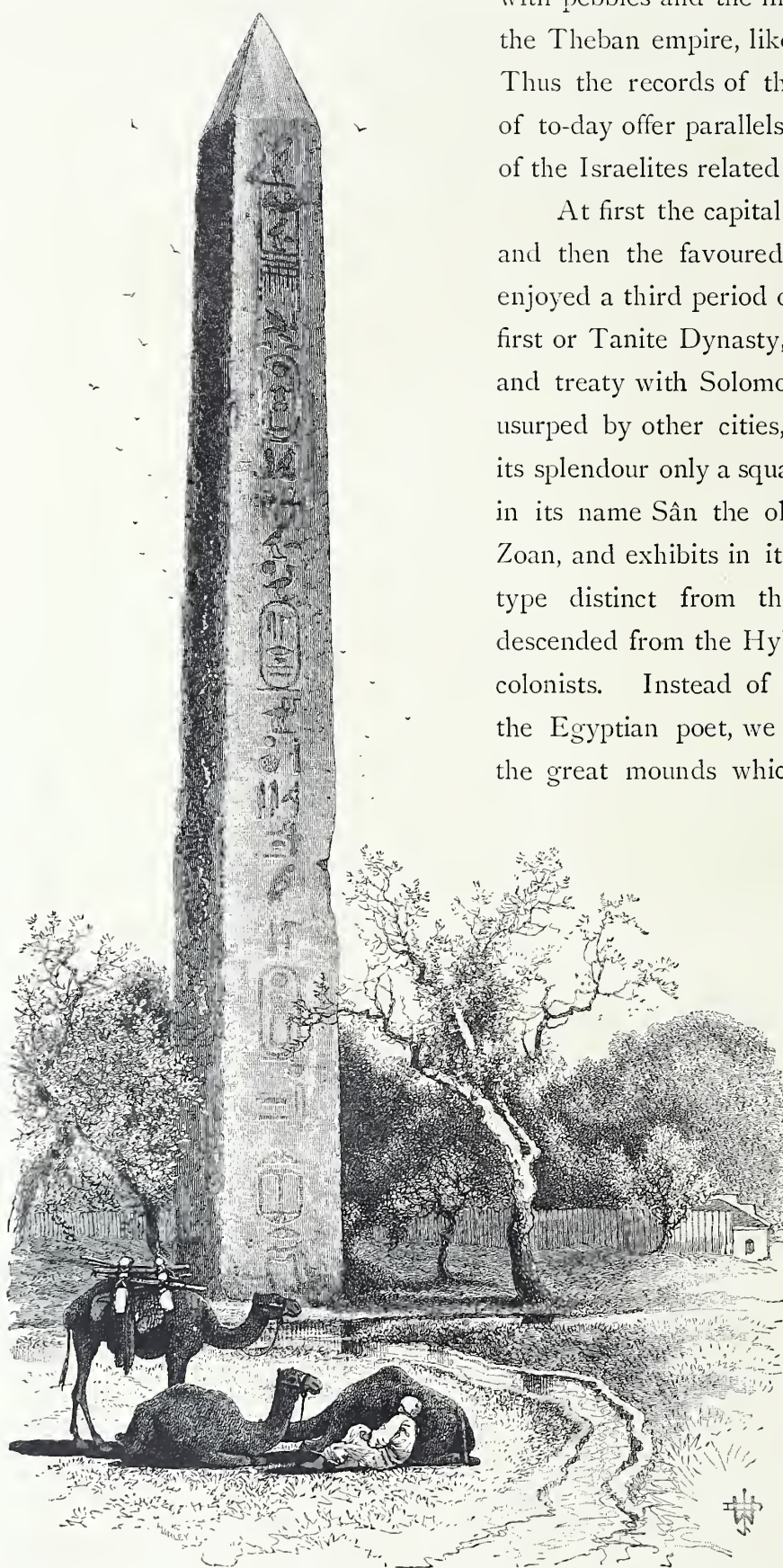
A WAYSIDE WELL.

Shaded by a fine specimen of the *Acacia Nilotica*. The water is raised by means of jars attached to a wheel, the *sákiyeh*.

with pebbles and the like, but those of the buildings of the Theban empire, like Zoan, were bound with straw. Thus the records of the monuments and the practice of to-day offer parallels to the story of the oppression of the Israelites related in the Hebrew records.

At first the capital of Joseph's Shepherd-Pharaoh, and then the favoured residence of Rameses, Zoan enjoyed a third period of prosperity under the Twenty-first or Tanite Dynasty, which was related by marriage and treaty with Solomon; but its place was gradually usurped by other cities, and now there remains of all its splendour only a squalid fishing village which retains in its name Sâ'n the old Egyptian Za'n and Hebrew Zoan, and exhibits in its brawny inhabitants a Semitic type distinct from the Egyptian, and undoubtedly descended from the Hyksos and perhaps their Hebrew colonists. Instead of the beautiful city described by the Egyptian poet, we see only the huts of Sâ'n and the great mounds which mark the place where two

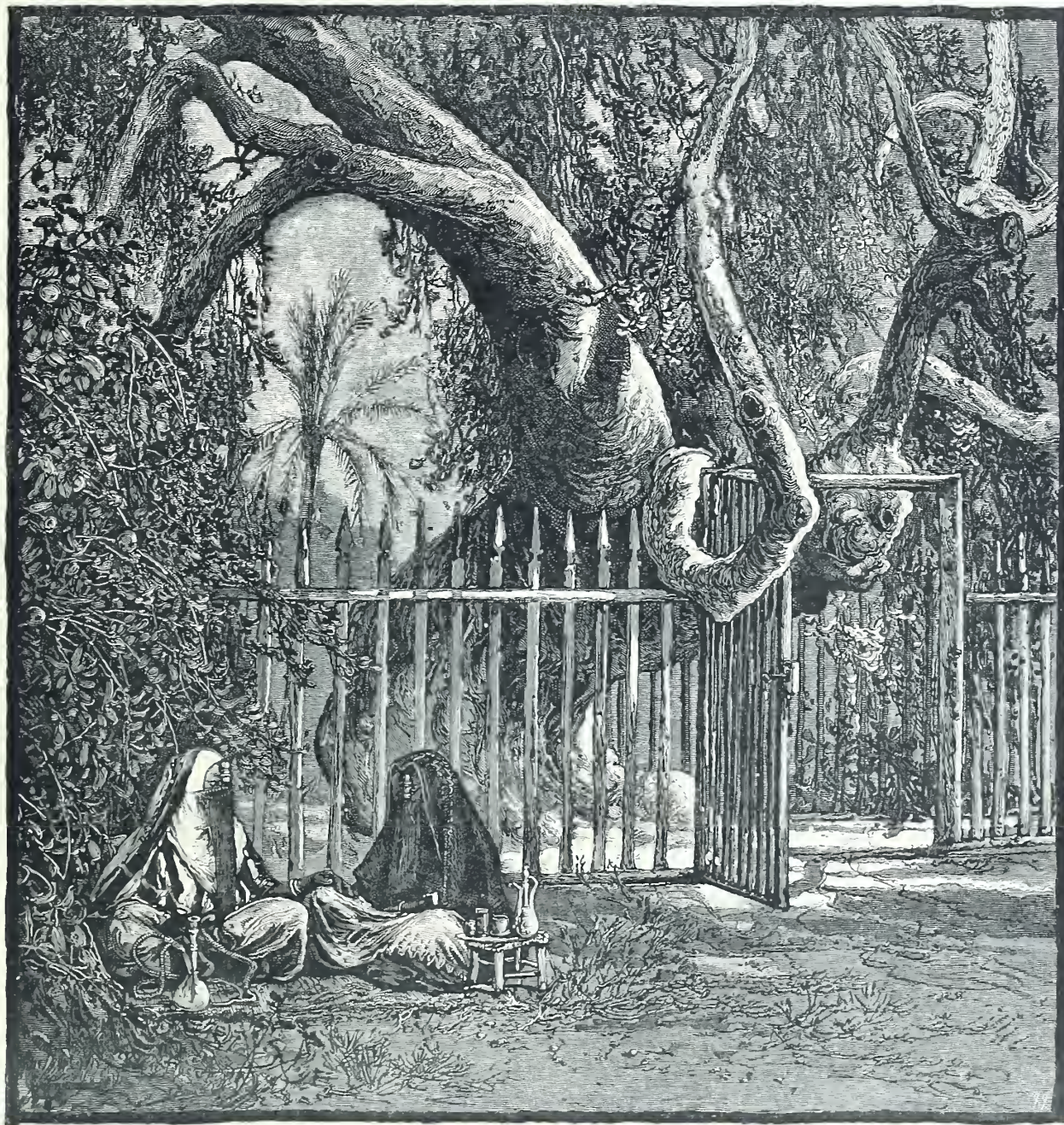
splendid temples of red syenite, adorned with numerous obelisks and sphinxes and surrounded by palaces and gardens and all that went to make "the very secret of the joys of life," once tempted Sesostris to leave his Theban capital and dwell in the field of Zoan. "Not even at Thebes," says Ebers, "are so many monuments of hard granite to be found; but of all the magnificent buildings that once stood here not even the ground plan can be recognised. The great sanctuary erected by Rameses II. has crumbled into dust. Granite pillars with palm-leaf capitals,



OBELISK OF HELIOPOLIS,

Formed of red granite; it has been so much encroached upon by deposits of mud that a considerable portion of its base is now buried.

colossi, and no less than twelve broken obelisks, lie by the side of less important monuments in grand confusion on the earth. An Arab legend relates that the Pharaohs were giants, who could move the mightiest masses of rock with a magic rod; but if it needed giants to erect these monuments, it must have required the will and the strength of a god thus to overthrow



THE "VIRGIN'S TREE."

At the time of the inauguration of the Suez Canal this tree was presented to the Empress Eugénie by the Khedive. The garden in which it stands is watered by means of a double sâkiyeh supplied from a reservoir fed by springs.

them." Around the fallen stones desolation and solitude hold their dreary sway, and a chaos of mounds and ruins, wrapped close in silence and neglect, is all that is left of Zoan.

The same fate has fallen on all the cities of the eastern Delta. Where are all the fortresses that defended the Syrian border, where now the ships of commerce steam peacefully through

"the silver streak" which severs Africa from Asia? Where is Migdol, the frontier fort in Ezekiel's days, and Pelusium, the "City of Sweet Repose," near the Serbonian bog, and Avaris, "which commanded the border, at once the place of arms and the last possession of the mysterious shepherds"? A few high mounds are all that break the desolate scene of Pompey's murder. Migdol is supposed by some to be represented by the hillock called Tell-es-Samût. Lofty mounds, again, and the scattered ruins of temples near Zakâzîk are what remain to us of that famous city of Bubastis, at which Herodotus marvelled, and whither, he tells us, seven hundred thousand pilgrims yearly came to celebrate the festival of Bast, the cat-headed goddess of burning love, with riotous rites, just as their descendants keep the Molid of the Muslim saint Ahmad El-Bedawy at Tanta hard by. The young men of Pi-beseth, as the Hebrew prophet called Bubastis, have fallen by the sword, and the cities went into captivity (Ezekiel xxx. 17). Nothing more impressive exists in all the wonderful sights of Egypt than this total overthrow of the great cities of the Delta. The "best of the land" is become a very Golgotha of a vanished and unreturning splendour. Turkish conquest and Roman neglect have verified the words, "I will make the canals dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the Lord have spoken" (Ezekiel xxx. 12).

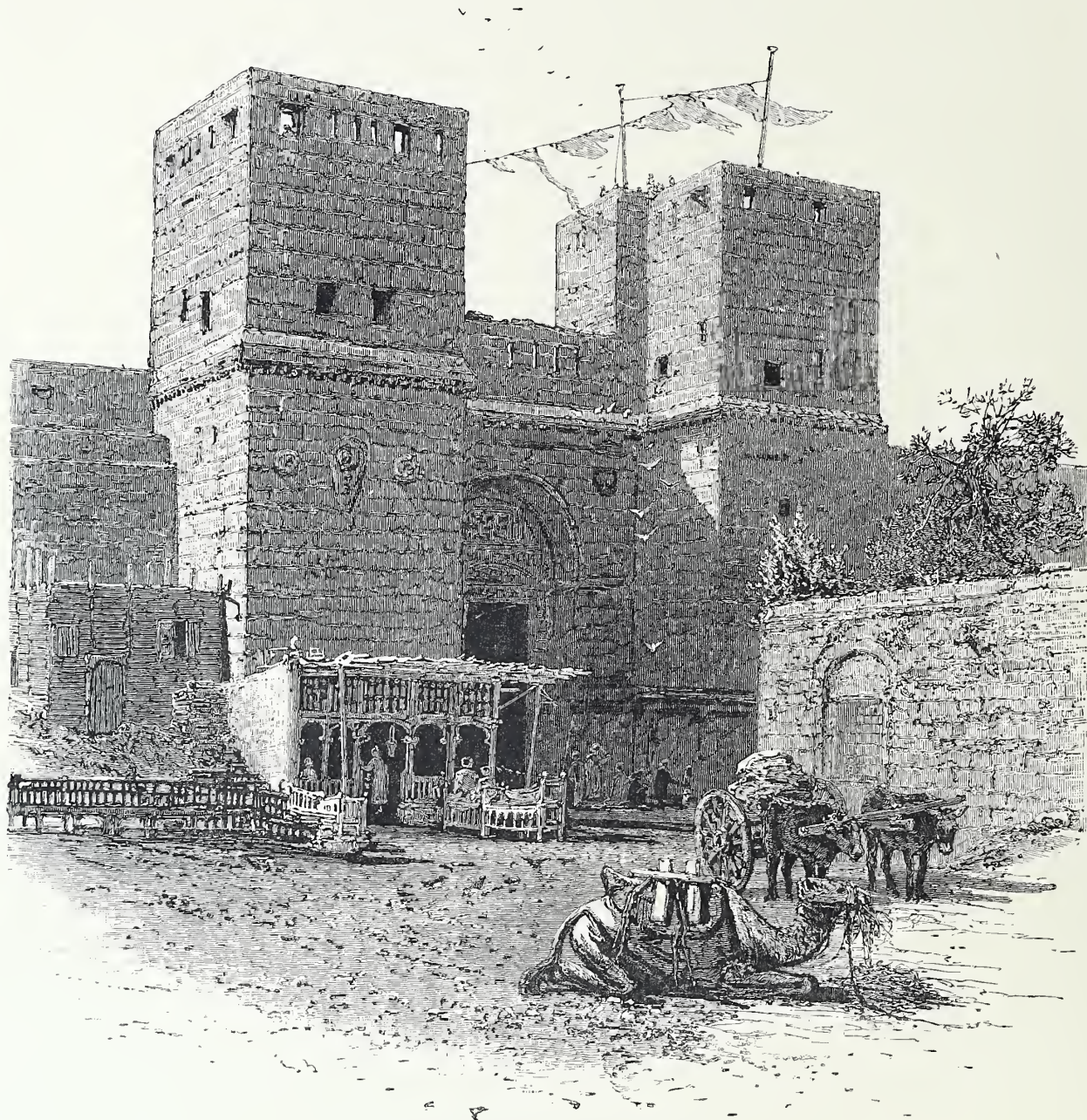
Goshen itself, the city which gave its name to half the "Arabian Nome," and which was the capital of the district assigned to Joseph's kinsfolk, has shared the fate of all the border-cities. The site can be shown at Fakûs, in which we trace the Greek Phaccusa, the Egyptian Pa-Kesem, and the Hebrew Goshen. We can now go by railway to the place whither Jacob journeyed, full of years and troubles, to end his days near his son, the famous viceroy of Egypt. But of the Hebrew capital—as of all the cities of the Delta—there remains nothing but the inevitable mounds. Everywhere throughout this wonderful land, where the Shepherd Kings conquered, where the children of Israel toiled, where a Pharaoh oppressed and another Pharaoh pursued, the plain is varied only by this one monotonous feature: mounds in every direction show the traveller where the buried cities of Zoan and Goshen lie waiting the tardy labours of the explorer to render up their secrets and tell something of their eventful and mysterious history. No part of Egypt demands excavation more loudly than the eastern half of the Delta; nowhere are the problems to be resolved so novel or so important. The cultus of the Shepherds, at present shrouded in obscurity, but offering already strange and remarkable features, bears, we know not how vitally, upon the religion of Israel; the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt await illustration in wall-sculptures of tombs; the mummies of the children of Israel themselves are beneath these mounds, if only the trouble were taken to uncover them. Mariette, ever in the van, did something for Zoan, but there remains a splendid field for a discoverer. The remarkable success attending the excavations at Pithom in 1883 is a good omen for the future; and Tanis and Daphnæ only await a like exploration to reveal, perhaps, even more astonishing results.

Near Cairo, forming the southern point of the triangle which included the land of Goshen,

stands a solitary obelisk (see page 128) of red granite, the oldest but one in Egypt—the only sign remaining that there was once a “City of the Sun.” In the plain of Matariyeh, before this lonely stone, the Turks fought the battle that won Egypt from the Memlûks in 1517, and Kléber gained his famous victory in 1800 over the very site of Heliopolis, or On, the oldest seat of learning in the world. There stood the famous temple of On of which Potipherah, the father of Joseph’s wife, was priest; here Pianchi, the Ethiopian priest-king, eight centuries B.C., washed at the “Fountain of the Sun,” and made offerings of white bulls, milk, perfume, incense, and all kinds of sweet-scented woods, and entering the temple “saw his father Ra [the sun-god] in the sanctuary.” Heliopolis was the university of the most ancient civilisation in the world, the forerunner of all the schools of Europe. Here, in all probability, Moses was instructed by the priests of Ra in “all the wisdom of the Egyptians;” here, too, Herodotus cross-questioned the same priesthood with varying success; here Plato came to study, and Eudoxus the mathematician to learn astronomy; and here Strabo was shown the houses where the famous Greeks had lived. Of this seat of learning and focus of religion nothing but the obelisk remains. “The images of Beth-Shemesh” (the “House of the Sun”) have indeed been “broken,” and “the houses of the Egyptians’ gods” have been “burned with fire” (Jeremiah xliii. 13).

Beside the obelisk is an ancient sycamore, riven with age and hacked with numberless names, beneath which tradition hath it that the Holy Family rested in their flight into Egypt, and which is hence known as the “Virgin’s Tree” (see page 129). Near by is a spring of fresh water—a rare sight in this brackish land—which, it is said, became sweet because the Bambino was bathed there. From the spots where the drops fell from his swaddling clothes, after they, too, had been washed in this sacred spring, sprang up balsam-trees, which, it was believed, flourished nowhere else. There is no evidence for these fancies, and, of course, the sycamore is but a descendant of the supposed original, as it was not planted till after 1672. But the circumstances that a temple was built by the Hebrew Onias for the worship of his countrymen near here, and that Jewish gardeners were brought here for the culture of the balsam-trees, give the tale a certain fitness. “The tradition is no more than a legend, yet there is no place in Egypt to which the visit of the Holy Family would be more fit, than to the almost deserted seat of learning, when it was already the parent of the great university under whose wide-spreading shadow grew and flourished those Hebrew and Christian schools which had so mighty an influence in the annals of the early Church. Thus Heliopolis then represented that which was passing away, not without hope of that which was to come. The least monumental of all the sites of Egypt, without temple or tomb, nor any record but the obelisk, is yet eloquent of greater things than the solemn pyramids of Memphis or the storied temples of Thebes. What these tell is rather of Egypt’s history than the world’s; the idea that Heliopolis suggests is the true progress of the whole human race. For here was the oldest link in the chain of the schools of learning. The conqueror has demolished the temple; the city, with the houses of the wise men, has fallen into hopeless ruin, downtrodden by the thoughtless peasant, as he

drives his plough across the site. Yet the name and the fame of the City of the Sun charms the stranger as of old while, standing beside the obelisk, he looks back through the long and stately avenue of the ages that are past, and measures the gain in knowledge that patient



THE GATE OF VICTORY (BÂB-EN-NASR).

The easternmost of the northern gates of Cairo. It was built in the reign of the Fâtîmy khalif El-Mustansir, A.H. 480 (A.D. 1087).

scholars have won. He sees that phoenix-like power of renewing her youth, which gives all wisdom the deathlessness which is at once a type and a presage of immortality." *

* R. S. Poole, "Cities of Egypt," pages 71, 83, 106, 131 ff., 147, whence much of the contents of this chapter has, with the author's permission, been derived. It should be stated that the recent explorations at Pithom, under the auspices of the Egyptian Exploration Fund and Sir Erasmus Wilson, were brought to a successful issue mainly by the exertions of Mr. R. S. Poole (joint secretary with Miss Amelia B. Edwards to the Fund) and the energy of M. Naville.

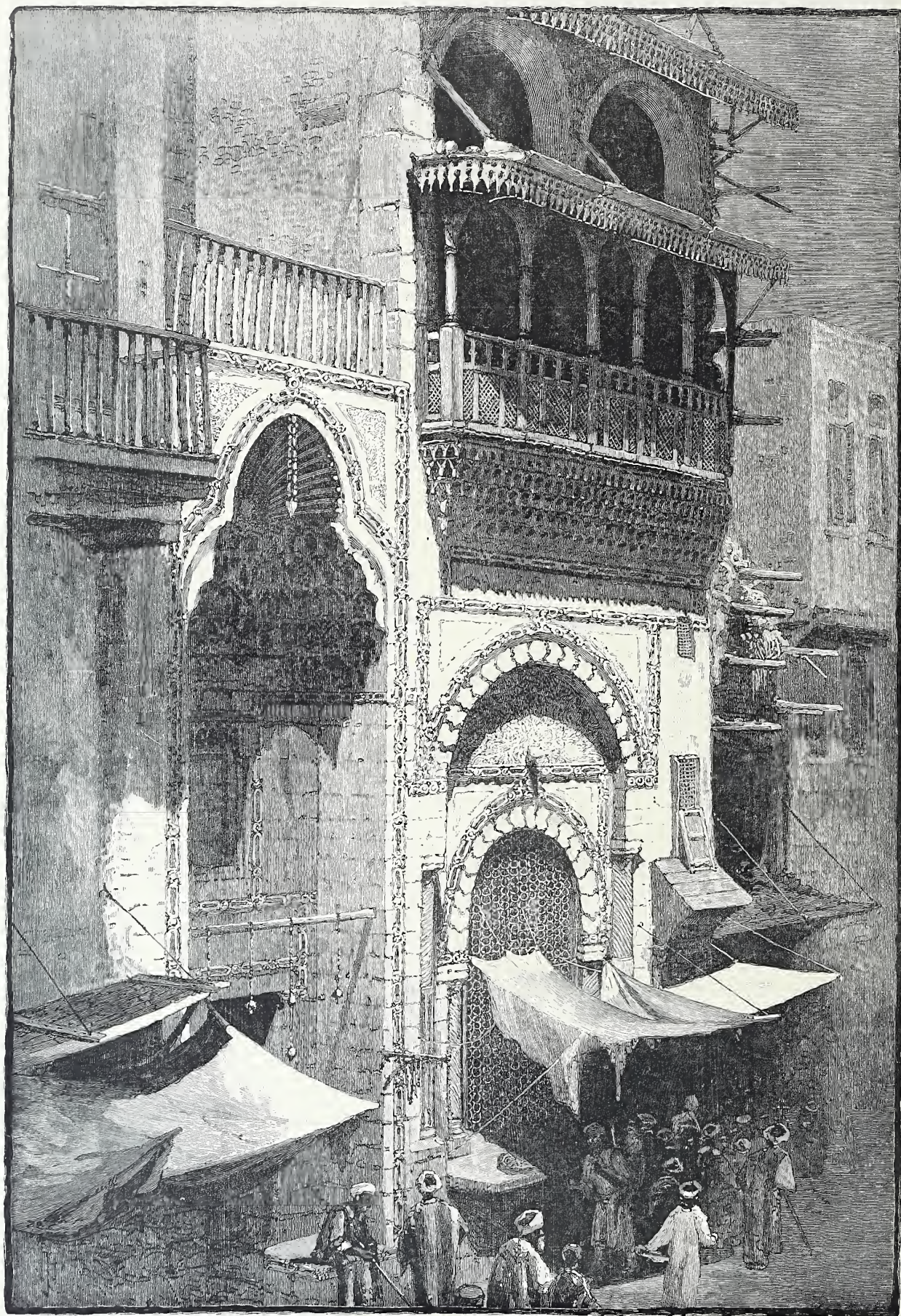


A SELLER OF LANTERNS.

In houses provided with latticed windows only, candles are usually sheltered by lanterns like those suspended above. One such lantern, with two or three wax candles in it, placed on the ground or on a low stool in a central position, is considered sufficient to light a large saloon.

CAIRO.

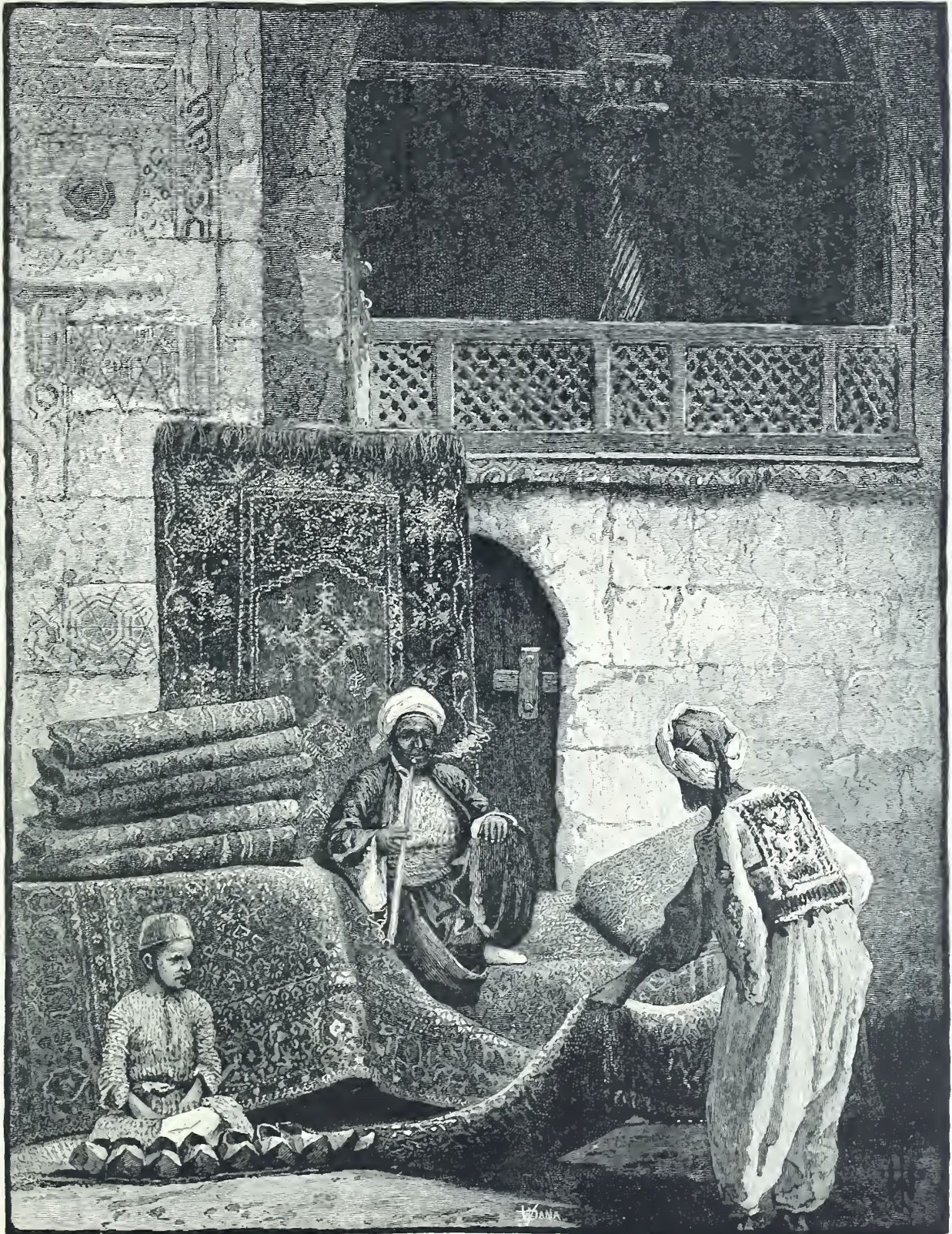
THE view of Cairo after the buried cities of Goshen is like the passing from death unto life. Behind us are the desolate mounds that mark the site of a far-off civilisation, magnificent while it lasted, but inexpressibly melancholy in its ruin; before us lies the chief seat of Arabian commerce and of Muslim culture—decaying too, like all Eastern cities, but still



SEBÎL, OR STREET FOUNTAIN.

Supplied from a cistern below which is filled during the inundation of the Nile. The upper chamber, with its columns and double verandah, is a school-room.

full of movement and life. We have been studying the scanty traces of extinct capitals,



CARPET BAZAAR.

There are two carpet bazaars in the Khân El-Khalily. The larger one is established in the picturesque court of a building of the thirteenth century, a portion of which is shown above. Here may be seen carpets from India and Persia and from every part of the Turkish empire.

engulfed by desert sand, dwelt in by no living thing: we are now to visit the apex of that

luxuriant Delta over which the Nile yearly spreads its fertilizing waters ; for at the point where the narrow valley begins to expand, like a green fan, towards the broad embouchure, stands Cairo, the jewel in its handle. The country we have just traversed is interesting for its Biblical associations ; the reign of the shepherd kings who welcomed Israel, and the sojourn and toil and exodus of the chosen people, render the land of Goshen beyond all things memorable. Cairo, on the other hand, is modern and Mohammadan. Yet even so it has its significance to the student of the Bible ; for here, at least until European inroads laid waste the Arabian city, could the life and modes of thought of the Semitic race be studied at their best ; and a study of the mind of the Muslim not seldom proved the best key to the thoughts of the Hebrew.

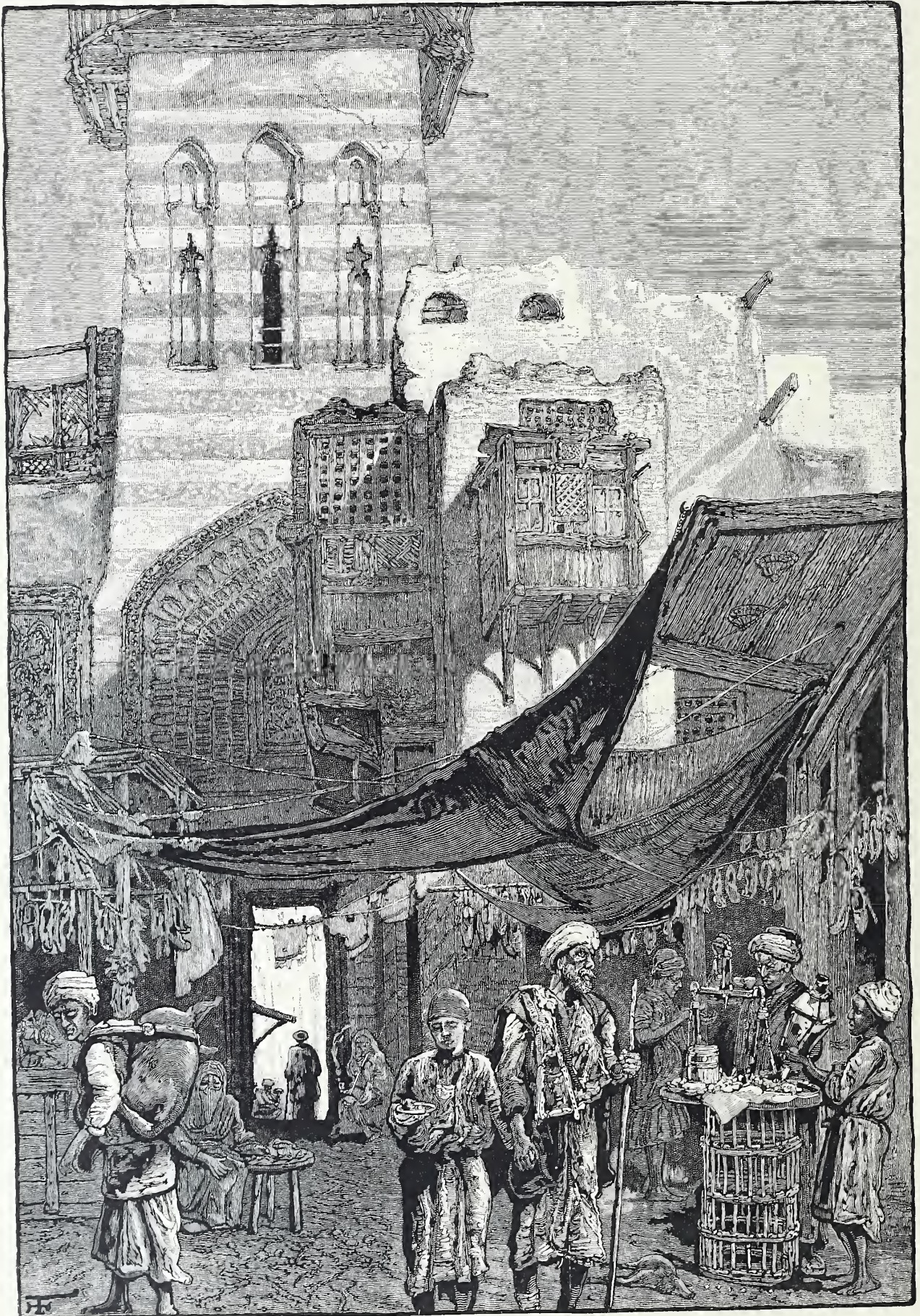
Cairo is not merely the largest city in Africa, it is the most perfect example the world can show of a Mohammadan capital. In spite of the "Haussmannizing" tendency of recent days, and the attempt to raise it to the questionable dignity of a bastard Paris, Cairo is still the ideal city of the Arabian Nights. We can still shut our eyes to the hotels and restaurants, the dusty grass-plots, and tawdry villa residences of the modern bricklayer's paradise, and turn away to wander in the labyrinth of narrow lanes which intersect the old parts of the city, just as they did in the days of the Memlûk sultans. And as we thread the winding alleys, where a thin streak of sky marks the narrow space between the lattice-windows of the overhanging upper stories, and dive under a camel here, or retreat into a recess there, to escape what seems imminent death at the feet of the advancing and apparently impassable crowd of beasts of burden, camels, asses, and horses, laden or ridden, we may fancy ourselves in the gateway of 'Aly of Cairo, and in that stall round the corner we may perhaps hear the story of the wonderful adventures of the six brothers, from the immortal Barber himself ; within the grated lattice over the way, the Three Royal Mendicants may at this moment be entertaining the Portress and her fair sisters with the history of their lives ; and if we wait till night we may see the good Harûn Er-Rashîd himself (though he did live in Baghdad) coming stealthily to the house in his midnight rambles, with Ja'far at his heels, and black Mesrûr clearing the way. A few streets away from the European quarter it is easy to dream that we are acting a part in the veracious history of the Thousand and One Nights—which do, in fact, describe Cairo and its people and life as they were in the fifteenth century, and as, to a great degree, they are still. In its very dilapidation the city helps the illusion ; the typical Eastern houses falling to ruins, which no one thinks of repairing, are of course haunted by the 'Efrits and other mischievous Jinn, who keep away all God-fearing tenants. But if in its ruined houses, far more in what survives of its mediæval monuments does Cairo transport one to the golden age of Arabian art and culture. Among its mosques and the fragments of its palaces are the noblest examples of Arabian architecture which can be seen in all the wide empire of Islâm. Damascus and Baghdad, Delhi and Gaur, Seville and Cordova, possess elements of beauty that Cairo has not, and serve to complete the history of Arabian art ; but to see that art in its perfection, uncorrupted by the mechanical detail of the Alhambra, free from the distorted outlines of India,

we must study the mosques and tombs of Cairo—the city whose beauties all Arabian literature extols, and of which the Jewish physician, in the *Story of the Humpback*, boasts that “he who hath not seen Cairo hath not seen the world. Her soil is gold; her Nile is a marvel; her women are as the damsels of paradise; her houses are palaces; and her air is soft, sweet-smelling as aloes-wood, refreshing the heart—and how can Cairo be otherwise, when she is the Mother of the World?”

The capital of Egypt has grown up on several foundations, and by the incorporation of various suburbs. It owes its origin to the Arabs, whose general, 'Amr ibn el-Âsy, after conquering the country, A.D. 641, fixed the site of his capital where he first pitched his tent; and hence it was called El-Fustât, “The Tent.” Here the governors, which the khalifs of Damascus set over the land of Egypt, held their court; and even when it was no longer the actual seat of government it remained still the chief town. A century later (A.D. 751), the representatives of the 'Abbâsy khalifs—a new line who had just wrested the empire from the earlier house of Omayyeh—removed their residence to a site a little to the north-east of El-Fustât, where a military suburb called El-'Askar (“the Camp”) grew up, and formed a sort of Cairene Versailles. The first independent Mohammadan sovereign, Ahmad Ibn-Tûlûn (A.D. 870), again changed the seat of government, and founded the new suburb, El-Katâi’ (“the Feofs”), farther to the north-east, where he and his house, and the succeeding dynasty of the Ikhshidis, kept their state. When Jowhar took Egypt from the latter for his master, the Fâtîmy khalif of Tunis, he chose a fourth site, again to the north-east of El-Katâi’, and founded there, in 969, the new city of El-Kâhirah, or “the Victorious,” which Italians corrupted into Cairo.

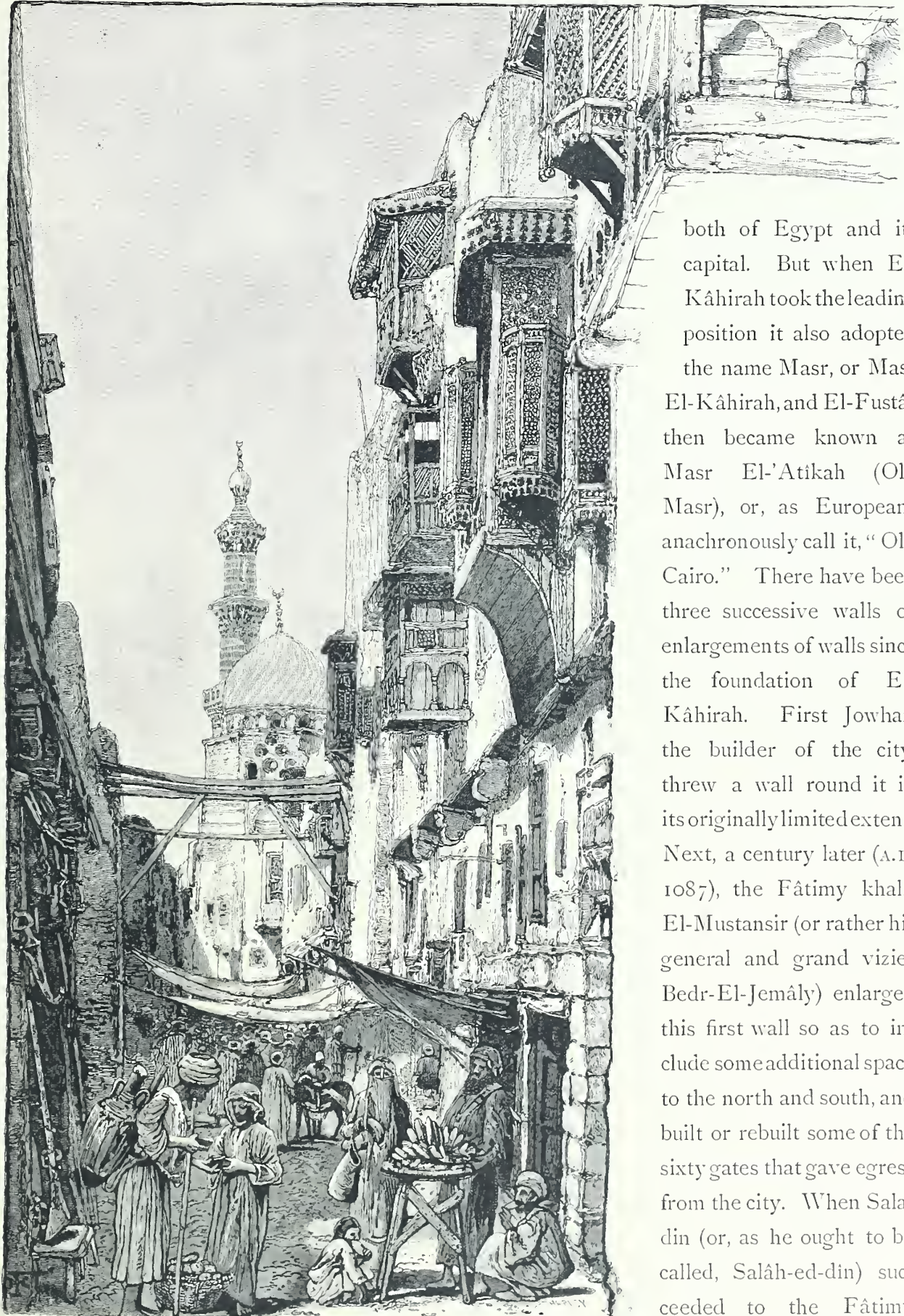
Jowhar’s object, however (as has been shown by Mr. H. C. Kay in the *J.R.A.S.*, N.S. xiv. 2), was not to found a new city, but to build a palace for the Fâtîmy khalif, El-Mo’izz; and for a long time El-Kâhirah was simply the khalif’s fortified palace, and was dwelt in only by his harim, his slaves, his officials, and his garrison. Two palaces, indeed, were enclosed within the fortified walls and double ditches; the eastern palace was the khalif’s own residence, and here he kept his women, children, and eunuchs, to the number of, it is said, 12,000 souls. Near by, where now stands the Khân El-Khalily, was the imperial mausoleum, where El-Mo’izz deposited the remains of his ancestors, which he brought with him from their places of sepulture in Tunis. Farther south was the khalif’s special mosque, the Azhar, where he himself, as Prince and Imâm of the Faithful, conducted the Friday prayers. The smaller western palace was separated from the eastern by the street called Beyn El-Kasreyn (“Between the Palaces”), now known as the Sûk En-Nahhâsîn, under which a subterranean passage connected the two. Nobody was allowed within the palaces, besides the khalif’s household, but the high officials and the garrison. It was not till Saladin succeeded to the Fâtîmy power, and enlarged the walls, that El-Kâhirah became a city instead of a palace.

The capital of Egypt thus includes four sites, each of which was a slight move to the north-east of the preceding, but contiguous at its western extremity. Until El-Kâhirah grew up El-Fustât was always the capital, and was called Masr (in literary Arabic “Misr”), the name



IN THE SHOE BAZAAR.

This was formerly a school, an interesting building now in a very dilapidated condition. The gateway, however, is still preserved.



THE ARMOURERS' MARKET.

In this street there are some good specimens of *meshrebīyahs* (lattice windows).

both of Egypt and its capital. But when El-Kâhirah took the leading position it also adopted the name Masr, or Masr El-Kâhirah, and El-Fustât then became known as Masr El-'Atikah (Old Masr), or, as Europeans anachronously call it, "Old Cairo." There have been three successive walls or enlargements of walls since the foundation of El-Kâhirah. First Jowhar, the builder of the city, threw a wall round it in its originally limited extent. Next, a century later (A.D. 1087), the Fâtîmy khalif El-Mustansir (or rather his general and grand vizier Bedr-El-Jemâly) enlarged this first wall so as to include some additional space to the north and south, and built or rebuilt some of the sixty gates that gave egress from the city. When Saladin (or, as he ought to be called, Salâh-ed-din) succeeded to the Fâtîmy power in the twelfth cen-

tury, he built the Citadel on a spur of Mount Mukattam, and enlarged the Fâtimy walls so as to include his new fortress in their circuit, and also a small suburb to the north of the original wall of El-Kâhirah. The city had now expanded from the square mile or less of the old Fâtimy enclosure to the size of the Cairo of to-day, excluding the modern quarter of the south-west,—that is, about three miles long and a mile to a mile and a half wide.

Most of these changes can be traced in the present city. A small part of El-Fustât remains under the name of Masr El-'Atikah, separated from the city by the great mounds of rubbish which indicate vanished suburbs. El-Katâi' was partly burnt and partly neglected, and little of it remains but the mosque of its founder, Ahmad Ibn-Tûlûn, which, with the site of the old suburb, was included within the circuit of Saladin's walls. Of El-Kâhirah the whole growth can readily be traced. The oldest wall still stands on the north side, though the magnificent gateways of the Bâb En-Nasr, or "Gate of Victory," with its mighty square towers and fine vaulting within, and the Bâb El-Futûh, or "Gate of Conquests," flanked with massive round towers, are not quite on their original sites, but were removed to enclose the ruined mosque and mebkharehs of El-Hâkim, the mad founder of the Druses. The cornice and frieze, adorned with fine Kufic inscriptions, which run along the face of the gateway and the faces and inner sides of the two towers, half-way from the ground, no less than its massive and clean-cut masonry, distinguish the Bâb En-Nasr among Arab monuments (see page 132). The second wall is still where it was on the eastern boundary of the city, and its other sides may be traced by the names of demolished gates, as the Bâb El-Bahr, the Bâb El-Lûk, and the Bâb El-Khalak; and the Bâb Zuweyleh, also called Bâb El-Mutawelly, still standing in the heart of the city, is one of the most striking monuments of Cairo, though its walls and inscriptions are daubed over with plaster, and its towers were lowered to make room for the minarets of the adjoining mosque of El-Muayyad.

This second wall, thus mapped out, must have run from near the present bridge over the Isma'iliyeh Canal, along the western side of the Ezbekiyeh (where the wall was standing in 1842), to near the Abdîn Palace, where it turned up to the Bâb Zuweyleh, and was prolonged to the eastern wall. Since it was built the Nile has considerably changed its course, and now runs much farther to the westward. Saladin's wall was a restoration of this in part, but his addition (begun in 1170) round the citadel is in full preservation, like the fortress itself, though the continuation round the site of El-Katâi' on the south is demolished. The names of the gates, however, show that the limits of the present city on the south are nearly what they were in Saladin's day, and this wall must have run from the citadel to near the mosque of Ibn-Tûlûn, enclosed it, and turned north to meet the old wall near the Bâb El-Lûk.

The limits of the modern additions are only too plain, but the "improvements" of the reigning dynasty happily do not extend to the old Fâtimy quarter, and indeed scarcely affect Saladin's city except in prolongation and widening of the Musky, the opening of the broad "Boulevard Mohammad 'Aly" to the citadel, and the laying out of the Rumeylah and the spaces of Sultan Hasan and Kara Meydan in the usual European style. With these

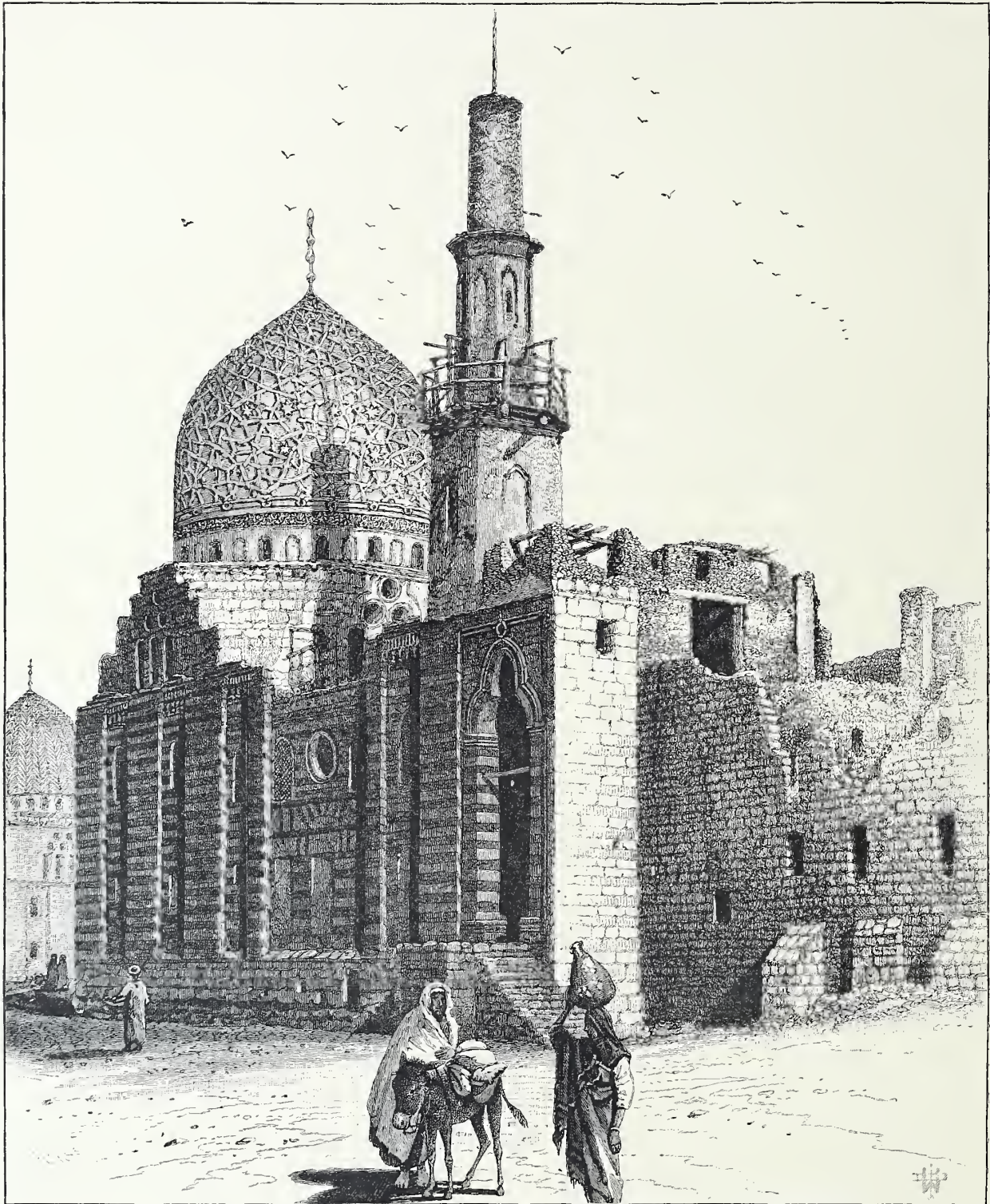
exceptions, the modern additions extend only from the Ezbekiyeh to the river, and consist of a number of parallel boulevards and *rondes places* whose only merit is that their designers, in borrowing Western ugliness and uniformity, have also followed a Western fashion in the planting of trees.*

To understand the topography of the old Arab city, which lies to the east of the canal on the side farthest from the Nile, we must imagine a white ensign with the red St. George's cross dividing it into four quarters. The rectangular oblong forming the flag represents the old part of Cairo, between the canal and the eastern wall. It is not set square to the cardinal points of the compass, but midway between them. The horizontal line of the St. George's cross is the old High Street of Cairo, and runs from the Bâb El-Futûh in the north wall in a south-westerly direction till it joins the new-fangled "Boulevard Mohammad 'Aly," almost in front of the citadel. It is called in various parts of its course by different names—first the Sûk En-Nahhâsin, or Coppersmith's Market; then the Ghûriyeh, or Street of Sultan El-Ghûry; then the Sukkariyeh, or Sugar Bazaar, and so on. The perpendicular line of the cross is formed by the Musky, so called after its builder, the Emir Musik, a kinsman of Saladin's. The Musky starts from the Ezbekiyeh, in the European quarter, and, crossing the canal, cuts the High Street in two and goes out through the east wall at the Bâb El-Ghureyyib. Around these two main thoroughfares which, crossing one another at right angles, form the cross of the ensign to which we have compared the old quarter of Cairo, are grouped those endless byways and *culs-de-sac* in which the Muslim population chiefly resides, and that wilderness of bazaars and streets of shops where most of the trade of the city is transacted.

As we turn into one of the narrow lanes that intersect the Mohammadan city, we are struck, not only by the vivid incongruities of the street scenes which travellers have described so often, but by the contrast between the noise and bustle of the crowded alley and the quiet and silence of the tall houses that overhang it on either side. Here there is no sign of life; the doors are jealously closed, the windows shrouded by those beautiful screens of net-like woodwork which delight the artist and tempt the cupidity of the collector. If we enter one of these gates, through the bent passage which bars the view of the interior from the profane eyes of the passing throng, we shall find the inner court almost as silent and deserted as the guarded windows which overlook the street. We shall see nothing of the domestic life of the inhabitants; for the women's apartments are carefully shut off from the court, into which only the guest rooms and groom's chambers and the like semi-public apartments open. We cannot penetrate through the closed door which leads to the rooms of the family, we can only notice the spacious and airy appearance of the interior court. After the bustle of the street this quiet and ample space is very refreshing, and it is impossible not to felicitate the Egyptian architects on their success in meeting the requirements of Mohammadan building. They make the streets narrow and overshadowed by projecting *meshrelîyehs* (lattice windows), because the sun beats down too fiercely for the wide street of European towns to be endurable. But they

* "Egypt," by S. Lane-Poole, pages 36—43 (Low's "Foreign Countries"), of which several paragraphs are reproduced in the present work.

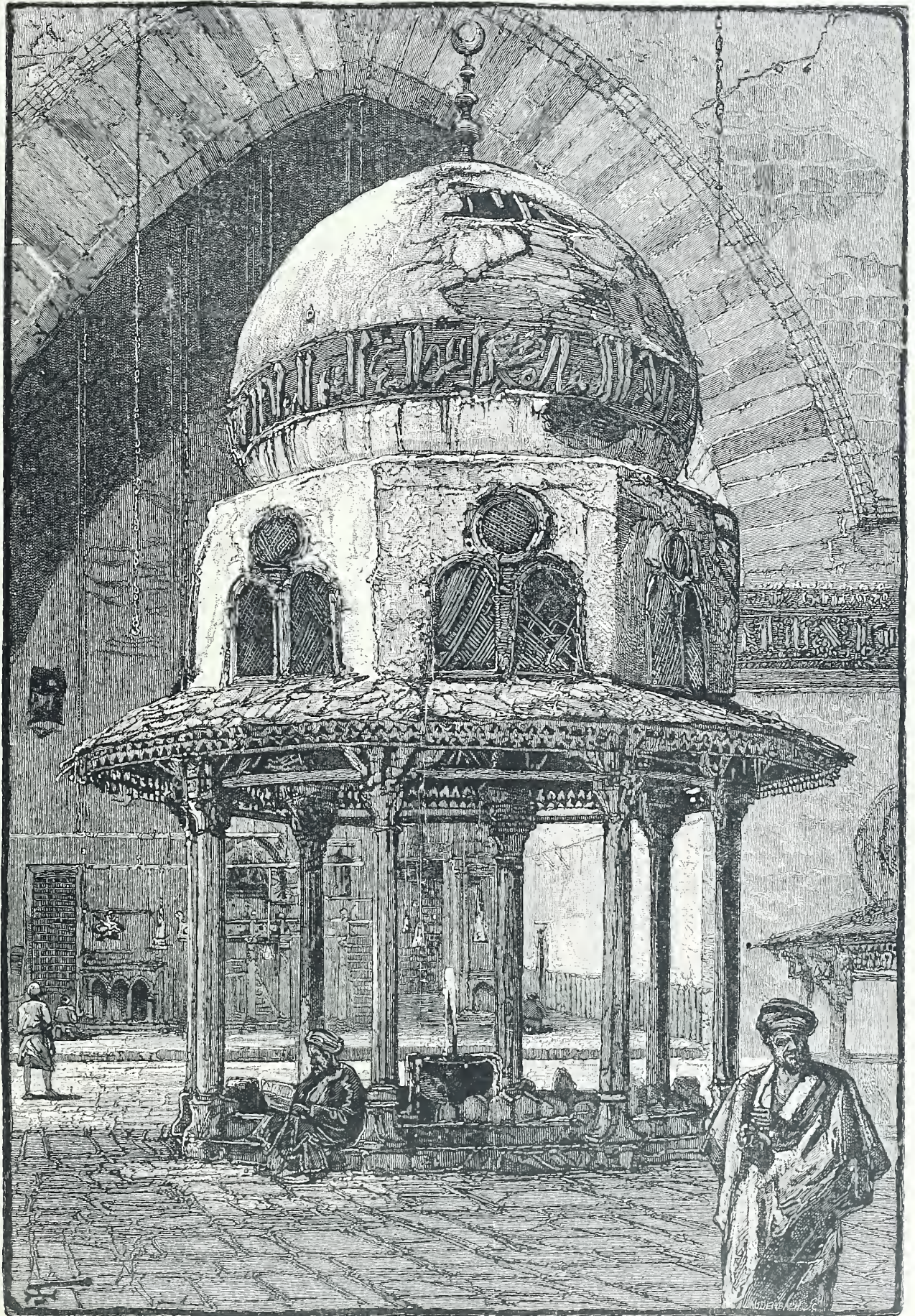
make the houses themselves roomy and surrounded by courts and gardens, because without air the heat of the rooms would be intolerable. The Eastern architects' art lies in so constructing your



TOMB-MOSQUE OF EL-ASHRAF BARSABAY.

In the Eastern Cemetery, or so-called "Tombs of the Khalifs." It is constructed of alternate courses of pale red and yellowish white limestone. Barsabay died A.D. 1438.

house that you cannot look into your neighbour's windows, nor he into yours; and the obvious way of attaining this end is to build the rooms round a high open court into which and out of

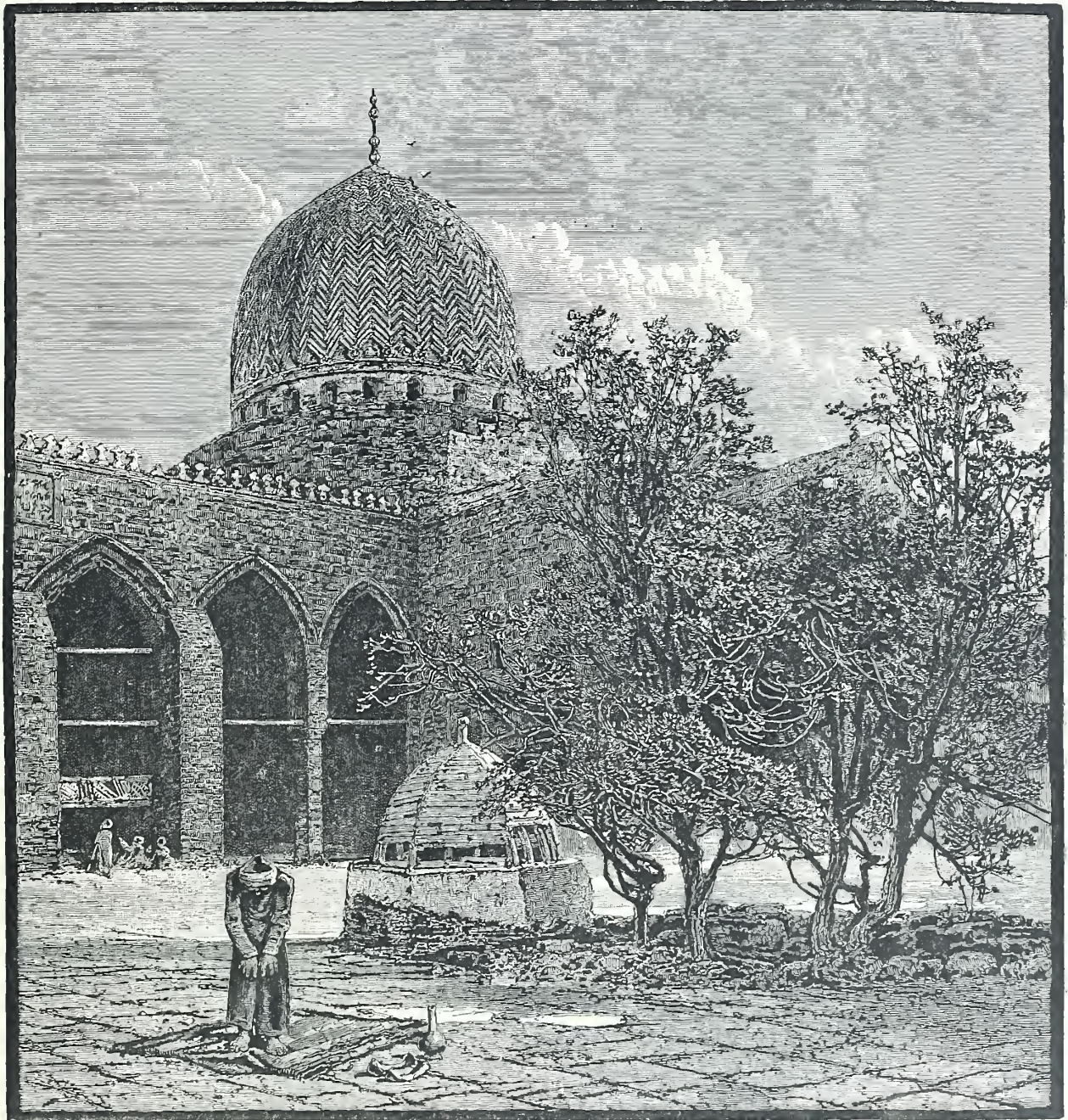


FOUNTAIN IN THE COURT OF THE MOSQUE OF SULTAN HASAN.

The recess beyond it on the eastern side of the court is the sanctuary. The arch is ninety feet in height.

which nobody can look, and to closely veil the windows, especially the few that must look into the street, with lattice blinds, which admit a subdued light and sufficient air, and permit an outlook without allowing the outside world to see through the delicately carved screen. The wooden screens and secluded court are necessary to fulfil the requirements of the Mohammadan system of separating the sexes. Many private houses stand in quiet *culs-de-sac*, closed at the single entrance by a gate; but others are in frequented thoroughfares, and their ground-floors abutting on the street are often let out in shops which have no communication with the interior of the houses. Shops in Cairo occupy little space and encroach very inconsiderably upon the houses beneath which they are situated (see page 133). A recess eight feet high and six broad, with shelves for the wares, and a large stone seat in front for the tradesman and his customers to sit upon and discuss a quiet pipe (or in these degenerate days an unsatisfying cigarette) over their bargaining, forms all that the average Cairene requires in the way of a shop. When the day's work is over, or if he feels inclined to go to the mosque or for a chat with a congenial acquaintance, the shopkeeper lets down the shutter that is hinged above his recess, locks it in a perfunctory manner, and departs with an easy mind. If anybody wants to buy anything while he is absent, "God is with the patient," or "Haste comes from the devil," succinctly expresses his view of the interruption. A number of these little recesses on either side of the street make up a *Sûk*, or bazaar, over which picturesque awnings of more or less tattered and disreputable appearance are sometimes stretched to shade the customers. These various streets and bazaars used formerly to be closed by gates at night, but these have long been abolished. Sometimes they enclose a large building of a couple of stories, called a *Khân* or *Wekâleh*, entirely devoted to merchants and merchandise, and in several instances, like that of the noble *Wekâleh* of *Kaït Bay* beside the *Azhar*, these buildings have some pretensions to beauty. In Cairo the usual oriental plan prevails of arranging the shops according to their trades or the place whence their wares come; and if the purchaser wishes to buy several articles of different kinds he may have to go some distance. After buying boots, say, in one shop, he will pass several hundred other cobblers, and whole streets of other trades, before he arrives at the jeweller or carpet-seller he is seeking. Most of these classified streets, devoted to distinct trades, cluster round the great thoroughfares that form the cross upon the ensign—to retain our simile. The *Jemaliyeh*, where the wholesale dealers display the products of the Red Sea trade, and the great *Khân El-Khalîly*, a notable place for silks and carpets, are both in the dexter chief, the north-east corner of our flag. Below the horizontal line formed by the *Sûk En-Nahhâsin*, where tinned and copper wares abound side by side with pipe-sticks, amber, and the smoker's paraphernalia in general, is the *Marghûsh*, or cotton market; nearer the *Musky*, the crooked intricate *Seven Dials* of the silversmiths and jewellers; and farther west the quarters of the Jews, odoriferous as usual. On the southern side of the *Musky*, or rather of its eastern prolongation, are the shops of the booksellers, who are learned men, and enjoy the peculiar advantage of being tied down by no fixed published price for their books; and the market for goods from the *Sûdân*—leopard skins, Nubian weapons, gums, ostrich eggs, feathers, and

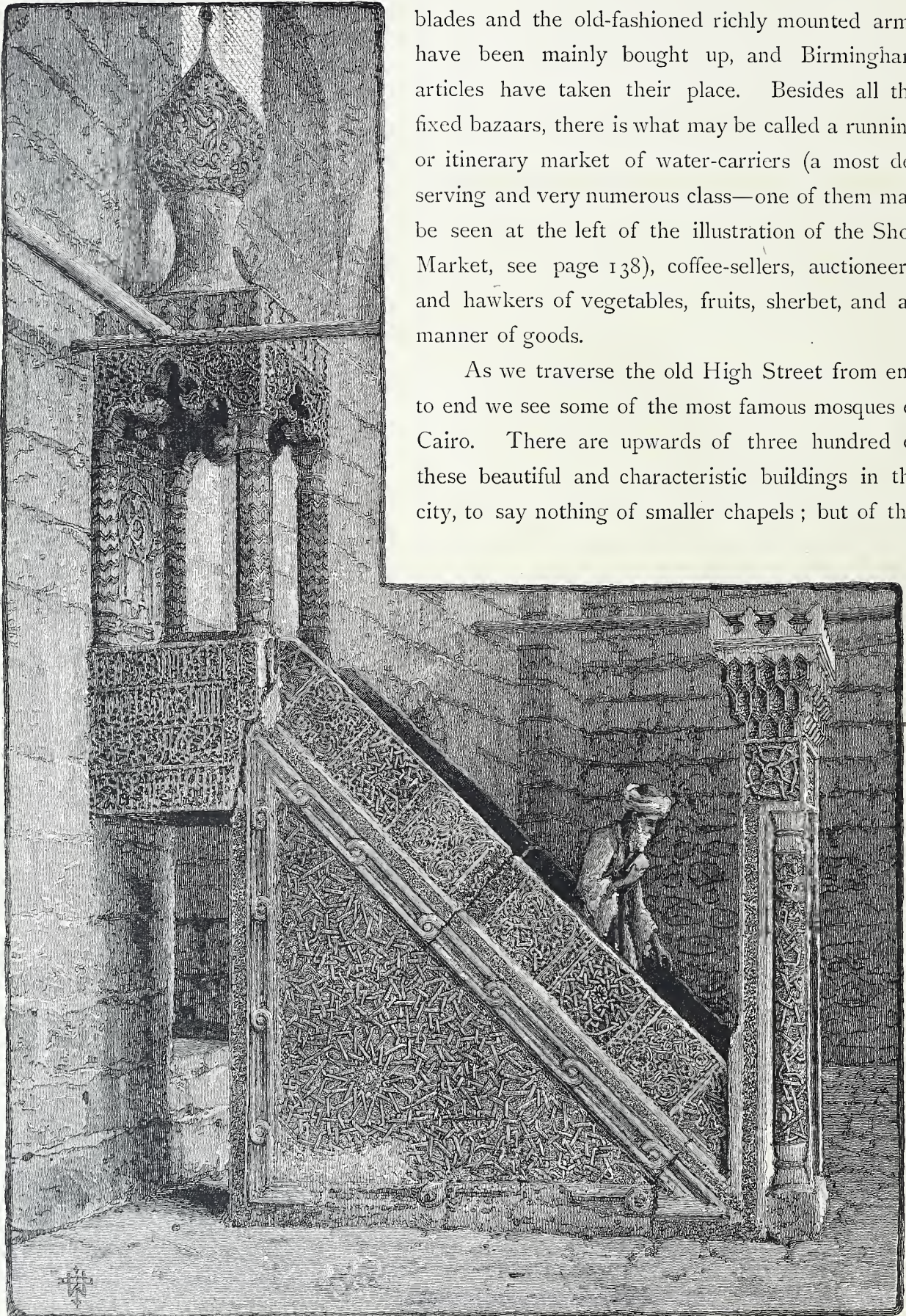
the like. After turning aside into the languorous bazaar of the perfumers, and then resuming our way along the High Street, in the part where it is called the Sukkariyeh, we see the sugar and candied fruits and other sweet commodities that give it its name displayed on all sides, and then suddenly find ourselves in the midst of the less tasty wares of the shoemakers, whose



COURT OF THE TOMB-MOSQUE OF BARKÛK.

In the Eastern Cemetery. A fountain for ablution, shaded by trees, stands in the centre of the court, which is surrounded by a colonnade. The sanctuary occupies the space between two fine domes, one of which is shown above. Barkûk died A.D. 1399.

covered bazaar, however, is quaint and picturesque; finally passing the tentmakers' stalls before we emerge upon the Boulevard. Farther towards the Citadel a street runs parallel with the Sukkariyeh, known as the Market of the Armourers, Sûk Es-Sellâh. This used to be a great centre of attraction to European travellers, but it is now fallen into disrepute, since the fine



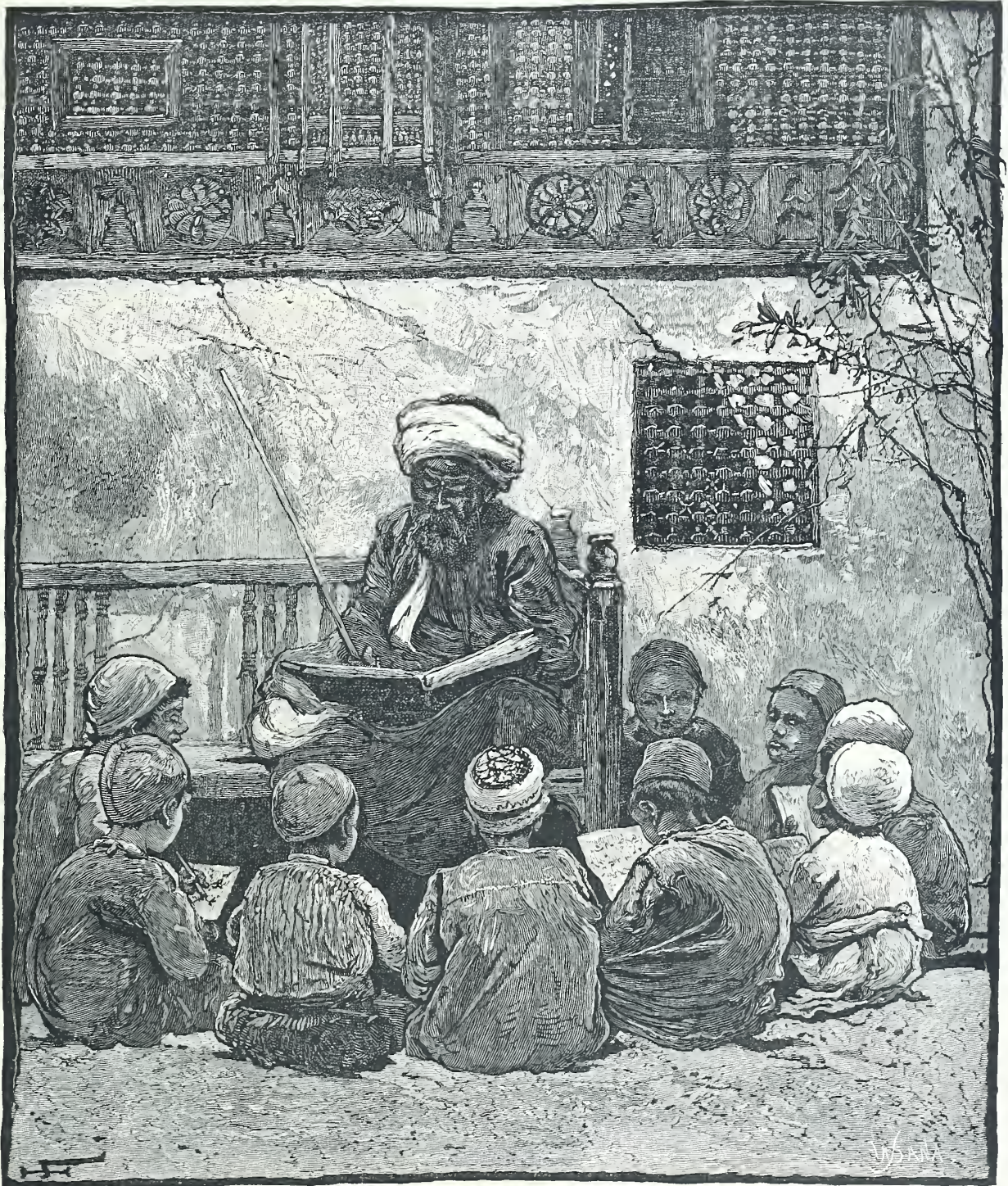
blades and the old-fashioned richly mounted arms have been mainly bought up, and Birmingham articles have taken their place. Besides all the fixed bazaars, there is what may be called a running or itinerant market of water-carriers (a most deserving and very numerous class—one of them may be seen at the left of the illustration of the Shoe Market, see page 138), coffee-sellers, auctioneers, and hawkers of vegetables, fruits, sherbet, and all manner of goods.

As we traverse the old High Street from end to end we see some of the most famous mosques of Cairo. There are upwards of three hundred of these beautiful and characteristic buildings in the city, to say nothing of smaller chapels; but of this

PULPIT OF THE TOMB-MOSQUE OF BARKÛK.

Presented by Kaït Bay. It is carved in hard limestone, and is one of the most beautiful existing specimens of Arabian sculpture.

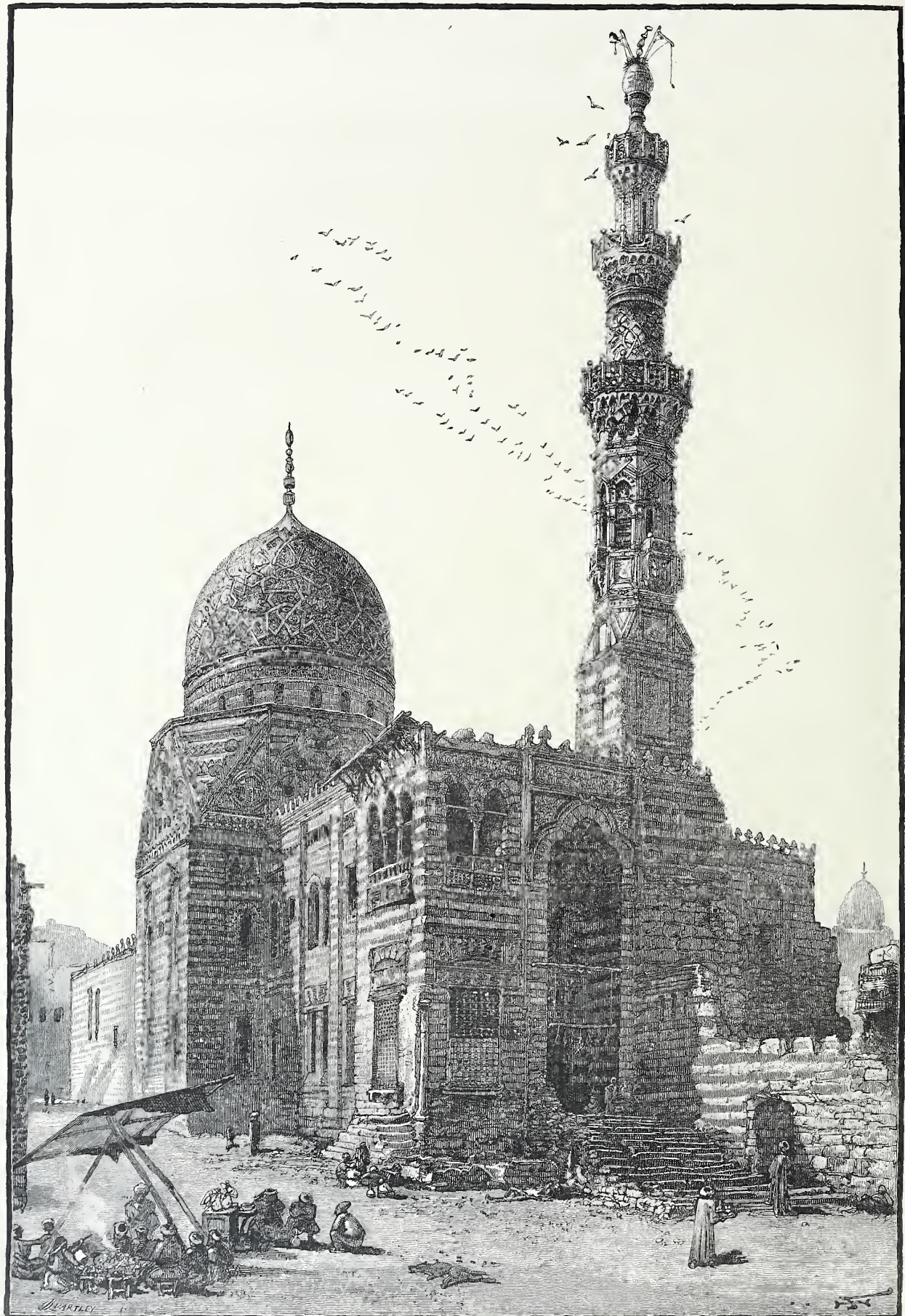
number a great many have fallen into decay (though not into disuse, as the crowd of worshippers on Fridays even in some of the most dilapidated mosques testifies), and there are



AT SCHOOL.

Small wooden boards painted white serve instead of books, the lessons being written upon them in ink by the schoolmaster, and renewed from time to time. The children, seated on the floor, read or recite the appointed lesson all at once, while rocking themselves to and fro or swaying from side to side.

not perhaps more than thirty that present individual and notably distinctive features. Of these, nine lie in the direct route from the Bâb El-Futûh along the High Street to the Citadel. Beside the gate, as has been mentioned, is the ruined mosque of El-Hâkim, with its fine Kufic



TOMB-MOSQUE OF KAÏT BAY.

In the Eastern Cemetery. It is constructed of alternate courses of pale red and yellowish white limestone. Kaït Bay died A.D. 1496.

frieze and curious mebkharehs (*i.e.* minarets upon which incense is said to have been burnt), the only important building, besides the walls and gates, and a small portion of the mosque of El-Azhar, that survives to commemorate the rule of the Fâtimy khalifs. Side by side, in the Sûk En-Nahhâsin, stand the three mosques of the Memlûk sultans Barkûk, En-Nâsir, and



VALLEY OF THE NILE AND PYRAMIDS.

From Mount Mukattam. Beyond the picturesque cluster of "Tombs of the Memlûks" we see the ancient aqueduct stretching across the mounds of rubbish which form the southern boundary of Cairo.

Kalaûn, with their handsome portals and minarets. Unhappily the late tasteless régime did its best to deface them. The original builders had combined the colours of the alternate layers of pale red and yellowish white stone (examples of which are represented on pages 142 and 148) in such a manner as to produce a soft and harmonious effect which can hardly be believed by those who have not seen it. To the eye of the ex-khedive's decorators, however,

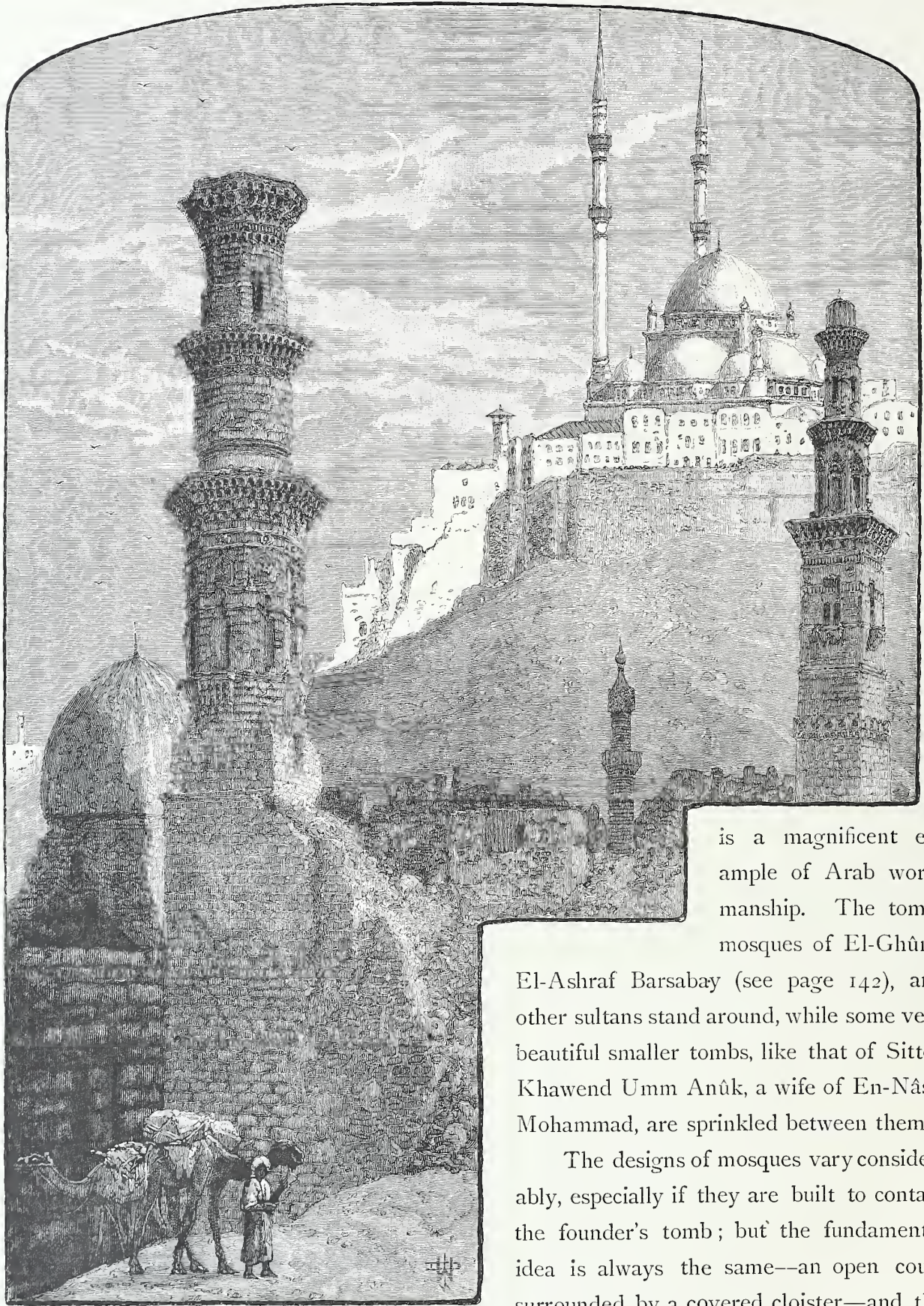
these subtle tints appeared merely washed-out colours that ought to be revived ; and the arrival of visitors for the extravagant festivities that celebrated the opening of the Suez Canal presented an occasion for furbishing up the faded monuments of Cairo which could not be passed over. So the viceregal paintpot was put into requisition, and the subdued colours of the mosque façades were "daubed with vulgar ruddle and glaring yellow" by the common house-painter, till his vile "jack-pudding pattern of stripes," as Ebers indignantly exclaims, "disgraces the noble monuments" upon which the skilful architects of the Middle Ages bestowed so much thought and taste. The Turks can build nothing themselves but tawdry palaces and gaudy, tasteless, over-ornamented mosques ; and the edifices they do set up are so insecurely built that they will infallibly come down before long amid the plaudits of a critical posterity. But if they cannot create, they can spoil ; and it is hard to know which to anathematise more, their neglect or their restoration of the art monuments of Cairo.

The Memlûks, who built most of the mosques, were probably as bad a set of rulers as any Turkish sultans or khedives ; many of them indeed were of Turkish, though not of Ottoman, blood. But at least they had a not ignoble ambition to adorn their capital with beautiful buildings, and if personal vanity entered into their motives it was a vanity which excuses itself by its effects. En-Nâsir, one of the best of the Memlûk kings, spent eight thousand pieces of gold a day on building, and this when the forced labour which reared all the monuments of Egypt, from the Pyramids to Port Sa'id, struck out the item of wages ! More than thirty mosques, besides mausoleums and other works, sprang up in his reign. Yet his own mosque is one of the least of its genus, and its most salient feature, the marble portal, is not Arab at all, but was subsequently brought by another sultan as a war trophy from Acre (refer to page 91, vol. iii.). The mosque and hospital, called the Mâristân of Kalaûn, next to it, is a much more interesting structure. It was built at the end of the thirteenth century for the purpose of a hospital, wherein rich and poor were gratuitously treated and fed. There were wards for every different disease that was known, and a hall where the chief doctor delivered his lectures. In the religious part of the building fifty salaried readers of the Koran publicly taught the Mohammadan religion, and a librarian with five assistants superintended a fine collection of medical, legal, theological, and grammatical books. Four lecture-rooms were allotted to teachers of the four orthodox sects of Islam, and sixty orphans were gratuitously maintained and educated in a state-supported school. This noble institution was till lately used as a lunatic asylum, but now it is in ruins. Tinkers batter their pans where surgeons formerly operated ; coppersmiths are soldering pots where once the learned expounded the law ; and beyond the richly decorated tomb, a singularly noble structure, and a plainer mosque opposite it, little is preserved of the famous Mâristân. Women resort to the tomb-mosque to pray for male offspring, and mothers take their infants thither to have their "tongues loosed," which is effectually accomplished by squeezing lemon juice upon the red stone and making the unhappy babies lick it, with the immediate result of piercing screams and the perfect satisfaction of the mothers. People who suffer from headaches also go to touch the turban of Kalaûn, a piece of which is preserved,

together with part of his kaftân (or coat), which when wrapped round the body is believed to be a cure for ague. Probably the clothes of this charitable Muslim prince are as worthy to work miracles in healing as the wall of Knock chapel or the image of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Farther along the High Street, at the corner of the Musky, is the mosque and medreseh of El-Ashraf Barsabay, who also built a mosque in the Eastern Cemetery of Kaït Bay (see page 142); and a little beyond, in the Ghûriyeh, are the two mosques of El-Ghûry, the last of the Memlûk sultans; that on the left hand (the tomb-mosque) is being restored with unusual skill, while that on the right, so far untouched, is a cruciform building with richly coloured ceilings and fine cornices. Farther still, with its minarets rising from the strange old gateway called the Bâb Zuweyleh, is the mosque of El-Muayyad, also a Memlûk, with a fine bronze gate which once belonged to the mosque of another prince of the same dynasty, Sultan Hasan. A view of the eastern transept of the latter magnificent mosque, which stands in the Rumeyleh in front of the Citadel, and is admitted to be the stateliest monument of Arab art in Egypt, is given in the woodcut on page 143, where the large canopied fountain for ablution before prayers is in the foreground, with the smaller fountain for the use of Turks at the right; while at the back can be seen the sanctuary, with its niche, pulpit, and reading platform, and the doors on either side which lead to the founder's tomb. If instead of proceeding to the Citadel we turn up the prolongation of the Musky towards the eastern wall, we shall find on the left the peculiarly sacred and unsightly mosque of the Hasaneyn, where the severed head of the martyred Hoseyn, the hero of the Persian Passion Play, is believed to be buried; while on the other side is the Azhar, the university mosque of Cairo—indeed the university of the Mohammadan world, whose ten thousand students come from India and the west coast of Africa, and even more remote regions, to learn Koranic exegesis and the decisions of the three hundred learned ulema who teach them without payment. The Azhar was built by the Fâtîmy khalif El-'Aziz in the tenth century, but has been several times restored or added to till little architectural beauty remains in it. There is, however, one beautiful arcade leading up to the mihrâb in the eastern colonnade, and some inscriptional friezes, which clearly date back to the Fâtîmy period.

Continuing our walk through the Bâb El-Ghureyyib, we shall find, beyond the huge mounds of rubbish outside the city, a collection of tomb-mosques, forming the cemetery known to natives as that of Kaït Bay, but to Europeans as "the Tombs of the Khalifs." The tombs, however, are not those of khalifs, but of that dynasty of Memlûk sultans who built most of the mosques within the city. The tomb-mosque of Kaït Bay (see page 148), with its exquisite fawn-coloured limestone dome and graceful minaret, deservedly gives its name to this Eastern Cemetery; but the tomb-mosque of Barkûk (see page 145), in the same vicinity, is scarcely less beautiful. Under one of its two noble domes the founder of the house of Circassian Memlûks sleeps after his career of conquest, the other covers the bones of his family, while his son and successor rests hard by. The mosque of Barkûk is of the colonnade form; the sanctuary on the east is distinguished by a deeper rank of columns, and the pulpit, carved out of fine limestone,



THE CITADEL FROM THE "TOMBS OF THE MEMLÛKS."

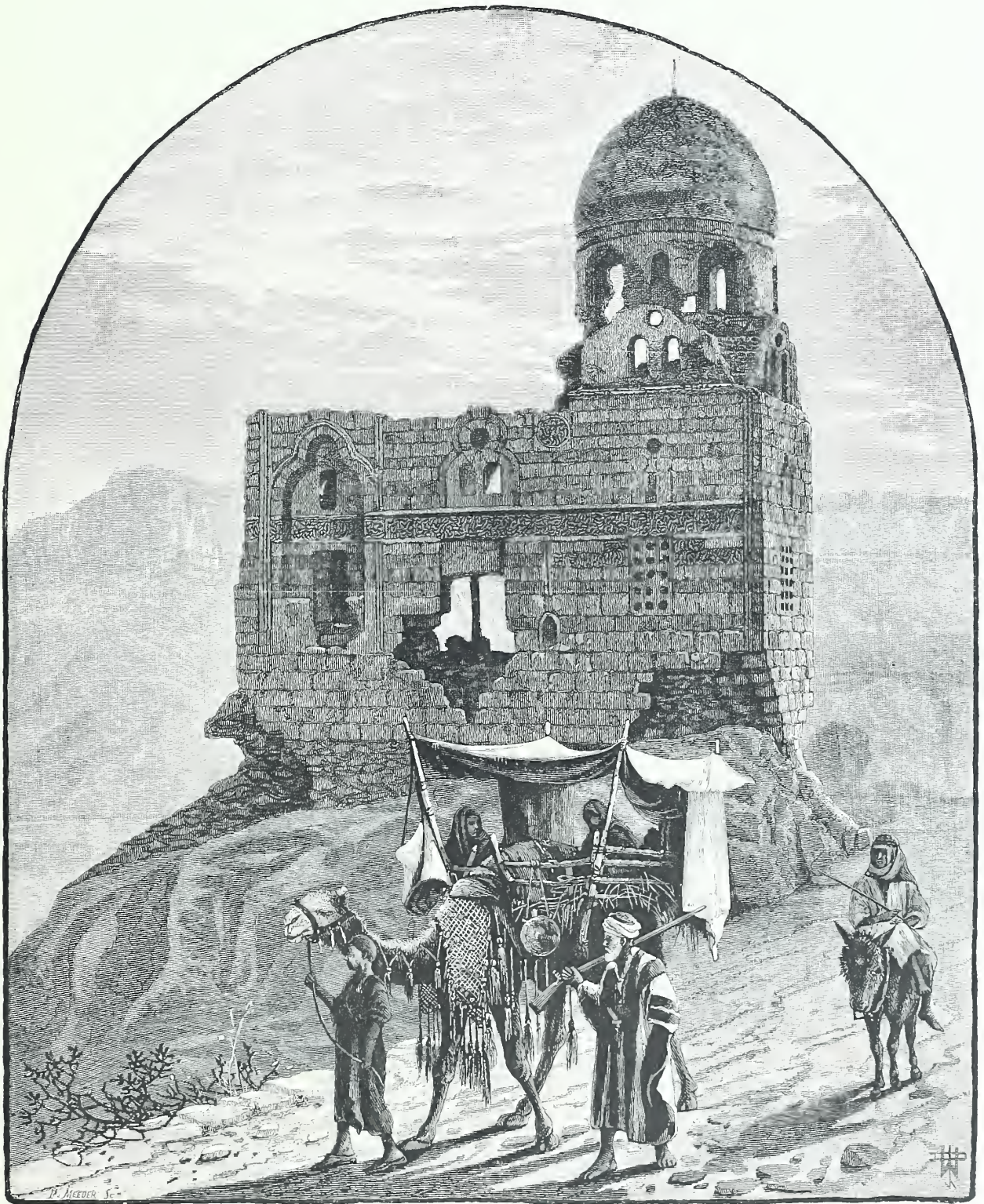
The Great Mosque of Mohammad 'Aly with its tall minarets and cluster of domes stands within the Citadel, and is the most conspicuous land-mark of Cairo.

is a magnificent example of Arab workmanship. The tomb-mosques of El-Ghûry,

El-Ashraf Barsabay (see page 142), and other sultans stand around, while some very beautiful smaller tombs, like that of Sittah Khawend Umm Anûk, a wife of En-Nâsir Mohammad, are sprinkled between them.

The designs of mosques vary considerably, especially if they are built to contain the founder's tomb; but the fundamental idea is always the same—an open court surrounded by a covered cloister—and the main variation consists in converting the four cloistered sides into four deep transepts,

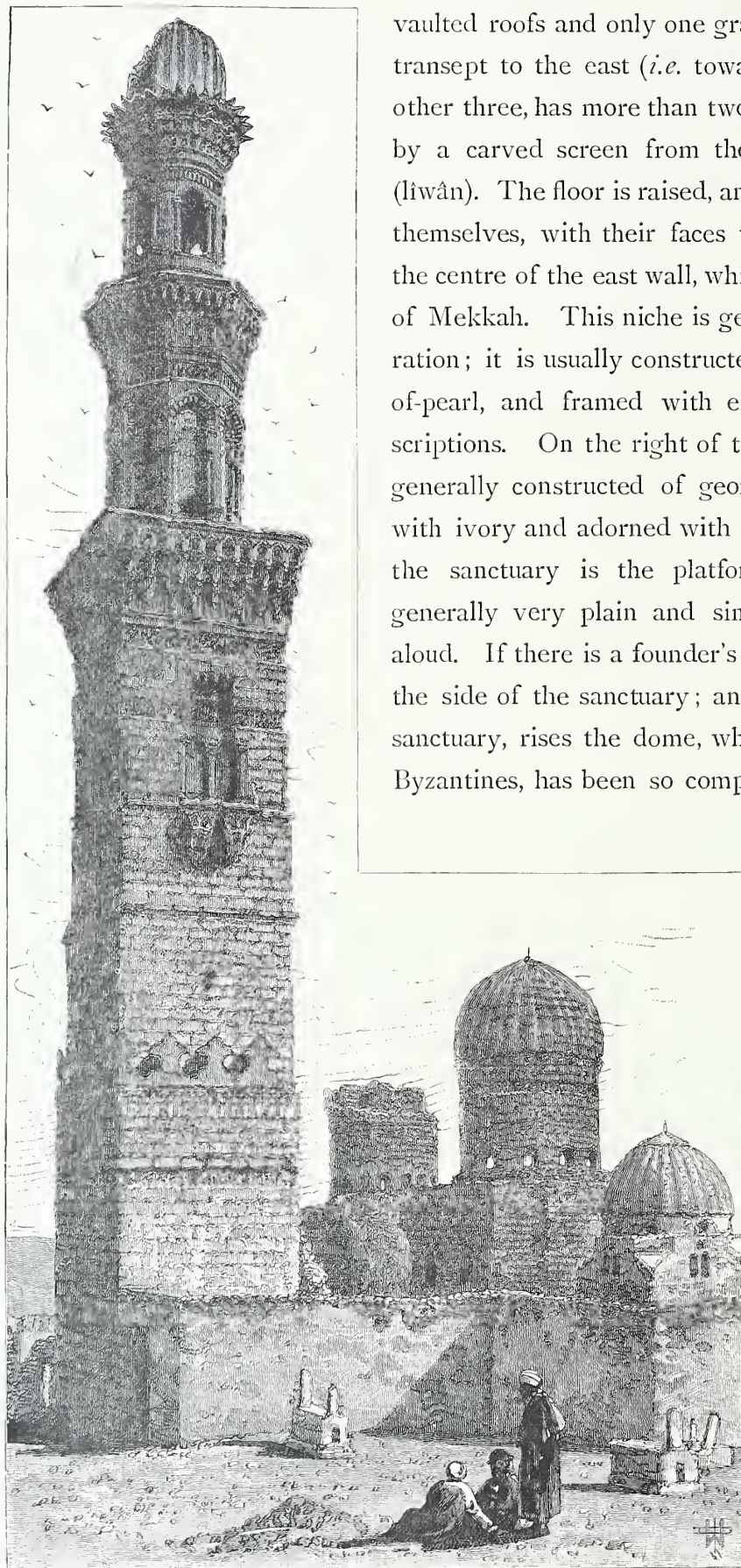
like that of Sultan Hasan, resulting in a cruciform interior, whilst the squares left between the four transepts are filled up by additional chambers, schools, fountains, &c. In either case,



ONE OF THE "TOMBS OF THE MEMLÛKS."

On Mount Mukattam. In the foreground is the *musattah*, or camel-litter, ordinarily used by pilgrims.

whether the court be surrounded by cloisters with double rows of columns supporting pointed arches on which the heavy carved beams of the flat ceiling rest, or by four transepts with



"TOMBS OF THE MEMLÛKS."

The whole of this region is dotted with gravestones and is still used as a burial-ground.

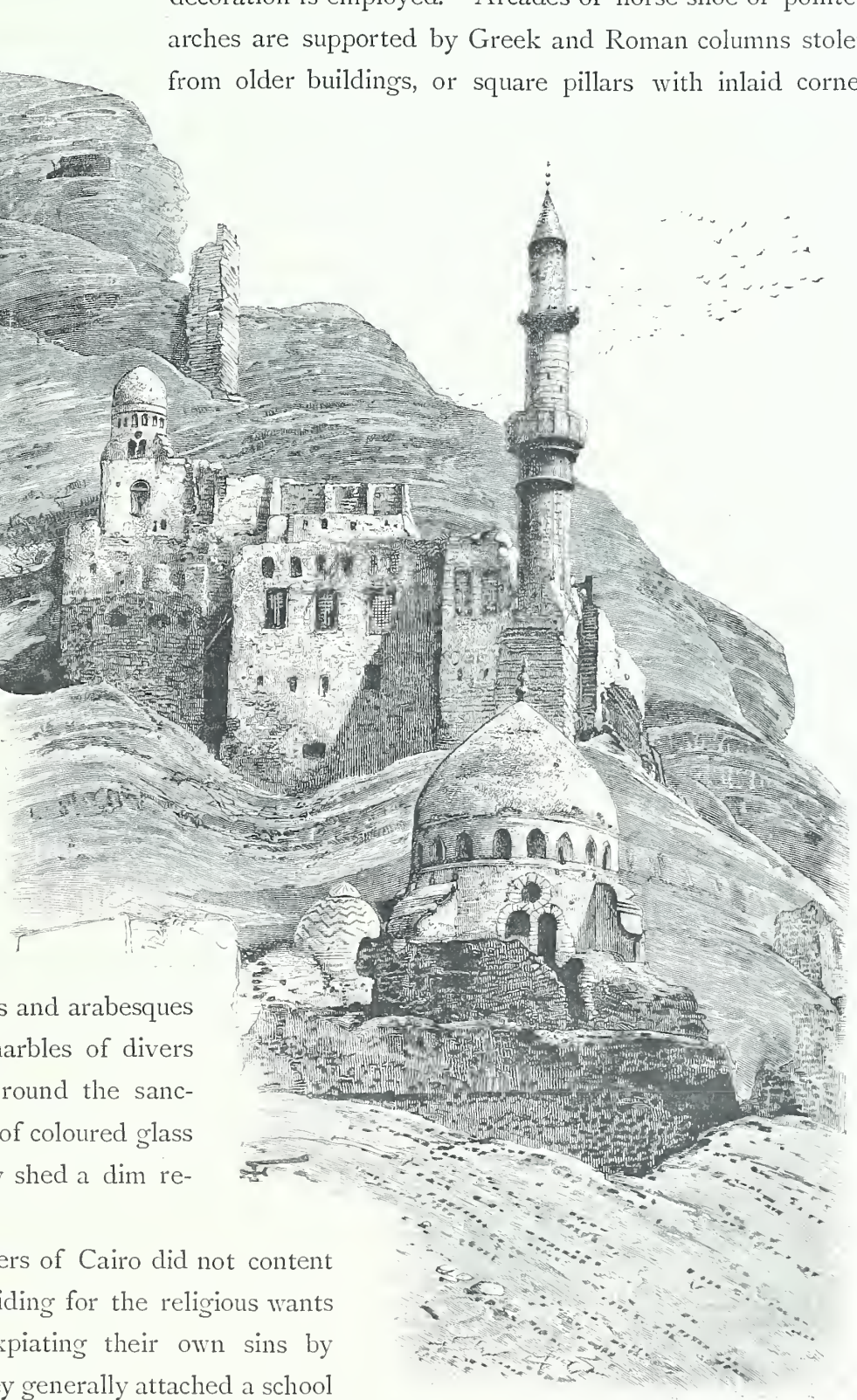
vaulted roofs and only one grand arch to each, the cloister or transept to the east (*i.e.* towards Mekkah) is deeper than the other three, has more than two rows of columns, or is separated by a carved screen from the court. This is the sanctuary (*liwân*). The floor is raised, and on it the worshippers prostrate themselves, with their faces turned to the niche (*mihrâb*) in the centre of the east wall, which marks the *kibleh* or direction of Mekkah. This niche is generally the chief point for decoration; it is usually constructed of inlaid marble and mother-of-pearl, and framed with exquisite borders of Arabic inscriptions. On the right of the niche is the pulpit, a staircase generally constructed of geometrically panelled wood, inlaid with ivory and adorned with inscriptions. Near the front of the sanctuary is the platform, resting on dwarf columns, generally very plain and simple, where the Koran is read aloud. If there is a founder's tomb, it is generally behind or at the side of the sanctuary; and as a rule over it, or over the sanctuary, rises the dome, which, though borrowed from the Byzantines, has been so completely naturalised as to form the

most characteristic feature in Arabian architecture. Perhaps the bulb-shaped dome reminded the Arabs of their primæval tent, and the minaret recalled the palm-tree up which the first muëddin clomb to chant the call to prayer. The minarets rise from the corners of the cloisters or near the portal of the cruciform mosque, but their position, like their number, is very variable. The exterior of a mosque is either quite plain or slightly decorated with mouldings and inscriptional friezes, and sometimes the whole building is enclosed by a brick wall

and outer courts to isolate the devotions of the people from the noises outside.* The chief external ornaments are the domes and minarets and the gateway, but inside a great variety of decoration is employed. Arcades of horse-shoe or pointed arches are supported by Greek and Roman columns stolen from older buildings, or square pillars with inlaid corner

columns, while graceful corbels and stalactite brackets break the sharpness of the angles. The walls are covered with Kufic inscriptions and arabesques in wood or plaster, marbles of divers colours form a dado round the sanctuary, while windows of coloured glass set in plaster tracery shed a dim religious light.

The pious founders of Cairo did not content themselves with providing for the religious wants of the people and expiating their own sins by building mosques; they generally attached a school to the mosque endowment; and we see many groups of noisy scholars (see page 147) shouting the Koran,



MOSQUES ON MUKATTAM.

Caverns and quarries are numerous on the slopes of the Mukattam hills, which are of the nummulite formation and extremely rich in fossils.

* "Egypt," by S. Lane-Poole, pages 50—52 (Low's "Foreign Countries").

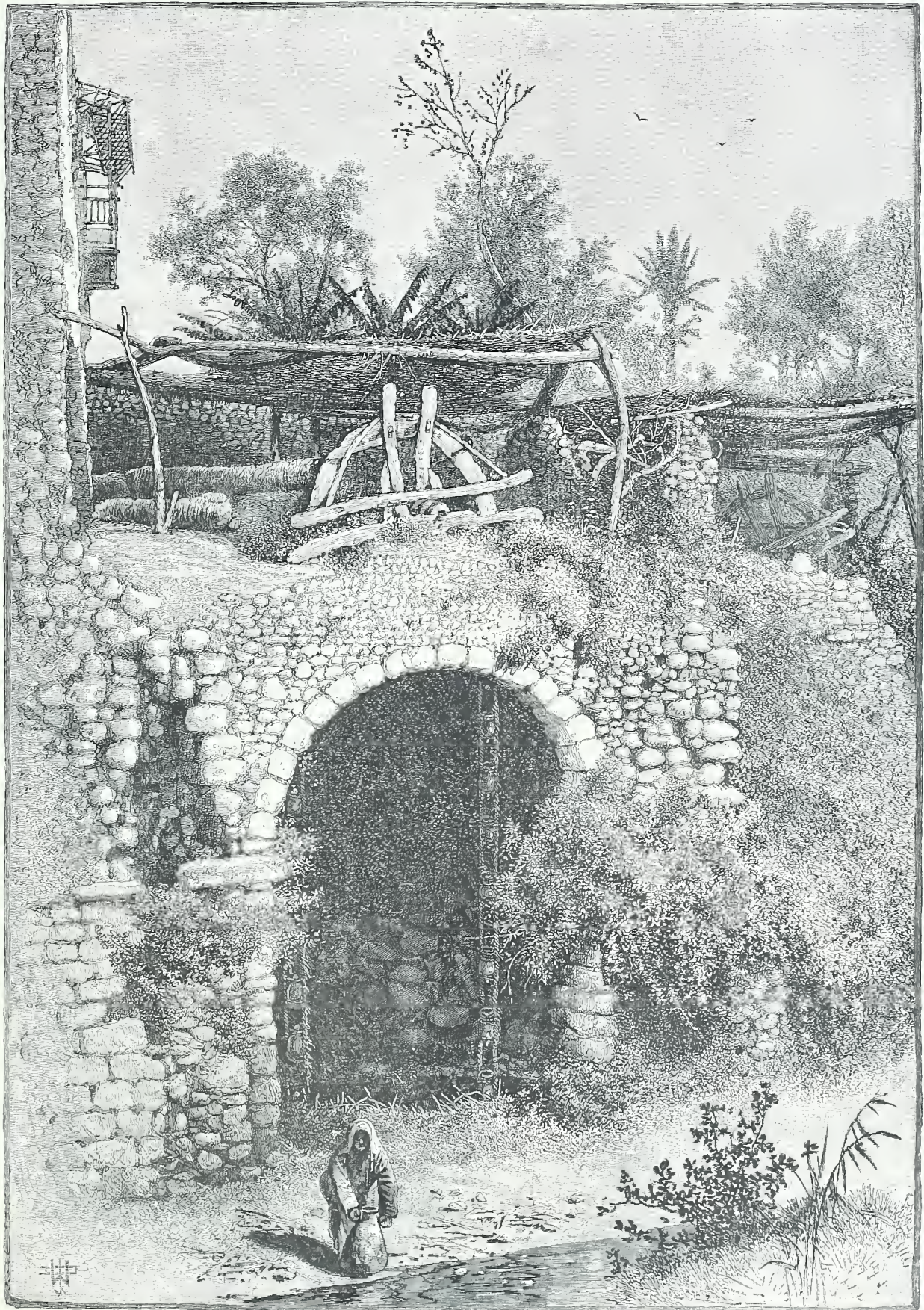


ON THE CANAL (EL KHALÎG).

This water-way, which runs through Cairo, was formerly navigable at high Nile.

as they sway to and fro, before the reverend-looking sheykh, their master. The schoolrooms are generally attached to another form of charity — the water fountains (sebils), which we encounter at every dozen steps in the chief streets of Cairo. Some of these fountains are tolerably tasteful buildings, like that figured on page 134, but too often they are the outcome of modern benevolence, and partake of the failings of the Turkish imagination.

Passing the great mosque of Sultan Hasan, we enter the Citadel (see page 152) by the narrow lane, guarded by the round towers of the Bâb El-'Azab, where the butchery of the Memlûks, which set the present dynasty on the throne, took place by order of Mohammad 'Aly. The omniscient dragoman will point out the very spot whence the solitary survivor of the massacre leaped his horse from the battlements down to the space below; but a more probable version of the story relates that the Memlûk who escaped distrusted Mohammad 'Aly's invitation and did not go to the Citadel at all. The fortress itself was built by Saladin rather as a place of residence than of defence. Though elevated on a spur of Mount Mukattam, it is commanded by higher positions behind; and while in the days before cannon was invented it was doubtless a very strong position, its uselessness as a place of defence against modern attacks was demonstrated in 1805, when Mohammad 'Aly, by means of a battery on a higher



A WATER-WHEEL (SÂKIYEH) ON THE CANAL.

When the creaking wooden wheels are in motion the earthenware jars, strung to ropes made of palm fibre, revolve, alternately dipping into the water and emptying themselves into a trough connected with a reservoir.

position, expelled the Turkish governor, Khurshîd, from the Citadel. The fortress was constructed of massive stones brought from the third and smaller pyramids of Gîzeh, and its vaulted gateways, machicolated battlements, and round towers present an almost Norman aspect. The principal building inside is Mohammad 'Aly's great mosque, with its over-slender minarets, cruet-stand of domes (see page 152), and gaudy Turkish decoration. The alabaster columns that procure it the name of "the Alabaster Mosque" were quarried near Beny Suweyf, but many of them were stolen by 'Abbâs Pasha for his palace, and replaced by wood. All Cairene building subsists on the principle of robbery. The Ptolemies stole the pillars of the Pharaohs; the Arabs used the materials of the Greeks and Romans; the Turks steal from most of their predecessors with their usual indiscriminating brigandage. The Citadel is an extraordinary medley of all styles and periods. Hieroglyphic blocks jostle Turkish lath-and-plaster; the eagle of Saladin looks down upon the flimsy ornaments of Isma'il. The deep well called, after Saladin (whose name was also Yûsuf, or Joseph), Joseph's Well, but believed by the Arabs to have been the identical pit into which Joseph, son of Jacob, was cast by his envious brethren, is an enlargement of an ancient shaft. Though very deep—nearly three hundred feet—its slow supply, raised by oxen, has been superseded by the modern steam pumps. The mosque of En-Nâsir Mohammad, hard by, is a partly ruined building, despoiled of many of its adornments, but presenting much that is noteworthy in the history of Arab art.

But the Citadel is not worth seeing for itself so much as for the view (page 149 gives but a portion of it) which spreads before the eye as one stands at sunset on its battlemented wall. Below lies the city with its countless domes and minarets—Sultan Hasan in the foreground—its wilderness of irregular tumble-down yellow and white flat-roofed houses, interspersed with many a garden and the dark foliage of the sycamores; beyond, a fringe of palms and a streak of silver show where the broad Nile rolls sleepily on between its brown banks. To the right, the huge dome and handsome minarets of El-Muayyad stand out prominently from among their fellows; beyond these the minarets of the Nahhâsin; and at the end the two queer-shaped mebkharehs of El-Hâkim. To the left is the enormous court of Ibn-Tûlûn's mosque, and its strange minaret then the billowy mounds of Fustât; and in the distance, against the ridge that terminates the Libyan desert, in the carmine glory of the setting sun, stand the everlasting Pyramids, "like the boundary-marks of the mighty waste, the Egyptian land of shades." Still farther to the left, the aqueduct, which has brought water to the Citadel for nearly four centuries, stretches away to the Nile; and behind us is the picturesque cluster of the ruined "Tombs of the Memlûks," or cemetery of El Karâfeh (see pages 152, 153, and 154), with their attendant city, not only of tombs, but of numerous houses for the reception of families who pay annual visits to the graves of their relatives, and celebrate the occasion by acts of charity and recitations of the entire Korân. Looking over the Memlûk minarets, we can see the dim outlines of the Pyramids of Dahshûr and Abusîr and the well-known form of the Step Pyramid of Sakkarah; and as the glow of sunset fades away, the evening clouds gather in the west, and the desert beyond takes up their shades of grey and blue, like a vast mid-African ocean.



J. SADDLER, SCULP.

J. D. WOODWARD, PINXT.

PYRAMIDS OF GÍZEH.



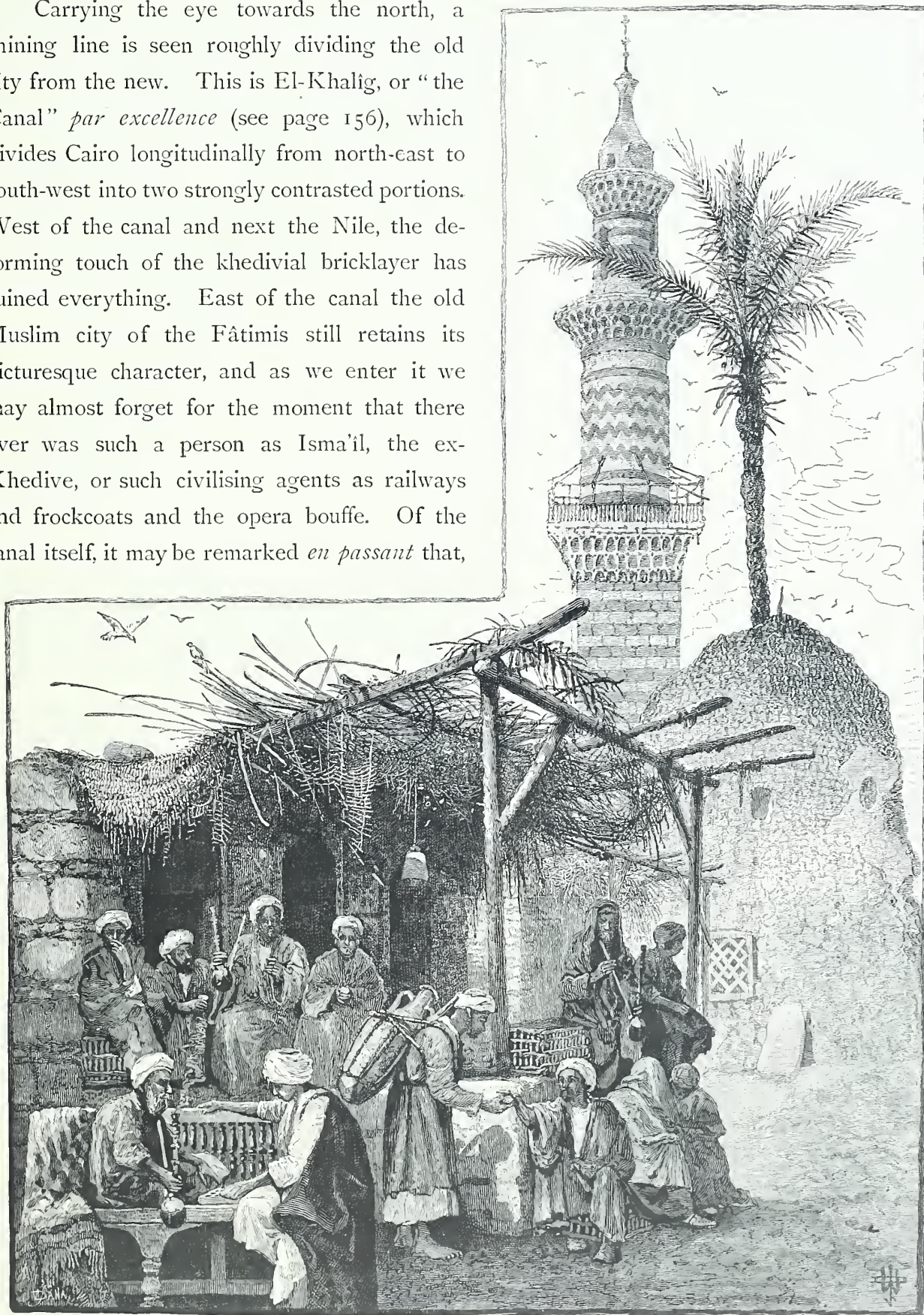
When we have studied the old Fâtîmy city, and inspected Saladin's citadel and looked down upon the magnificent prospect it commands, we have not yet seen all Cairo. South-west of the fortress is the oldest part of the capital, as marked out by Saladin's wall. This is the Hârat Ibn-Tûlûn, which represents the old suburb El-Katâi', built by Ahmad Ibn-Tûlûn to the north-east of the still older Fustât. The suburb was burnt and demolished to a great extent, and there is not much left of its original buildings; but the mosque of its founder still survives to show us what Arabian art was in the ninth century, and what skill and labour an Eastern prince would expend upon his house of worship. The mosque of Ibn-Tûlûn was built in 879, at a cost of £72,000, after designs by a Christian architect—it is noteworthy that some of the chief triumphs of Arabian architecture are said to have been the creations of Greek artists—and it presents the peculiarity of having been entirely constructed of new materials. Instead of columns stolen from older monuments, the spacious court (ninety-nine yards every way) of Ibn-Tûlûn's mosque is surrounded by arcades resting on massive square brick pillars, with small Byzantine columns in gypsum, without bases, let into the four corners. Architects see in these the prototype of the Gothic clustered pillars. The lofty pointed arches, verging on the horse-shoe form, are bordered with exquisitely worked Kufic inscriptions and conventional foliage, and an upper row of (as it were) triforium windows, of the most beautiful and varied designs, are framed in a similar but even more delicate embroidery of arabesques. The absence of stalactyte ornamentation and the other characteristics of later mosques is significant of the period to which the mosque belongs, and of which it is the most notable example. It stands to the Memlûk mosques much as Early English does to Perpendicular Gothic; and as evidence for the tracing of the development of Arab architecture, which has its periods and transitions like the Gothic, it is a priceless monument. Among its titles to fame is the fact that it presents the earliest examples existing of the pointed arch, which was not introduced in England till three centuries later. Unfortunately its impressive quadrangle is ruined by the bricking-up of most of the arches for the purpose of providing cells to shelter the beggars and ne'er-do-wells of Cairo, who infest and disfigure the noble building. Ugly whitewashed walls now take the place of the cloisters on all sides but the east, and it is only there, in the *liwân* or sanctuary, that the original beauty of the design can be to some degree appreciated. Here, too, stands a carved pulpit of inlaid ivory and walnut-wood; which, however, is of a much later date. In the centre of the court is the covered fountain for ablutions, which was originally intended to have served as the founder's tomb. The minaret, which is in a very ruinous state now, has the peculiarity of an external winding staircase, which was said to have been suggested to Ibn-Tûlûn by winding a strip of paper spirally round his finger. From the top it is possible to look down upon the dilapidated remains of what was once the aristocratic quarter of the capital. Among the wilderness of flat roofs, we can trace the course of the Salibeh street, which connects the Citadel with the south-west angle of Cairo, and in this quarter some of the most beautiful examples of the fast-disappearing lattice windows may still be seen.



IN A CAIRO GARDEN.

Where the date-palm, the *Cactus opuntia*, almond-trees, acacias, and sycamores, the common trees of the country, flourish. During the reign of the Khedive Isma'il about two hundred different kinds of trees, chiefly of East Indian origin, were planted in great numbers in the new parks and gardens of Cairo.

Carrying the eye towards the north, a shining line is seen roughly dividing the old city from the new. This is El-Khalig, or "the Canal" *par excellence* (see page 156), which divides Cairo longitudinally from north-east to south-west into two strongly contrasted portions. West of the canal and next the Nile, the deforming touch of the khedivial bricklayer has ruined everything. East of the canal the old Muslim city of the Fâtimis still retains its picturesque character, and as we enter it we may almost forget for the moment that there ever was such a person as Isma'il, the ex-Khedive, or such civilising agents as railways and frockcoats and the opera bouffe. Of the canal itself, it may be remarked *en passant* that,



A SUBURBAN CAFÉ.

The two men on the bench in the foreground are playing at a game called *mankalah*; small pebbles are placed, according to certain rules, in hemispherical holes in a board. This game exercises the powers of calculation, and is often played at cafés. The loser is expected to pay not only for the coffee drunk by himself and his antagonist, but by the spectators of the game.

though it is a favourite subject for Cairene poets, and the inhabitants love to smoke their pipes and enjoy their "keyf" or siesta in the houses and terraces overlooking it, and drowsily listen to the murmur of the water-wheel (see page 157)—

"Where bright Khaleega, like a spotted snake,
Past meads and gardens trails her glittering coil"—

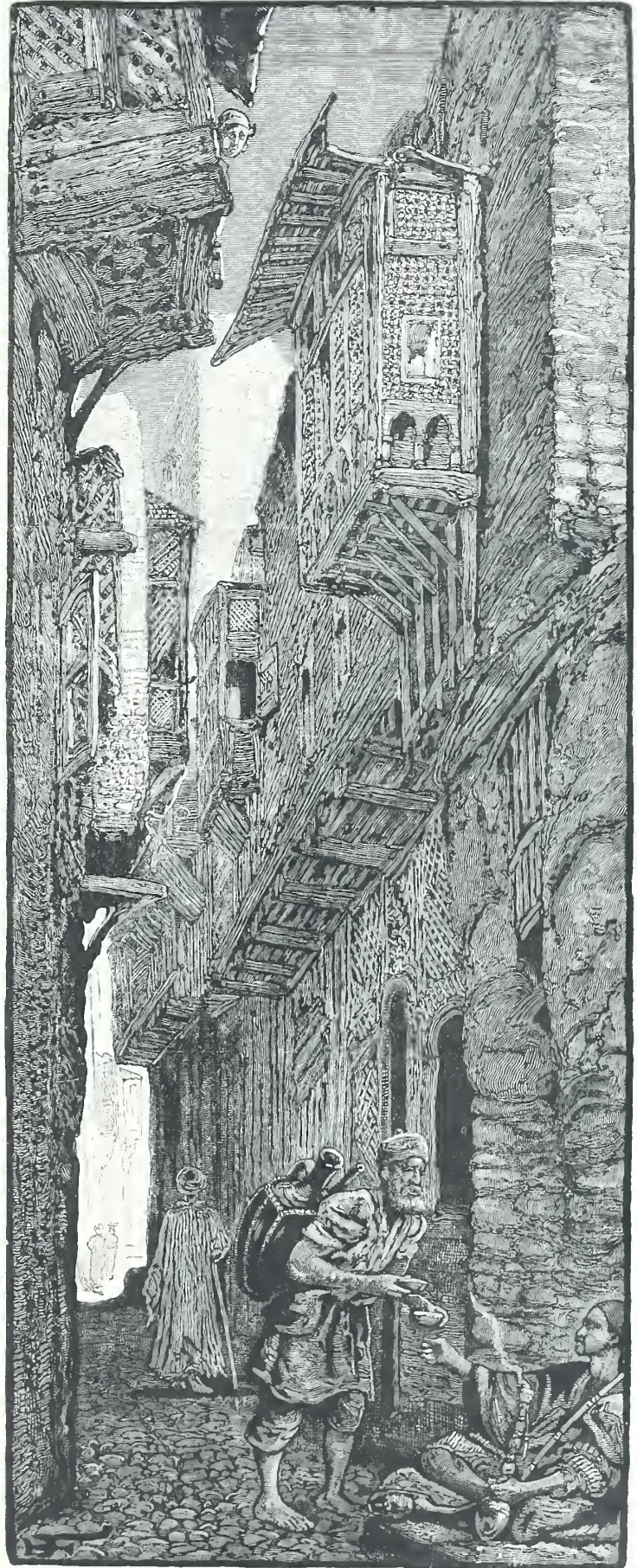
it is only pretty during four months when the Nile fills it, while for the rest of the year "bright Khaleega" is a gutter of mud and a home for noisome smells. The people, however, are so fond of this unwholesome drain that no ruler dares risk his popularity by converting it into a street, though that is, undoubtedly, its proper destiny.

In the gardens which fringe the Khalig the fair inhabitants of the harim enjoy the fragrance and tints of the rose and oleander and the other favourites of Cairene horticulture unseen by the profane eye of man. It is true the ladies of Egypt do not take much interest in their flowers; the gardeners make formal bouquets for them, which they languidly admire, but they never dream of tending or even plucking the flowers themselves. Nevertheless, they enjoy "smelling the air," as they call it, amid the irregular parterres of Cairene horticulture; and if we are to believe Beha-ed-dîn Zuheyr, an Egyptian poet of the thirteenth century, who wrote some charming verse which our lamented E. H. Palmer (who deserved so well of students of Palestine and Arabia) turned into no less charming English, these gardens of Cairo were once, and may still remain, delightful places for lovers' meetings. The garden he described looked on the Nile, but in other respects the picture applies to many of the pleasure-grounds in the heart of the city:—

"I took my pleasure in a garden bright—
Ah! that our happiest hours so quickly pass;
That time should be so rapid in its flight—
Therein my soul accomplished her delight,
And life was fresher than the green young grass.
There raindrops trickle through the warm, still air,
The cloud-born firstlings of the summer skies;
Full oft I stroll in early morning there,
When, like a pearl upon a bosom fair,
The glistening dewdrop on the sapling lies.
There the young flowerets with sweet perfume blow;
There feathery palms their pendant clusters hold,
Like foxes' bushes waving to and fro;
There every evening comes the after-glow,
Tipping the leaflets with its liquid gold.
Beside that garden flowed the placid Nile.
Oft have I steered my *dahabiyeh* there;
Oft have I landed to repose awhile,
And bask and revel in the sunny smile
Of her whose presence made the place so fair."

West of the Tûlûn the canal makes a sharp angle, and then, resuming its south-westerly direction, enters the Nile close to Masr El-'Atîkah, or, as Europeans call it, "Old Cairo." The entrance of the canal (Fum El-Khalig) is opposite the island of Rodah, where is the famous Nilometer, or well for measuring the height of the inundation. Until the river has risen to the height of sixteen cubits in the Nilometer, an old law enacts that no land-tax can be levied. The Government, however, of course take care to publish a falsified measurement before the due

time, and thus induce the peasants to begin payment. Long before even this official date a public crier goes about, accompanied by a boy, announcing the portentous height of the river. "God preserve the master of this house," he cries, stopping before your door, "and increase upon him His favours. O Bountiful, O God!" "Ay, please God!" choruses the boy. "God preserve to me my mistress, the chief lady among brides, such a one" [naming your wife, perhaps] "for a long period! O Bountiful, O God!" "Ay, please God!" from the boy. Then comes the information that the Nile is rising abundantly. "Five digits to-day: and the Lord is bountiful!" To which the acolyte adds, "Bless ye, Mohammad!" to avert the possible effects of the evil eye. The people do not, however, pay much attention to, or at least place much credence in, the crier's daily announcements, until the last day before the government proclamation of "Full Nile," which is signalled by cutting the dam of the canal. On that day the crier goes about with additional pomp, accompanied by a crowd of little boys carrying coloured flags, and announces that it is now the "Wefâ en Nil" (the Fulness of the Nile), and that the Dâr en Nahâs, the old building between the aqueduct and Masr El-'Atikah, whence the governors of Egypt used to inspect the height of the river, is filled. "The river hath given abundance," he cries, "and fulfilled (its measure)." At which the boys shout, "God hath



STREET IN MASR EL-'ATIKAH.

The man in the foreground is selling water flavoured with orange blossom.

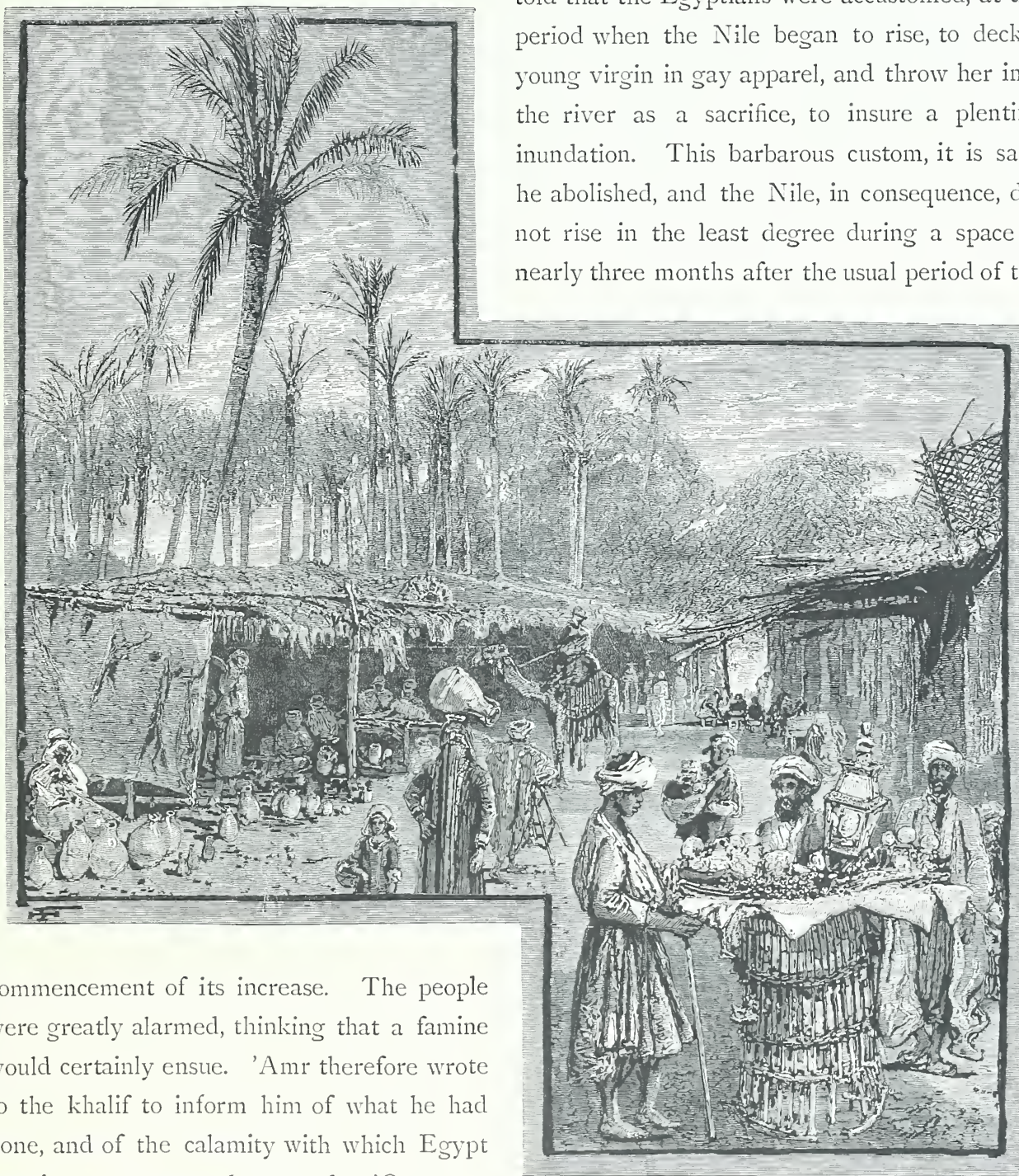
given abundance." "The canals flow—and the vessels are afloat—and the hoarder of grain has failed—by permission of the Mighty, the Requiter," &c., interrupted at each clause by the refrain of the boys, "Ofa-llah!" "God hath given abundance." "This is an annual custom," continues the crier. "God hath given abundance," repeat the boys. "And may you live to every year!" "God hath given abundance!" "And if the hoarder of grain wish for a scarcity—" "God hath given abundance!" "May God visit him with blindness and affliction ere he dies!" "God hath given abundance!" "This generous person" (here the crier personally addresses himself to the master of the house before which he is standing) "loveth the generous—an admirable palace is built for him (in Paradise)—and its columns are incomparable jewels—instead of palm-sticks and timber—and it has a thousand windows that open—and before every window is Selsebil (the fountain of the blest)—Paradise is the abode of the generous—and hell is the abode of the niggardly." In every pause the boys ejaculate, "God hath given abundance!" "May God not cause me to stop before the door of an avaricious woman, nor of an avaricious man," continues the crier sarcastically—"nor of one who measures the water in the jar—nor who counts the bread while it is yet dough—and if a cake be wanting orders a fast—nor who shuts up the cats at supper time—nor who drives away the dogs upon the wall." "God hath given abundance!" echo the boys. "The world is brightened, and the damsels have adorned themselves—and the old women tumble about—and the married man hath added to his wife eight others—and the bachelor hath married eighteen!" "God hath given abundance!"

By this time somebody, afraid of his scorn of avarice, or cajoled by his flatteries and humour, has given a copper or two to the crier, who then moves on to the next house.

The adornment of the damsels and the excitement of the old women and the extravagances of bachelors and married men find their crowning point in the festivities of cutting the dam of the canal, which takes place on the following day. "The dam," says Mr. Lane, "is constructed before or soon after the commencement of the Nile's increase. The Khalig, or canal, at the distance of about four hundred feet within its entrance, is crossed by an old stone bridge of one arch. About sixty feet in front of this bridge is the dam, which is of earth, very broad at the bottom, and diminishing in breadth towards the top, which is flat, and about three yards broad. The top of the dam rises to a height of about twenty-two or twenty-three feet above the level of the Nile when at the lowest, but not so high above the bed of the canal, for this is several feet above the low-water mark of the river, and consequently dry for some months when the water is low. The banks of the canal are a few feet higher than the top of the dam. Nearly the same distance in front of the dam that the latter is distant from the bridge is raised a round pillar of earth, diminishing towards the top in the form of a truncated cone, not quite so high as the dam. This is called the 'arûseh, or 'bride.' Upon its flat top, and on that of the dam, a little maize or millet is commonly sown. The 'arûseh' is always washed down by the rising tide before the river has attained to its summit, and generally more than a week or a fortnight before the dam is cut.

"It is believed that the custom of forming this 'arûseh' arose from a superstitious usage, which is mentioned by Arab authors, and among them by El-Makrizi. This historian relates that in the year of the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs 'Amr Ibn El-As, the Arab general, was

told that the Egyptians were accustomed, at the period when the Nile began to rise, to deck a young virgin in gay apparel, and throw her into the river as a sacrifice, to insure a plentiful inundation. This barbarous custom, it is said, he abolished, and the Nile, in consequence, did not rise in the least degree during a space of nearly three months after the usual period of the



BAZAAR IN BÛLÂK.

Bûlâk is the river harbour of Cairo; here goods from Upper Egypt, Nubia, and Central Africa are landed, and the bazaars are often crowded with natives of distant provinces during the busy season.

commencement of its increase. The people were greatly alarmed, thinking that a famine would certainly ensue. 'Amr therefore wrote to the khalif to inform him of what he had done, and of the calamity with which Egypt was in consequence threatened. 'Omar returned a brief answer, expressing his approbation of 'Amr's conduct, and desiring him,

upon the receipt of the letter, to throw a note which it enclosed into the Nile. The purport of this note was as follows:—'*From 'Abd-Allah 'Omar, Prince of the Faithful, to the Nile of Egypt. If thou flow of thine own accord, flow not; but if it be God, the One, the Mighty, who*

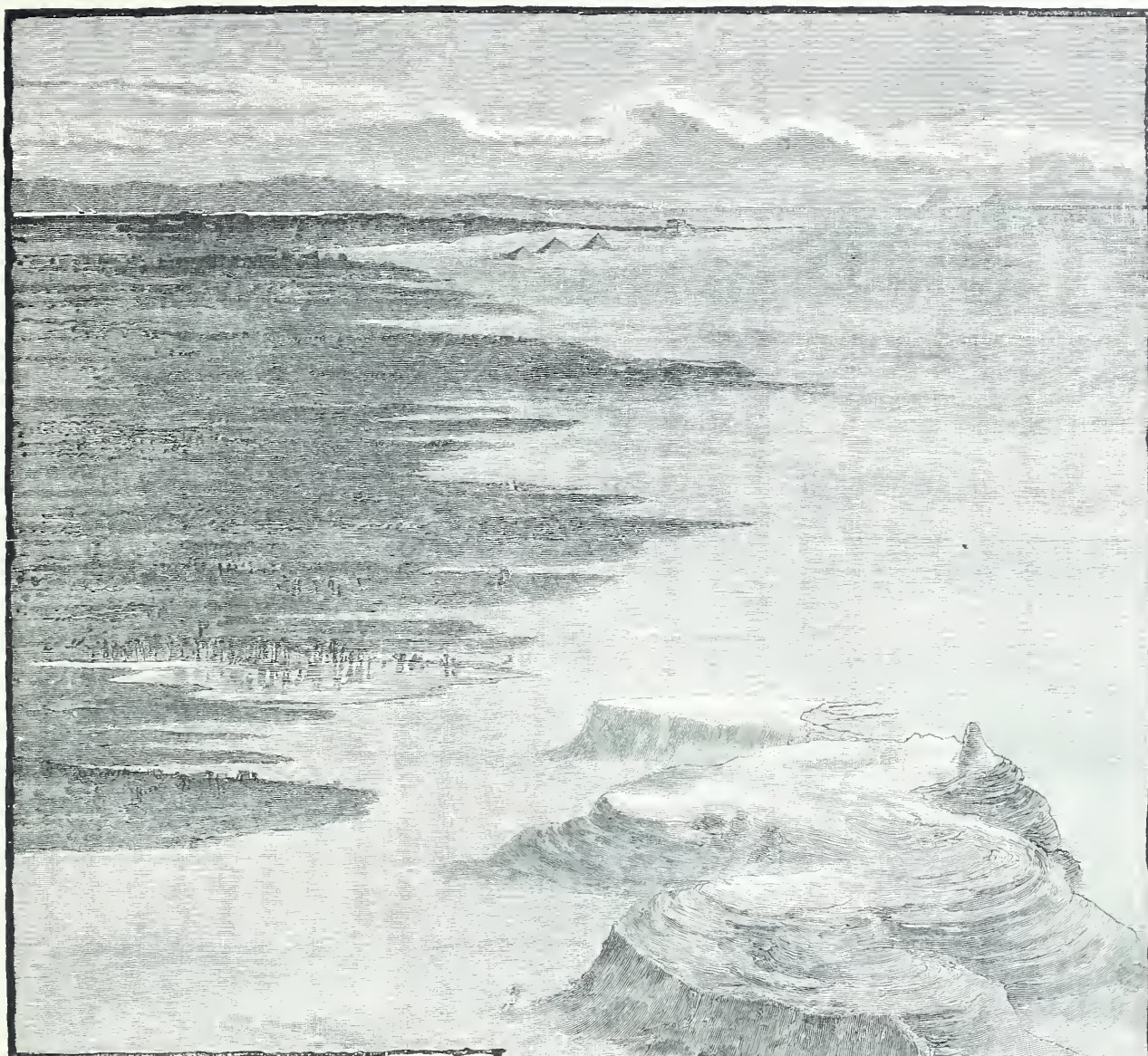
causeth thee to flow, we implore God, the One, the Mighty, to make thee flow.' 'Amr did as he was commanded, and the Nile, we are told, rose sixteen cubits in the following night." *

The evening before the cutting of the dam the Nile about Rodah becomes very gay and animated. Boats of all kinds and sizes bring visitors to witness the ceremony, and a great state barge, carrying cannon and ornamented with lanterns and decorations, sails with much pomp from Bûlâk, and moors to the island opposite the entrance of the canal. The land is as fully peopled as the water; crowds gather on the mainland near Masr El-'Atikah and on Rodah, and tents are pitched for their shelter and refreshment. A Cairo crowd easily amuses itself; coffee and pipes will generally content it, and the mere prospect of something going to be done is enough to make it very happy. All that night nobody sleeps. If he wished to, the constant firing of guns from the big barge, the beating of drums on the other boats, the discharge of rockets, and general babel of noises would render the desire abortive. But no one harbours so foolish a wish: the mere sight of the Nile that night is a scene out of fairyland. Boats gaily decked and covered with coloured lamps pass to and fro, their crews merrily dinning away at the *târ* and *darabukkeh*; every now and then a rocket flies up against the quiet stars, which look down in surprise at the disturbance mere sublunaries are making, and the whole air is alive with sounds and sights of gaiety and innocent frolic. It is like Venice in the old carnival time, only the voices and dresses are changed, and we cannot help feeling that, like the carnival, this ceremony belongs to an older state of things and an older religion. As we gaze upon the crowd we feel dimly that the priest of Isis ought to be there.

Early next morning the workmen are busy cutting away the dam, till only the thickness of a foot is left. Soon after sunrise the officials begin to appear: the Governor of Cairo rides up, the Kâdy reads a formal document, a boat bearing another officer is pushed through the mud wall, purses of gold are flung about, and the Nile is soon flowing rapidly between the banks of the Khalig, and rejoicing the hearts of the Cairenes who dwell beside it (see page 156). Reserve and decency are thrown to the winds, and a mania for bathing seizes the population.

The only monument of any interest at Masr El-'Atikah (all that remains of Fustât, the first Muslim capital of Egypt), if we except some curious Coptic churches—built partly in the bastions of the old Roman fortress of Babylon, of which considerable remains can be traced—and some quaint old byways and alleys (see page 163), is the (oft-times rebuilt) mosque of 'Amr, the Arab conqueror. Here, in 1808, when the river seemed to be about to fall at the time when it ought to have risen, the chiefs of all denominations, Muslim ulema, Coptic clergy, Jewish rabbis, all assembled together for united prayer, and continued entreating until the river rose in the usual degree. Amid the general ruin and desolation of Fustât, which was almost wholly destroyed in 1168 by a fire which continued to burn for fifty-four days, and left little but the immense mounds we see around, the mosque of 'Amr still survives, with its fine colonnades of strangely incongruous pillars, as a monument, albeit a hybrid one, of the Mohammadan conquest. When it falls, they say, Islâm will cease to be.

* "The Modern Egyptians," chap. xxvi.



MEMPHIS.

AN hour's ride from Cairo carries us back through the long vista of history to the earliest monuments of civilised man. We leave the mosque of 'Amr, the oldest building of Cairo, which has yet seen only twelve centuries pass since its foundation, and we stand before the Pyramids of Gizeh, which have looked down

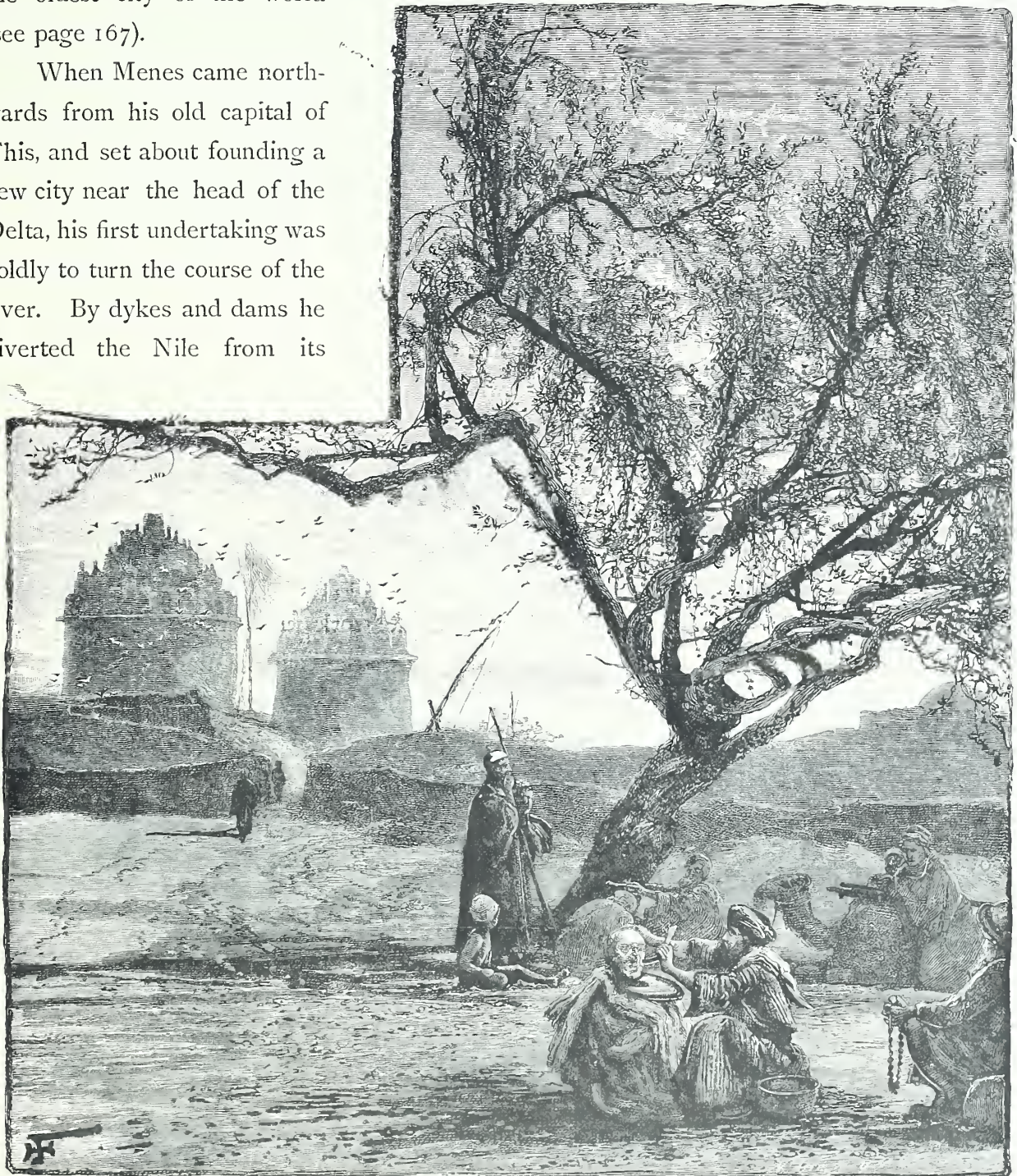


VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE GREAT PYRAMID.
Looking southwards towards the Pyramids of Sakkarah and Dahshûr.

upon the whole course of man's development, as we measure it in our puny Western scale, from ages when Noah had not built his ark, when Phœnician and Greek had not even a name, when the oldest of all the Troys was still in the dim future. At a time when our Aryan forefathers were pasturing their herds on the Asian steppes, and when a tent or a reed hut were the highest achievements of architecture everywhere else, in the Nile valley the Egyptians were building those stupendous monuments which are still the wonder of the engineer, and were painting those frescoes and modelling those statues which represent a stage of civilisation to which the Greeks did not attain till thirty centuries later, and which half the world has not reached even now. The people who built the Pyramids four thousand years before Christ were no barbarians, no nomad tribes or lacustrine paddlers; they were people with a profound philosophy, a lofty religion, a remarkable and individual art, a refined and complex society. If the progress of man from savagery to civilisation marched then by the same slow labouring steps as in later times, the Egyptians must have been a nation for thousands of years before they could have built Memphis and its chain of giant sepulchres. It is like standing on the border of infinitude when we think of this terrible antiquity. The immeasurable ages of geology and the weird traces of primitive man give one an overwhelming sense of insignificance, but these tell us only of a barbaric, savage existence, with scarcely the beginnings of a higher life. The monuments of Egypt show us man living as civilised a life as ever Roman conceived—as civilised in some of the best senses as any life we lead now—and there they stop short, and meet us like a closed door, bearing on its threshold the footprints of myriads of inhabitants, but suffering no man to enter and see them. It is not the age of the Pyramids that awes one most, but the thought of the unknown past that preceded their mighty birthday. Five thousand years ago they stood where they stand now, but the men who then looked upon them belonged to another immeasurable antiquity when Pyramids were not, of which we see the end but not the process, and whereof there remains no record but the result. In the brisk bustling bazaars of Bûlâk (see page 165), where traders and dealers meet to exchange their goods, the brown Nile labourer may be seen bringing the produce of the Sûdân and of the upper valley. In appearance he is much the same being that he was when Memphis was founded; but now he can neither build, nor paint, nor write. Turn into the Museum close by, where Mariette stored the treasures his unrelenting labours extorted from the grasp of the desert sand, and you will see the statues and pictures and the writing on the walls, which people with the blood of the modern Egyptians in them produced in lavish quantities and amazing perfection. One of this very people's descendants, a modern fellâh, is looking at the works of his forefathers in stupid wonder. He does not understand them, but he knows that he and his fellow-countrymen can do nothing like them now. We could tell him that his people have done nothing like them for the last twenty centuries and more. How they ever came to do them, why they and not their neighbours did them, and what took away the power of such works from them, are some of the questions that crowd upon the mind as, standing on the summit of the Great Pyramid, one gazes down

upon the long fringe of Pyramids that border the Libyan desert for a distance of forty-five miles, and upon the ruined traces of what was once called the "Perfect Abode"—Memphis, the oldest city of the world (see page 167).

When Menes came northwards from his old capital of This, and set about founding a new city near the head of the Delta, his first undertaking was boldly to turn the course of the river. By dykes and dams he diverted the Nile from its



VILLAGE BARBERS.

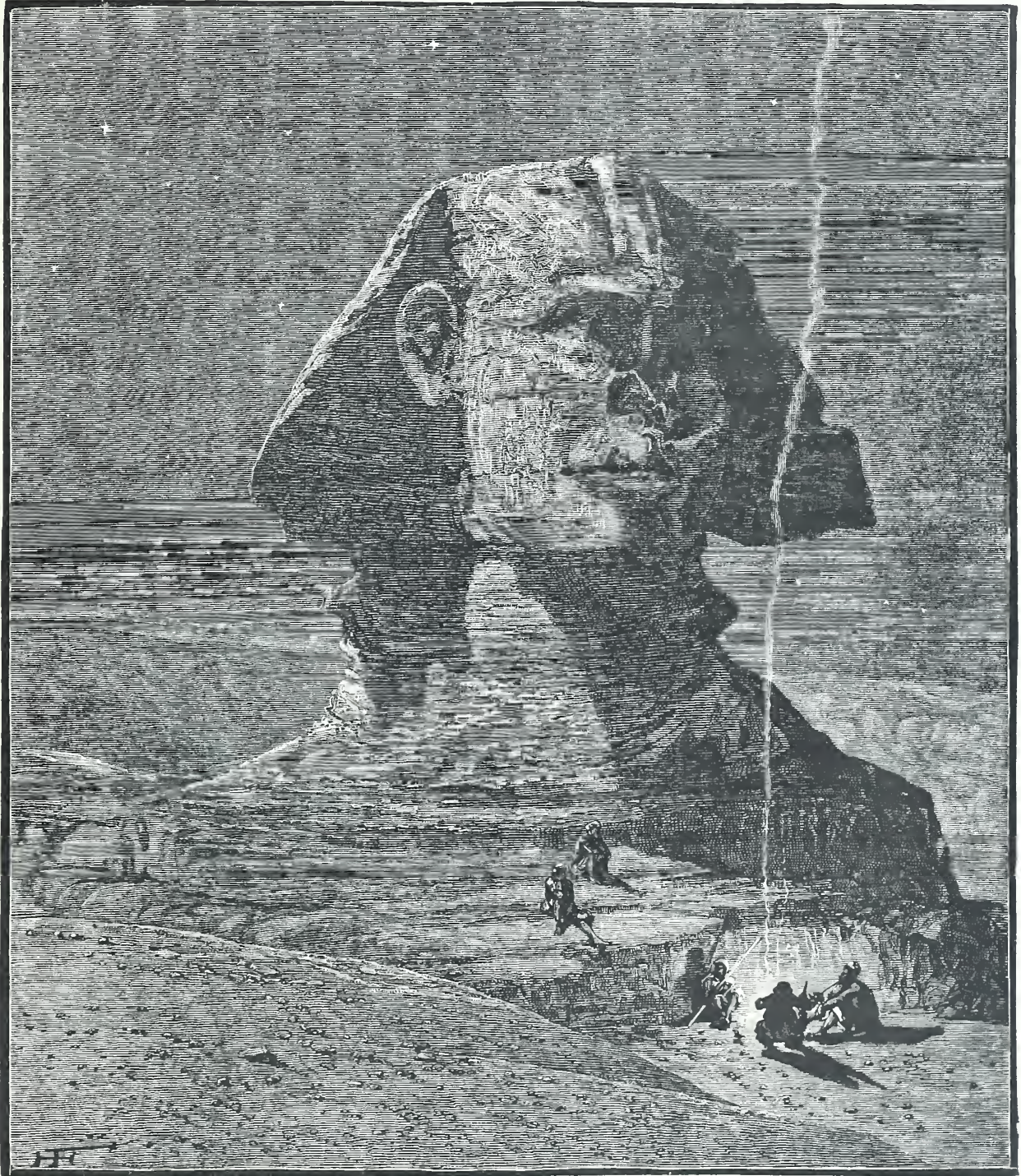
The two singular-looking structures on the left are pigeon-houses. The domes are formed of earthen pots of oval form; each pair of pigeons occupies a separate pot. These birds are kept solely for the sake of the manure they yield.

channel beside the Libyan mountains, so as to form a barrier between the new city and the tribes of the East, and on the former bed he built Memphis. We are told that there were palaces and temples and schools and beautiful squares and streets in this new city of six thousand years ago; there was a famous citadel called the "White Wall," a fine port upon

the Nile, and in later days a special quarter for the Phœnician traders who brought their merchandise to Egypt. So large was the city that even in the time of its decline it was half a day's journey to cross it from north to south. For five thousand years Memphis was the first or the second city of Egypt. It was only second to Sais when Herodotus journeyed there, and even when Alexandria was founded Memphis still stood next in rank. The Arab invasion and the building of Fustât at last destroyed it, for the inhabitants migrated to the new capital hard by. But long after this it was still a wonder to travellers, and that delightful writer, the learned physician 'Abd-el-Latif of Baghdad, describes Memphis as it was in the beginning of the thirteenth century with his quaint and graphic pencil. "Its ruins," he says, "still present a crowd of wonders that bewilder the intellect, and which the most eloquent of men would vainly attempt to describe. The more one considers the city, the greater grows the admiration which it inspires, and each new glance at its ruins is a fresh cause of delight. Scarcely has it given birth to one idea when it suggests another still more marvellous; and when you believe you have thoroughly grasped it, Memphis at once convinces you that what you have conceived is still far behind the truth." The wonderful monolithic green chamber of brecchia verde, once the shrine of a golden statue with jewelled eyes, was still to be seen there, and the sphinxes of the temple of Ptah, the Egyptian Vulcan, originator and fashioner of all things, and the walls and gates thereof, were still standing; but even there the insane greed of treasure-hunters had begun to work its disastrous effects. From the temples and tombs of Memphis to the ruins of Merv, the Oriental mind has associated the remains of antiquities with the presence of concealed treasure. 'Abd-el-Latif records with indignation the irreparable destruction wrought by "people without sense" in this childish pursuit, and tells how they mutilated the statues (whom they took for guardians of the tombs), bored holes, wrenched off metal-work, and split up monoliths, in the hope of discovering hidden wealth. Most of the tombs and Pyramids have been impiously broken into and pillaged of whatever they contained, though it could never have repaid the pains of excavation to vulgar burglars without archæological instinct. And when treasure was no longer expected, a worse thing came upon the monuments of Egypt: they were used as building materials for the walls and mosques and citadel of Cairo. Columns and slabs were carried over the river to the new capital; the splendid masonry which had stood unshaken for five thousand years was used for the beautiful but unstable monuments of Arab art; and the wonderful ruins that excited the admiration of the old traveller of Baghdad are now vanished. Of all that splendour and beauty nothing remains; as we wander among the palms that fatten on the site of Memphis, a few fragments of what may have been the temple, and the great half-buried, half-drowned colossus of Rameses II. prone upon its face (see page 172), are all that remain to remind us of the oldest city of the world. "The images have ceased out of Noph" (Ezek. xxx. 13).

Even the Pyramids were not spared. 'Abd-el-Latif tells us how he saw the workmen of El-Melik El-'Aziz, son of Saladin, employed in 1196 in pulling down the Third Pyramid

—that at the left in our steel engraving of the Three Pyramids of Gîzeh, from a sketch made during the inundation. A large body of engineers and miners pitched a camp close to the Red Pyramid (as the Third was called from its beautiful granite casing), and with their united and



THE SPHINX.

Called by the Arabs "Father of Terrors." It faces the east, and is hewn out of the natural rock.

continuous efforts achieved the removal of one or two stones a day. The blocks fell down with a tremendous shock, and buried themselves in the sand, whence they were extricated with immense toil and then were laboriously broken up. At the end of eight months the treasury

was exhausted and the work of destruction abandoned. To look at the quantity of stone taken away you would think, says the observer, that the whole monument had been razed to the ground; but when you lift your eyes to the Pyramid itself, it is hard to see that it has suffered the least diminution! One day 'Abd-el-Latif asked one of the workmen, who had assisted in laboriously removing one stone from its place, whether he would put it up again for a thousand gold pieces? The man answered that they could not do it if the reward were many times multiplied. And so in spite of the efforts of man and the wearing of time, the Red Pyramid of Menkara still stands besides its two sisters at Gizeh, and verifies the saying that "Time mocks all things, but the Pyramids laugh



THE FALLEN STATUE OF RAMESSES II. AT MEMPHIS.

The soft mud in which it is embedded has perfectly preserved the well-cut features and all the front part of the figure. During about eight months of the year it is partly covered by the waters of the overflowing Nile.

at Time." This Red Pyramid contained the tomb of a queen, Nitocris of the seventh dynasty ; and superstition has accumulated a number of traditions round this lady. Her rosy cheeks were celebrated and caused her to be confounded with the fair Rhodôpis, the Greek favourite of Amasis, who it is said fell in love with her, like Cinderella, from a sight of her sandal. Rhodôpis became the Loreley of Egyptian fairyland, and popular fancy depicted a beautiful treacherous woman who haunts the Red Pyramid and leaves bewitched travellers to their doom :—

" Fair Rhodope, as story tells,
The bright unearthly nymph who dwells
'Mid sunless gold and jewels hid,
The Lady of the Pyramid."

To the present day the Arabs shun the Pyramids at night, and tell dreadful tales of the Jinn who frequent them.

In front of the Second and Third Pyramids are ruins of what were doubtless temples



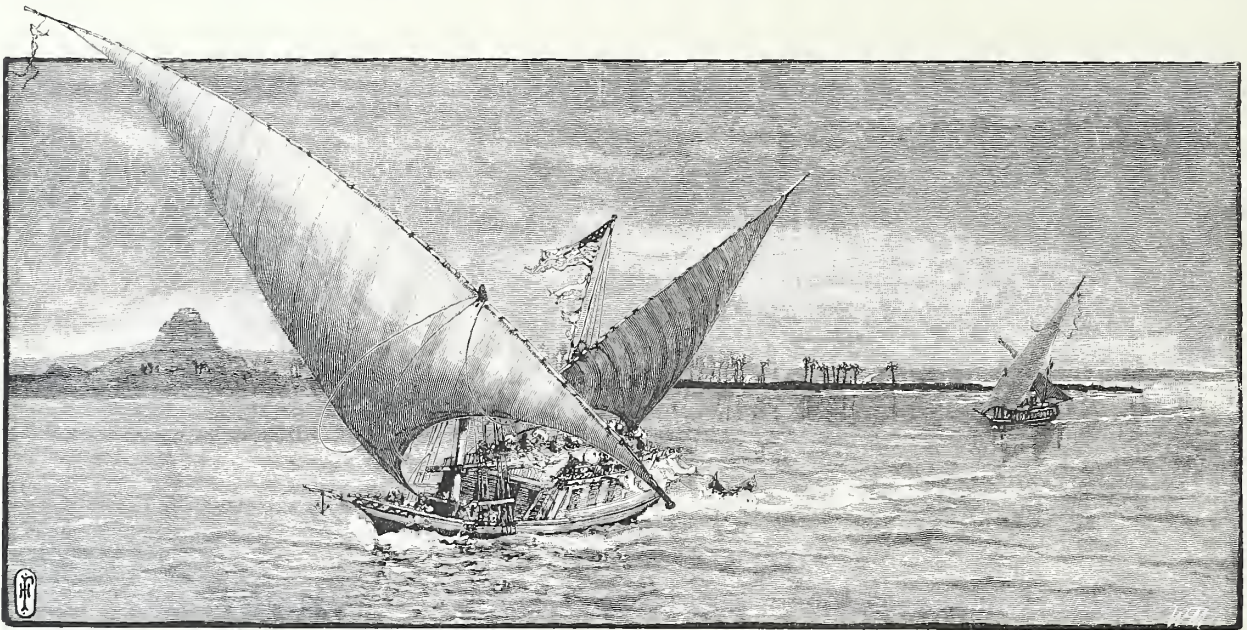
THE PYRAMID OF STEPS AT SAKKÂRAH.

Constructed of an inferior clayey kind of limestone quarried in the neighbourhood. Possibly the oldest monument in Egypt.

where rites were performed in honour of the kings who built them, and further away is the amazingly massive granite temple or tomb in which were found statues of Chefren, or Khafra, the builder of the Second Pyramid; and hard by is the most mysterious of all Egyptian monuments, the Sphinx—"Father of Terrors," the Arabs call it—a human-headed lion, the symbol of the rising sun, which stands on the approach to the Pyramid platform like a solemn sentinel (see page 171). Like most of the monuments of Memphis its foundations are so choked with sand that it is hard to realise its true proportions; but when Mariette for the moment tore away the desert shroud, it was found to be sculptured out of a natural rock,

and to stand some sixty feet from its base to its crown, while between its legs stood an altar, to which a great flight of steps conducted the worshipper of Horus in the Horizon. 'Abd-el-Latif was enchanted with its proportions and the "winning smile" upon its gracious countenance ; but the loss of the nose has since destroyed its beauty.

A Pyramid is simply a cairn or barrow, only its stones are laid regularly and their edges are carefully finished, instead of being roughly thrown together. The principle of the Pyramid is almost always the same. A rocky eminence on the desert tract lying between the river and the Libyan hills, above the reach of the annual inundation, was excavated for the reception of the king's sarcophagus, and a sloping passage was cut to connect the royal sepulchre with the surface. Over the sepulchre, both to protect it from the inroads of the sand and to mark the spot, a large block of stones was erected, almost in



PYRAMID OF MEYDÛM.

The Arabs call it "The False Pyramid." Its outer walls consist of admirably jointed and polished blocks of Mukattam stone. The base is hidden by a heap of débris.

the shape of a cube, but slightly tapering towards the top. This was done early in the king's reign, and if he died at this point his mummy was inserted into the tomb, a small pyramidal cap was put on the top of the block of stone, and triangular or wedge-shaped pieces were added to the sides, and a small Pyramid, effectually closing the royal sepulchre, was then complete. If the king, however, continued to reign, he deferred the cap and wedges, and, instead of them, put other blocks round the base, so as to form a second stage, upon which he erected another quasi-cube like the first. If the king died at this point, the cap and wedge-shaped side-pieces could be added, and the Pyramid thus completed would be one size larger than the first form. The longer the king lived the more numerous these stages became, so that it is possible to gauge roughly the duration of a king's reign by the height of his burial cairn. There are sometimes other chambers besides the subterranean tomb in Pyramids, which were probably

substitutes for the latter in the more advanced stages of the building. The entrance to the tomb itself—generally a steep sloping passage, narrow and low—was carefully concealed, and ingenious devices, portcullises, &c., were resorted to in order to prevent the sarcophagus being removed. The material of the Pyramids is mostly stone from the neighbouring limestone



TOMB OF A MUSLIM SAINT AT MINYEH.

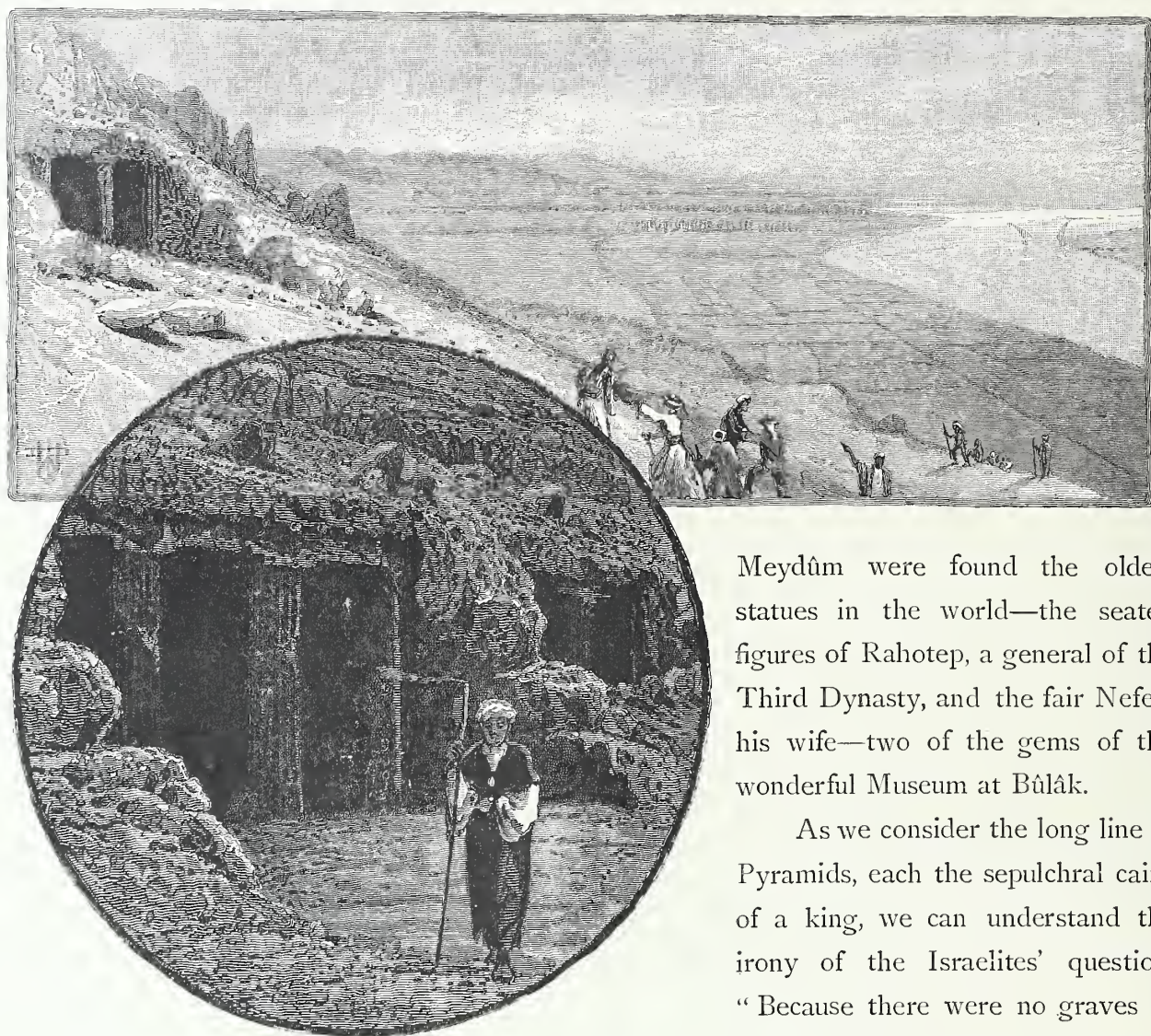
Shaded by an aged sycamore-tree. It is on the north side of the town, and near to the spot where boats are generally moored.

quarries, with finer blocks brought over the river from Tura and El-Ma'asarah; but some are of brick.*

A minute description of individual Pyramids is beyond the present scope. A complete volume would not exhaust the subject. It is enough here to signalise the remarkable "Pyramid of Steps" (see page 173), one of the eleven that are included in the second great cemetery of Memphis—the necropolis of Sakkarah. This Pyramid may have been built by Uenephes of the First Dynasty, and if so is the oldest monument in the world; its six steps, with the angles

* "Egypt" (Low's "Foreign Countries"), by S. Lane-Poole, pages 59—61.

not filled up, reveal the principle of Pyramid building, and it has the peculiarity of an oblong instead of a square base, and, unlike other Pyramids, it is not set square to the cardinal points of the compass. The truncated Pyramid of Meydûm, built by Seneferu of the Third Dynasty (see page 174), also seems to show in its unfinished upper stages the skeleton of a Pyramid; while the bent Pyramids of Dahshûr have their tops finished, but their lower stages lack the outer wedge-shaped additions which would give the true pyramidal shape. In a tomb at



VIEW OF THE NILE FROM THE TOMBS OF BENY HASAN.

These grottoes, the interior of one of which is also shown, were excavated by a single family of the time of the Twelfth Dynasty.

Meydûm were found the oldest statues in the world—the seated figures of Rahotep, a general of the Third Dynasty, and the fair Nefert his wife—two of the gems of the wonderful Museum at Bûlâk.

As we consider the long line of Pyramids, each the sepulchral cairn of a king, we can understand the irony of the Israelites' question, "Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" Egypt is indeed a country of graves, and

there is a singular appropriateness in Hosea's prophecy, "Egypt shall gather them up: Memphis shall bury them" (ix. 6). The necropolis of Memphis is a huge burial-ground, with graves so big that the stones of one of them would form a wall round the whole French coast, so high that St. Peter's at Rome would stand inside the Great Pyramid "like a clock under a glass shade" if it were hollowed out. But all about the Pyramids the ground is furrowed and perforated with graves. The tombs of the families and officers of the kings are grouped around, and

the walls are covered with sculptures depicting the life of the deceased. Nothing in all Egypt, the land of marvels, is more wonderful than the minute pictorial records of this peaceful country life of five or six thousand years ago, preserved in the tombs at Memphis and Sakkarah. In them we see not only the portrait of the deceased, in size a demi-god, and of his diminutive wife, the mistress of the house—"beloved of her husband, his palm of pleasantness"—sculptured with



THE GATEWAY OF ASYÛT.

It opens into a large tree-shaded court which forms part of the governor's palace and leads into the town.

marvellous fidelity to nature and with a realism that is almost terribly lifelike, but all the scenes of the great man's daily life; his cattle, goats and sheep, and fat oxen; villagers bringing their tribute of the produce of the nobleman's country estates; oxen drawing the plough, with the super-scription "A strong pull" and "Trot on, beasts;" the overseer with his stick; every scene of agriculture, the large ears of corn, the reaping and gleaning; the exciting hunt of the hippopotamus, who is entangled in the ropes in the very act of devouring his prey, while the sportsmen launch their javelins at him; the nets full of fish; the chase of the antelope; the struggles of wrestlers—every branch of labour and of diversion is found on the walls of the



tombs. Over many of the pictures are inscriptions which are positively comic, as when the slaughterers of an ox comment on the various stages of the operation, or a captain of a ship calls his crew a set of apes. But the solemn side of existence is not forgotten amidst these cheerful scenes. Funeral processions and wailing women are engraved on the walls, and inscriptions are addressed to Anubis of the jackal head, the Hermes of the Egyptian religion, who guides the souls through the under world.

Nor are men and women alone honoured with these splendid resting-places. Under the Serapeum at Sakkarah—the Ptolemaic temple, with its various chambers, priests' houses, and cells for ascetic recluses, which was dedicated to the strange mixed Græco-Egyptian worship of Serapis—is the gigantic cemetery of Apis. This sacred bull, who was distinguished from common cattle by twenty-eight marks, such as a blaze on the forehead, a scarab under the tongue, a crescent on the flank, and the like, was kept in his lifetime in solemn state, secluded behind a curtain on a soft bed in the temple of Ptah at Memphis, with his venerated mother in another stall, and a plentiful harim of cows near by; and hither came those who would obtain his oracular verdicts: if he ate from their hand it was well; if not, their doom was decreed, as Eudoxus, the Greek astronomer, and Germanicus proved to their dismay. When after his luxurious life the bull Apis died, he was buried, with immense pomp and with costly rites, which sometimes drained the treasury of £20,000, in the burying place of his ancestors at Sakkarah. Here, in long galleries, with vaults on either side, rested the mummies of all the sacred bulls for nigh two thousand years, in huge sarcophagi of granite or other stone, each monolith, empty, weighing nearly sixty tons (one hundred and thirty-four thousand pounds). When Mariette opened this amazing city of dead bulls he found one vault which for some reason or other had escaped the violating hand of the treasure-seeker, and there in the mortar was the impress of the fingers of the mason who had set the last stone in the reign of Rameses II., before the birth of Moses; there in the dust were the imprints of the feet that had last trod the floor three thousand and more years ago; there were the votive offerings dedicated in the sacred vault by visitors who have been dead since nearly twice as long a period as we are distant from our Era—among them a tablet of Rameses' own son, high priest of Apis, and one of the chief dignitaries of the time of the Oppression of Israel. It is not wonderful that when the great explorer set foot in this tomb, which had remained inviolate for thirty-five eventful centuries, he was overwhelmed, and burst into tears.

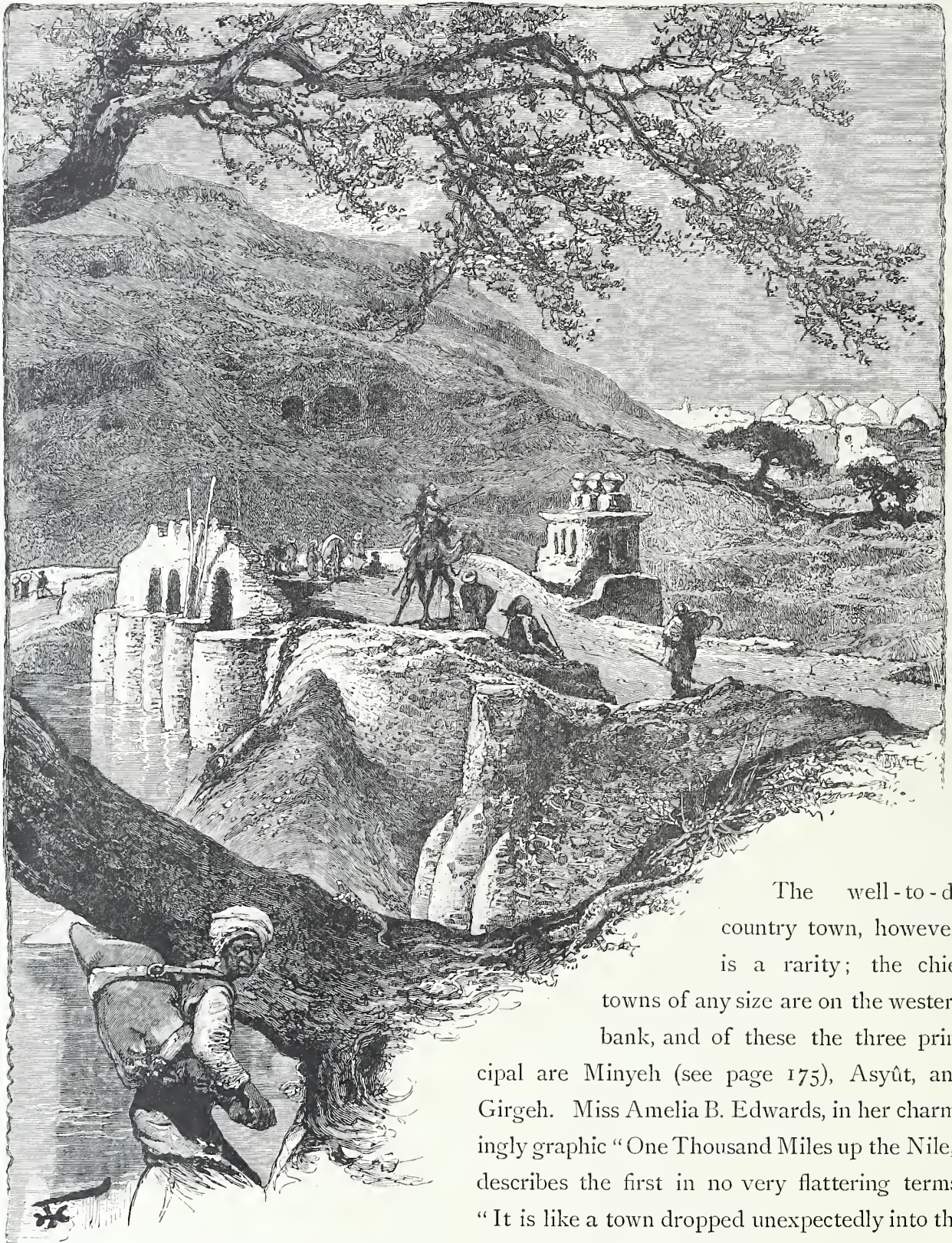
There are no graves like those of Memphis; they belong to the Titanic age of Egyptian building; but as we hasten up the Nile to Thebes we see tombs on either side, everywhere, old and new. Scarcely have we left the modern cupola of a Muslim saint's grave (see page 175) at Minyeh, when the rocks of Beny Hasan, honeycombed with painted ante-chambers and deep sepulchral vaults, come in sight (see page 176). The great cemetery of the sacred crocodile opposite Manfalût presents a counterpart to the vast necropolis of the bulls at Sakkarah. All along the eastern bank the cliffs that hem in the river are honeycombed with tombs or grottoes, and it is from the paintings of these tombs that much of our knowledge of ancient

Egyptian life and manners is derived. Those at Beny Hasan, excavated by a single noble family of the time of the Twelfth Dynasty, are the most famous; but every cliff and headland abounds in tombs which present some point of interest or importance.

The western bank presents a complete contrast. Here the mountains trend away to some distance, and between them and the river spread the famous corn-fields of the Nile valley, the villages in which the fellahîn live, sometimes a large town, and everywhere shadûfs (see page 187) and sâkiyehs—machines for raising water for irrigating the higher lands—(see page 157), cattle bathing in the cool river, women with water-pots on their heads, and the other usual commonplaces of Egyptian scenery. If one feature is more peculiar than another, it is the inevitable pigeon-tower, with earthen pots for a battlement, which greets the eye at every village and town all up the Nile voyage (see page 181). Trees are wanting in the scenery, except sparse clumps of palms and stunted acacias and tamarisks, which form a foreground to a village scene. These villages are of two kinds. "Some are built on high mounds, the accumulation for the most part of millenniums of crude brick buildings. Some, on the other hand, are flat, but protected from the inundations very imperfectly by thickly buttressed walls and a wide moat, which is full of water in October, a fetid marsh in December, and dry in spring—a place of bad smells and air thickened with mist and mosquitoes. Every here and there a house has fallen over the wall and an avalanche of crude bricks is being melted into the moat. Here the children bask, naked, except for a thick incrustation of flies, and the dogs sleep among them. As you walk round the village to find an entrance you come, if it is on a mound, to what looks like a newly extemporised path, leading up at an angle so steep that your hands often touch the ground as you climb. If there is no such mound, you probably enter without any gate between two high mud walls, and find yourselves presently in the public *place*, a square of perhaps fifty feet each way, with ruined seats or divans round three sides, and the sheykh's residence, sometimes a mere hut, at the other. Some villages have beautiful greens of very fine small grass, interspersed with palms, surrounding them; but the tendency of taxation within the last few years has been to cause these pleasant places to be desolated. A sheykh's tomb, with its white-washed mud dome, is usually to be seen glimmering through the shade, and near it there is often a well with a very primitive wheel made of sticks and cords. Here the elders of the village sit and smoke, and the women gossip as they fill their great pitchers.

"The houses in these villages are one-storeyed, built of unbaked Nile mud, without windows, and only a few small holes for light. On them or near by them is a sort of battlemented edifice which is devoted to the pigeons that infest every Nile village. There are all stages of these hamlets, from the cluster of miserable hovels kneaded up by the fellâh or Nile peasant covered with reeds or mats, and surrounded by a mud wall inclosing a yard which holds, besides the live stock, the tub-like structures which serve as store-room and pantry, to the well-to-do village, with its mosque and white-washed minaret, and the country town with its substantial dwellings, its market, and its street."*

* Loftie, "Ride in Egypt," pages 259—261.



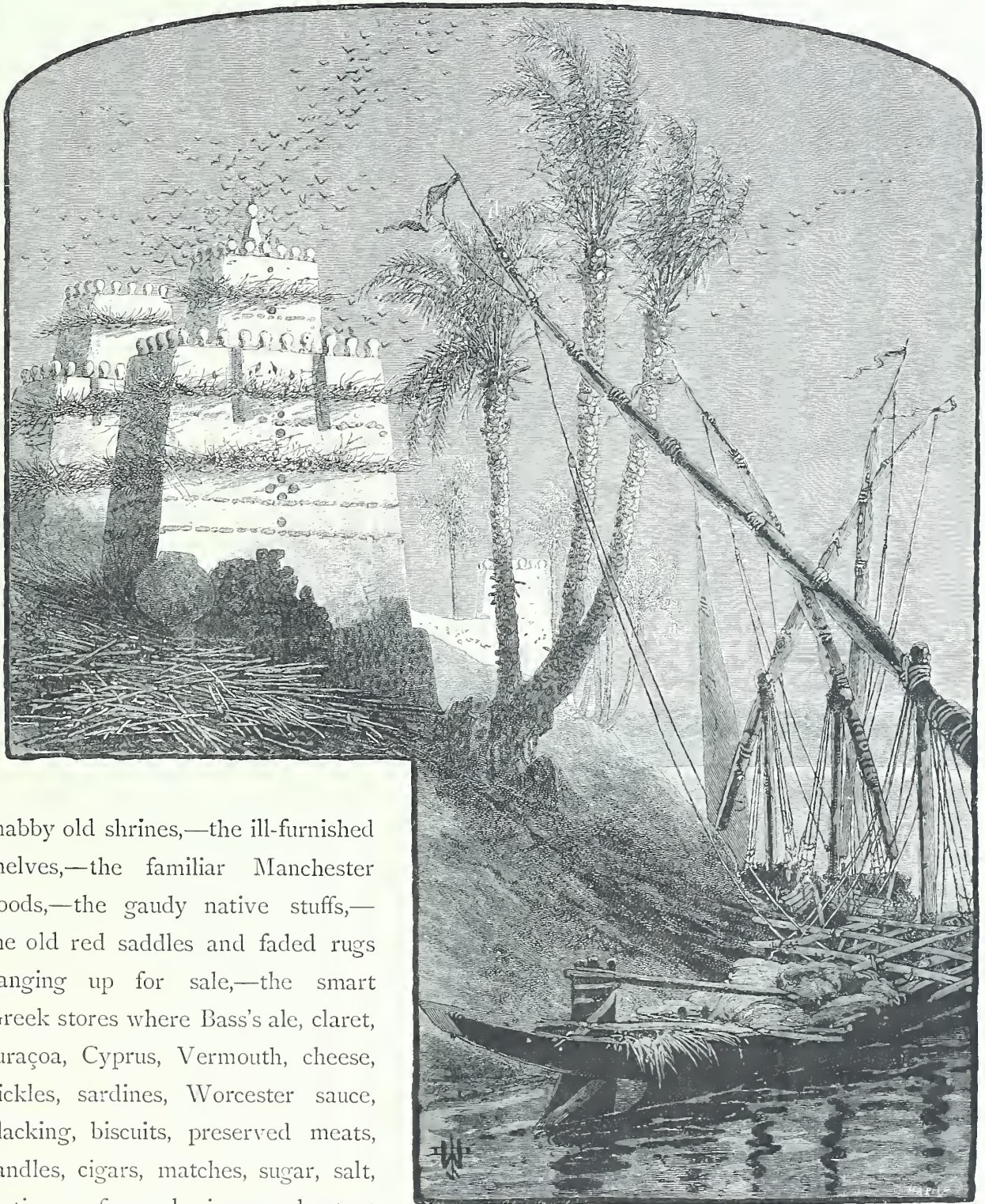
THE NECROPOLIS OF ASYÛT,

Consisting of ancient rock-tombs and a modern cemetery (to the right), approached from the town by a bridge over a canal which skirts the cultivated land.

The well-to-do country town, however, is a rarity; the chief towns of any size are on the western bank, and of these the three principal are Minyeh (see page 175), Asyût, and Girgeh. Miss Amelia B. Edwards, in her charmingly graphic "One Thousand Miles up the Nile," describes the first in no very flattering terms. "It is like a town dropped unexpectedly into the midst of a ploughed field, the streets being mere trodden lanes of mud and dust, and the houses a succession of windowless prisons with their

backs to the thoroughfare. The bazaar, which consists of two or three lanes a little wider than the rest, is roofed over here and there with rotting palm-rafters and bits of tattered

matting, while the market is held in a space of waste ground outside the town. The former, with its cupboard-like shops, in which the merchants sit cross-legged like shabby old idols in



PIGEON-TOWERS ON THE NILE.

The battlements are formed of earthenware pots, and rows of Indian corn stalks project from the loopholed walls to serve as perches (see page 179).

shabby old shrines,—the ill-furnished shelves,—the familiar Manchester goods,—the gaudy native stuffs,—the old red saddles and faded rugs hanging up for sale,—the smart Greek stores where Bass's ale, claret, curaçoa, Cyprus, Vermouth, cheese, pickles, sardines, Worcester sauce, blacking, biscuits, preserved meats, candles, cigars, matches, sugar, salt, stationery, fireworks, jams, and patent medicines can all be bought at one fell swoop,—the native cook-shops, exhaling savoury perfumes of kebabs and lentil soup, and presided over by an Abyssinian Soyer blacker than the blackest historical personage ever was painted,—the surging, elbowing,

clamorous crowd,—the donkeys, the camels, the street-criers, the chatter, the dust, the flies, the fleas, and the dogs, all put us in mind of the poorer quarters of Cairo. In the market, it is even worse. Here are hundreds of country folk sitting on the ground behind their baskets of fruit and vegetables. Some have eggs, butter, and buffalo-cream for sale, while others sell sugar-canes, limes, cabbages, tobacco, barley, dried lentils, split beans, maize, wheat, and durah. The women go to and fro with bouquets of live poultry. The chickens scream; the sellers rave; the buyers bargain at the top of their voices; the dust flies in clouds, the sun pours down floods of light and heat; you can scarcely hear yourself speak; and the crowd is as dense as that other crowd which at this very moment, on this very Christmas Eve, is circulating among the alleys of Leadenhall Market."

Asyût (or Siout) is a much larger place, and gloriously situated. The approach along the zigzags of the river is singularly beautiful, as the town appears first on one side and then on the other, with the glowing Libyan hills behind it and delicious riverside pictures in the foreground. Asyût is the capital of Upper Egypt, and musters a population of twenty-five thousand, according to Egyptian reckoning; and its superior rank and prosperity are testified by the comparative solidity and regularity of its mud huts, and the several well-built houses and mosques which it contains: after all, a large town in Egypt is only a magnified village. It is famous for its manufactures of pottery and pipe bowls, and caravans arrive here with the produce of the equatorial provinces. But the finest thing about Asyût is its situation. Half-girdled by a spur of the Libyan hills behind, it looks down upon the broad windings of the river, while around it stretches the rich green plain watered by the wide canal which irrigates the valley as far as the Fayyûm, with high embankments planted with trees. No site is more picturesque in all Egypt.

A high embanked road leads to Asyût from El-Hamrâ, its little port on the Nile, and another leads from Asyût to the tombs in the Libyan mountains (see page 180). Tier above tier in the lofty stratified cliffs yawn the tombs, while shreds and bones of mummies bleach in the sun on the slopes below. Interesting as many of these tombs are, the view from the mountain in which they are cut is even more fascinating. "Seen from the great doorway of the second grotto it looks like a framed picture. For the foreground, we have the dazzling slope of limestone débris; in the middle distance, a wide plain clothed with the delicious tender green of very young corn; farther away yet, the cupolas and minarets of Siout rising from the midst of a belt of palm-groves; beyond these again, the molten gold of the great river glittering away, coil after coil, into the far distance; and all along the horizon, the everlasting boundary of the desert. Large pools of placid water left by the last inundation lie here and there, lakes amid the green. A group of brown men are wading yonder with their nets. A funeral comes along the embanked road—the bier carried at a rapid pace on men's shoulders, and covered with a red shawl; the women taking up handfuls of dust and scattering it upon their heads as they walk. We can see the dust flying, and hear the shrill wail of the mourners borne upon the breathless air. The cemetery towards which they are going lies round to the

left, at the foot of the mountain—a wilderness of little white cupolas with here and there a tree. Broad spaces of shade sleep under the spreading sycamores by the road-side ; a hawk circles overhead ; and Siout, bathed in the splendour of the morning sun, looks as fairy-like as ever.” *

These tombs, and many others in various parts of Egypt, were appropriated by anchorites of the Christian Church ; and there is a yet sacreder association with them, if we like to believe the legend that makes Asyût, or Lycopolis as the Greeks called it, the place where the Holy Family sojourned during their exile in Egypt. Similar traditions are unfortunately too common to meet with general acceptance ; and in this case the likelihood is further weakened by the improbability that the Holy Family, if they had once settled at Asyût, would ever have deserted it.

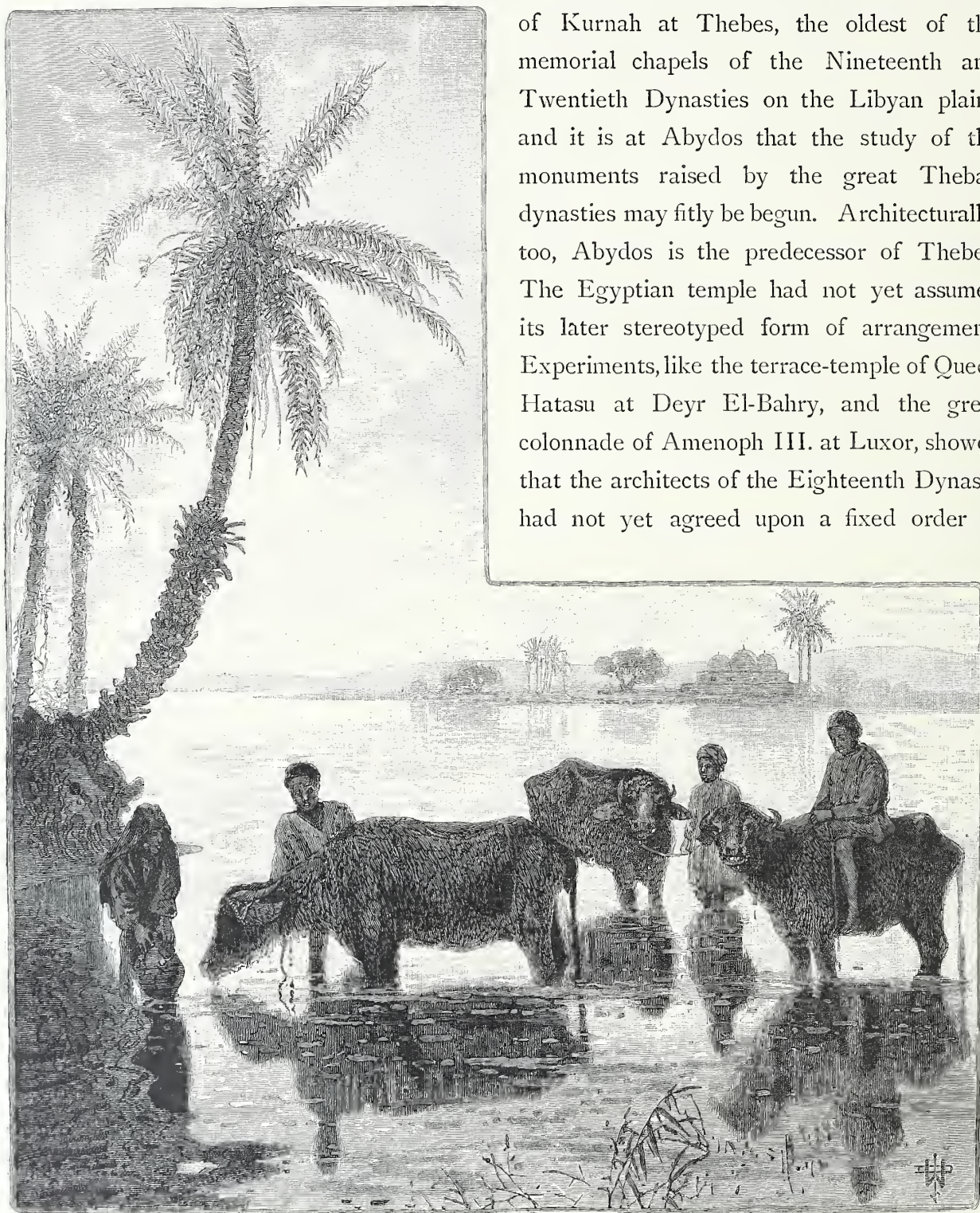
Another large town was Girgeh, but it is now fallen into decay. Each year the river encroaches upon it ; the banks are eaten away deeper at each inundation, the houses fall in, and Girgeh is disappearing into the Nile. Suhâg, with its sugar-mills, takes its place ; but Girgeh is still a beautiful spot, faced by a noble cliff in the Arabian hills ; and its population, largely composed of Copts—for Girgeh was a Christian settlement named after St. George—do a fair trade in dyeing and gold work.

Like Asyût, Girgeh has its monumental background, but it is much farther away and infinitely more important ; for twelve miles west of the town of St. George lie the ruins of Abydos, the site of Thinis, and the burial-place of Osiris. The better way to go to Abydos, however, is from Belliâneh, a good-sized village with a curious underground Coptic church, but little else that is noteworthy. Passing between the clean-looking well-built houses with their quaint pigeon-battlements, crossing some dry canals, and traversing a lovely grove of palms, we emerge upon the most fertile tract in Egypt. For six miles we ride through waving barley, wheat, and bean fields ; far as the sight can reach on either side stretches the wide expanse of green. Slingers are standing here and there, armed with their fibre slings, to guard the precious grain from the birds that hover above. A long string of camels winds slowly along the narrow footpaths that intersect the cornfields, and a grey-bearded Arab of the outlying village jogs into town upon his ass. This granary of Egypt is one of the most perfect sights in the land. Visiting Abydos, as the traveller generally does, on the return voyage, the vivid green of this six miles' ride offers a refreshing restful contrast to the eye which has been blinking for weeks at burning yellow sand and limestone ; and to him who has seen the Holy Island where Osiris is fabled to sleep, the home of the older legend which tells how the head of the god was buried at Abydos is doubly interesting. Historically, however, Abydos should be the first monumental sight visited after Memphis and the Pyramids. Indeed, the oldest city of Egypt, Thinis or This, once stood here, whence Menes, the first of the long line of Egyptian kings, migrated to found Memphis. Crude brick remains are all that can now be seen of Thinis ; and Abydos, its successor, belongs to post-Memphite times, and forms a fitting prelude

* Amelia B. Edwards, "One Thousand Miles up the Nile."

to the study of Thebes. Seti I. was the founder of the principal temple, and Rameses II., his son, completed it and added a second fane of his own. The older temple of Abydos is

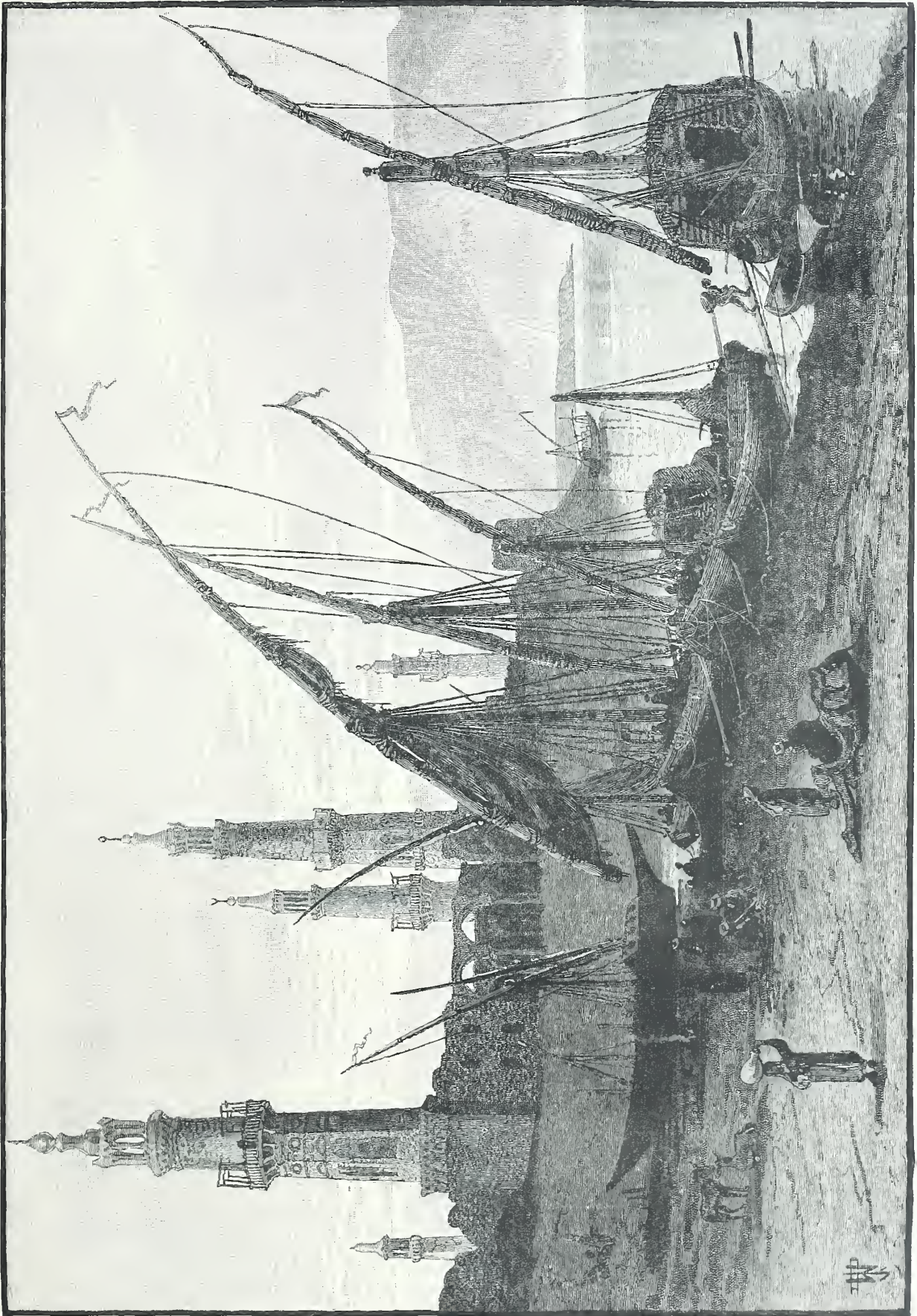
therefore contemporaneous with the temple of Kurnah at Thebes, the oldest of the memorial chapels of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties on the Libyan plain; and it is at Abydos that the study of the monuments raised by the great Theban dynasties may fitly be begun. Architecturally, too, Abydos is the predecessor of Thebes. The Egyptian temple had not yet assumed its later stereotyped form of arrangement. Experiments, like the terrace-temple of Queen Hatasu at Deyr El-Bahry, and the great colonnade of Amenoph III. at Luxor, showed that the architects of the Eighteenth Dynasty had not yet agreed upon a fixed order of



A SILHOUETTE ON THE NILE.

A group of the slate-coloured buffaloes of the country being watered is one of the commonest sights on the Nile.

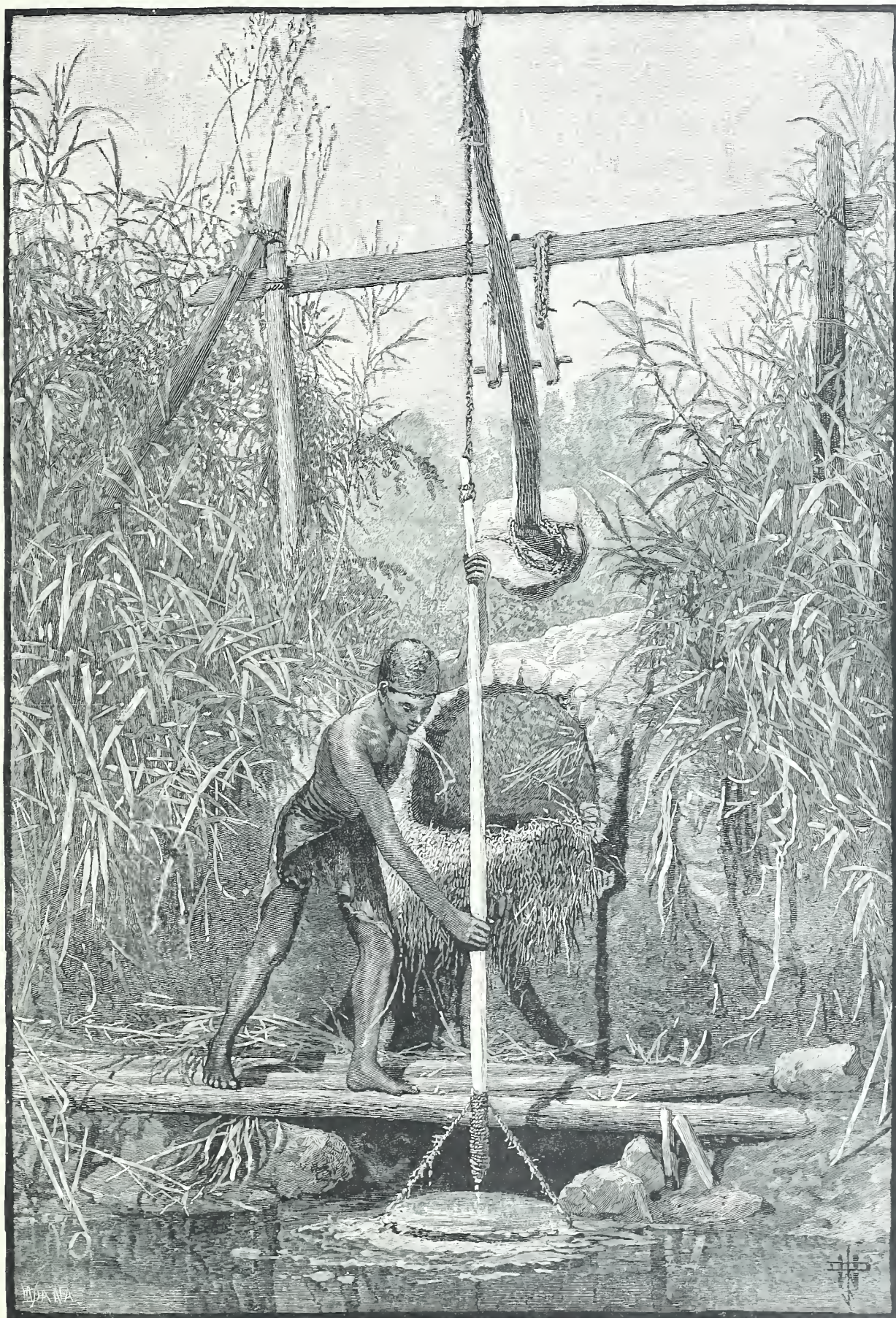
courts and chambers; and Abydos is proof that Seti, of the Nineteenth, had a different idea of temple forms to those of his forerunners and his successors. The seven aisles ending in seven



GIRGEH, FROM THE MOORING-PLACE ON THE SOUTH SIDE.

pictured chapels are unique in Egyptian architecture, though Seti's other temple at Kurnah bears a certain resemblance to this arrangement. For a small temple nothing can be more beautiful than this sevenfold avenue of columns and portals; and here the beauty is increased by the remarkable preservation of the whole temple—roof, walls, and pillars—and by the unrivalled charm of the sculptures which cover the walls and columns. Not only are they in an unusually fine state of preservation, but they are evidently the work of a supreme artist. Unless it be the sculptures in the tombs at Sakkarah, there is nothing in Egyptian glyptic art at all comparable with the wall-chiselling at Abydos. The famous figure of Seti offering a little statue of the goddess Truth to the seated Osiris on the north wall of the inner court is matchless, and its pure white surface enhances its beauty to a Western eye, unacclimatised to the Egyptian method of colouring sculpture. The Theban artists could not rival Hi (for we know the name of Seti's sculptor), and even the portions of Seti's temple which Rameses II. completed show a marked falling off in artistic feeling. All the older sculptures, however, are magnificent. There is one of Seti and Rameses taming a bull which is full of power, and in the passage next to this is the celebrated Tablet of Abydos, wherein are engraved all the cartouches (or names and titles) of all the kings of Egypt from Menes to Seti I., each of whom is represented, uniform in aspect, sitting on his hams, beneath his cartouche, while Seti himself, in colossal contrast, and his son Rameses of more moderate proportions, offer libations to their assembled ancestors.

Near by is a mound now called Kom-es-Sultan, where it is pretended the head of Osiris is buried. The mound is formed of the accretions of centuries of pious Egyptians who had themselves buried near the sepulchre of the best-beloved of their gods. His tomb has not yet been found, but some such monument must eventually be discovered. Every one knows how Osiris came to be buried there; how he ruled the world wisely and gave just judgments until his false brother Typhon enticed him into a chest and cast him into the Nile; how Isis, his queen, searched the wide earth for her husband's body, and at last found it buried at Byblon in Syria, where it had been cast up by the sea; how Typhon again possessed himself of the corpse and cut it into fourteen pieces and scattered them over the land of Egypt; and how the mourning wife sought diligently for the severed limbs, and buried each where it lay, and the head was buried at Abydos. Then Osiris, who now ruled the world of shades, made armour for Horus, his son, and sent him out to do battle with Typhon, who was vanquished, but not slain outright. And Osiris came back to reign with Isis. How the setting and reappearance of the sun is figured in this beautiful myth, and how the conflict between Osiris and Typhon was made to symbolise the struggle between spiritual and intellectual as well as physical light and darkness, the fight between right and wrong, between life and death, till the resurrection of Osiris became the type and symbol of the immortality of the soul, is known to all. To every pious Egyptian the story of the risen Osiris was a presage of his own resurrection, and though, like the god, his body must be buried in the sand of the Western desert, like him too shall he rise again and triumph over death. We see this idea in the representation of the myth in many temples from Abydos to Philæ; and separate chapels were

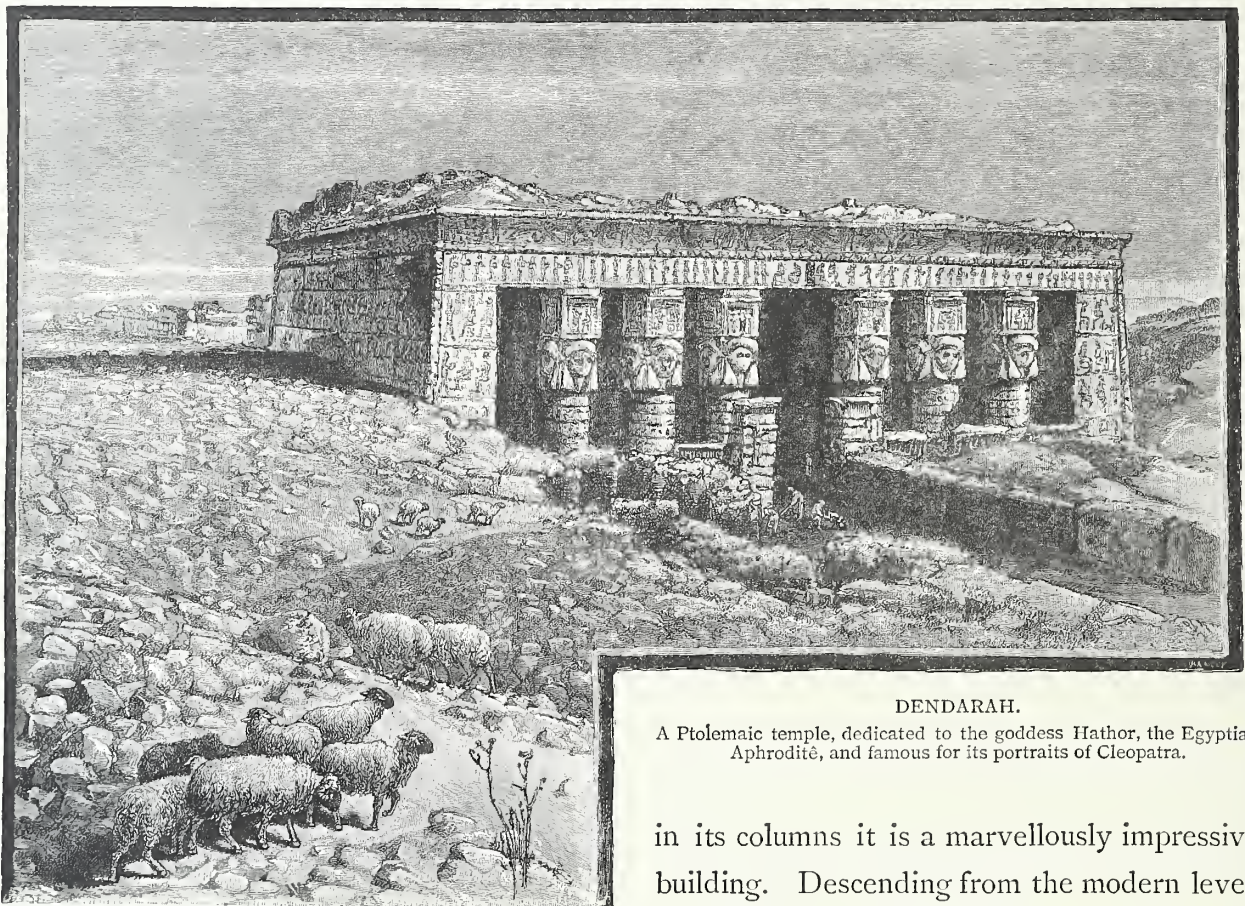


SHADÛF.

The weight of the water in the bucket is balanced by the lump of Nile mud at the other end of the swinging beam, and the water is thus raised to the mouth of the canal with little effort: but pulling down the bucket is hard work, and the machine is ruinously extravagant in labour.

set apart for this special subject ; and these "Mammisi" form a notable feature in all Ptolemaic temples, such as Dendarah, Edfû, and Philæ, when Greek philosophy had adopted this myth of Osiris and Isis and sublimated its significance.

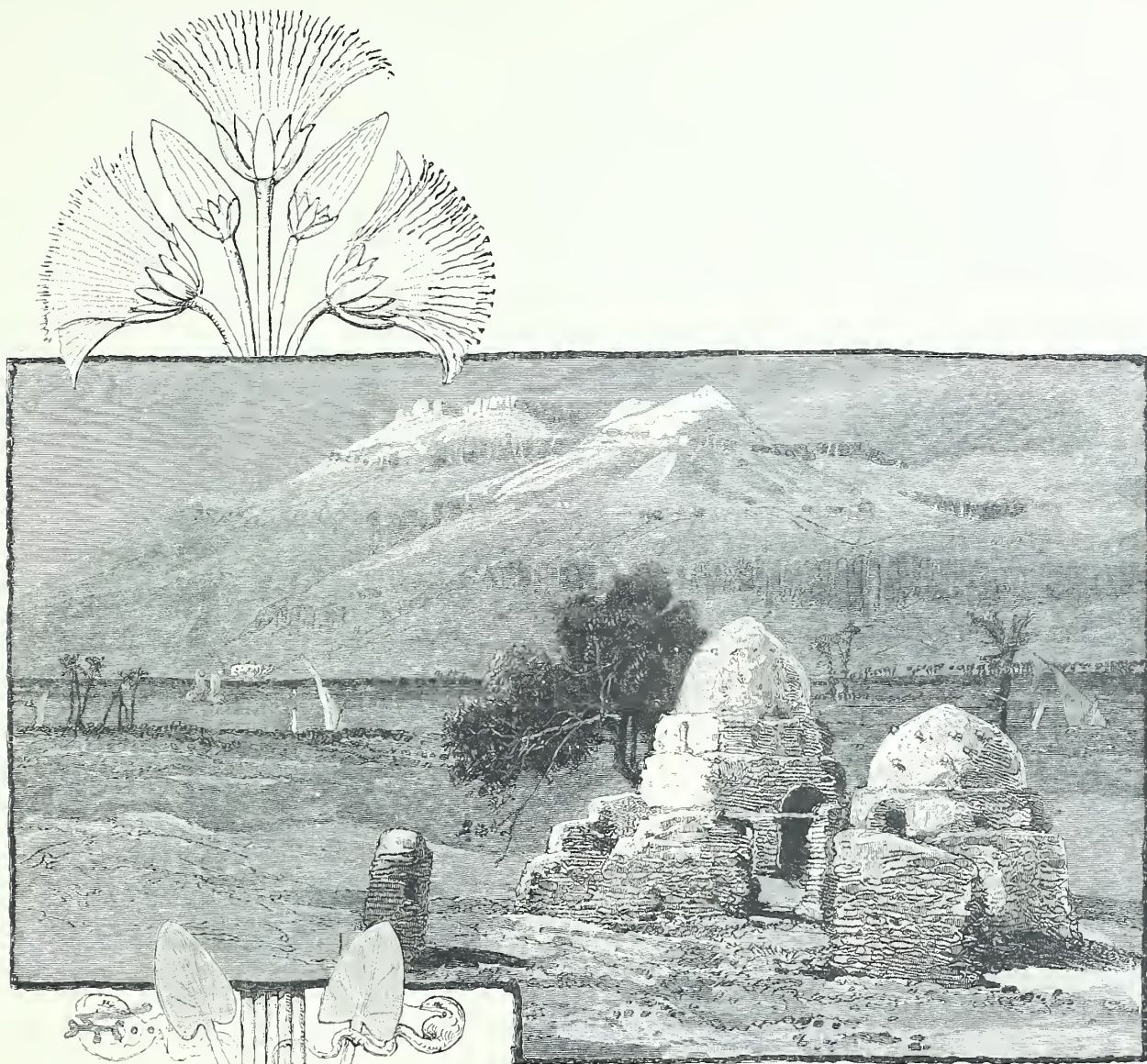
Before Thebes is reached there is yet another famous monument, and this is Dendarah, the first Egyptian temple the traveller usually visits on his voyage up the Nile. Dendarah is quite a late creation. It belongs to Ptolemaic times, and was completed under Tiberius and Nero; when Christ was living at Jerusalem. The general plan of this beautiful building will be described hereafter. At present it is enough to say that in spite of a certain grotesqueness



DENDARAH.

A Ptolemaic temple, dedicated to the goddess Hathor, the Egyptian Aphroditê, and famous for its portraits of Cleopatra.

in its columns it is a marvellously impressive building. Descending from the modern level, raised far above that of the temple, we stand in a glorious hall of columns, and as we penetrate to the sanctuary the effect of the long avenue of pillars and portals is grand beyond expression. Dendarah, however, can hardly compare with its twin temple, Edfû ; and though it has elements of beauty that Edfû lacks, the latter temple far excels it in size and preservation, and in the perfection of its details. Yet Dendarah has one attraction which is perhaps its greatest charm to the ordinary tourist : it offers several portraits of Cleopatra. How far they are faithful representations of the queen of her age it is difficult to say ; but the impression may be hazarded that if they are true to nature, Cleopatra's empire over men's hearts must have rested upon some other power than beauty.



THE PLAIN OF THEBES FROM NEAR KARNAK.

In the foreground is seen a modern saint's tomb; in the middle-distance, the lateen sails of the Nile boats, the twin Colossi, and the Rameséum stand out above the river, and the view is closed by the finest mountain in Egypt, whose steep cliffs are honeycombed with tombs, and whose towering mass guards and conceals the gloomy "Valley of the Kings" behind.

THEBES.

IN all the long course of the Nile there is no site that can compare with that of Thebes. Nile scenery possesses a strange beauty of its own, but it is a monotonous unchanging beauty. Long lines of brown banks, a strip of vivid green behind them, narrow or wide according to the breadth of the valley and the facilities for irrigation, and beyond, closing in the view, a low rampart of yellow-brown hills—these are the only features of Egyptian scenery that meet the traveller's eye for mile after mile of his Nile voyage. Here and there a village, with its clump of palms, its shapeless mud huts and queer-looking pigeon towers, its sheykh's house and the little whitewashed dome which marks the tomb of a local celebrity, breaks the monotony; and at wider intervals a veritable town, with a few fairly-built houses and a couple

of minarets, to show that, whatever it may appear, it is not merely a village like the rest, makes an agreeable diversion. But, as a rule, brown river, brown banks, and pale brown hills constitute the Egyptian triad in the unemotional tourist's recollection.

Thebes upsets all such generalisations. It is not in the least like the rest of the Nile scenery. The Libyan hills, which have hitherto kept away at some distance from the river, low and dim, and rather like the South Downs of Sussex without their grass, draw close to the bank at Dendarah, just before Thebes is reached, and then suddenly sweep away again in a noble curve, rising at the same time to the, in Egypt, unexampled height of twelve hundred feet. The Arabian hills, on the eastern side, which have hugged the bank most of the way from Cairo south, seem here to have taken the hint from their Libyan rivals; for they too trend away from the Nile, only to return and almost meet their antagonists as they curve round again to the river and close in upon the view just above Thebes. Thus by corresponding curves the mountains open out a great amphitheatre, such as a king would choose to build his capital therein. Instead of a strip of vegetation, a broad green plain now borders the Nile on either hand, rich with bean-fields and clover and all manner of corn; and beyond the sandy slope that edges the plain, there rises no longer the low undulating ridge which merely marks the limit of the desert plateau, but a stern barrier of precipices, scored with ancient torrent beds and honeycombed with the tombs of the mighty dead. No one who has ever seen it can forget the first sight of this plain from the heights of the Libyan hills. Our earliest impression of Thebes should, in prudence, be taken from here. Instead of watching the boat's gradual approach, the appearance bit by bit of a pylon here and an obelisk there, and losing the general effect by the slow appreciation of details, as almost all travellers are compelled to do, we should arrive at Luxor by night, cross the river blindfold early in the morning, and never open our eyes till we are safe in the gorge which traverses the Libyan range and nothing but yellow rock is to be seen. After threading the "Valley of the Kings"—a bare rugged ravine scooped in the rock by an extinct torrent, where the baked cliffs reflect the blazing noonday sun till the gorge seems red-hot—and then clambering over the crest of the hill that divides the valley from the plain, the view of Thebes comes upon us as a delicious shock. Below our feet the mountains seem to overhang the plain; their threatening cliffs girdle it like the outspread arms of a giant; while opposite, the Arabian rampart, accepting the challenge like a jealous rival, stretches out its answering embrace, and raises its three peaks in vain attempt to measure itself against its towering adversary. And in the midst, the beautiful fertile plain seems, woman-like, to enjoy this strife for her possession, and, cool in the waters of her father Nile, to smile serenely through the sunlight at the hot endeavours of her emulous suitors.

Nothing more lovely than this green amphitheatre, with its border of yellow sand and rampart of cliffs, can be seen in all the land of Egypt. As we descend by the steep path that leads to the terraced temple of Deyr El-Bahry, which Queen Hatasu, sister of Thothmes and earliest of the great queens of history, built as an antechamber to her tomb, and look across the plain and over the river to the lofty obelisk—tallest in Egypt—which she set up in the

court of her father's temple at Karnak, new and wonderful points of view are reached at every step; and as we approach the level of the plain, and, leaving the platforms of Deyr El-Bahry, wander past the Assasîf to the long colonnade which shows how great a temple the Ramesêum has once been—and with Kurnah on our left and Medînet Habû on our right, ride back through the scented bean-fields where the two colossi keep guard, till we reach the Nile again, with the temples and minarets of Luxor rising opposite in picturesque confusion—we shall say with a Hebrew poet that no city could be “better than the city of Amon, that was enthroned among the streams, that had the waters round about her, whose rampart was the Nile and her wall the river-sea” (Nahum iii. 8).

The natural beauty of Thebes is not, however, in the eyes of most people, its chief title to admiration. Its girdle of hills encloses not only one of Nature's masterpieces, but some of the most marvellous achievements of human genius, skill, and perseverance. There are more than twenty temples at Thebes—as many, that is to say, as all the rest of the surviving temples of Egypt put together—and in variety of design, grandeur of scale, and richness of decoration, and also, unhappily, in the ruthlessness of their ruin, they have no rivals. Many will prefer, for perfection of plan and comparative preservation, such exquisite examples of Ptolemaic art as the temples of Edfû and Dendarah; the design and the matchless sculptures of Abydos enthrall the admiration of others; while, for a bold and captivating realism in the wall-paintings, combined with an almost incredible massiveness in the masonry, the buildings of the Memphite empire stand without peer. But Thebes has something of all these, and something more. It has the massiveness of Memphis applied to columns and roofs and colossi, instead of square blocks of stone; it has graphic wall-sculptures, less natural and vivid, no doubt, than Sakkarah, and without the extraordinary, almost Greek, purity of Abydos, but still vigorous and artistic, and representing, moreover, not merely a man's domestic life and country pursuits, but the victories of the greatest kings of antiquity and the erection of the most magnificent of ancient monuments, the works and wars of conquerors instead of the sports and business of country magnates. And all this is found at Thebes in such abundance and variety, on such an immense scale, in such endless forms and repetitions, that the mind fails to grasp the outline in the lavishness of detail, and appalled at the number and vastness of the fragments of Thebes, abandons the thoughts of analysis or comparison, and by acclamation accepts “No Amon, enthroned among the streams” of its canals, as, after Memphis, the chief of the monumental sites of Egypt.

Yet what we now see of Thebes, the monster ruins that cover so immense a space, represent but a fraction of what Thebes once has been. Even of the temples, not one is even nearly entire. Karnak is a heap of ruins, fallen columns, broken obelisks, walls and roofs thrown down; Luxor is half buried and in part destroyed; Kurnah is in terrible decay; the greater part of the Ramesêum has disappeared; the temple of Amenoph has entirely vanished, except its two colossal sentinels; Medînet Habû has suffered partial martyrdom at the hands of the Copts, who built a village over it; and how many other temples, of which we know

nothing, have gone without a trace? But besides this demolition and decay, where is Thebes itself, the city “of the hundred gates,” of which Homer sang?—

οὐδ' ὅσα Θήβας
 Λίγυπτιας, ὅθι πλεῖστα ἔδομοις ἐν κτήματα κίτται,
 αἴθ' ἐκατόμυλοί εἰσι, διηκόσιοι δ' ἀν' ἐκάστην
 ἄνδρες ἔξοιχνεῦσι συν ἱπποισιν καὶ ὄχεσφιν.—IL. ix. 381—384.

Here are some of its temples, whose pylons doubtless formed the “hundred gates,” but the city itself seems to have been swallowed up by the earth. Of all this great metropolis, which once could send out twenty thousand armed chariots, and whose κτήματα furnished indeed a mighty spoil to the Persian Cambyses, of the capital of the victorious Amenoph, Thothmes, and Rameses, absolutely nothing remains—not a trace of a wall—hardly even a mound of rubbish! Like Memphis, Thebes itself has vanished utterly from the face of the earth. Like Memphis, also, Thebes has left behind monuments of its religion which three and four thousand years of neglect and wilful destruction, and finally of the ravages of indiscriminating affection, have not availed to destroy.

The city of Thebes has vanished because it was not built to endure. The ancient Egyptians laid no store by their dwelling houses; they regarded life only as a halting-place on the journey to the next world, and their abode here was too transitory to be worth elaboration. They spent all their skill and ingenuity in constructing dwelling-places for their dead selves, where the *Ka* or “double” of their soul would agreeably pass his time in contemplation of the scenes of his past life which he would find depicted on the walls of the tomb. All the records we possess of the old Memphite empire are in tombs. The pyramids are tombs; the pictures at Sakkarah are on the walls of the antechambers of tombs; the sculptures of Meydûm are sepulchral monuments. Even of the second great period of Egyptian history, that represented mainly by the Twelfth Dynasty, our chief information is derived from the tombs of Beny Hasan. It is there that we see Egyptian society, as it was twenty-five centuries before Christ, depicted on the walls of a family burying-place. And at Thebes the same principle holds good. The monuments that survive are those that were built not for this life but for eternity. The palaces of Rameses have vanished, but the monuments he built for his soul's welfare bear testimony to his power and wealth in every degree of latitude from the Mediterranean to the second cataract. In a wall-picture we see the third Rameses caressing the chin of a favoured damsel, who supports the monarch's elbow with her hand to enable him to stroke her without fatigue; but we see this, not in the palace where such blandishments would naturally take place, but in a side structure of the temple of Medinet Habû. The position is so unexpected that scholars have called this side structure the “Pavilion of Rameses;” but there is little doubt that it formed part of the temple, and that the picture of the king caressing a lady was only a phase of the general representation of the kingly career which is the chief aim in Theban wall-decoration, after the relations of the sovereign with the gods have been fitly depicted.

Most of the temples on the Libyan side of Thebes are merely developments of the entrance chambers of the tombs of the early empire. Just as the daily surroundings of Ti

are depicted in the entrance chambers of his tomb, while his body lies buried at the bottom of a concealed shaft, so the history of Rameses is represented on the walls of his temple in the Theban plain, while his body was deposited in the gloomy Valley of the Kings behind the



THE VALLEY OF THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS.

The interior of one of the tombs, dimly lighted by those torches wherewith travellers blacken and destroy the monuments, is shown beneath.

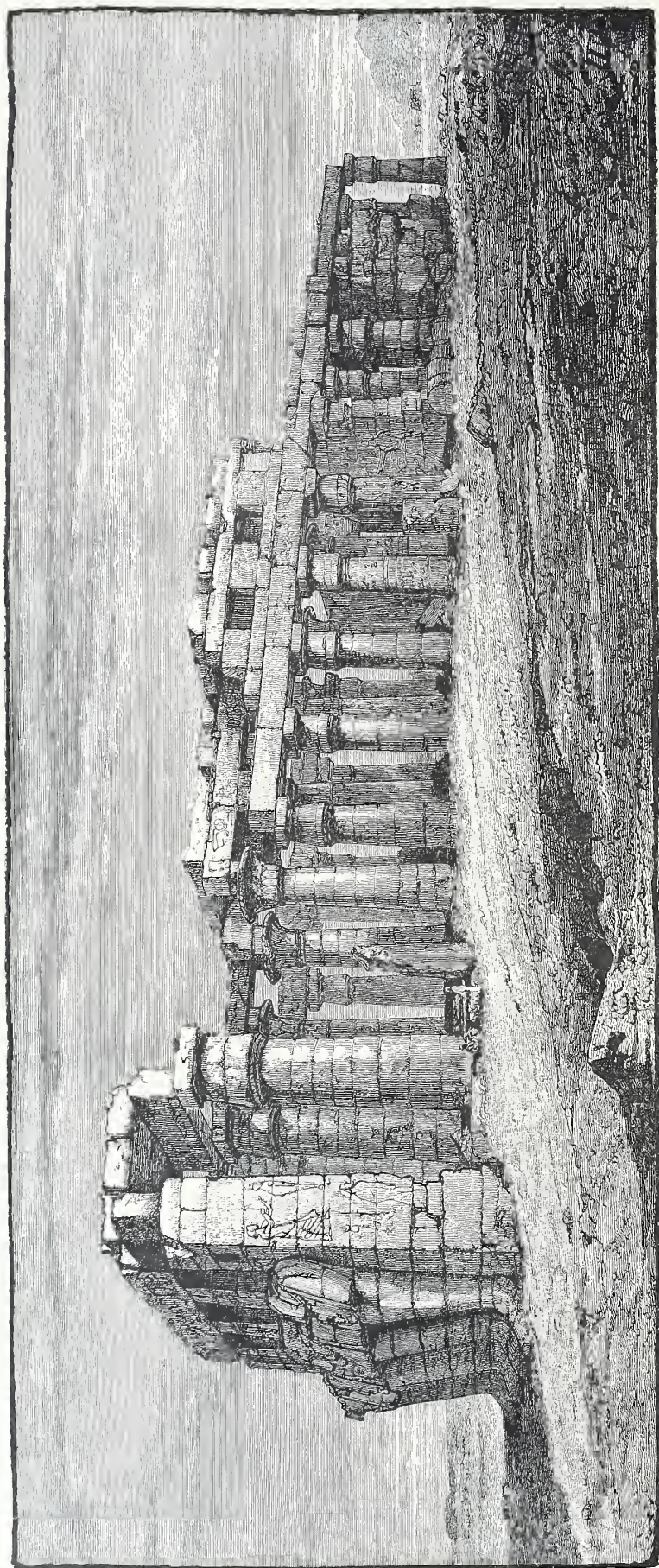
Libyan mountains. Secrecy demanded so retired a position for the sepulchre, and in the narrow valley there was no space to build an adequate memorial chapel on a scale conformant with Nineteenth Dynasty ideas. The two parts were therefore separated: the tomb itself was excavated in the Libyan rocks, and the memorial chapel, now developed into a complex and

elaborate temple of many halls and chambers, was built on the plain below. The tombs in this one valley number twenty-five (and there are hundreds in other parts of the mountains), and from Amenoph III. to the end of the Twentieth Dynasty not a single royal tomb but that of Horus is missing. The valley is a singularly impressive site for a burying-ground. Steep cliffs shut it in on every side, not a blade of grass or living thing can be seen, nothing but burning rock on the right hand and on the left. Here and there a steep slope leads down to a gloomy cavern's mouth. We enter a long tunnel-like passage, lofty and wide, but growing more intensely dark at every step. Candles show us that the walls are covered with pictures, and as we enter the larger chamber or chambers to which the passage leads, the eye grows accustomed to the partial light, and the design of the artist becomes clear. It is the progress of the soul through the underworld that we are witnessing in these pictures which line the dimly-lighted walls.

"Immediately on entering the tomb the visitor finds himself transported into a new world. The almost joyous pictures of Sakkarah and Beny Hasan have altogether disappeared. The defunct is no more to be seen at home in the midst of his family; no more making of furniture, no more building of ships; no more extensive farmyards, with cattle, oxen, antelopes, wild goats, geese, ducks, demoiselle cranes, marching in procession before the stewards. All has become, so to speak, fantastic and chimerical. Even the gods themselves assume strange forms. Long serpents glide hither and thither round the rooms or stand erect against the doorways. Some convicted malefactors are being decapitated, and others are precipitated into the flames. Well might a visitor feel a kind of horror creeping over him, if he did not realise that, after all, underneath all these strange representations lies the most consoling of all dogmas, that which vouchsafes eternal happiness to the soul after the many trials of this life. It has been said that before according to their kings the honour of burial the Egyptians passed judgment upon them. This legend must of course be understood in an allegorical sense. The judgment of the soul after being separated from the body, and the many trials which it will be called upon to overcome by the aid only of such virtues as it has evinced while on earth, constitute the subject-matter of the almost endless representations which cover the walls of the tomb, from the entrance to the extreme end of the last chamber. The serpents standing erect over each portal, darting out venom, are the guardians of the gates of heaven; the soul cannot pass unless justified by works of piety and benevolence. The long texts displayed over other parts of the walls are magnificent hymns to which the soul gives utterance in honour of the divinity whose glory and greatness it thus celebrates. When once the dead has been adjudged worthy of life eternal these ordeals are at an end; he becomes part of the divine essence, and henceforward a pure spirit, he wanders over the vast regions where the stars for ever shine. The soul has no sooner left the body than we are called upon, from room to room, to witness its progress as it appears before the gods and becomes gradually purified, until at last, in the grand hall at the end of the tomb, we are present at its final admission into that life 'which a second death shall never reach.'"

* Mariette, "Monuments of Upper Egypt," English translation, pages 236—238.

The memorial chapels belonging to these tombs were built in the plain between the mountains and the Nile. The temple of Kurnah is a cenotaph erected by Seti I. to the memory of his father, Rameses I.; the tombs of both are in the Valley of the Kings, and that of Seti, generally known as Belzoni's from the name of its discoverer, is the most famous of all these tombs, not only for its length (which measures four hundred and seventy feet from the entrance to the fallen rock which now blocks up the end), but for the beauty and extent of its wall sculptures, now unhappily greatly defaced by exposure and vandalism. The alabaster sarcophagus which Belzoni found here is now in the Soane Museum; but Seti's body was discovered among the mummies in the pit at Deyr El-Bahry, and is in the Bûlâk Museum, side by side with the other great Theban monarchs. The next temple was famous in classical times as the "Tomb of Ozymandias" or "of Memnon," but it is really the memorial chapel erected by Rameses the Great to his own glory, and therefore with better reason called the Ramesêum. Of this splendid monument, which once had the full array of temple ornament—its two noble gateways, its open court surrounded by a cloister supported by caryatid columns, leading to a hall of many columns, where the heavy stone roofing slabs lent a religious shade to the covered sanctuary beyond—little remains. The lofty gateways are half destroyed, most of the Osiride cloister has disappeared; but the long central vista of tall calyx-topped columns, and the side aisles of lower lotus bud capitals, representing the well-proportioned and well-spaced "hall of assembly," are enough to show that the Ramesêum must have been one of the most perfect of all the monuments of Egypt. As we stand in the shadow of the mighty columns, on which the successors of the Pharaohs have here and there painted the figure of a Christian saint, we begin to realise the majesty of the Theban sanctuary and the magnificence of the king who could rear such a temple to his praise. There on the pylons are the spectacles of his triumphs; above all the supreme scene where, deserted by his body-guard and surrounded by the enemy, Rameses throws himself alone into the thick of the fray, with his single arm deals death around him, kills with his own hand the chief of the Khetas, crushes the flying foe under his chariot wheels; and, when his officers crowd before him with servile felicitations, denounces them for their cowardice, as the proud inscription runs: "The princes and captains did not join hands with me in fight; by myself have I done battle; I have put to flight thousands of nations, and I was all alone!" The great conqueror was never wearied of recalling this deed of prowess; we see it twice in the Ramesêum, again at Luxor, at Karnak, at Abu-Simbel; and close beside the sculptured record of his courage, on the second pylon of the Ramesêum, lie the shattered fragments of the statue of Rameses himself, "the most gigantic figure that the Egyptians ever carved out of a single block of granite." This huge colossus once measured fifty-seven feet in height and weighed nearly twelve hundred tons; but now it lies strewn upon the earth, broken, by what superhuman power we cannot guess, into a hundred pieces (see page 197). Shelley's fine description of the face, quoted beneath the cut, is almost as imaginative as his interpretation of the hieroglyphic inscription.



THE RAMESSEUM.

The remains of the great hypostyle hall of the Temple of Ramesses II. The figures of Christian saints have been painted on some of the columns.

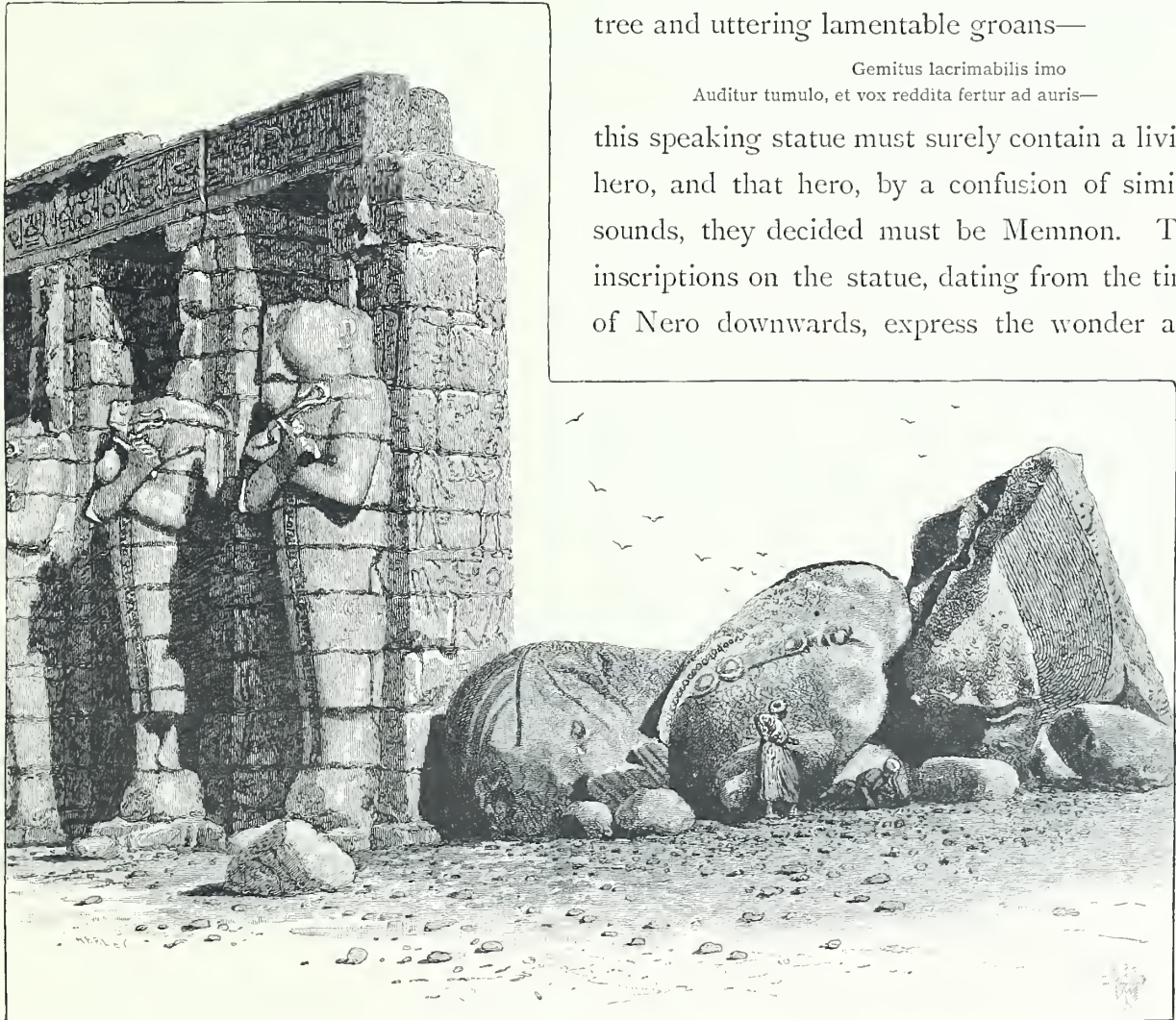
Next to the Ramesseum once stood another memorial temple, sacred to Amenoph III., whose tomb is in the western valley in the mountains behind. Not even the foundations of the Amenophseum are now to be traced, but in front of where the pylons must once have been the two colossi which once guarded the temple still stand side by side amid the green fields. These twin giants, representing Amenoph III. seated with his hands on his knees, are perhaps, after the Pyramids, the best-known monuments in Egypt. That on the north (the nearest in the cut, page 199) is the famous "Vocal Memnon," which Roman visitors identified with the son of Tithonus and Eos, and forthwith covered the throne and legs of the colossus with inscriptions in honour of the valiant hero who came to the aid of the Trojans, and slew Antilocus, and withstood the godlike Achilles himself. The identification probably arose out of a misunderstanding of an Egyptian word; but an accident invested the mistake with a romantic glamour. The northern statue, once, like its mate, a monolith of breccia, fifty-one feet high (or with the pedestal sixty-four), was shattered to its middle—it is said

by an earthquake which shook the monuments of Thebes in the year 27 B.C.—and this accident was the main cause of its after fame. For from the ruined giant there now came forth a sweet sound, as of a human voice, when the morning sun touched him with its early beams. The phenomenon was doubtless due to the effect of heat upon a cracked stone wet with dew—some say a shrewd priest worked the oracle from within—but to the Greeks and Romans, who were then the chief Nile tourists, the “Vocal Memnon” was nothing less than miraculous.

Like the luckless Polydorus imprisoned in his tree and uttering lamentable groans—

*Gemitus lacrimabilis imo
Auditur tumulo, et vox reddita fertur ad auris—*

this speaking statue must surely contain a living hero, and that hero, by a confusion of similar sounds, they decided must be Memnon. The inscriptions on the statue, dating from the time of Nero downwards, express the wonder and



THE FALLEN COLOSSUS OF RAMESES.

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed :
And on the pedestal these words appear :—
“ My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair ! ”—SHELLEY.

delight of tourists of the ancient world who heard the morning song of Memnon. Some are in Greek, some in Latin, some prose and some verse ; and the legend which they associate with the statue is thus told in the lines inscribed on it by Asclepiodotus :—

O sea-born Thetis, know that Memnon lives,—
Slain though he was beneath Dardanian walls,—
And softly sings beneath the Libyan hills,
Where spreading Nile parts hundred-gated Thebes :
Yet thy Achilles, whom no fray could sate,
Speaks not in Trojan or Thessalian plain.

People came from all parts to hear the plaintive song which Memnon raised to his mother, the rosy-fingered Dawn, and those who heard it cut their names and elegiacs. One inscription tells us that "Sabina Augusta, the consort of the Emperor Cæsar Augustus [Hadrian], twice heard the voice of Memnon during the first hour;" another is in verse, and ends—

Ταύτοις τοῖς ἐλέγοις Πετρωνιανός σε γεραίρω
 αὐδῆντι θεῷ μουσικά δῶρα διδούς
 Πατρόθεν οὔνομ' ἔχων Λουκίλιος, Ἴταλος ἀνὴρ
 ἀλλὰ σὺ μοι ζῶειν δηρὸν, ἄναξ, χάρισαι·

while a third testifies that the voice was twice heard "when the sun left the majestic waves of ocean" by Gemellos, who "came here with his well-beloved wife Rufilla and his children" (*συν κεδνῇ ἀλόχῳ Ῥουφίλλῃ καὶ τεκέεσσι*).

At length the emperor Septimius Severus essayed the dangerous office of restorer, and reaped the usual fruits. He rebuilt the ruined upper part of the statue with layers of sandstone, and thereby silenced Memnon for ever. Severus was the last who ever heard the song to the dawn, and, though Juvenal could write—

Dimidio magicæ resonant ubi Memnone chordæ,

there is now no voice; the two weird sentinels in solemn silence sit and brood over the glory that is departed from them and the house that is left desolate.

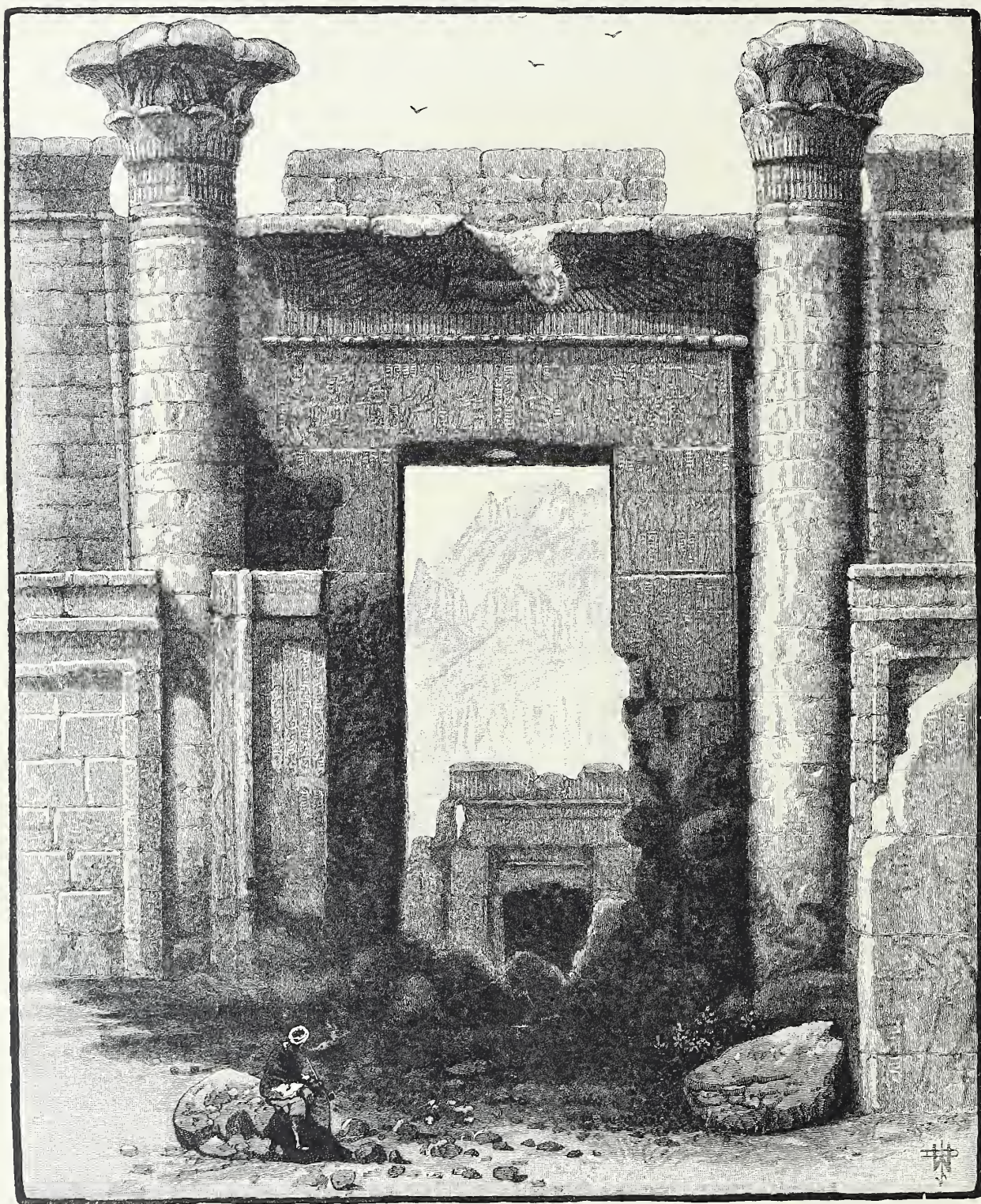
The southernmost of the memorial temples of Thebes is that of Rameses III., or Medînet Habû. His tomb in the Valley of the Kings, generally known as Bruce's, is one of the most magnificent, and though its sculptures cannot compare with those of Seti's tomb, the subjects in the side chambers are peculiarly interesting as records of the life of the Egyptians, and some, as the well-known picture of the Harpers, are executed with exceeding skill. But if Rameses III.'s tomb may be contrasted unfavourably with others, his temple in the plain below may challenge comparison with any in Egypt. Setting aside the minor temple of Thothmes III.—which shows signs of frequent and ill-judged restoration, yet presents a fine vista of pylons and courts (see page 200), albeit the proportions are mean—and confining the attention to the large temple of Rameses III., it is impossible to deny it one of the first places in the long series of Egyptian monuments. None certainly is more impressive. You enter, through immense pylons, two spacious courts, both open to the sky, the first with a covered colonnade at each side, the second cloistered all round; the columns supporting the roof of the cloister have heavy lotus-bud capitals, or else the colonnade consists of a row of square pillars, with the much-defaced figure of Osiris, or rather of Rameses III. in the attributes of Osiris, sculptured on the side next the court. The second of these magnificent quadrangles was once used as a Christian church, for Roman pillars are still standing on one side, dwarfed by their gigantic neighbours (see page 201), and many lie around on the floor. Beyond is the hall of columns, which must have been too crowded for a just effect, but the merits of which are now beyond discussion, since the columns have all been cut down to four or six feet from the ground to suit the requirements of the Coptic settlement which till lately encumbered the spot. Various chambers and sanctuaries lay beyond the hypostyle hall, but they are mainly destroyed now.



THE VOCAL MEMNON.

The nearer colossus formerly gave forth a low sound when the rays of the rising sun first glanced upon it. The "Song of Memnon" was famous in Roman times, and is even said to have been heard in the present century.

The so-called "Pavilion of Rameses," however, stands in comparatively good preservation some way in front of the great temple, and beside the temple of Thothmes III. In truth this

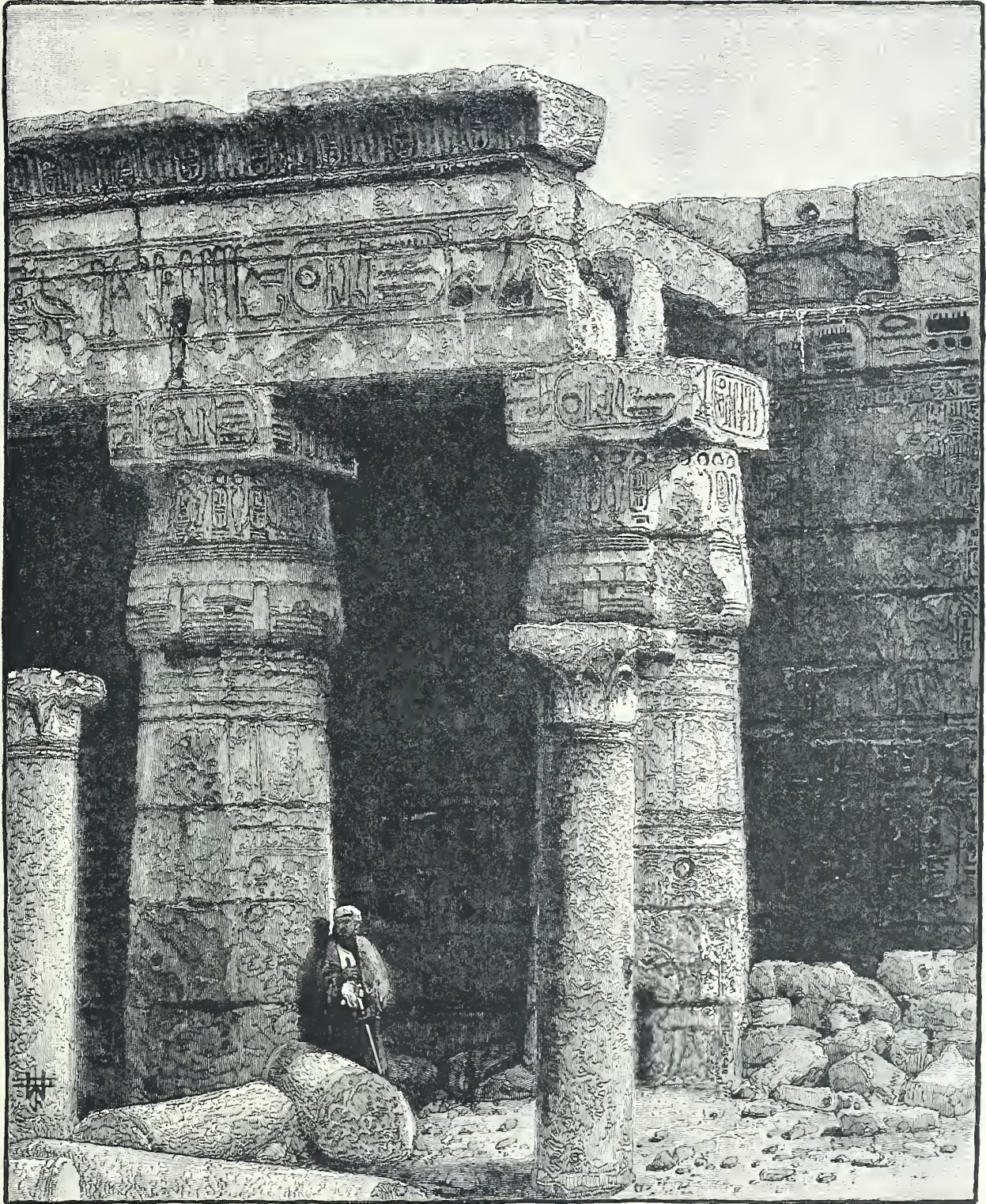


PYLON OF THE TEMPLE OF THOTHMES III. AT MEDINET HABU.

Commonly called the small temple, in contradistinction to its greater neighbour. It has been restored and added to in Ptolemaic and Roman times.

"pavilion" is very like an improved propylon. Two pylon-like towers enclose a little court, and are joined together by chambers built over the gateway which leads into the court. It

curiously resembles the fortified entrance to a Norman castle, and we can almost fancy we see a drawbridge and portcullis, and the "youth over whose head scarce five-and-twenty summers



THE COURT OF THE GREAT TEMPLE OF RAMESES III. AT MEDÎNET HABÛ.

The short pillars in front belonged to the church which the Copts erected within this noble peristyle court, and of which many other columns strew the ground.

had shed their bloom" of the romances. The floors of the several stories over the gateway have disappeared, but the holes for the beams can be seen, and the slots for the bolts and

hinges of the folding windows. Grotesque caryatids support the balconies under the side windows. The whole tower or gate—donjon keep we should like to call it—is unique in Egyptian architecture, and, like the rest of the buildings of Medînet Habû, leaves an ineffaceable impress on the mind.

These four memorial temples all stood on the western plain, on the same side of the river as the tombs in which the kings their builders were buried. Indeed it is rare to find any funeral monuments on the east side of the Nile, Beny Hasan excepted. The notion of the sun's setting in the west, or rather going down into a pit near Abydos, was so closely associated in Egyptian belief with the passage of the soul to the under-world, that a tomb in the west seemed most appropriate for him who must travel the road wherein Osiris had journeyed. The pyramids and all the graves of the great necropolis of Memphis and Sakkarah are on the west of the Nile; and on this side the Theban kings excavated their tombs and built their memorial temples.

The eastern bank has also its temples, but they differ from those we have been considering in several important respects. They are not memorial temples built by one sovereign in his own honour, but a collection of temples erected by many kings at different periods in honour of the great Theban triad of gods—Amen, the male, Mout, the female, and Khons, the offspring of the two. Each ruler strove to improve upon the work of his predecessor in raising a worthy fane for the local divinities. One king built a sanctuary, another a huge propylon, a third a hall of columns, a fourth a peristyle court; others added side chambers and subsidiary temples, or adorned the approach with avenues of sphinxes or rams. This aggregate of pious zeal became the national temple, the centre of the worship of Thebes, which once meant the centre of Egypt. The great congeries of temples and portions of temples on the east bank, known now, from the miserable villages that have grown up over them, as Karnak and Luxor, are agglutinations of this kind. King after king has had a hand in increasing or adorning this wonderful group, and from the days of Osirtasen of the Twelfth Dynasty to the age of Ptolemy Physkon, nine dynasties and more than twenty monarchs have had their part in the great work. In the product of twenty-five centuries and innumerable architects it were vain to seek for unity of design, and Karnak is a bewildering heap of ruins in which it is hard to trace the faintest resemblance to the ordinary type of an Egyptian temple.

That type is best seen in the later temples by which the Ptolemies worthily carried on the traditions of the Theban empire. Dendarah or Edfû, by reason partly of their better preservation, partly because their architecture had become organized and defined by the influence of Greek method and precision, offer clearer examples of the Egyptian temple than Karnak, and the student may most easily advance from the consideration of one of these well-arranged Ptolemaic temples to the study of the more complex and indefinite temples of Thebes. Mariette has well said:—

“The Egyptian temple must not be confused with that of Greece, with the Christian church, or with the Mohammadan mosque. It was not a place for the meeting of the faithful

or for the recital of common prayer; no public ritual was celebrated within it; no one was admitted to it except the priests and the king. The temple was a kind of royal oratory, a monument reared by the king in token of his own piety, and in order to purchase the favour of the gods.

“The elaborate decoration with which all the walls of the temples are covered is only to be explained by admitting this point of departure. The essential element of this decoration is the picture; many pictures are arranged symmetrically side by side, and tiers above tiers of pictures cover the walls from floor to ceiling. This arrangement never varies, and the same may be said of the general significance of the pictures: on the one hand the king, on the other one or more deities—these are the subjects of all the compositions. The king makes an offering (meats, fruits, flowers, emblems) to the god, and asks for some favour at his hands; in his answer the deity grants the favour demanded.

“The whole decoration of a temple consisted, therefore, in an act of adoration on the part of the monarch repeated in various forms. The temple was, therefore, the exclusive personal monument of the prince by whom it was founded and decorated. This fact explains the presence of those precious representations of battles which adorn the external walls of certain temples. The king ascribed all his successes in the field to the immediate protection of the gods. In combating the enemies of Egypt, in bringing them by thousands to the capital, in employing them upon the construction of their temples, he was performing an act as agreeable to the gods as when offering incense, flowers, and the limbs of animals sacrificed. By such deeds he proved his piety and merited the continuation of those favours for which the erection of a temple was meant to be an acknowledgment.

“The ceremonies consisted for the most part in great processions, issuing from the sanctuary to be marshalled in the hypostyle hall, and afterwards traversing the open courts which lay between the buildings of the temple and the great wall which encloses the whole. They perambulated the terraced roofs, they launched upon the lake the sacred barque with its many coloured streamers. Upon a few rare occasions the priests, with the sacred images, sallied from the enclosure which ordinarily shielded their rites from profane eyes, and at the head of a brilliant flotilla directed their course to some other city, either by the Nile or by the waterway which they called ‘the sacred canal.’” *

The two chief requisites of an Egyptian temple, therefore, were (1) such an arrangement of halls and passages as would allow room for long processions, and (2) strong chambers wherein to store the sacred emblems, barques, vestments, and other costly treasures appertaining to the rites. In two words, length and strength were the essential qualities of a temple. Accordingly we find the former secured by a series of avenues, halls, and courts, one behind the other; while the quality of strength or secrecy was obtained by lofty enclosing walls without and skilfully concealed secret chambers within.

It is but rarely that the original external appearance of an Egyptian temple can be realised

* Mariette, *apud* Perrot and Chipiez, “History of Ancient Egyptian Art,” vol. i. page 435, English translation by W. Armstrong. 1883.



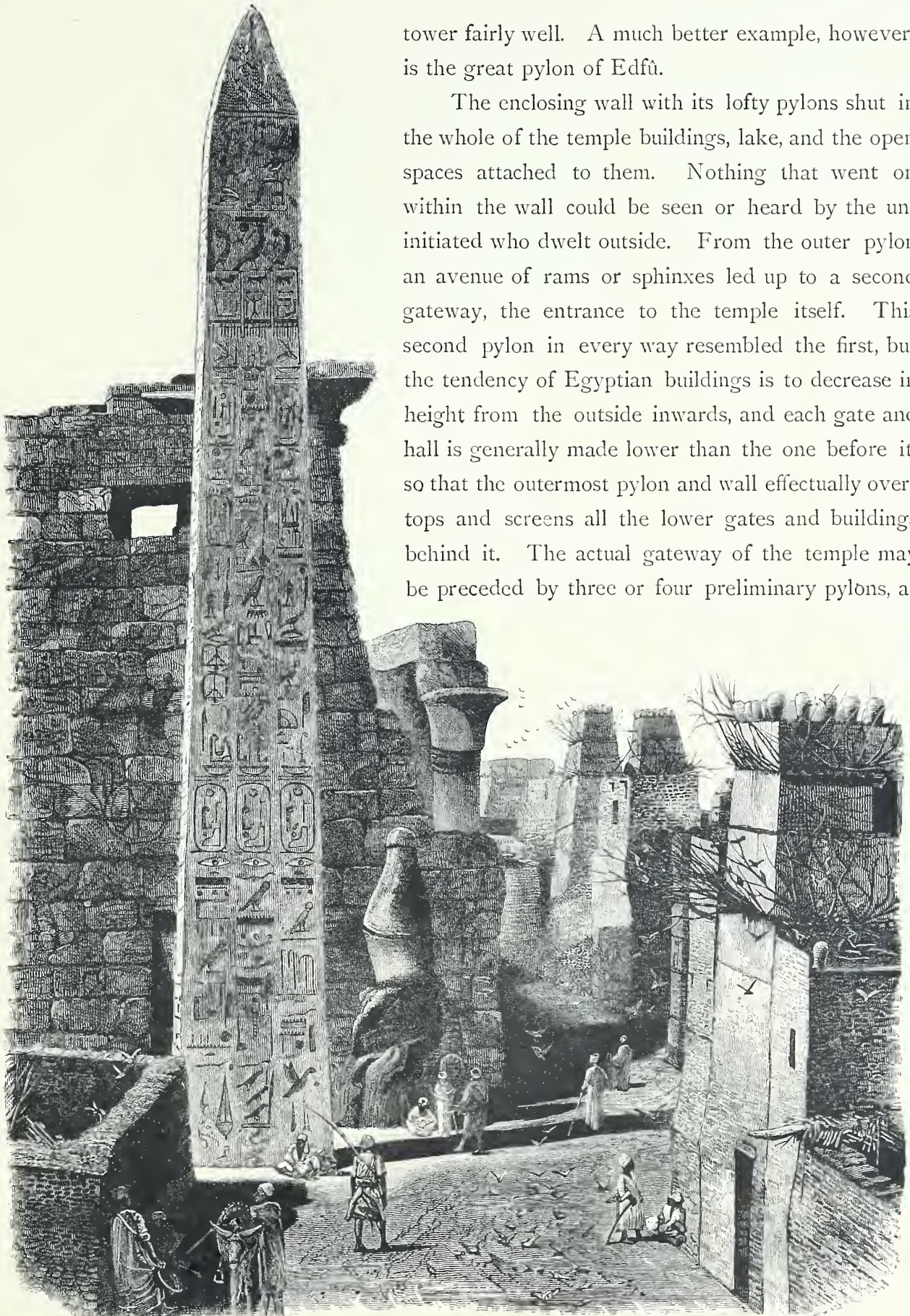
THE MOSQUE OF LUXOR.

Ornamented in black upon a white-washed ground in the manner characteristic of Upper Egypt.

at the present day. In most cases the wall of enclosure is gone, and the interior of the temple is exposed to view. At Karnak, the vast vallum which surrounds the ruins shows how massive this crude brick wall must have been. The recent excavations at Pithom show that the wall of that strong city was twenty-four feet thick, and this measure is doubtless but a moderate one, for the vallum at Karnak is thirty-three feet. These massive outer walls were proportionately high, and were crowned with a crenelated parapet. At certain places they were pierced with gates, and here the wall rose into one of those lofty gateways which are known as *pylons*, i.e. a high entrance between two towers, slightly tapered, with flagstaffs in front of them, and all their surface covered over with sculptures. An example of a rather plain and defaced pylon (of the temple of Khons, at Karnak) may be seen in the cut on page 210, where the Ptolemaic gate in the foreground has lost its twin towers, but that behind shows the left-hand tapered

tower fairly well. A much better example, however, is the great pylon of Edfû.

The enclosing wall with its lofty pylons shut in the whole of the temple buildings, lake, and the open spaces attached to them. Nothing that went on within the wall could be seen or heard by the uninitiated who dwelt outside. From the outer pylon an avenue of rams or sphinxes led up to a second gateway, the entrance to the temple itself. This second pylon in every way resembled the first, but the tendency of Egyptian buildings is to decrease in height from the outside inwards, and each gate and hall is generally made lower than the one before it, so that the outermost pylon and wall effectually overtops and screens all the lower gates and buildings behind it. The actual gateway of the temple may be preceded by three or four preliminary pylons, as



THE OBELISK OF LUXOR.

The hieroglyphics are cleanly and deeply cut in the red granite. The fellow of this monolith has been carried away to Paris, and set up in the Place de la Concorde.

was the case at Karnak and Luxor, and, in front of these, obelisks and colossi may be arranged in pairs; but the essential character of the arrangement is the *dromos* or avenue leading from the outer gate to the temple door.

Arrived at the temple itself we are met by another screen. The whole of the building is enclosed by an inner wall, nearly as high as the highest part of the temple, and sometimes adorned, like the pylons, with sculptured scenes. From outside, the temple, when entire, must have presented very much the appearance of a box without a lid. The engraving of Edfû, page 218, shows something of this enclosing wall, springing from the immense pylon and running round the whole of the interior structures, leaving an open corridor between itself and the walls of the rearward halls. Passing through the single pylon which admits us within this second screen, we find ourselves in what is called the peristyle, that is to say, a large court open in the centre, but surrounded by a narrow cloister supported by a single or double row of columns. From the peristyle we pass by another but lower pylon, often guarded by a pair of sitting colossi or obelisks or both, into the hypostyle, or hall of assembly, which was originally roofed with immense stone slabs, painted with stars in gold upon a blue ground, supported upon a forest of gigantic columns. Such a hypostyle is the famous "Hall of Columns" of the great temple of Karnak, of which portions are shown on pages 211, 212, and 213. It is the largest hall in Egypt (three hundred and forty by one hundred and seventy feet, and in the centre seventy-six feet high), and its one hundred and thirty-four columns are among the wonders of the world. Twelve of them, forming a central avenue, are thirty-three feet in circumference, or as bulky as Trajan's column, and a hundred men could sit on their enormous bell-shaped capitals. The one hundred and twenty-two side columns are shorter, and form aisles, above which the central nave projects with a kind of clerestory of grated stone windows. It is said that the entire cathedral of Notre-Dame at Paris could stand upon the ground occupied by this one hall at Karnak.

Behind the hypostyle, and sometimes separated from it by an open vestibule, with obelisks and colossi, is the sanctuary, the holy of holies, where the emblem of the god was kept in a monolithic shrine; and round the sanctuary itself are the treasure-chambers, robing-rooms, and laboratories for the manufacture of incense and other necessities of the temple rites, while beneath are sometimes crypts where the most precious and sacred of the treasures were doubtless concealed. The crypts at Dendarah, for example, consist of long and narrow passages with beautifully preserved wall-paintings. The entrance, from the floor of one of the side chambers which surround the sanctuary, was probably concealed by a movable stone like that which figures in the story of the Treasury of Ramsinitus.

Thus the principal parts of an Egyptian temple are jealously secluding walls, an avenue of sphinxes, an outer and an inner gate or gates, an open court with cloisters, a covered hall of columns, and a sanctuary surrounded by small chambers. There are no dwelling-places or cells for the priests, nor is there accommodation within the hypostyle hall or sanctuary for a congregation of worshippers. But indeed the public were never admitted into the sacreder





J. D. WOODWARD, PINXIT

J. GODFREY, SCULPT

LUXOR.

portions of the temple. On great high days and festivals certain privileged persons might be allowed to view the processions from the open or even the hypostyle court. But the Egyptian temple is not calculated for the use of crowds. The procession passing from the sanctuary down the chief avenue of the hypostyle hall would be but imperfectly seen by people at the sides, where the forest of columns would shut out most of the spectacle. "The hypostyle hall was lofty and wide in order that it might be a vestibule worthy of the god who dwelt in the sanctuary beyond it, and in order that it might bear witness to the piety, wealth, and power of the king who constructed it. It offered no place in which the faithful could assemble to listen to religious discourses, to unite in the expression of their faith and hope, to sing and pray in common. In virtue of the sanctuary which was its nucleus, the temple was the dwelling of the god, the terrestrial resting-place to which the king, his son and the nursling of the goddesses, came to offer him thanks and to do homage in return for the protection and support which he received. The temple was also, in virtue of those numerous chambers which surrounded the sanctuary, a place for the preparation, consecration, and preservation of holy objects: a huge sacristy to which access was forbidden to all but those who were specially attached to the service of the god and charged with the custody of the sacred furniture. Such being the origin and purpose of the temple, we need feel no surprise at the triple fortification behind which it was entrenched. This fortification consisted, in the first place, of the brick wall which formed the outermost enclosure; secondly, of the wall of masonry which embraced the temple proper, leaving a narrow passage only wide enough for the walk of a sentry; thirdly, of a wall which divided the really sacred parts of the building from the pronaos [or hypostyle hall]. Now that the line of the external wall is only indicated by a gentle swell of the ground, now that the best preserved of the inner walls are broken down in many places [Edfû excepted], and now that the roofs and ceilings have fallen and encumbered the floors, it is difficult enough to form a true idea of the former appearance of the Egyptian temples. Could we see them as they left their architects' hands, we should be struck by the jealous severity of their isolation, by the austere monotony of the screen of stone which was interposed between the eyes of the people and the internal splendours of the building. In this we should find the chief point of distinction between the temples of Egypt and those great religious edifices of our own times, with which we half involuntarily compare all other works of the kind." *

When we come to apply these generalisations to the immense assemblage of buildings known as Luxor and Karnak, we shall find some difficulty in identifying the various parts of the temple. At Luxor this difficulty is enhanced by the fact that the temple is half buried in a village, mud huts are huddled together within the vistas of columns, cocks crow and cattle are stalled in the sanctuary, while the picturesque black and white decoration of a simple mosque stands out against the sky not far from the beautiful obelisk of red granite whose fellow has been carried away to the Place de la Concorde at Paris. It is not easy at first sight to

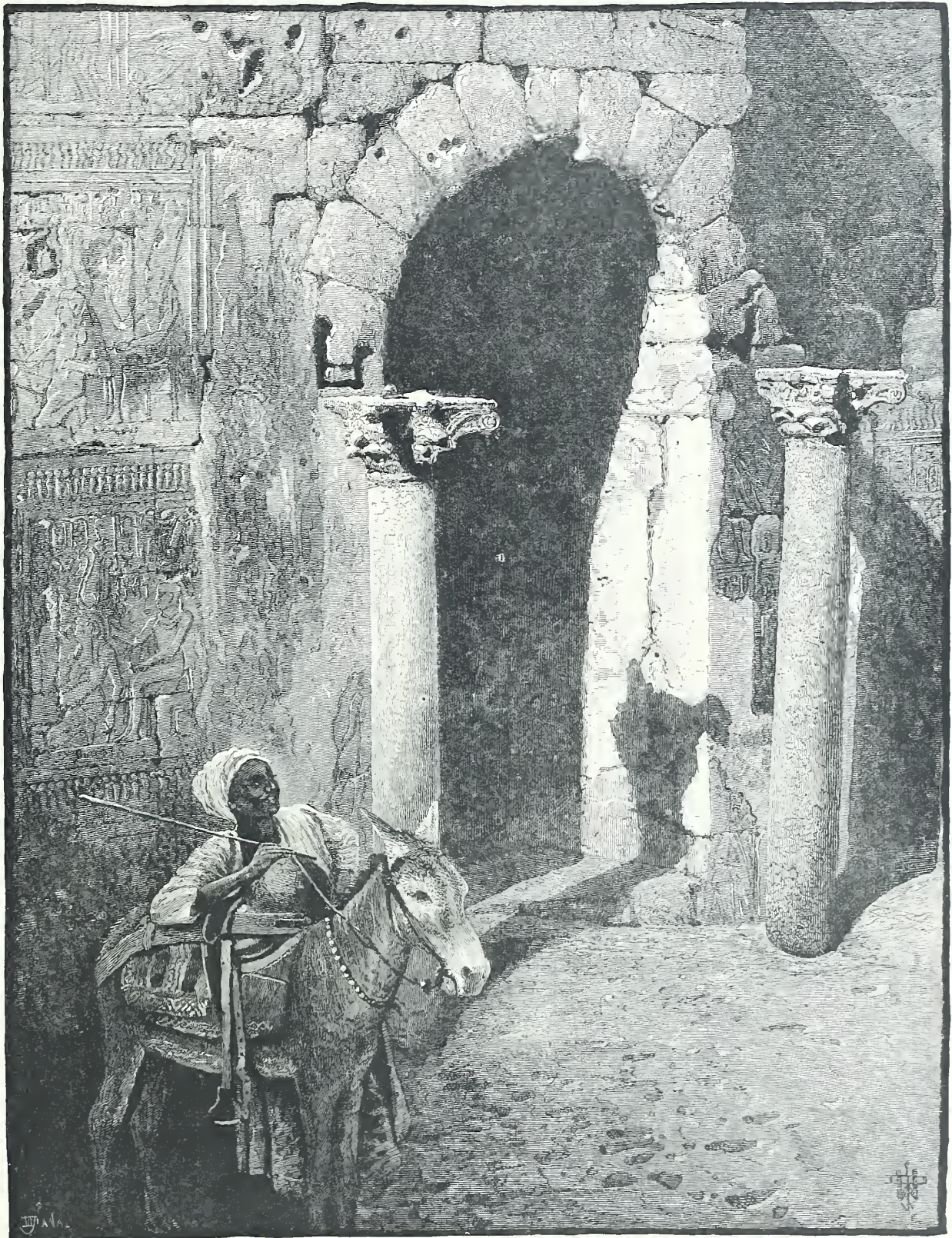
* Perrot and Chipiez, English translation, pages 439, 440.

realise that the hospitable abode of Mustafa Agha, the British vice-consul, with its flags, its French carpet, its chair and divans, its photographs and cheap prints, is actually built among the enormous columns of the grand colonnade which connected the first peristyle hall of Rameses II. with the temple of Amenoph III.; that the French consulate is built over the most sacred parts of this temple; and that the whole line of buildings that fringe the bank are interwoven into the ruins of one of the most splendid monuments of Egypt.

Part of the chief pylon of this double temple is seen in the cut on page 205, with the remaining obelisk and one of the colossi, buried almost up to his shoulders. A column of the great peristyle court of Rameses II. is seen beyond, and some of the mud hovels which (together with the mosque shown on page 204, and in the steel engraving facing page 207) encumber the building. Behind this court is the anomalous colonnade, peristyle court, and sanctuary and surrounding chambers of the original structure built by Amenoph III., as may be seen in the steel engraving, where the great colonnade is above the large sail of the boat in the foreground, and the peristyle hall of Amenoph III. over the dahabiyeh which is moored to the bank, while to the left is seen the minaret of the mosque which stands upon the peristyle court of Rameses II., and still further the pylon and the widowed obelisk which also appear in the woodcut. The temple of Luxor is the work of only two monarchs, Amenoph III. and Rameses II., and is therefore comparatively simple. When the mud huts are cleared away, an excellent work which M. Maspero is now attempting, the whole plan will appear coherent and complete. The curious bend in the axis of the temple, however, and the unexplained colonnade, will still form subjects for speculation, while the wall-pictures at present hidden by the village may be expected to furnish a mass of important historical material.

A long *dromos* or paved causeway, bordered by an avenue of sphinxes, leads from the great pylon of Luxor to Karnak. It is two thousand two hundred yards long, and seventy-six feet broad, and there must have been five hundred sphinxes on each side of it. Most of them are now destroyed, but enough remains to show that for part of the way there were woman-headed sphinxes, and that the rest were rams. This causeway leads up to the beautiful gate of Ptolemy Euergetes, which forms the propylon to the temple of Khons, the pylon of which is seen through it in the cut (page 210). The temple of Khons, however, built by Rameses III., and that of Euergetes beside it, are only two of the eleven temples included in the Karnak group; and the great temple, in the erection of which so many kings united, is some distance further north, and looks in a different direction. The first view of Karnak is rendered all the more confused and perplexing by the circumstance that most of the temples face different points of the compass. The great temple, indeed, faces the west, *i.e.* the Nile, as it should, and as most other temples do. But the subsidiary temple of Khons faces south, while the temple of Mout looks to the north. There is, however, a reason for these positions. The temple of Khons looks towards the south because that is the direction of Luxor, with which it is connected by the long avenue of sphinxes. The temple of Mout,

on the other hand, faces north, because that is the direction of the great temple of Amen-



NICHE IN AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH, LUXOR.

Part of the Temple of Amenoph III. converted into a church. Frescoes, of some pretensions to artistic merit, half cover the ancient bas-reliefs; and the figures of Egyptian gods mingle eccentrically with the aureoles of Christian saints.

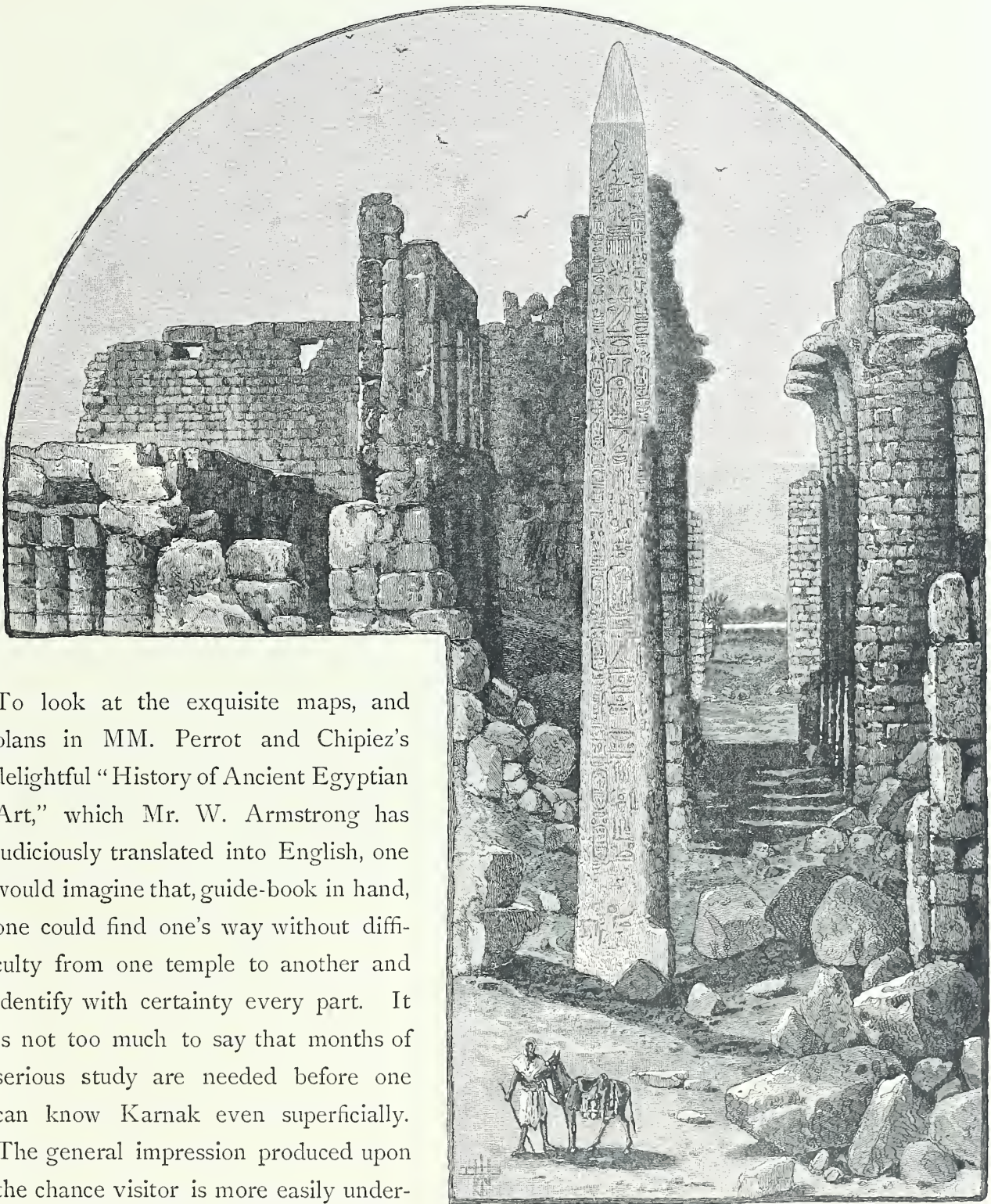
Ra, whither an avenue of colossal statues and huge pylons conducted the priestly processions.



THE GATE OF PTOLEMY EUERGETES, KARNAK.

Showing the pylon of the Temple of Khons beyond. An avenue of rams leads up to this beautiful gate, which is the most graceful of all the structures at Karnak.

The variety of aspect is only one of the many obstacles to a clear understanding of Karnak.



THE SMALLER OBELISK OF KARNAK.

Belonging to the pylon of Thothmes I. The fragments of a fellow obelisk strew the ground. Behind is seen the central avenue of the Hall of Columns, and the clerestory windows are shown at the left-hand side.

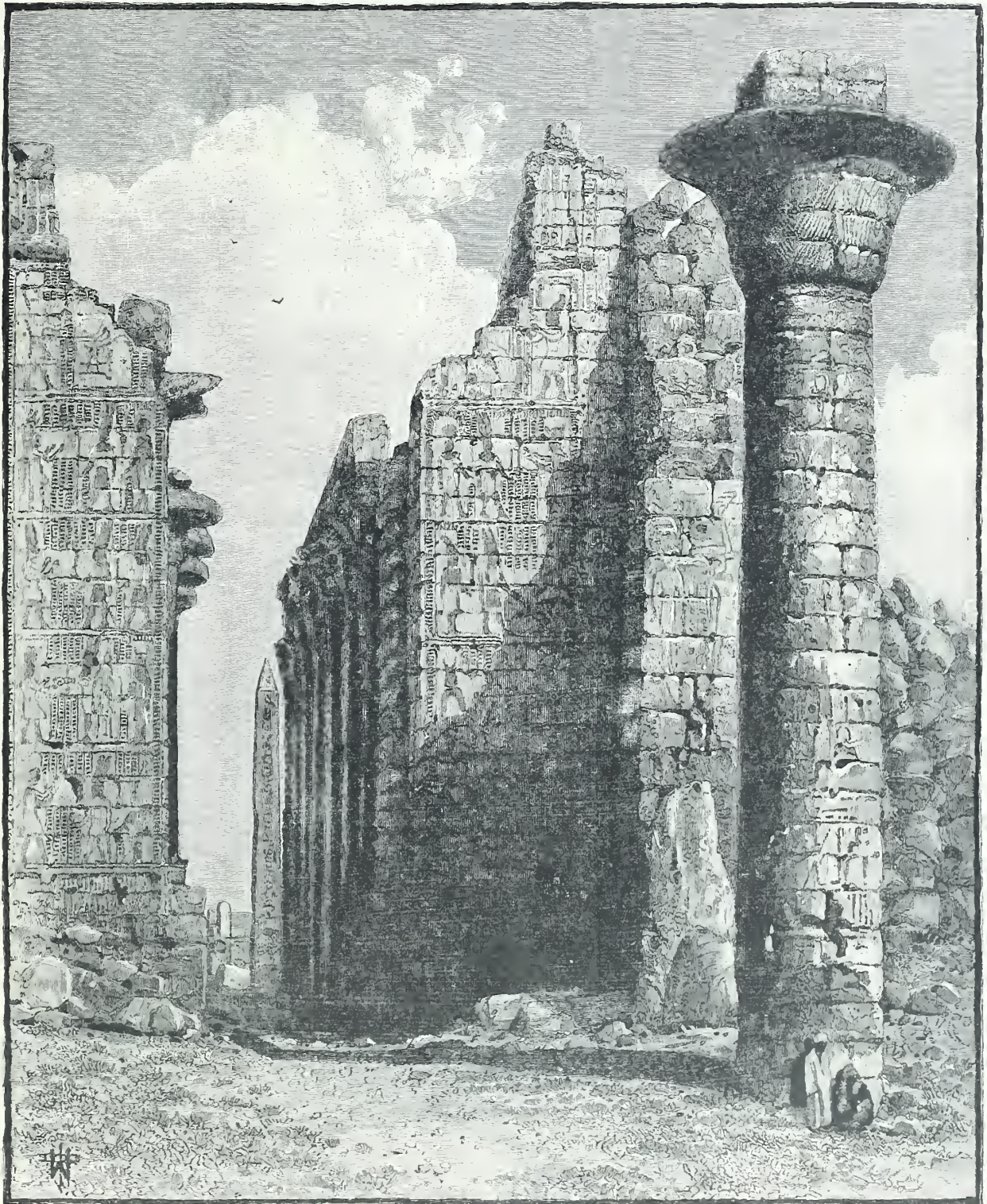
To look at the exquisite maps, and plans in MM. Perrot and Chipiez's delightful "History of Ancient Egyptian Art," which Mr. W. Armstrong has judiciously translated into English, one would imagine that, guide-book in hand, one could find one's way without difficulty from one temple to another and identify with certainty every part. It is not too much to say that months of serious study are needed before one can know Karnak even superficially. The general impression produced upon the chance visitor is more easily understood by a glance at the steel engraving (facing page 214). This represents the great temple of Amen-Ra from its first pylon to the sanctuary; the hall of Thothmes behind is not included for lack of space. We are standing with our backs to the temple of Mout, looking north. In front is the sacred lake;



THE LEANING COLUMN, KARNAK.

In one of the side aisles of the Hall of Columns. The base is worn and the foundations undermined by the Nile, which at the inundation rises some six feet above the level of the floor.

at the left we see a glimpse of the Nile, with the Libyan hills beyond. The first pylon is clearly seen next to the palm-trees, with its holes for the wooden brackets to which the flagstuffs



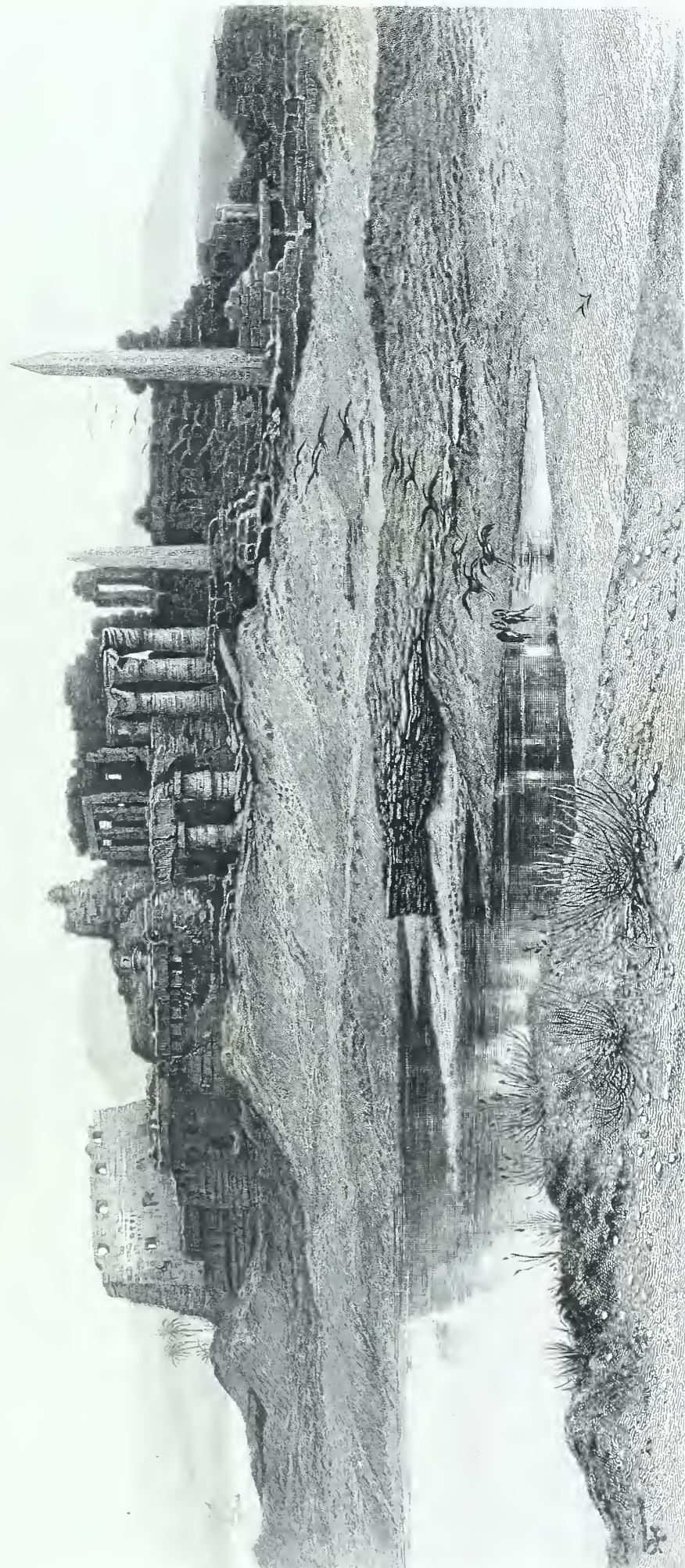
GRAND COLUMN OF KARNAK.

At the west entrance to the Hall of Columns. The central avenue is here seen from the opposite end to that shown in the engraving on page 211.

were fastened. This pylon is one hundred and forty feet high and three hundred and seventy feet broad. Before it stood granite colossi, now hurled down, defaced, and buried in the sand. Between this and the second pylon, which is indicated by a jutting piece of masonry

in the engraving, stretches the great peristylar court (two hundred and seventy-four feet by three hundred and twenty-nine feet), with a colonnade at each side and a double row of columns down the middle, of all which very little remains. A small temple (of Rameses III.) projects through the south wall (towards the spectator in the engraving), and another, of Seti II., stands in the north-west corner of the court. The ruined second pylon leads into the famous "Hall of Columns," several of which are seen in the centre of the engraving, while special points of view are shown on pages 211—213. This is really the only approximately complete part of the Great Temple; and even here the roof is off, the columns are partly fallen, and the grated windows of the clerestory are broken in. Beyond the Hall of Columns—which, to be seen to advantage, should be viewed on a fine moonlit night, when the strong contrasts of light and shade give distance to what is in sunlight an overcrowded vista—is a wilderness of ruins, representing a hall of Osiride figures, the sanctuary, and surrounding chambers; while further back is what remains of the temple of Thothmes III., containing various indistinguishable divisions. Amid this chaos are the obelisks, two upright and two fallen, the shorter ones bearing the name of Thothmes I., and the taller (indeed the tallest known—one hundred and nine feet) that of Hatasu, his daughter, the builder of Deyr El-Bahry. Round about are the remnants of the Osiride court, the granite sanctuary, and the so-called proto-Doric columns of Osirtasen I. (Twelfth Dynasty) behind it. As one stands amid the wilderness of fallen stones, broken obelisks, mutilated statues, the single emotion is wonder, not so much at how these huge buildings were set up, but how they came to be thus destroyed. Nothing short of a terrific earthquake, one would say, could have overthrown Karnak; yet the slow and irresistible sapping of the foundations by the Nile may account for a great deal of the ruin. The brown river-stained bases of the columns in the great hall warn us that the time may come when even what remains of Karnak may be overturned.

In spite of its ruined state, Karnak presents many exceedingly interesting wall-pictures. In one place we see Seti I. making war upon the nations of Asia, compelling the Armenians to cut down their forests in their conqueror's behoof, driving his chariot among the fleeing Shasu, or Bedouins, showering his arrows upon the Khari, dragging home in triumph the prisoners taken in his campaign against the Assyrians, warring with the Khetas (Hittites), and holding the captives of all nations by the hair of their heads while he offers them as victims to Amen-Ra. In another place is the famous epic of Pentaur, with Rameses charging the foe single-handed; and on the outside of the south wall of the Hall of Columns is depicted the campaign of the "Shishak" of the Bible against Palestine. Shishak appears about to slay a row of suppliant prisoners, and behind is the long series of the Levite cities, each represented by a man hidden, all but his head, behind a cartouche containing the name of the place. It was believed by Champollion that one of these heads stood for Jeroboam, but later researches make this more than doubtful. The list of cities and Rameses' treaty with the Hittites are, however, alone enough to show the high importance of these sculptures. The walls of Karnak, indeed, even more than those of most temples, form an historical library of priceless value and interest.



Part of Pylon. Peristyle Court. Hall of Columns. Obelisk of Thothmes I. Obelisk of Ramses II. Sanctuary.

THE GREAT TEMPLE AT KARNAK.



THE NILE, FROM LUXOR.
The two women in the foreground wear the ordinary black *burkho* or veil, joined to the head-dress by a piece of cane placed between the eyes.



THE DÔM PALM.

Groups of these eccentric-looking trees form a characteristic feature of the scenery of Upper Egypt. They are not found south of the Thebaïd.

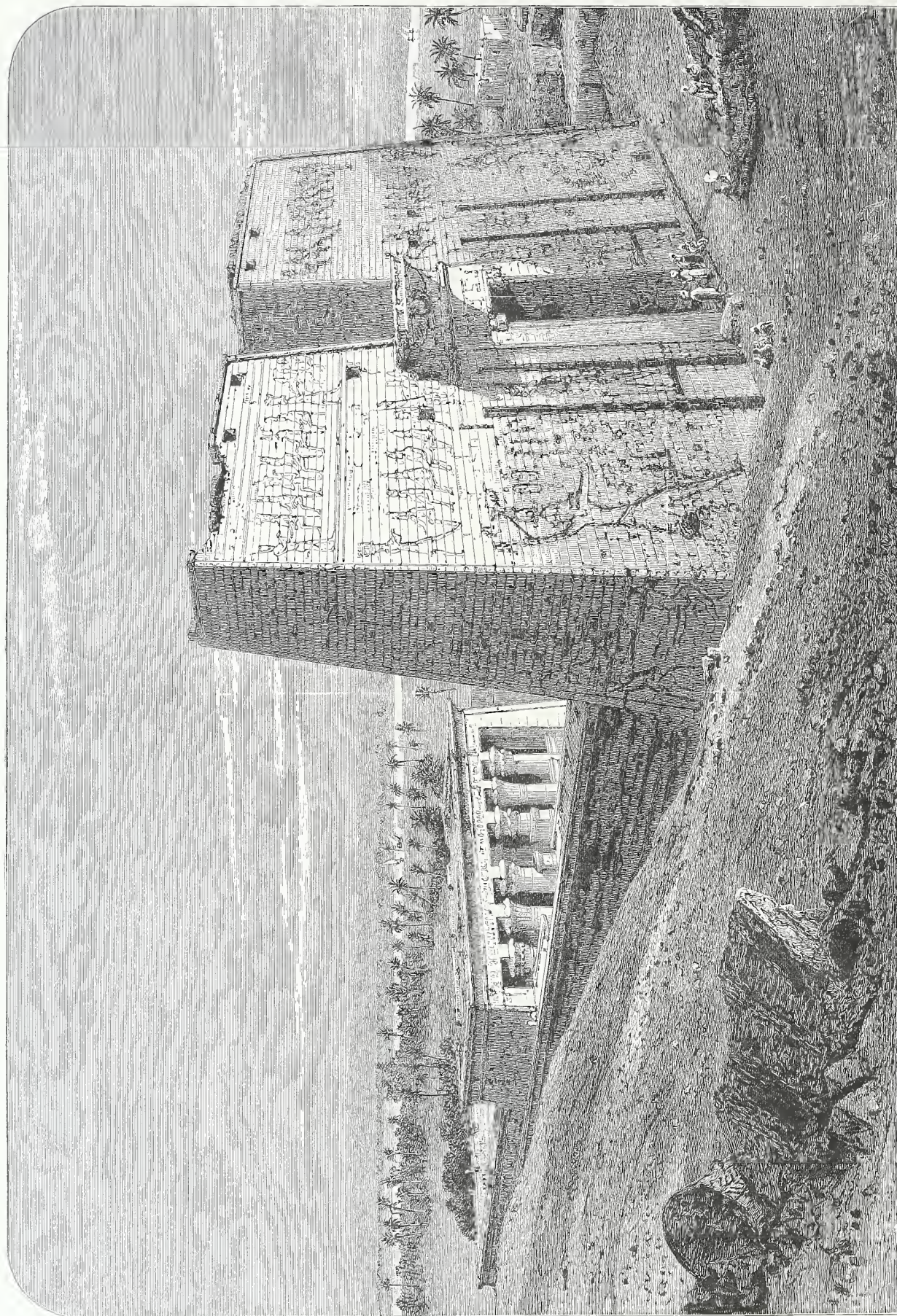
EDFÛ AND PHILÆ.

ABOVE Thebes the hills again close upon the river and the valley resumes its narrow aspect. Indeed for the greater part of the way from Thebes to the First Cataract, and throughout Nubia, the hills hedge in the Nile so closely that there is scarcely room for any cultivation. Instead of the green plain one sees at Asyût or Abydos or Thebes, the upper valley of the Nile consists in a mere ribbon of vegetation, and often nothing beyond the sloping bank itself is cultivated. For miles a strip of green a yard wide and a fringe of palms behind form the sole relief to the brown mountain background, and it would be easy, one would think, to become the owner of a degree of latitude hereabouts for a trifling consideration. Egypt, in fact, can hardly be said to exist in the upper course of the Nile. Instead of the frequent villages that met the eye every half-hour in the voyage below Thebes, a whole morning may be passed on the steamer's deck above Thebes without the sight of a human habitation. There is no land to cultivate and consequently no means of supporting a population. Here and there a shadûf may be seen at work, but the incessant toil of the handsome brown figures that work it is ill repaid by the meagre vegetation that springs up in scanty patches near the machine. A narrow streak of brown river, running between banks of rugged and precipitous hills, and encouraging only at very rare intervals the growth of sparse crops and the settlement of a sparse population—such is Egypt above Thebes.

The change from the fertile and populous plains of the lower Nile to the barren valley

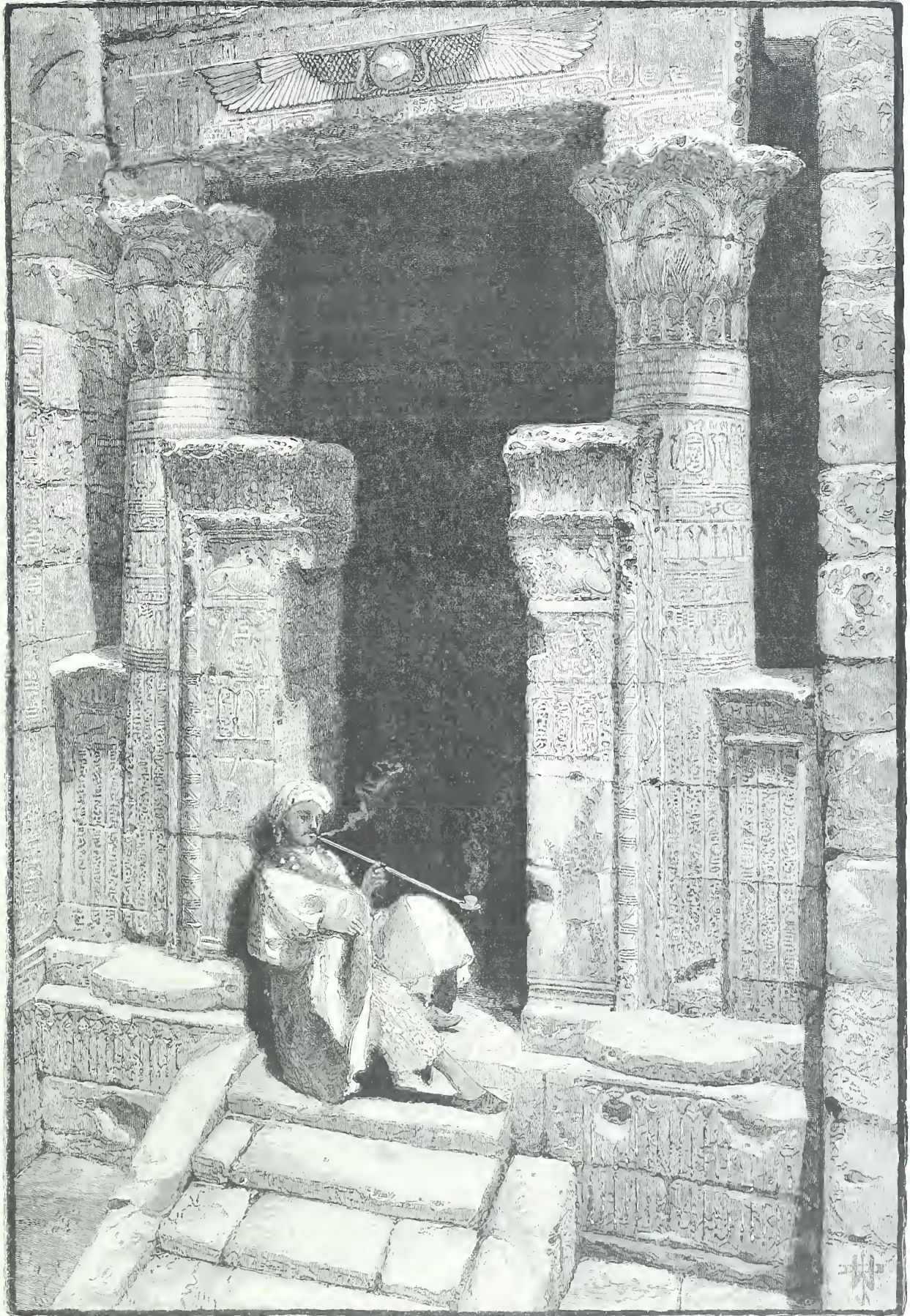
above is, however, a gradual one. At first some prosperous towns appear to promise a repetition of the scenery below Thebes. Erment, the first important place on the voyage up, consists of a long row of sugar factories, with many high square tapered chimneys, which, if they had but pointed tops and inscriptions on their sides, might be mistaken for obelisks by the unprejudiced eye. A neighbouring temple was lucklessly used in their building. Then Mutaneh is passed, a European-looking little town, with well-built but incongruous verandahed and terraced and French-windowed houses, overtopped by two huge chimneys, which interrupt a very beautiful bend of the Nile terminating in the curious detached hills known as the Gebeleyn. A little higher up, thirty-five miles above Luxor, is Esnê, an important place, and the capital of a wide-spread province. Dyeing blue cloth seems the main business here, and the market-place and streets are adorned with long pieces of blue stuff hanging to dry on ropes stretched overhead. Weaving is also done here, and coppersmiths ply their trade, while there is a good deal of business carried on with the Sûdân. Esnê has a look of affluence about it; it is unusually clean, well built, and prosperous. Some of its houses are really comfortable-looking, and its mosques, though simple, are not displeasing, with the characteristic black-and-white decoration of the upper country. In one of them, however, beside a glaringly painted pulpit, stands a tall eight-day kitchen clock, in absurd incongruity. Beyond the market, buried up to its roof in the accretions of the modern town, is the temple, of which nothing can now be seen but the portico, with its richly carved bell-shaped capitals of the Roman period and the zodiacal ceiling, and some poor sculptures of Ptolemaic times within.

Thirty-two miles above Esnê is the most perfect temple in Egypt, the temple dedicated to Horus at Edfû by Ptolemy Philopator, and continued by his successors. It is the twin temple with Dendarah, but is even more perfect. Until quite recent years it was buried in the modern village, but M. Mariette, with the sanction of the ex-Khedive, destroyed nearly a hundred huts, and set the temple free from its invaders. The lofty pylon (see next page) is a conspicuous feature of the scenery long before Edfû is reached, but after walking over the fields that separate the village from the Nile, crossing the plank that bridges the great canal, and threading the narrow, tortuous lanes of the village, we lose sight of the noble towers, and afterwards the view of the temple suddenly bursts upon us with a shock. The other temples of Egypt are either ruined or buried; in no single instance elsewhere can we see the temple in its original perfection, but here, at Edfû, the splendid building seems intact, perfect, complete as when its architects left it. Except the cornice, the immense pylon is entire; and its position, with a space cleared in front and at the sides, gives it a commanding aspect that no other gateway in Egypt possesses. It is not so high as the first pylon of the great temple at Karnak, but its wonderful preservation makes its hundred and twenty feet of height infinitely more imposing than the hundred and forty feet of its ruined rival. Two hundred and forty steps of a square staircase, with rooms opening out of it alternately on either side, lead up to the summit of each of the twin towers. The chambers and parapet walls at the top are covered with scrawls, not of modern English tourists, but of old travellers like Irby and Mangles, and of those



TEMPLE OF EDFU.

The towers of the great pylon are one hundred and twenty feet high, and in almost perfect preservation. The columns of the hypostyle hall are seen over the wall of enclosure, which springs from the pylon and runs round the whole building.



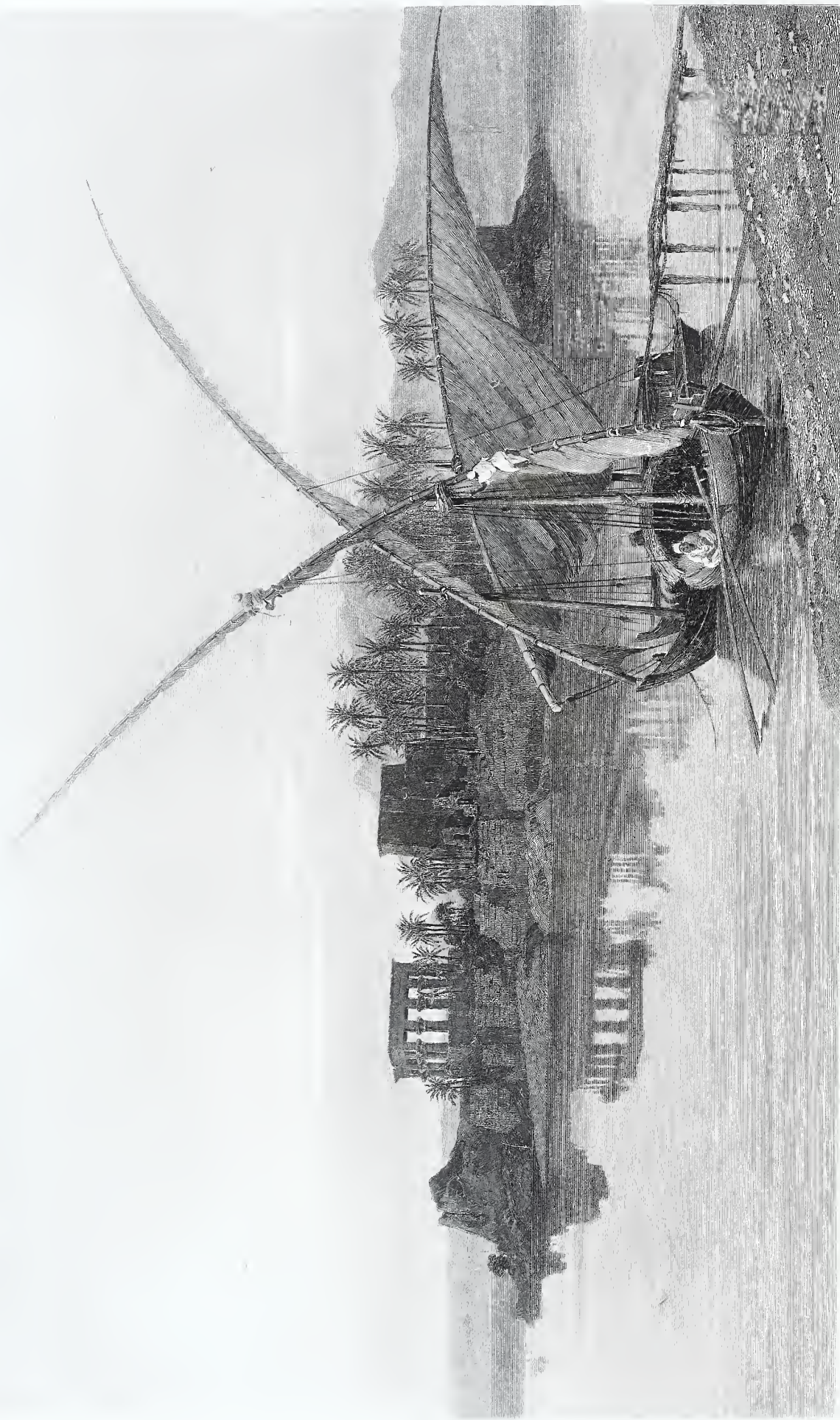
DOORWAY OF A SIDE CHAPEL OF THE TEMPLE OF EDFU.

After leaving this chapel the priestly procession ascended the winding stone staircase opposite, which conducts by a series of easy steps to the roof.

pre-eminent offenders, the officers of the French army under Desaix, who pursued the Memlûks beyond the Cataract, defaced Philæ, and on their return voyage tattooed the interior of Edfû with their obscure names and regiments and their impertinent "An VIII." It is curious that the chief defacers of Edfû should be of the same nation as its uncoverer.

From the top of the pylon we look down upon a wide and beautiful stretch of country, chiefly of desert, yet with a rich expanse of vividly green crops near the winding river, the grey mountains beyond, and almost under our feet the village of Edfû, a tangled mass of huts with tunnel-like roofs, or flat roofs covered with durah, and little yards in front, so closely packed and so irregular, that it is impossible to see where one little house ends and the next begins. Turning round, we look down upon the great court of the temple, surrounded by colonnades, with pillars of every form of capital. This is a place of broadest sunshine, but the hypostyle hall beyond, which is divided from the great court by an intercolumnar screen between the exquisite papyrus-flower pillars, is dim and shaded. A pylon and wall divide the hypostyle into two portions, somewhat to the detriment of the general effect, and behind is the sanctuary, wherein still stands unbroken a granite shrine cut out of a single block, which must originally have weighed sixty tons, in which the sacred hawk, symbol of Horus, was once jealously concealed. A passage runs round the sanctuary, and off this open a number of small and very dark chambers. Outside these again runs a wider corridor, forming a space between the peculiarly sacred portion of the temple and the enclosing wall, and ending in the great court. The whole of the surfaces of the walls on both sides of this passage, and indeed every column and every wall in the temple, are covered with sculptures. The general character of these designs is conventional, the same figures are repeated again and again, until the eye grows weary of the sight of a uniform king offering uniform gifts to uniform gods; and the tendency to making symmetrical counterparts of the two sides of a door or pylon is a sign of artistic decadence. Nevertheless, the effect of the lofty walls covered with sculptures, towering up on either hand as one walks round the great corridor, is singularly impressive, in spite of the mutilation which iconoclastic zeal has wrought upon the faces of the divinities. The pictures of boats—one with an exquisitely carved sail, in which the king stands, harpoon in hand, to strike the hippopotamus (drawn relatively about the size of a guinea pig) which his men have enmeshed in their ropes—are especially vivid and dramatic.

We find here none of those great battle scenes which delighted the soul of Rameses, no epic poems like Pentaur's, but chiefly the rites of religion and the interviews between gods and kings. There is, however, a remarkable scientific value in the sculptures of Edfû. There are here "more inscriptions of a miscellaneous character than in any temple of Egypt, and it is precisely this secular information that is to us so priceless. Here are geographical lists of Nubian and Egyptian nomes, with their principal cities, their products, and their tutelary gods; lists of tributary provinces and princes; lists of temples, and of the lands pertaining thereunto; lists of canals, of ports, of lakes; calendars of feasts and fasts; astronomical tables; genealogies and chronologies of the gods; lists of the priests and priestesses of both Edfû and Dendarah, with



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their names; lists also of singers and assistant functionaries; lists of offerings, hymns, invocations; and such a profusion of religious legends as make of the walls of Edfû alone a complete text-book of Egyptian mythology."*

Just as at Dendarah, a side chapel of the star Sirius (see page 219), with strangely painted ceiling, opens out of the chamber on the right of the sanctuary; and close by, a winding staircase of deliciously graduated ascent, whose walls are decorated with a representation of an ascending procession, leads up to the roof, where are some curious chambers, and one queer little room in the thickness of the roof, entered from above, and closed by a heavy stone which rolled away into an adjoining recess. A straight staircase, with pictures of a descending procession, leads down to the opposite side of the sanctuary to that by which the ascent is made. Even the paving of the courts and passages is perfect.

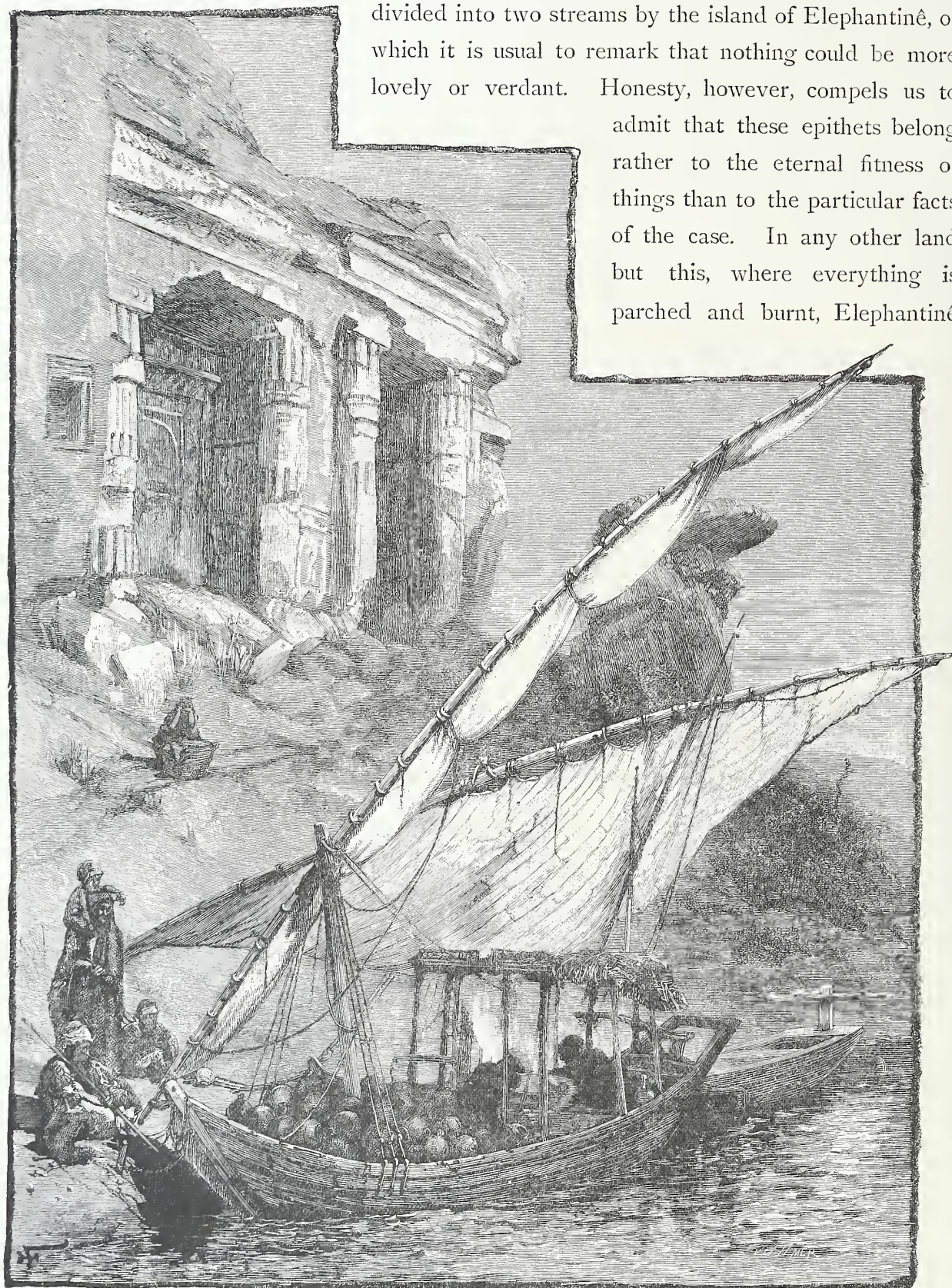
From every point of view the temple of Edfû is magnificent, whether, standing on the steps that lead down from the modern to the old level, one looks up at the smooth creamy walls of the towering pylon, or, sitting under the colonnade of the great court, one surveys the dark entrance of the hypostyle hall, separated from the court by the low sculptured screen, like the choir of a cathedral, or wanders among the chambers round the sanctuary and along the paved corridor bounded by lofty sculptured walls. But perhaps the view which most delights the artist's eye is that which is obtained from near the entrance to the sanctuary. Overhead rise the columns of the hypostyle hall; in front, through a deeply shaded vista of columns and portals, appears the great court gleaming in the sunshine, and through the gateway of the mighty pylon which closes the view a vision of the outer world gives life to the scene. Peasant women in their dark blue gowns and brown-clad villagers throng the steps before the pylon, armed with the inevitable "antikas" and fruit of the dôm palm and other traps for the unwary traveller. We can forgive them their importunities for the sake of the life and colour they give to a scene which without the relief they afford would be almost overpowering in its stately grandeur.

Above Edfû is the gorge called Gebel-es-Silsileh, or Hill of the Chain, because it is fabled that a king once barred the river here with a chain. The Nile has here burst through a strong sandstone barrier, and the scene is a striking one, especially when viewed from the south side. The rocks on either hand, honeycombed with quarries and grottoes of the time of the great Theban dynasties (see page 222), are not high, but their outlines are bold, and the view looking backwards from the broadened river to the narrow mouth (scarcely eleven hundred feet wide) through which the Nile has forced its way, is very picturesque. Above Silsileh the valley becomes a mere ribbon, and the verdure has almost wholly disappeared. The Ptolemaic temple of Kom Ombo (see pages 223, 225) stands out finely upon the eastern bank, over which it is gradually falling in a cascade of masonry, and a little vegetation and even a tiny garden near the temple give colour to the otherwise monotonous scene. Presently the appearance of black rocks jutting out of the river on all sides shows we are approaching the

* Miss Amelia B. Edwards, "One Thousand Miles up the Nile."

great granite barrier that separates Egypt from Nubia, and nearing Aswân, the southernmost town of Egypt. Before Aswân is reached the Nile is divided into two streams by the island of Elephantinê, of which it is usual to remark that nothing could be more lovely or verdant. Honesty, however, compels us to

admit that these epithets belong rather to the eternal fitness of things than to the particular facts of the case. In any other land but this, where everything is parched and burnt, Elephantinê

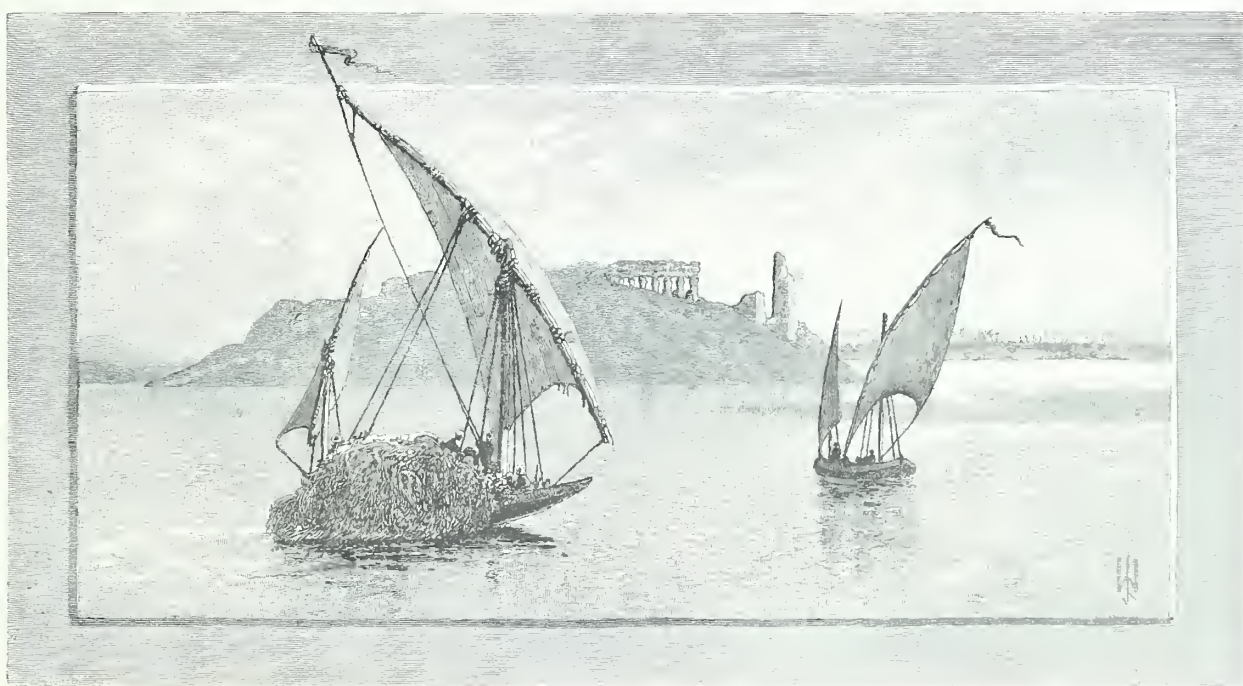


ROCK TOMBS AT GEBEL-ES-SILSILEH.

At this point the Nile is scarcely eleven hundred feet wide. The rocky barrier through which the river has forced its way is honeycombed with grottoes of the time of the great Theban dynasties.

would be called a barren brown baked little island, saved from decided ugliness by a few patches of green and a picturesque belt of palms (see pages 226 and 227). In Egypt, however, it is difficult for the traveller to preserve his mental balance and judge unromantically, and Elephantinê has acquired a factitious charm by a sort of reflected enthusiasm.

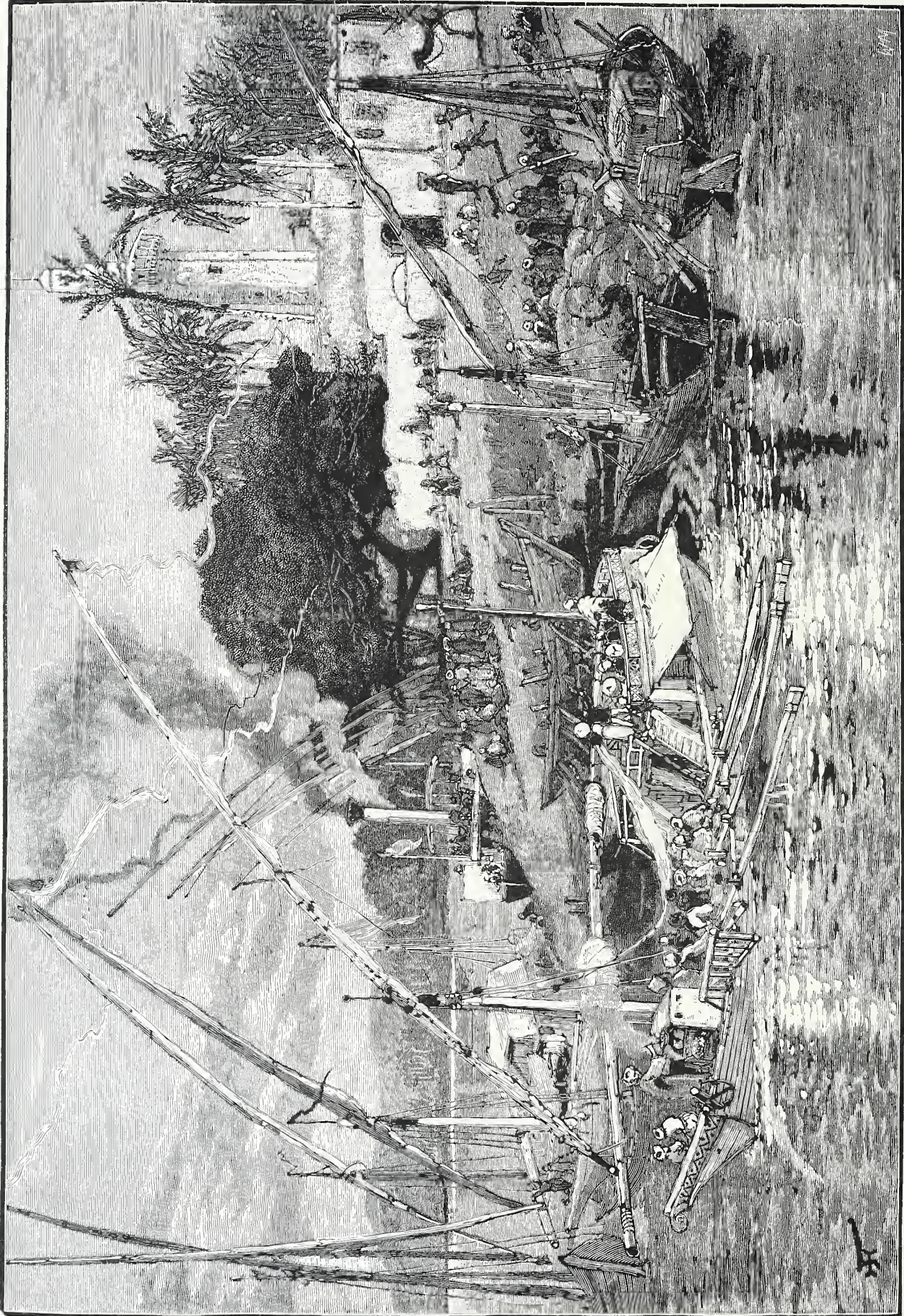
Aswân lies very picturesquely on the slope of a hill backed by rocks. On the arrival of any boat the bank is always lined with people selling baskets, kurbâjes or whips made of hippopotamus hide, shells, "Madame Nubias"—*i.e.* fringe girdles which form a Nubian girl's sole garment, well soaked in castor-oil—grass fans, silver and glass ornaments, and the other goods of the Sûdân and southern regions. Behind are a few white buildings, with a grove of trees at the end (see next page). Fighting our way through a crowd of donkeys and camels, and



DISTANT VIEW OF KOM OMBO.

The fine Ptolemaic temple stands out boldly on the edge of the cliff, over which it is gradually falling in a cascade of white masonry.

passing under two magnificent *lebbekh*-trees—great spreading acacias with yellow pods hanging down—we enter a narrow lane, under an archway, and avoiding the mosque, with its plain white minaret, turn suddenly round a sharp angle to the left and find ourselves in the principal, indeed the only, bazaar. It is a long covered lane, about eight feet wide, lined on both sides all along with little shops of the old-fashioned Eastern type, about six feet square, with a carpeted stone seat projecting in front on which the would-be purchaser sits while conducting his bargains. The first sight the eye encounters is one of these cupboard-like recesses, with a sly-looking, blear-eyed merchant sitting in it, smoking a cigarette and surrounded by ostrich-feathers (probably sent up from Cairo to meet the deluded traveller), a tray of curiosities—a few scarabs, shell necklaces, silver rings and bracelets of native make (and others from Europe), pieces of carved or turned ivory, a tusk or two, and a row of kurbâjes, ebony clubs, and the



ASWÂN, THE SYENE OF JUVENAL.

The chief entrance to the town is beneath the two noble *tebbekh*-trees to the left of the minaret, and opposite the landing-place for steamers. *Dahabiyehs* moor higher up, as is shown in the foreground.

stout sticks called nebbûts. Opposite him is another suspicious-looking trader buried in a cloud of ostrich feathers; then half a dozen more little shops, all alike, with the same feathers, kurbâjes, leopard skins, ebony, ivory, shells, and "Madame Nubias;" and the same system of haggling. Further along the bazaar a new order of goods appears; shawls and kerchiefs and cotton stuffs of all kinds—and all from Manchester—fill every shop. Aswân is full of English manufactures, and half the ornaments of the inhabitants are made at Birmingham! Then a fresh complexion comes over the market, and nothing but red slippers is to be seen on every side, till these give place to baskets of the well-known Nubian pattern, but, alas! in process of



TEMPLE OF KOM OMBO.

Half buried in sand-drifts, and half fallen over the river bank, the temple of Kom Ombo is one of the loneliest and, at a distance, the most impressive of the smaller shrines of Egypt.

degradation by aniline dyes. Here and there a shop is filled by the red-and-black earthenware of the country, but neither so abundant nor so well made as at Asyût. A large recess halfway down the bazaar is reserved for the local barber, who operates in public, and reduces the curly locks of his clients to one frizzy tuft on the top of their heads, and sometimes a frizzly fringe over the brow. The mixed crowd in the bazaar of Aswân—of all shades of brown, from the Egyptian red brown to the Sûdân black—is not easily forgotten. It is the most picturesque and, but for Manchester goods and magenta, the least contaminated mart in Egypt.

Aswân lies just below the First Cataract. In spite of travellers' tales, this famous rapid is no Niagara, but merely an exaggerated Thames lasher. The whole breadth of the river is

here choked up by black rocks, which jut out of the stream in every direction and in every variety of form. Between, around, and over them the river eddies and foams; not fiercely,

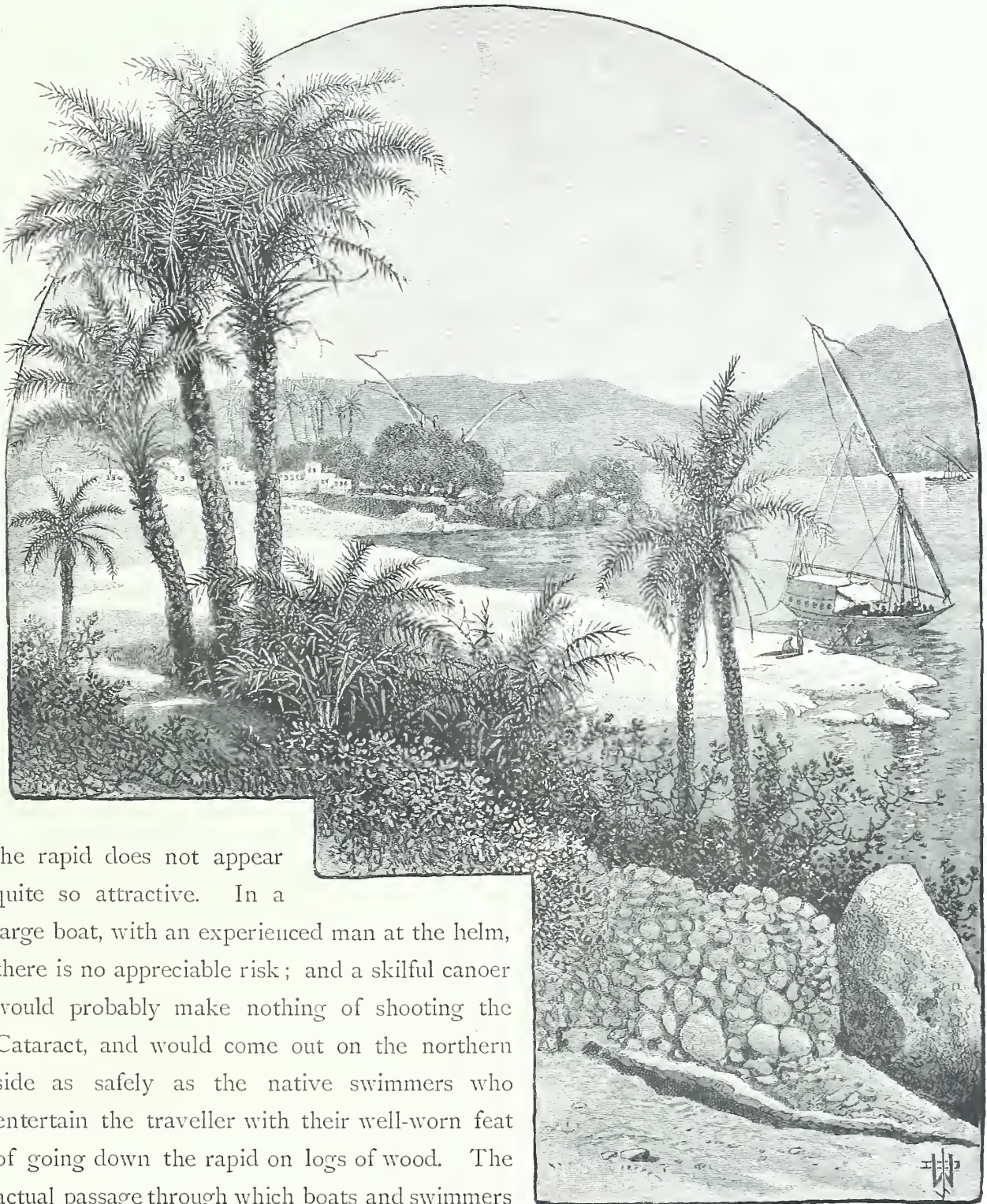


ON THE ISLAND OF ELEPHANTINÉ.

A large number of potsherds, inscribed with interesting Coptic and Demotic temple records, are constantly picked up on the island by the natives, who drive a profitable trade in these valuable archives.

however, but in a quiet, monotonous, persistent manner. The fall is both slight and gradual, and there is nothing resembling a cascade, so that one is tempted to fancy that the descent

of the cataract cannot be dangerous; but the stream is very swift and strong, the black rocks bristle on all sides, the backcurrents and underpull are problematical, and, on second thoughts,



the rapid does not appear quite so attractive. In a large boat, with an experienced man at the helm, there is no appreciable risk; and a skilful canoer would probably make nothing of shooting the Cataract, and would come out on the northern side as safely as the native swimmers who entertain the traveller with their well-worn feat of going down the rapid on logs of wood. The actual passage through which boats and swimmers shoot the cataract is a sort of millrace, perhaps two hundred feet long and rather narrow, bounded on either side by steep but not very high rocks. The stream runs down it pretty fast, and there is a fine curly crest near the bottom, where currents meet; but with the boat's nose

LOOKING NORTH FROM THE ISLAND OF ELEPHANTINÊ.
At Aswân the inhabitants are still mainly of the Egyptian type, but at Elephantinê the population is wholly Nubian.

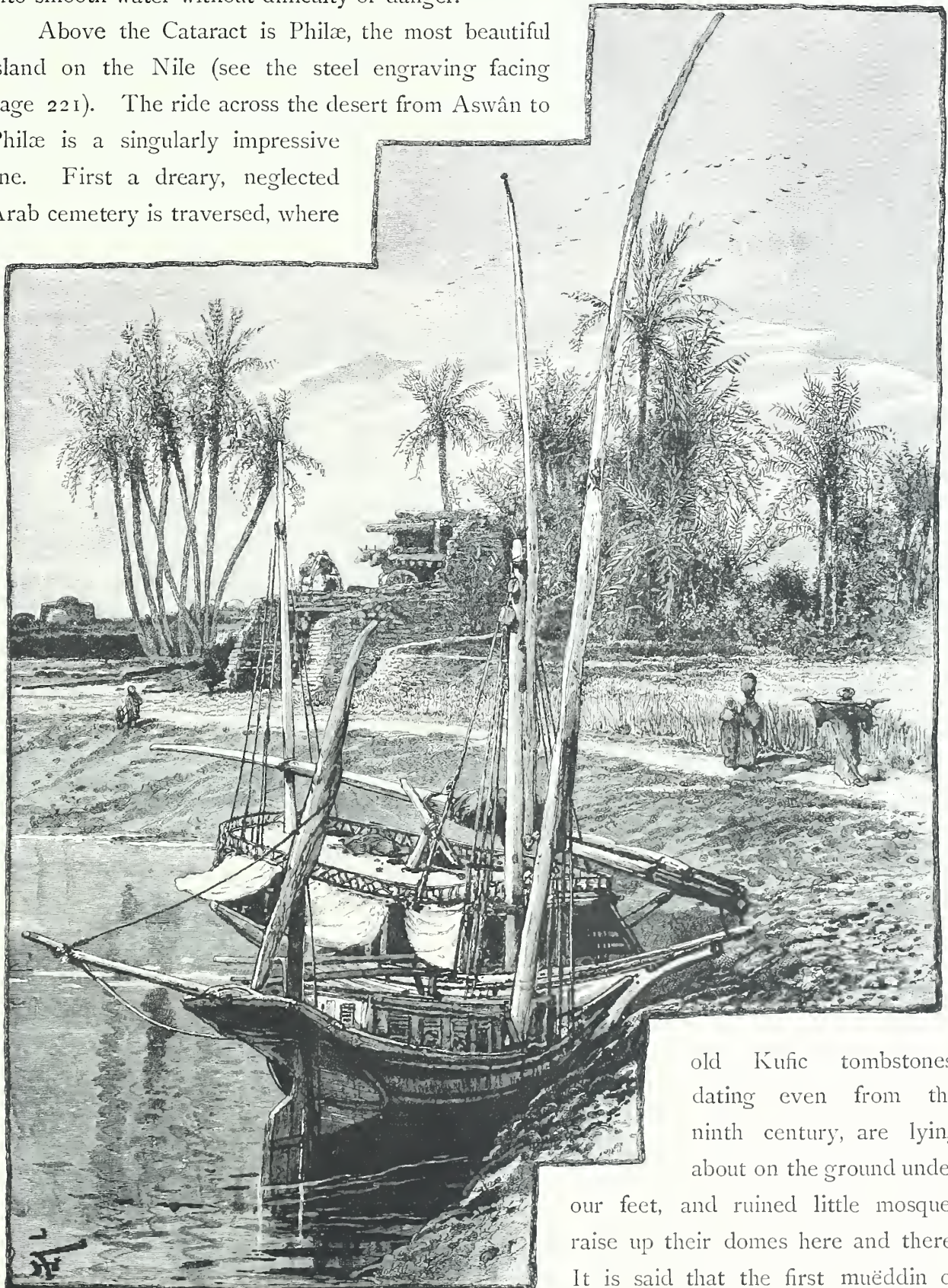


GENERAL VIEW OF PHILÆ, TAKEN FROM BIBBEH.

In the great temple in the centre of the view the Sacred College still celebrated the mysteries of Isis and Osiris so late as A.D. 43, and thus for sixty-four years resisted the forcible conversion of Egypt to Christianity which followed the edict of Theodosius.

straight and the helm put up sharp at the right moment, the craft shoots round the corner into smooth water without difficulty or danger.

Above the Cataract is Philæ, the most beautiful island on the Nile (see the steel engraving facing page 221). The ride across the desert from Aswân to Philæ is a singularly impressive one. First a dreary, neglected Arab cemetery is traversed, where

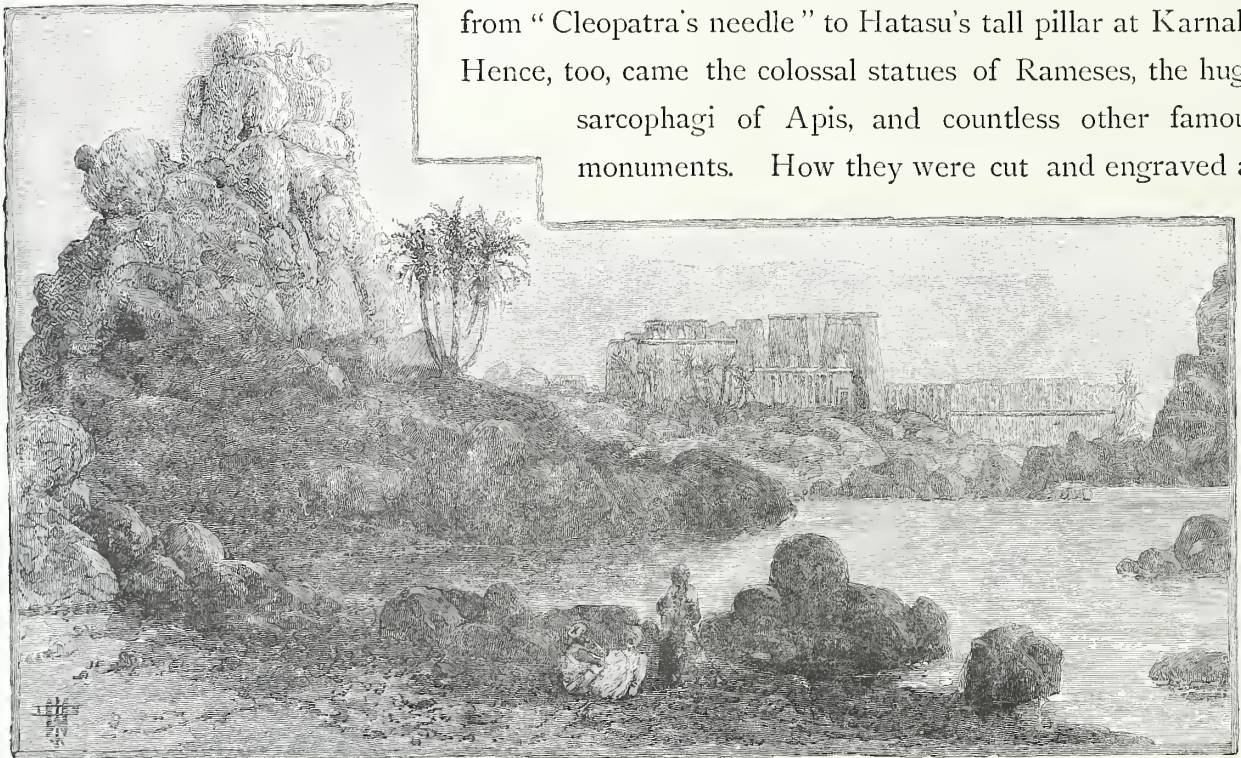


MAHATTAH, NEAR PHILÆ, ON THE NILE.
The home of many of the Shellâlis or boatmen of the Cataract.

old Kufic tombstones, dating even from the ninth century, are lying about on the ground under our feet, and ruined little mosques raise up their domes here and there. It is said that the first muëddin of Islam was buried here. Then we find ourselves amid strange and weird

scenery. We ride over miles of bare desert, with nothing to vary its yellow surface but huge torn masses of granite and black syenite. Immense jagged volcanic rocks tower up on either hand, and seem to have been intentionally thrown into the most impossible positions, balanced upon one another in the most hazardous way, and broken and split and thrown together in the strangest and weirdest shapes and combinations. It is one of the most extraordinary scenes in Egypt, and its historical associations are scarcely less wonderful. For it was here that the masons of Memphis and Thebes and Heliopolis came to quarry the granite for the coating of the Third Pyramid, the Temple of the Sphinx, the obelisks, colossi, shrines and sanctuaries of the great temples at Thebes, and indeed for every monument in Egypt. We may still see what looks like an obelisk half cut out of the rock and then abandoned. Every obelisk in

Egypt was cut out of the solid rock just in the same manner, from "Cleopatra's needle" to Hatasu's tall pillar at Karnak. Hence, too, came the colossal statues of Rameses, the huge sarcophagi of Apis, and countless other famous monuments. How they were cut and engraved at



THE APPROACH TO PHILÆ.

"In the time of the Ptolemies visitors from all parts of Egypt, travellers from distant lands, court functionaries from Alexandria, came annually in crowds to pay their vows at the tomb of the god."

Aswân, and then floated down the river, and then rolled to the place where they were to stand, is one of the marvels of this marvellous antiquity.

At length we reach the river again; but now we are above the Cataract. A boat is ready and assistance is clamorously proffered, and we row across to Philæ. The approach to the island is very beautiful. On either hand great bare shining rocks, black and grey, tower against the sky, while between them, through an opening, appears the little island, with palms in the foreground, and the well-preserved pylon of the Temple of Isis rising out of the green. Philæ is green, however, only by comparison with the general brownness. There is really little verdure on the island, which is now wholly deserted; and it suffers from the same parched, barren aspect that is characteristic of all Upper Egypt. We cannot help missing the greenery

which we are accustomed to regard as a chief beauty in a landscape. If the heap of Coptic brick ruins that encumber the ground were cleared away, and the water of the Nile were once more applied to fertilize the island, Philæ would be incomparably more lovely. Its position is, indeed, almost unrivalled, and there is nothing in Philæ so beautiful as the view from the summit of the larger pylon. The girdling hills that bound the prospect on all sides, the sweep of placid water running under the palms, the savage rocks beyond, all lend an enchantment to the scene which the memories of the island's history serve to enhance.

Philæ does not indeed belong to the great days when a Thothmes or a Rameses conquered distant nations and commemorated his deeds on the walls of his temples. It is the work of Ptolemies and Cæsars. But its associations are more important than its architecture. "It shared with Abydos and some other places the reputation of being the burial-place of Osiris. It was called 'the Holy Island.' Its very soil was sacred. None might land upon its shores, or even approach them too nearly, without permission. To obtain that permission and perform the



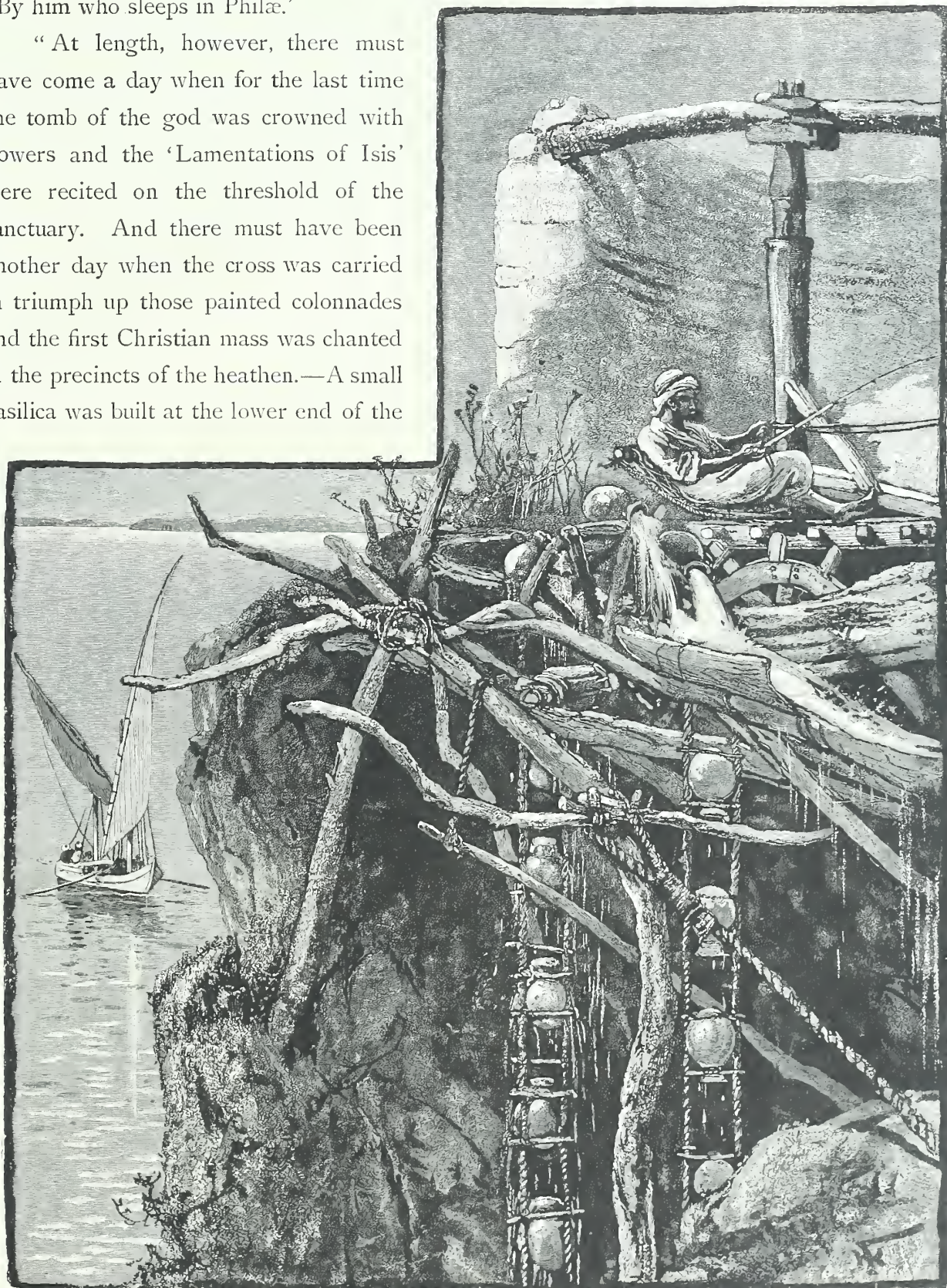
LOOKING SOUTH FROM PHILÆ.



HYPÆTHRAL TEMPLE AT PHILÆ.
Commonly known as "Pharaoh's Bed." One of the gems of Egypt, and exquisitely set.

pilgrimage to the tomb of the god, was to the pious Egyptian what the Mekka pilgrimage is to the pious Mussulman of to-day. The most solemn oath to which he could give utterance was 'By him who sleeps in Philæ.'

"At length, however, there must have come a day when for the last time the tomb of the god was crowned with flowers and the 'Lamentations of Isis' were recited on the threshold of the sanctuary. And there must have been another day when the cross was carried in triumph up those painted colonnades and the first Christian mass was chanted in the precincts of the heathen.—A small basilica was built at the lower end of the



NUBIAN WATER-WHEEL.

In Nubia these *sakiyahs* take the place of the *shadufs* of Upper Egypt, and though they are costly to erect they effect a considerable saving of labour.

island, the portico of the great temple was converted into a chapel and dedicated to St. Stephen. 'This good work,' says a Greek inscription traced by some monkish hand of the period, 'was done by the well-beloved of God, the Abbot Bishop Theodore.'—The little basilica, we may be sure, had a cluster of mud huts upon the roof, and I fancy that the abbot and his monks installed themselves in that row of cells in the east side of the great colonnade, where the priests of Isis dwelt before them. As for the village, it must have been, like Luxor, swarming with dusky life, noisy with the babble of children, the cackling of poultry, and the barking of dogs, sending up thin pillars of blue smoke at noon, echoing to the measured chime of the prayer



THE TEMPLE OF ABOO SIMBEL, IN NUBIA.

The most wonderful of all the temples of Rameses the Great, excavated in the solid rock.

bell at morn and even, and sleeping at night as soundly as if no ghostlike mutilated gods were looking on mournfully in the moonlight. The gods are avenged now--the creed that dethroned them is dethroned. Abbot Theodore and his successors and the religion they taught and the simple folk that listened to their teaching are gone and forgotten. For the Church of Christ, which still languishes in Egypt, is extinct in Nubia. It lingered long, though doubtless in some such degraded and barbaric form as it wears in Abyssinia to this day. But it was absorbed by Islam at last, and only a ruined convent perched here and there upon some solitary height, or a few crosses rudely carved upon the walls of a Ptolemaic temple, remain to show that Christianity once passed that way." *

* Miss A. B. Edwards, "One Thousand Miles up the Nile," chap. xii.

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