

JENSON'S TRAVELS.

LETTER NO. LXV.

After spending a second night in Cario, Egypt, I arose early in the morning of June 9th, 1896, and took a long walk through the city without guide or donkey. Passing through Rue du Muski, one of the principal streets of the city, I found myself at the eastern boundary and at the foot of a spur of the Mokuttam Hills, which I crossed, and then descended to a veritable city of the dead known as the "graves of the Khalifs." Here lie the nobility of Egypt for many generations, many of them in costly and ornamental buildings which are crowned by domes in regular mosque style. I was permitted to enter the finest building I could see, after the doorkeeper had carefully tied a pair of sandals on my feet. The Arab attendant took great pains to tell me all about it in a language of which I knew not a single sentence; but I was led to understand that I was in the open tomb of one of the late Khedives of Egypt. From the graves of the Khalifs, I walked to the great citadel, where I fell in conversation with some English soldiers, one of whom (William Cox) said he was related to Thomas C. Patten, of Salt Lake City. He desired very much to go to Utah himself, and hoped to have the privilege of doing so after he had served his term as a soldier. Two of the boys had recently died with the cholera, and I was shown the cholera camp on a high roof within the inclosures of the citadel. At present, however, it is without tenants, and I was told that the two deaths was caused by the unwise conduct of the soldiers themselves, who had mixed with the natives in their unhealthy quarters, and had drank bad whisky with them.

From the citadel I returned to the hotel by way of the street called Boulevard Mohammed Ali, paid my hotel bill, drove to the station in a carriage, and left Cairo by rail at 11:15 a. m. Arriving at Ismailia, I changed cars for Port Said, distant fifty miles from Ismailia by rail, where I arrived at 7:30 p. m., and put up at a hotel. At Ismailia a fellow passenger—a German—voluntarily took my part against an impudent Arab who insisted on acting as my guide, though I had told him repeatedly that I did not want him. My German friend, whose name was Constantin Fix, seeing that the fellow tried to impose upon me, arose, fired with indignation, and deliberately knocked the Arab down. The station police was soon on the spot; but my friend, who talked good Arabic was able to give satisfactory explanation, and the impudent native scampered off with a sore head instead of the money which he wanted to extort from me. Port Said is a new town which, as I have stated in a former letter, and had no existence before the building of the Suez ship canal. It has regular streets, one small artificial park, some respectable and good sized buildings, but otherwise no particular attractions. And it is only important as the Mediterranean port of the Suez canal, where all canal dues are also paid by south bound ships. A fine statue of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, to whose ingenuity the town owes its existence, adorns the public park. Port Said gets its supply of fresh water from the Nile through a previously mentioned canal.

Everything alive that I have seen in

Egypt relies upon the Nile for its very existence. It certainly is one of the most remarkable rivers of the world, and as the memorials of antiquity, in the shape of the tombs, temples and monuments of old Egypt, lie on its banks a short sketch of that historical river may not prove uninteresting to the readers of the News. Miss Harriet Martineau, who recently wrote a book on Egypt, remarks:

"Everything in Egypt, including life itself, and all that life includes, depends on the incessant struggle which the great river maintains against the forces of the desert. The world has witnessed many conflicts; but no other so unrelenting, so protracted and so sublime as the struggle of these two gigantic powers, the Nile and the Desert. The Nile, ever young because perpetually renewing its youth, seems to the inexperienced eye to have no chance with its stripling force—a David against a Goliath—against the desert, whose might has never relaxed, from the earliest days till now, but the Goliath has not conquered it. Now and then he has prevailed for a season, and the tremblers whose destiny hung on the event have cried out that all was over; but he has once more been driven back, and Nilus has risen up again, to do what we see him doing in the sculptures—bind up his water plants about the throne of Egypt. From the beginning the people of Egypt have had everything to hope from the river, nothing from the desert; much to fear from the desert, and little from the river. What their fear may reasonably be, any one may conjecture who has looked upon a hillocky expanse of sand, where the little jerboa burrows, and the hyena prowls at night. Under these hillocks lie temples and palaces, and under the level sands a whole city. The enemy has come in from behind and stifled and buried it. What is the hope of the people from the river anyone may witness who, at the regular season, sees the people grouped on the eminences, watching the advancing waters, and listening for the voice of the crier, or the boom of the cannon which is to tell the prospect or event of the inundation of the year. The Nile was naturally defied by the old inhabitants. It was a god to the mass; and at least one of the manifestations of Diety to the priestly order. As it was the immediate cause of all they had, and all they hoped for—the creative power regularly at work before their eyes, usually conquering, though occasionally checked—it was to them the good power; and the Desert became the evil one. Hence, originated a main part of their faith, embodied in the allegory of the burial of Osiris in the sacred stream whence he arose once a year to scatter blessings over the earth."

The sources of the Nile, which is so intimately bound up with the fortunes and creed of a great people, were long involved in mystery. The sources of the Blue Nile was discovered by James Bruce in 1770; but that of the more important White Nile, which is indeed the true Nile, remained enshrouded in mystery until quite recently, when its source was discovered in or adjacent to the great lake now called Victoria in central Africa by the late Dr. Livingston and others. The river flows out of said lake on the north, just beyond the Equator in a channel 150 yards wide, and pouring over a mass of igneous rocks, forms the Ripon Falls, twelve

feet high in latitude $0^{\circ} 20'$ north and longitude $33^{\circ} 30'$ east. Proceeding in a northwesterly direction, it forms the Karunia and the Murchison Falls, and joins the Albert Nyanza. Emerging from this second reservoir, the White Nile or Bahr el Abiad of the Arabs, still keeps to the northwest, and through a country recently opened up by the late General Gordon and his lieutenants, goes onward to Gondokoro, the great depot of the ivory dealers, 1,900 feet above the sea. Over a gently undulating plain with many windings but no great descent, it strikes to the northwest, and afterwards to the northeast for nearly 500 miles, receiving in latitude $9^{\circ} 15'$ north its first great affluent, the Bahr el-Gazal, or Gazelle river, a slow and shallow stream from the west. Taking an easterly direction for eighty miles, and curving southward for thirty miles, it is augmented by the waters of the Giraffe and the Lobat; after which it takes a northerly course, with a full and tranquil current, and a breadth varying from 1,700 to 3,600 feet, for nearly 480 miles. Thus it arrives at Khartoum, the capital of Nubia, in Latitude $15^{\circ} 37'$ north. Here it is that it receives the river which for generations was supposed to be the Nile—the river which the adventurous Bruce traced to its fountains—the Blue Nile, or Bahr el-Azrek. It is formed by the junction of the Abai (which rises in Abyssinia, fifty miles from Lake Dembea and 8,700 feet above the sea) and the Blue River, which has its sources in the southern highlands, and is fed by the Dender and the Shimla.

At Khartoum the Blue Nile is 708 yards wide and the White Nile only 483 yards; but the latter is much deeper, and its flow of water more continuous. Flowing north for sixty miles, across wide pasture plains, and past Halfara and ancient Meroe, the Nile arrives at its first cataract, or rather rapid, which is the seventh counting from the river's mouth. Rolling onward, it passes Shendi and receives at El Danier (in latitude $17^{\circ} 45'$ north) the Atbara, or Tacazze or (as it is often called in allusion to its muddy waters) the Bahr el-Aswad, or Black River.

From this point the great river traverses for 120 miles the rich, well cultivated, and numerous inhabited country of the Berbers, to enter on a widely different region—a wilderness of sand, barren and desolate, where the ruins of antiquity lie overwhelmed by the sandstorms of centuries. Below the island of Mogreb (in latitude 18° north) it bends sharply to the south-westward, three cataracts or rapids marking this part of its course. It then takes a northwesterly direction, crosses the desert of Bahionda, forms another cataract, diverges to the north-east, and flows through the rapids of Wady Halfa, passes, in a much narrower valley, the ruins of Abou-Simfel, Derr, Ghirsch, Housseyn, Dendour and Kalabsche, and at Assovan (anciently Lyene) in latitude $24^{\circ} 5' 23''$ north, descends into upper Egypt by its largest cataract, which is the seventh from its source, or the first from its mouth. All these cataracts are really rapids which almost disappear when the Nile is at its height during the period of the annual inundation. They are caused by the encroachment of the rocks upon the river-channel, which, dividing into several small streams pours its waters through the craggy defiles with considerable fury.