

engineer came to a similar result in 1853, but declared that no navigable canal could be constructed; and he then laid down the existing railroad between Cairo and Suez as a substitute.

There arose, however, at this time a Frenchman, with all the élan and ingenuity of his countrymen, and an indomitable perseverance peculiarly his own, who came to a different conclusion. Having some influence at the Egyptian court, he obtained a concession in 1854 from Laid Pasha, the viceroy of Egypt, for the making of a canal across the Isthmus of Suez. The Sultan's assent was less easily procured owing to the jealousy which has arisen between English and French into sects and it was not until 1858 that M. Ferdinand de Lesseps found himself in a position to appeal to the public for support. A company was then formed with a capital of £8,000,000. In 1859 the work was begun, and by December, 1864, the fresh water canal requested for the supply of the laborers on the ship canal was completed. All, however did not go on smoothly. Difficulties arose between Ismail Pashima, (Laid Sasha's successor) respecting the concessions granted to the company. The dispute was referred to the Emperor of the French as arbitrator, who decided that the company should give up some important privileges, and receive in line thereof a total sum of £4,000,000, with a strip of land, about forty eight yards wide, on each side of the canal. The ship canal was then proceeded with; a variety of ingenious machinery being invented by the French engineers to meet the exigencies of their novel and magnificent enterprise. In 1867 an additional capital of £4,000,000 was raised and on the 17th of November, 1869, it was formally opened for navigation in the presence of a host of illustrious personages, representing every European State. The cost of the canal was about twenty million pounds. The total length is about ninety miles from head to head. The width of the water surface was at first 150 to 300 feet, the width of the bottom 72 feet and the minimum depth 26 feet. It begins at Port Laid, on the Mediterranean, where an artificial harbor has been constructed; proceeds to Kantara, traverses the Abu Ballah Lake; at Ismailia enters Lake Timsah; thence to Serapeum; passes through the Bitter Lakes and terminates at Suez.

At the end of a dozen years the traffic had increased so enormously that a second canal began to be talked about, and in 1886 the task of widening and also deepening the existing canal was commenced. By 1896 the canal had been deepened to 28 feet, and widened between Port Laid and the Bitter Lakes to 144 feet and from the Bitter Lakes to Suez to 213 feet.

Since 1886 the time of making the transit through the canal has been greatly accelerated. In that year a vessel took on an average 36 hours to get through; now the average time of passage does not exceed 18 hours. Moreover, since March, 1887 the electric light has been used to light the way during the night.

The construction of the Suez Canal has called into existence two new towns namely Port Laid which now has a population of about 14,000, and Ismailia. Suez, which is an older town, has largely increased its population, which

now numbers about 20,000. About 5,000 vessels pass through the canal every year, and the canal stock is said, pays its shareholders a good annual dividend.

At 6:30 p. m. I left Ismailia by train for Cairo, the capital of Egypt, distant 156½ kilometers, or about 97 miles from Ismailia. It being night I was unable to make but a few observations in regard to the country which we passed through; but I noticed that the first part of the route lay through a barren desert land though following the banks of the fresh water canal; while the latter part took us through a thickly populated and fertile country—a part of the great Nile delta, part of which I afterwards learned to be the land of Goshen of Bible fame. Zagazig and Benha were the two most important intermediate stations. I also noticed the desert village of Tel-el-Kebir where the English under General Sir Garnet gained a decided victory over Egyptian rebels in battle on Friday, July 7, 1882. Soon afterwards Cairo was taken by the British, who have since watched over their Egyptian interests with a jealous eye, constantly fearing the ascendancy of French influence, which perhaps is not without cause.

On my arrival at Cairo at 10:30 p. m. I put up at the Khedivial Hotel, where I appeared to be the only European or American guest, the tourist season being over for this year.

ANDREW JENSON.

GIZEH near Cairo, Egypt, June 8, 1896.

LETTER NO. XLIV.

After enjoying a good nights rest at the Khedivial Hotel at Cairo, Egypt, I arose early on the morning of June 8th, 1896, and hired a man with a gray donkey to take me through the city and out to the great pyramids beyond the Nile. I left the hotel at 7:30 a. m. being mounted as gracefully as possible on the donkey whose neck was richly decorated with Egyptian brass jewelry; but whose constant abuse of his braying powers made me perfectly disgusted with him before the day was over. His master who ran behind me and donkey could talk a little broken English, so I dispensed with the additional luxury of a special guide, though such a one, who styled himself the guide of Cairo, offered his services for six shillings a day, provided I hired a carriage for both of us which would cost me sixteen shillings extra. Believing in economy I decided to get along with Said Mohammed and his donkey for four shillings per day.

As we rode through the streets of Cairo, I saw much to admire and many things to disgust me. Most every visitor to the capital of Egypt I believe is at first bewildered, same as I was, by the novel scenes which crowd upon him; and some time necessarily elapses before he is able to disentangle his confused impressions and realize each feature of the marvelous picture. After awhile one begins to understand that he is indeed in a purely Oriental city. As he examines its bazaars and passes through its streets he seems carried back to the days of antiquity. There are a few straight and regular streets in Cairo, but most of the thoroughfares are so narrow as scarcely to admit of two camels passing abreast; some of its bazaars glow with the richest productions of the looms of the East; its mosques and minarets are apparently innumerable; and its fountains fill the air with an enduring freshness. Many of the richly

carpeted shops are enclosed in front by a divan, and in the midst sits a venerable Turk or a wealthy Arab, smoking his pipe—often a splendid narghileh of gold and silver—and surveying with complacent gaze his costly wares, which embraces jewelry from Paris, chibougues from Constantinople, tobacco from Latakia, dainty muslins from India, keen bright swords of "Damascus steel" and rustling silks from the land of the Celestials. Meanwhile the ways are thronged in many parts, and it is often with difficulty the pedestrian escapes a rude jostle from the donkeys which pass him every moment, laden with sand, flour, water, etc., or occasionally with a happier burden in the person of some Egyptian beauty of the harem closely veiled and attended by watchful guards. With my best endeavors to make it otherwise the braying donkey that I rode ran headlong against several persons and also against other donkeys, though his master claimed that his donkey ranked very high in the scale of good behaviour as compared with Cairo donkeys in general.

Cairo lies in latitude 30° 2' north and longitude 31° 16' east on a sandy level between the right bank of the Nile and the range of the Mokuttam Hills. It was founded eastward of what is now called old Cairo by Touloun, a Moslem governor of Egypt in A. D. 868; but was removed still further eastward, to its present site, by the Fatimite khalif, Ed Moez, in A. D. 923. It remained the capital of the Fastimite rulers until 1171, when the famous Saladin usurped the throne. In 1220 it was unsuccessfully besieged by the Crusaders. In 1250 Moosa-el-Ashref was deposed by the Mamelukes, who retained possession of the city until 1517 when it was stormed and captured by Sultan Selim. Though it has lost most of its original importance, it is still a prosperous city with a population of about 250,000, mostly Mohammedans. It may be considered as the great centre of learning of the Eastern world, its celebrated university being presided over by men of acknowledged erudition and annually attended by some two thousand students.

One of the most remarkable edifices in Cairo is the Cathedral which dominates over the whole town from its elevated position on a bold ridge of sandstone. Its wall are of great solidity and, in some places, one hundred feet in height. It was within these walls that the massacre of Mamelukes took place March 1st, 1811; and its battlements were crowned by Napoleon's victorious standards in 1798. The Cathedral walls were enlarged and strengthened by Mehemet Ali who resided here during the greater part of his reign. The prospect it commands is of a very extensive and impressive character, including not only the city of Cairo with its carved domes and fantastic minarets, but the sequestered valley of the Nile, with its tombs of the Mameluke Sultans; the rich deep verdure of the distant delta; the sharp clear outline of the mysterious Pyramids; the yellow frontier-belt of the desert; the meanderings of the tranquil Nile; and everywhere a soil that has been swept by successive waves of revolution from the days of Menes and Rameses to those of Napoleon Bonaparte. When I stood on the top of the high wall by the great mosque which