

EGYPTIAN FARMERS

HOW SIX MILLION FELLAHS MAKE THEIR LIVING IN THE VALLEY OF THE NILE.

(Special Correspondence of the Desert News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

TANTA, 1907.—For the past month I have been traveling through the farms of the Nile valley. I have visited many parts of the Delta and have taken a run through the narrow strip which borders the river for several hundred miles above Cairo. I am writing these notes at Tanta, a city which lies about half way between Cairo and Alexandria and midway between the two branches into which the Nile divides below Cairo and flows from there down into the Mediterranean sea. I am in a region where the guide books make little account. I refer to the Delta, that great fan of land, which begins at Cairo and in a radius of about 100 miles, reaches the Mediterranean sea at Alexandria and Port Said.

BIG PRICES FOR FARMS.

The Delta is the heart of Egypt. It contains the bulk of the population. It has the most land, the richest soil and the highest crops. It is more thickly settled than any other part of the world, and it yields more to the acre than any other region on earth. Its farm lands are worth more than those of any other country, and they bring a great price. The average yield for all Egypt nets a profit of \$35 per acre, and that of lower Egypt amounts to much more. Some lands yield so much more that they are renting for \$50 per acre, and there are instances where \$100 an acre is paid. Such lands bring two or three crops a year, and those who rent them know what they are doing. The renting value of the lands of Egypt in 1895 was over a hundred and ten million dollars, and the selling values of the best lands now range all the way from two hundred to a thousand dollars per acre.

I see in today's newspapers an advertisement of the Egyptian Lands company, announcing an issue of two and one-half million dollars' worth of stock. The syndicate says in its prospectus that it expects to buy 5,000 acres of land at "the low rate of \$200 per acre," and that by spending \$1,000,000 it can make that land worth \$100 per acre within three years. Some of this land is now worth from \$250 to \$300 per acre, and it is renting for \$20 per acre per annum. The tract lies 50 miles north of Cairo and is planted in cotton, wheat and barley.

EGYPT BELONGS TO THE EGYPTIANS.

Such estates as the above do not often come into the market. The most of Egypt is in small farms, and there are thousands here of one acre or less. The cultivable land, all told, covers only a little over 6,000,000 acres.

Indeed, it is not right to think of Egypt as owned by foreigners. Six-sevenths of all the farms belong to the Egyptians, and there are more than a million native land owners. The most of the holdings are small, and over 1,000,000 acres are in tracts of from five to 20 acres each. Many are even less than an acre in size. The number of proprietors is increasing every year, and the fellahs now seem crazy to possess land of their own. It used to be that the khedive had enormous estates, but when the British government took possession some of the khedival lands came to them. They have been divided and have been sold on long-time and easy payments, the lands going to the fellahs. Many who then bought these lands have paid for them out of their crops and are all rich. As it is now there are only 6,000 foreigners who own real estate in the valley of the Nile.

AMONG THE FARMERS.

I wish I could show you the farmers of Egypt as they live here in the Delta. They have one of the garden spots on the globe to cultivate, and the rich mud of which their land is composed is from 30 to 60 feet deep. It rests on the bed rock of the desert, and has been brought down, through the ages, from the highlands of Abyssinia by the river Nile. The Nile is bringing more every year, and the land, if carefully handled, needs practically no fertilization. As it is now it is yielding two or three crops every 12 months and is seldom idle. Under the old system of basin irrigation the farms lay fallow during the hot months of the summer, but the canals and dams which have of late been constructed enable much of the country to have water all the year round, and as soon as one crop is harvested another is planted.

THE CITIES OF THE DELTA.

The whole of the Delta is one big farm dotted with farm villages and little town cities. There are mud towns everywhere, and there are half a dozen agricultural centers of considerable size outside the big cities of Alexandria and Cairo. Tanta for instance, Tanta, where I am at this writing, it has 57,000 people and is supported by the farmers. It is a cotton market and it has a great fair, now and then, to which the people come from all over Egypt to buy and sell. A little to the east of it is Zagazig, which has more than 40,000 people, and further north, upon the east branch of the Nile, is Mansura, another cotton market, with a rich farming district about it.

Damietta and Rosetta, at the two mouths of the Nile, are also big places, and Damianhur, which lies west of the Rosetta branch, is also large, not far from Lake Esaki. It is also large. There are a number of towns ranging in size from five to ten thousand, and the whole country is peppered with mud villages. The people do not live on their farms, but in towns. They go out to work in the morning and come back home at night. They usually bring their cattle in with them and never allow them to graze at will in the field.

HOW AN EGYPTIAN FARM LOOKS.

Indeed, these farms are nothing like those of the United States. We should have to change the face of our landscape to imitate them. There are no fences, no barns and no haystacks. The country is as bare of such things as an undeveloped prairie. The only boundaries of the estates are little mud walls, and the fields are divided into patches, some of which are no bigger than a bed quilt. Each patch has its wall, and the furrows within are so made that the water from the canals can irrigate every inch.

IRRIGATION.

The whole country is cut up by canals. There are large waterways running along the branches of the Nile, and smaller ones, connecting with them, to such an extent that the whole country is bound, as it were, in a lace-work of little streams from which the water can be let in and out. The draining of the land is quite as important as watering, and the system of irrigation is perfect, inasmuch that it brings the Nile to every part of the country. The methods of raising the water from one level to another are different from ours. In some places there are steam pumps which do the work, in others gravity is employed and on some of the higher lands half-naked men labor for months at a time scooping water up in buckets and pouring it out on the fields above. There are also great creaking cog wheels which work in such a way that the water is caught in clay pots attached to their rims, and thus raised and poured into the little canals through which it flows to the fields. These wheels are moved by blindfolded buffaloes, bullocks or camels. There are thousands of them in the valley of the Nile.

QUEER FARMING METHODS.

The American farmer would sneer at the old-fashioned way in which these Egyptian fellahs cultivate the soil. He would tell them that they were two centuries behind the times, and still, if he were allowed to take their places he would probably ruin the country and himself. Most of the Egyptian farming methods are the result of long experience. In plowing, the land is only scratched, and the farmer is careful not to turn up the earth a foot or so below the surface. This Nile mud is full of salts, and the salt from Abyssinia is of such a nature that the people have to be careful in order that the salts may not be raised from below and ruin the crop. In many cases there is no plowing at all. The seed is sown on the soft mud after the water is taken off, and pressed into it with a wooden roller or trodden in by oxen or buffaloes.

ODD FARM TOOLS.

Where plows are used they are just the same as those of 5,000 years ago. I have seen carvings of the tools of the ancient Egyptians representing the farm tool used then, and they are about the same as those I see in use today. The average plow consists of a pole about six feet long fastened to a piece of wood bent inward at an acute angle. The end piece is shod with iron, and does the plowing. The pole is hitched to a buffalo or ox by means of a yoke, and the farmer walks along behind the plow holding its single handle, which consists of a stick set almost upright into the pole.

The harrow of Egypt is a roller provided with iron spikes, and the chief digging instrument is a mattock-like hoe. Much of the land is dug over with the hoe. The most of the grain here is cut with sickles or pulled out by the roots. Wheat and barley are threshed by laying them inside a ring of well-pounded ground and driving a sledge which rests on a roller over them. The roller has sharp semi-circular pieces of iron set into it, and it is drawn by oxen, buffaloes or camels. Sometimes the grain is trodden out by the feet of the animals without the use of the rollers and sometimes there are wheels of stone between the sled-runners which aid in hulling the grain. Peas and beans are also threshed in this way. The grain is winnowed by the wind. The ears are spread out on the threshing floor and the grains pounded off with clubs or shelled by hand.

Much of the corn is cut and laid on the banks of the canal until the people have time to husk and shell it. Then the leaves are stripped off the fodder, and the stalks are tied up and laid on the tops of the houses for fuel.

CAMELS AS HAY RACKS.

The chief means of carrying farm produce from one place to another is on bullocks and camels. The camel is taken out into the corn field while the harvesting is going on. As the men cut the corn they tie it up into great bundles and hang one on each side of his hump. The ordinary camel can carry about one-fifth as much as one

What Farm Lands are Worth and What They Yield—The Average Profit is \$35 Per Acre—A Land of Wheat and Barley—In the Corn Fields and Among The Stock—A Look at a Farm Village and A Farmer's House—Queer Methods of Thrashing, Etc.



THRASHING WHEAT IN EGYPT—BULLOCK AND CAMEL WORKING TOGETHER.

Photographed for the Desert News by Frank G. Carpenter.

horse hitched to a wagon or one-tenth as much as a two-horse team. Hay, straw and green cover are often carried from the fields to the markets on camels. Such crops are put up in a baglike net-work which fits over the camel's hump, and makes him look like a hay or straw stack walking off upon legs. Some of the farmers, who cannot afford camels, use donkeys for such purposes, and these little animals may often be seen going along the narrow roads carrying bags of grain balanced upon their backs. I have always looked upon Egypt as devoted to sugar and cotton. I find it is full of wheat and barley as well. It has also a big yield of clover and corn. The sugar and cotton fields all told cover about 1,600,000 acres, and they take up only about one-fourth of the tillable land. There is twice as much farming country devoted to grain. The wheat and barley fields cover 1,750,000 acres, and there are more than 1,000,000 acres in Indian corn. There are something like 500,000 acres in millet and sorghum. The delta raises almost all of the cotton and some of the sugar. Central and upper Egypt are grain countries, and in central Egypt Indian and Kaffir corn are the chief summer crops. Kaffir corn is, to a large extent, the food of the poorer fellahs, and it is eaten by the Bedouins who live in the desert along the edges of the Nile valley.

Egypt raises a great deal of hay and it produces some of the very best

clover. The Egyptian clover is known as bersine. It has rich feeding qualities and a small bundle of it is enough to satisfy a camel. It is cut and carried into the cities for sale on the backs of camels and donkeys, and is also grazed.

STOCK FARMING IN EGYPT.

Egypt is a great stock country. For its small size it supports, I venture, its many animals as any other part of the world. The Nile valley is peppered with camels, donkeys, buffaloes and sheep, either watched by herders or tied to stakes, grazing on clover and other grasses. No animal is allowed to run at large, for there are no fences and the cattle thief is everywhere in evidence. The fellahs are as

shrewd as any people the world over, and a strayed animal would be difficult to recover. Much of the stock is watched by children. I see buffaloes feeding in the green fields with naked brown boys sitting on their backs and whipping them this way and that if they attempt to get into the crops adjoining.

The sheep and goats are often watched by the children or by men who are too old to do hard work. The donkeys, camels and cows are usually tied to stakes and can only feed as far as their ropes will reach. The sheep of Egypt are fine. Many of them are of the fat-tailed variety, some brown and some white. The goats and sheep feed together, and there are some goats in almost every flock of the former.

The donkey is the chief riding animal. It is used by men, women and children, and a common sight is the veiled wife of one of these Mohammedan farmers seated astride on a little donkey with her feet high up on its sides in the short stirrups. But few camels are used for riding except by the Bedouins out in the desert, and it is only in the cities that buggies, carriages or wagons are to be seen.

IN THE COUNTRY VILLAGES.

Suppose we go into one of the villages and see how these Egyptian farmers live. The towns are collections of mud huts with holes in the walls for windows. They are scattered along narrow roadways and the dust is thick.

The average hut is so low that one can look over its roof when seated on a camel. It seldom contains more than one or two rooms, and usually has a little yard outside, in which the children and chickens roll about in the dust and where the donkey is sometimes tied.

Above some of the houses are towers of mud with holes in their sides. These towers are devoted to pigeons, which are kept by the hundreds and which are sold in the markets as we sell chickens. The pigeons furnish a large part of the manure of Egypt, and this is so of both gardens and fields. The manure is mixed with earth and scattered over the soil.

Almost every village has its mosque or church, and often in addition the tomb of some saint or holy man who has lived there in the past. The people worship at such tombs and think that prayers made there avail more than those made out in the fields or in their own huts.

There are no water works in the ordinary country village. If the locality is close to the Nile the drinking and washing water is brought from there to the huts on the heads of the women, and if not it comes from the village well. It is not difficult to get water by digging down a few feet anywhere in the Nile valley, and every town has its well. The village well is usually shaded by palm trees. It is at night that the men gather about and gossip at night, and there the women come to draw water and carry it home upon their heads.

HOW THE FARMERS LIVE.

The farmers' houses have no gar-

dens about them, and no flowers or other ornamental decoration. The surroundings of the town are squalid and mean, and the peasants have no comforts in our sense of the word. They have but little furniture inside their houses. Many of them sleep on the ground or on mats, and many wear the same clothing at night that they wear in the day time. Out in the country shoes, stockings and underclothes are comparatively unknown; and it is only upon dress-up occasions that a man or woman puts on slippers.

The cooking and housekeeping is done entirely by the women. The chief food is a coarse bread made of corn or millet. This is baked in thick cakes and is broken up and dipped into a kind of a bean stew seasoned with salt, pepper and onions. Almost every sort of vegetable grows well here, and onions and tomatoes are raised for export. The ordinary peasant seldom has meat, and it is only the rich who can afford mutton or beef. At a big feast on the occasion of a wedding a farming nabob sometimes brings in a sheep which has been cooked whole. It is eaten without forks, and is torn limb from limb, pieces being cut out by the guests with their knives.

Every one in Egypt who can afford it smokes. The men have pipes of various kinds, and of late many cigarettes have been coming into use. A favorite smoke is with a water pipe, the vapor from the burning tobacco being drawn by means of a long tube through a bowl of water upon which the pipe sits, so that it comes cool into the mouth of the smoker.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

MEN PAST SIXTY IN DANGER.

More than half of mankind over sixty years of age suffer from kidney and bladder disorders, usually enlargement of prostate glands. This is both painful and dangerous, and Foley's Kidney Cure should be taken at the first sign of danger, as it corrects irregularities and has cured many old men of this disease. Mr. Henry Burnett of Rockport, Mass., writes: "I suffered with enlarged prostate gland and kidney trouble for years and after taking two bottles of Foley's Kidney Cure I feel better than I have for twenty years, although I am now 91 years old." For sale by F. J. Hill Drug Co., "The never substitutes."

VIA NIAGARA FALLS AND LEHIGH VALLEY R. R.

To New York

A delightful trip at any season. The route of the Lehigh Valley is famed for its scenic beauty, and comfort is assured on its vestibuled trains. Its double track is stone ballasted throughout, and trains are protected by automatic electric block signals. Your local ticket agent will sell you tickets reading over the Lehigh Valley from Niagara Falls or Buffalo to New York or Philadelphia on request to Chas. S. Lee, G. P. A., 113 Liberty St., New York.

A splendid August linen sale

The greatest sale of table linens ever inaugurated by the Walker Store and consequently by any store in this city.

Every piece new and fresh—no old stock, shelf-worn and soiled—just a splendid offering of this season's best linens—made by the best linen weavers in the world.

Starts Monday, August 19th—lasts all week.

Here are the reductions—compare them with any you have seen—they will out-class them all.

66 in. fine satin damask table linen worth \$1.50 the yard—August linen sale price **\$1.00**

70 inch fine satin damask table linen worth \$1.75 the yard—August linen sale price **\$1.25**

72 inch fine table linen worth \$2.00 the yard—August linen sale price **\$1.50**

72 inch fine table linen worth \$2.50 the yard—August linen sale price **\$1.85**

20 inch napkins to match 66 inch damask worth \$3.50 the dozen—August linen sale price **\$2.50**

22 inch napkins to match 70 inch damask worth \$4.50 the dozen—August linen sale price **\$2.98**

Pure linen glass towels worth 45c each—August linen sale price **29c**

Fine damask figured huck toweling 25 inches wide worth 85c the yard—August linen sale price **69c**

Fine linen cambrics worth 75c the yard August linen sale price **59c**

Fine linen cambrics worth \$1.00 the yard August linen sale price **69c**

Fine linen cambrics worth \$1.25 the yard August linen sale price **79c**

Fine linen cambrics worth \$1.50 the yard August linen sale price **89c**

Entire stock of John S. Brown's fine linen towels will be marked at one-fourth off regular prices.

No telephone orders or approvals during this sale.

Perrin's gloves—all styles.

No good quality that should be possessed by a glove, lacking in these. The very best on the market. When a woman asks for "Perrin's," she shows that she knows.

Long silk gloves in all shades and black and white. Fown's and Kayser's makes, best in their lines. Prices \$1.75, \$2.00 and \$2.25.

Walker's
CORNER 3RD ST. AND MAIN
Phones: Independent—227. Bell—EXCHANGE 22. Call all departments.

Embroidery sets half priced

These in dainty colorings, three sets in the lot. Blue, pink and lavender, including flounce and insertion. This offer of half off for one week only.

Plaid braid belting in blue, green and red plaids. Very special at the yard **60c**
Centre aisle—back. Main store.

"Men's corner"—the handiest men's store in town.

Right on your way to the Post Office.

E and W collars at 25c each, or six for \$1.40
Arrow collars at 15c each, or two for **.25c**
Boston garters, lisle, 25c, silks **.50c**
White plated shirts, \$1.25 to **\$.25c** each.

Special prices for the week, scheduled here.

Regular 25c and 35c neckwear, special **.19c**
Regular 50c and 75c neckwear, special **.35c**
Regular \$1.00 neckwear, special **.65c**
Regular 50c underwear, special **.42c**
Regular \$1.00 underwear, special **.80c**
Regular \$1.50 underwear, special **.95c**

Splendid line of new fall shirts just unpacked. Priced the Walker way—that's reasonable.

Girls' sailor suits at one-fourth off.

Chambrays, French ginghams and linens. Colors are dark, medium and white. Patterns are small blue and white, black and white, and plain colors. Sizes 6 to 14 years. Choose this week at one fourth off regular.

Boys' knee trousers, splendid assortment of dark materials. Reinforced seams and patent buttons, 4 to 16 year old sizes. Choose Monday and week at the special price **39c**

Juvenile section—First floor—Annex.

Silk hosiery for women.

Great care has been exerted to make this line as nearly perfect as possible at this distance from the market—novelties are shown here as soon after they are in New York as steam can bring them. Everything that is necessary to the perfection of a silk hosiery department will be found here—and the prices are New York prices, too.

All black spun hose at \$1.25 the pair. Black all silk or with lisle soles, \$1.50 the pair. Black or colors in all silk or lisle soles, \$2.00 the pair. Black and all colors, extra fine all silk, \$2.50 the pair. Black, extra heavy garter laced, \$2.50 the pair.

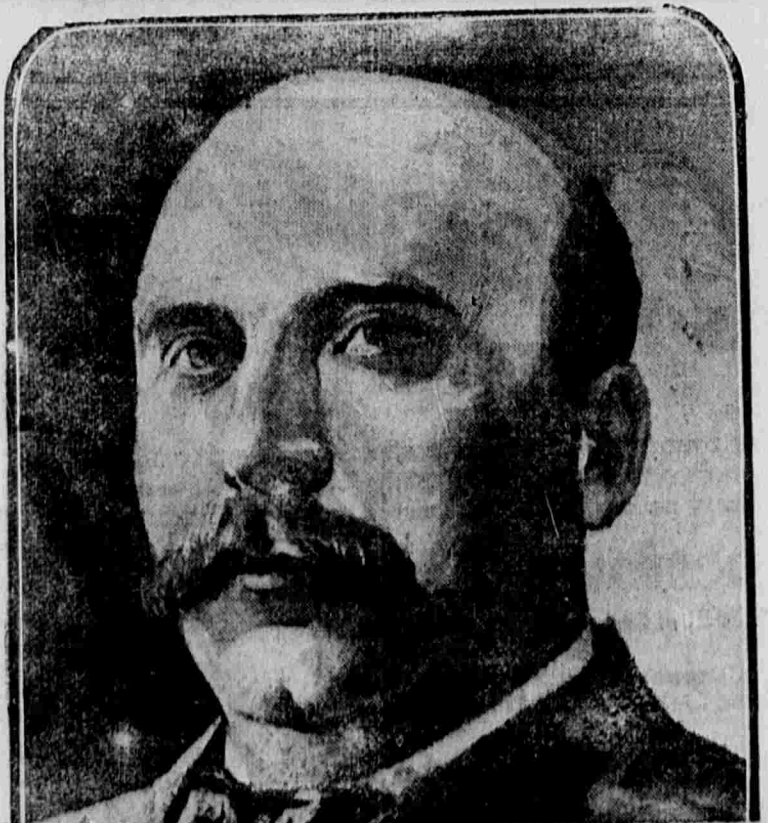
East aisle—Main store.

Peter Thompson suits—special

A splendid line of these popular models to go at almost half prices—Monday and week. They are made of fine white duck with red, blue and black dots, very effective. Suits that sell regularly at \$7.50 each. You select from at **\$5.75**

White batiste waists special.

A very choice assortment of these made of finest quality white batiste. Trimmed tastily with German val lace and tucks back and front. Short sleeve style. A very exceptional offer for Monday and while they last at each **\$2.75**
First floor—Annex.



MAY BE ILLINOIS GOVERNOR.

Chicago Republicans are enthusiastic over the proposition to nominate for governor of Illinois Judge Willard M. McEwen, known as "the divorce judge." He is a man of high character and has presided at more than 2,000 divorce trials, in many of which he has been successful in patching up the trouble and sending the couples away happy and arm-in-arm. He is a homely philosopher and many of his deliverances from the bench have become local axioms.