THE CRADLE OF THE WORLD.

WHAT SAMUEL S. COX SAW IN THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS.

His Visit to the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid of Cheops—His Visit to the Museum in Cairo—He Sees the Bier of the Pharaoh who Refused to "Let My People Go."

CAIRO, Dec. 1.—Next to Judea, Egypt is the most interesting of all lands. Judea gave us Christ; Egypt sheltered him from Herod. Before Christ, Egypt had sheltered the fathers of Israel, for Egypt was even before Abraham. Although Africa, geologically, may be a younger continent than America, and although Asia may be older than Africa, still the human record of Egypt antedates all others. It is a record of interest to human nature, for it is the first and most trustworthy testimony of our kind about our kind. Doubtless other nations learned art and culture from Egypt. Greece was taught by her even as she taught Rome. Our Biblical knowledge is after that of early Egypt. All its old people have gone to the abysm except the Coptic race, whose features we see upon the ancient monuments and in the market places and Christian churches. These remaining Copts seem to be as foreign to Egypt and its Arabs and Bedouins as the Jews to Judea.

Turkey ostensibly ruled Egypt. The olden power of the Ottoman has departed. When it arose in Asia Minor, with a capital at Brussa, it swept from Ispahan to Vienna, upturned the throne of the caliphs in Bagdad and of the emperors in Constantinople, it seized the sacred control of Mosledom. Its population is said to be thirty or forty millions, including about eight and a half millions in Egypt. Of these, eight millions are Arabs, who mostly till the ground. They are called fellahs. Seventy thousand are Bedouin Arabs of the desert, 15,000 are Turks, and 200,000 are Copts.

The history of Egypt under the viceroys, the frail rope of sand which binds her to its suzerain on the Bosporus, and the strange relation of France and England, politically, economically, and judicially, to Egypt, are not less interesting than the influence of the Suez Canal on commerce, the Nile overflows on agriculture, the recent representative body of Egyptian notables on democracy, the quasi revolution of a few months ago in favor of native rule upon patriotism, and the general unrest of the Mohammedans in North Africa with respect to the encroachment of the Christian nations upon the Moslem world.

These are the new phases of the oldest of nations. They are worth a visit to the Nile for their elucidation.

But as the politics of the Orient, including Turkey and Egypt, are in a transitory condition, and as not much of certainty can as yet be crystallized, the chief interest of Egypt for the tourist centres in its climate and position, and its history and monuments.

THE WONDERFUL RIVER.

Its climate is balm itself. It is dry. The mud huts survive all its changes. In winter its mildness is a salutary luxury. These features of the climate result from the position of Egypt. If is in the northeast corner of Africa; yet it is not Africa in its ordinary meaning. It is a small corner of Africa physically; but neither are its people nor is its position African. Egypt is the Nile. The Nile made it the cradle of human thought and progress, and the Nile plays for it even yet an important part in civilization. The Nile has created its limits and gifted it with opulence. The delta, whose apex is near old Memphis and modern Cairo, is the creature of the river. The northern side of the delta country made by the river is 160 miles along the Mediterranean. From its southern boundary on Nubia, where the templed isles of Philæ and Elephantine divide the waters of the foaming river, you have a sweeping stream 550 miles in length; but the fruitfulness it engenders is straitened within a valley, seldom more than seven or ten miles wide. Mountains or hills of sandstone or rock shut in this strip from the invading sands of the desert.

I did not go even up as far as the first cataract at Assouan, but I know that there is a sameness in the scenery that makes the river green by when low, red by brown when high, running within a fertile belt, between herbless, grassless desert hills. Now and then a plumed palm and a dirty Arab town diversify the plain, where ox and camel, donkey and fellah do the work of cultivation and transportation. Along the steep sides of the embankments of the river women jars, and naked men lift the furrows by means of buckets or shadoofs, which, like our primitive well process, lift the water from the river.

Before the steamers ran up the river crocodiles used to bask in the warm sun in secluded places. A few cranes and pelicans are seen occasionally. This is the aspect of the river and its banks from Cairo to the first cataract. Its fields and riches are sugar, maize, wheat, barley, cotton, and dates.

The river frontages are nearly parallel with the Red Sea and the Suez Gulf and the mountain ranges west and east, until about twelve miles from Cairo, when it divides into two principal streams. The mountains still follow by diverging east and west. Within the delta in various places there are lake plains. But all the rest of Egypt is 10,000 square miles—double Massachusetts, and but little over one-third of the size of Illinois, which is 55,000 square miles.

Omitting, therefore, the excursion above the capital, on the river, all of Egypt can be seen, as we saw it, by landing at Port Said and Alexandria, and taking a railroad run over the level land to Cairo. From Cairo you may see the most interesting ruins and monuments, including the Nile and its most luxuriant islands and plains.

There is seldom any rain in Egypt. The Nile does it all. Its waters hold in solution infinite quantities of fertilizing elements. The farmers sow their seed in the oozy soil, which needs no other stirring than that of a wooden one-handled stick of a plough, which, 4,000 years older than Abraham, is little greater than a pick for pasturage. It is agriculture which the Nile brings. The fellahs reap with a hook what the pigeons leave of the grain. Often thrash, and sometimes a winnow or fan is used in the breeze.

There are as many palms as there are people, and a pound of dates per palm a day is reckoned a good provision of this richest of food. Egypt has few roads. The Nile does it all, except the two railroads and some pathways to and from the desert for the pilgrims to Mecca, and the caravans to the remote lands of Arabia and Ethiopia.

Egypt is rich in clay, as the Hebrew slaves found out when they were compelled to make brick. Fine marbles, granite, and alabaster are convenient to the river, and were used to build the temples and monuments.

This is the Egypt of to-day. It is soon seen: Arab towns of mud huts, long lines of loaded camels and of donkeys and their naked or half-naked drivers, and they are always ready for baksheesh; the fields of the Nile and the great river itself, the mosque and minaret, the hooded women, and turbaned, long-robed men; the acacia and palm, and in the two great cities luxury along with poverty, dirt with despotism, all the plagues, including an abnormal government; sugar mills and palaces, and an equable temperature, with a sunset that never fails to allure and detain the eye.

MONUMENTS THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD.

The history and monuments of Egypt are its special marvels. We are accustomed to read the Bible account of the land of Egypt as connected with the bondage and exodus of Israel. We think this account very old. So it is in one meaning. When Joseph was sold into Egypt it was 1728 B. C. Jacob removed there twenty-two years later. He died there in 1689 B. C. Fifty-four years later Joseph died there, and thirty-six years later still Moses was born. There lapsed 1,491 years after he heard the Voice of the Lord in the burning bush at Horeb before the Saviour was born at Bethlehem; just the time, plus a decade after Christ, to the time Columbus found himself in chains for sailing into sunset!

These dates faintly express the antiquity of Egypt. Its monuments along the Nile are more expressive. There are various groups of temples and pyramids. They are as numberless as the old gods. The great pyramid of Cheops, near Cairo, called Ghizeh, was built 1,900 years before Abraham and nearly 3,000 years before Christ. It is 4,800 years old.

At these early epochs Egypt had a splendid massive architecture and sculpture, a religion of wonderful beauty, complexity, and awe, a literature whose evidences I have seen on papyri (the original paper), mathematics, astronomy, music, agriculture, and factories in ivory, gems, and glass, not to speak of fabrics of various fine and texture.

After that time its armies ravaged Judea, Syria, and Assyria; the exodus of the Hebrew captives took place through the Red Sea into the desert and Israel, Moab, and over Jordan; Asiatic hordes swept on the delta; Greek philosophers came thither to learn and Alexander to conquer. Learning lighted her torch in Alexandria. A library was organized whose manuscripts are said to have been so numerous that in the seventh century enough remained to heat the baths of Cairo for six months. After the Greeks took and ruled Egypt, Rome came. Christianity followed, and greeds began their aggrandizement. Then came Saladin, who built the Citadel of Cairo and the Mosque of Sultan Hassan, and built the walls of Cairo, which are still standing. Napoleon came, but his generals were slaughtered at Heliopolis. And now, with the canal connecting the East and West, stands England, with her foot upon the ancient river, leaning forward, as she says, to protect, through Suez, her dominion in India.

THE MYSTERY OF THE SPHINX.

The placid Sphinx has looked upon all these vicissitudes, and yet made no sign of revealing its secret. Thirty years ago Bonaparte looked upon the Sphinx and made a prophecy. The poem adjacent of monolaths, which I saw exhumed, has the same prophecy. Napoleon's prophecy, the Crimean War, and the point note of England and France since, give significance to this prophetic view of Egypt by the Sphinx:

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