

ARE TELLS OF THE MOHAMMEDAN FLY

And Other Creatures Living Along the Nile.

EGYPTIAN civilization is supposed to be stationary, except in the larger cities. The fellahin scratch the rich alluvial soil with the same kind of clumsy wooden plow that was used when Marc Antony came down from home on a business trip and got all snarled up with Cleopatra. They live in the same type of smug mud hut—about the size of lower berth. They lift the water from the Nile by exactly the same wooden sweep that was in vogue when Cheops began work on the pyramids. It may be remarkable on a passport, that the fellahin are the farmers of Egypt. I might have said "farmers" in the first place, but what is the use of spending a month in a place and paying large hotel bills, only to be struck by the fact that the fellahin description to parade up and down in front of his friends and cause them to feel ignorant and untraveled? The on a passport, which is not so neatly done, I found in Paris. It means "under your hat," or something like that. It is impossible to translate these French phrases without sacrificing some of the quaint significance of the original. For instance, "string beans" can never be haricots vert. They may look the same and taste the same, but when they are both on the bill, me for the haricots vert every time.

To resume: The outlying districts of Egypt are supposed to be absolutely unprogressive. This is a mistake. While driving out from Assiut to visit another cheerful cluster of tombs we came upon a large gang of workmen engaged in improving the road. As soon as the carriage ahead of ours struck the improved road it turned turtle, and for a moment the air was full of jumping tourists. Our conveyance started over the improved road, but mired down, so we got out and walked until we came to an unimproved road, and then we jumped in and sped merrily on our way. I stopped for several minutes to watch the men at work, and I was deeply impressed by the fact that here in this heathen land, where they have no normal schools or farmers' institutes to guide them, no agricultural weeklies to beacon them out of the darkness, the simple children of the orient were "improving" the roads just as I had seen them improved during my boyhood days in Indiana. In other words, they were mending dirt out of the ditch on either side and dumping it in tall, unsurmountable hillocks right in the middle of the roadway. The most hydrocephalous township supervisor in the whole middle west could not have done a more imbecile job.

In Indiana every voter is required to "work the roads" or pay a road tax. Of late years, under intelligent direction, the highways have been vastly improved, but there was a time when "working the roads" was a large joke. To avoid paying the tax the farmer would have to go on a public highway. Usually he selected a road which he would not traverse in going to town, and he would plow it up to the hilt, and then he would plow it back down into a hollow, and it would look like a sample of the Bad Lands in Montana. As soon as the tax was "worked out," he discontinued the improvement. After two or three years the improvement was fairly good, but it could be made altogether impassable. If I were a military commander and had to execute a retreat and cut off my pursuit by a superior force I would have a lot of flat-headed township supervisors bring up the rear and "work" the roads. It was in this same town of Assiut

that we visited one of the greatest bazaars in Egypt. We had heard about this bazaar every day since landing. The traveler who had been up the Nile and who had come back to Cairo, sun-baked and full of the patronizing airs of the veteran, invariably said, "By the way, when you are in Assiut you must see the bazaar." He might as well have said, "When you are in Washington be sure to take a look at the Washington monument."

"Bazaar" has a seductive, far eastern sound, the same as "mosque." It is much luckier to shut your eyes and think of a mosque than to actually see a deserted lime kiln with an unturned sugar bowl on top of it. The same for "bazaar," only it goes double. A bazaar is a cozy corner gone wrong. If you will take the long corridor of an American second-class hotel, tear off the roof and substitute a canopy of tattered rag carpets, cover the walls with the imitation merchandise of a

earth seem dank and waterlogged. We asked truthful Hassim, our guide at Assiut, if there had been any rainfall lately. He said that about five years ago there had been a light shower, and during one of the Ptolemy administrations there had been a regular old drencher. The Ptolemy family occupied the throne about 2,000 years ago. At home, take it in the dog days, if we have no rain for two weeks and the creek dries up, all the local apostles of gloom and advance agents of adversity clout themselves together in front of the postoffice and begin pronouncing funeral orations over the corn crop. Fourteen days without rain and the whole country is on the toboggan, headed straight for bankruptcy. Yet here in Egypt, where they haven't experienced really a wet rain for twenty centuries, the people go about cheerfully, and there is no complaint regarding Providence. But what an unsatisfactory hangout

souan, extending as far north as Luxor, and when we came along, a few weeks later, the natives were still bewailing the visitation of Allah's wrath.

The extreme dryness of the air in Egypt causes the visiting microbe to feel like an alien. It becomes enervated and discouraged, incapable of initiating any new and fashionable epidemics. This same air, however, seems to have a tonic effect on the flea. In no other clime is he so enterprising, so full of restless energy, so given to unexpected achievements during a dull season. If there is a short supply of tourists, he associates with the natives. He prefers the tourist, but some what may, is never idle. The bacillus on the other hand, has circumscribed opportunities. Inasmuch as the entire population of the country lives along the river one might suppose that harmful germs would be bred and disseminated by the billion. Yet both natives and visitors drink from the river with impunity. "The sweet water of the Nile" is called "micro-organism" in the scientific sticks to the water the monotony of travel begins to wear upon him, and after about seven miles he dies of ennui.

Egypt is a happy hunting ground for the flea it is likewise a paradise for the fly. If I had to be something in Egypt I should prefer to be a Mohammedan. This little creature, which in most countries is hounded and persecuted and openly regarded as a pest, is treated with consideration in Egypt—humored, petted, indulged, actually household companion. The belief in most countries is that the fly is as unpopular as the millionaire. He is wary, fretful and suspicious, because he knows that all humanity is joined in a conspiracy to put him out of business. He sees a sign, "This way to the temptingly set forth in a white bowl he finds himself a few minutes later writhing in cramps and full of corrosive sublimates. He sees what appears to be a tempting bunch of sweets and when he starts in to serve himself he discovers that he is caught and held by the treacherous "tanglefoot" mixture. He devotes his last moments to the dining room, and after passing thru a long corridor he lands in a wire trap from which there is no escape. If he alights on a bald head and tries to conclude the situation he strikes at him and calls him names.

It is all different in Egypt. The gods are indulgent to the Mohammedan ever offers a fly is to give him a gentle shove and request him to move on. It is contrary to religious teachings to kill or even cripple this diminutive creature. The belief in transmigration of souls seems to prevail everywhere in the mystical east, and perhaps the fly that follows and nags you all indignantly through the streets, the use of a former head waiter or a bey or some other dignitary. When the flies assemble in large numbers around the various apertures of a baby's face, the mother, collecting in pool self defense, tries to "spat" them and drive them away. But the mother restrains the infant by holding its hands and the flies give themselves over to unmolested enjoyment. The older child

has learned their lesson and seldom make any effort to brush away the flies which loiter all over their bright young features. This is not a pleasant thing to talk about, but, inasmuch as the fly is omnipresent during a trip up the Nile and this friendly understanding between the fly and the native is constantly under the traveler's observation, a description of Egypt would be sadly incomplete without a chapter on the fly.

Having been a privileged class for generations the flies are impudent and familiar to a degree. When the white unbeliever, with no conscientious scruples against murder, comes up to the river they swarm about him and buzz into his ears "Welcome to our city." Then when he begins sparring with them and using sulphurous language they gather about in augmented numbers and dodge when he strikes and sidestep when he slaps himself and seem to think that he is trying to teach them some new kind of a "tag" game. The Mohammedan fly cannot by any effort of the imagination bring himself to believe that a human being would want to injure him. This feeling of overconfidence in mankind breeds carelessness and during the open season for tourists many of them are laid low. Mr. Peaseley said that if there was anything in the transmigration theory he figured that he had massacred a regiment of soldiers, several boards of directors, a high school and an insane asylum, and mortality during the tourist season do not seem to lower the visible supply

of in any way discourage the surviving millions. When we started up the river a peddler came to the boat and offered us some small fly brooms. They are very much like the brush used by the apprentice in a blacksmith shop to protect the horse that is being shod. The brush part is made of split palm leaves or horse hair and the handle is decorated with beadwork. The idea of a person sitting about and whisking himself with this ornamental duster is essential. It is needed every eight seconds. At Luxor we went out to see a gymkhana under the auspices of the Luxor Sporting club and every one of the 200 spectators sat there wearily slapping himself about the head with a



IN THE U.S.A THE FLY IS ALMOST AS UNPOPULAR AS A MILLIONAIRE

tuffed fly brush while looking at the races. The Luxor Sporting club is not as dangerous as it sounds. The presiding judge of the races was a minister of the gospel and the receipts were given to local charities. A gymkhana is the last resort of a colony shut off from the metropolitan forms of amusement, and yet it can be made the source of much hilarious fun. Nothing could have been more frivolous than the program at Luxor, and yet the British spectators seldom gave way to mirth. Doubtless they were laughing inwardly. Several ponderous committees had charge of them with due solemnity.

First there was a race between native water carriers, distance about 300 yards, and each contestant carrying a goatskin filled with water. Then there was a donkey boy's race, each

and not because of any guiding intelligence. One demented water buffalo turned and ran at right angles to the course. The last we saw of him he was disappearing over a hill toward the setting sun, with the native jockey riding on all parts of the upper deck, from the horns back to the tail. The gymkhana is intended to provide an afternoon of undiluted nonsense, and for the benefit of those who find reason tottering on her throne and who don't care what they do as long as they enjoy themselves I shall append a few simple competitions from an Egyptian program and suggest that they be tried in America. Bucket Contest—Competitors to gallop past three buckets, throwing a potato into each bucket. Marks to be given for pace. Best of two runs. Hat Trimming Competition—Gentleman to ride to lady with parcel containing hat and trimmings. Lady to trim hat and gentleman to return to the winning post wearing hat. Dak Race—Competitors to drive at the trot about one-half mile, unharnessed and saddle same pony and ride 200 yards, returning to the winning post. Housekeeping Stakes—Gentleman on sidesaddle to ride to lady and give her envelope containing an additional sum. Lady to open envelope, add up this sum and return it to gentleman. First past post with correct sum wins. Needle Thread—Lady carries needle and thread 100 yards to gentleman partner. He threads the needle and returns it to lady. First past the post with needle properly threaded wins. Egg Carrying Competition for Ladies—Each lady carries an egg in an ordinary teaspoon for a distance of about fifty yards. If egg is dropped it must be recovered with the spoon and must not be touched with the hands. First past the post with unbroken egg wins. There are many other contests which tax the intellect in a similar manner, but possibly the foregoing will be sufficient to provide a fairly demoralizing afternoon. Of course, in America it is impossible to secure the real Levantine donkey. In Egypt the donkey takes the place of the motor car, the trolley, the hansom and the bicycle. In size he ranges from an average goat to a full-grown St. Bernard. Ordinarily he is headstrong and hard to manage, having no bridle wisdom whatever, but he is of tough fiber and has a willing nature, and behind his mournful countenance there always seems to be lurking a crafty and elusive sense of humor. The names are marvelous. At the various stops on our way up the Nile I became personally acquainted with Ramesses the Great, Ramesses Telegraph, Ramesses Telephone, Jim Corbett, Whiskey, Straight, Lovely, Sweet, Roosevelt, Sleeping Car, Lydia Pinkham and others equally appropriate which I cannot now recall. As I have indicated above, our wanderings have carried us to Luxor, Luxor (the ancient Thebes) is the superlative of all that is old and amazing in Egypt and therefore it calls for at least one separate chapter. I can only say "Continued in our next."



WHEN MARC ANTONY CAME DOWN FROM ROME ON A BUSINESS TRIP

5 and 10-cent store, kick up a choking dust, turn loose twenty or thirty ripe olives and then have 150 coffee-colored lunatics all begin talking at the same time, you will have a rather tame imitation of the genuine oriental bazaar as made famous in song and story. The crude articles sold in these bazaars, if displayed in the windows of a department store in America, would attract no attention whatever, but the tourist, as soon as he has had a touch of the Egyptian sun, seems to become easy and irresponsible, and he wants to bargain for everything in sight. It is a kind of temporary mania, known as curiosity, and is closely allied to the widely prevalent sennoviria, or post-card fever, which attacks even the young and innocent.

The intelligent reader may have noticed that now and then I have referred to the dust of Egypt. Egypt makes all the other dusty spots on

for the weather shark! In Egypt the oldest inhabitant never gets up in the morning and says, "I'm satisfied we're going to have rain today, because my rheumatism bothered me all night." There is no need of looking for rings around the moon. You never hear any one say, "It looks a little black in the north, but I think it'll blow around, because the wind is in the wrong direction." Every morning the sun rolls up in silvery splendor and surveys the same old parched landscape, and perhaps the fly that follows and nags you all indignantly through the streets, the use of a former head waiter or a bey or some other dignitary. When the flies assemble in large numbers around the various apertures of a baby's face, the mother, collecting in pool self defense, tries to "spat" them and drive them away. But the mother restrains the infant by holding its hands and the flies give themselves over to unmolested enjoyment. The older child

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under the wire it was by mere chance



WORKING OUT HIS TAXES AND IMPROVING THE ROADS

THE ANTWERP GRAIN MARKET IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER IN THE WORLD

The Bourse, Owned by the City, Has No Memberships, No Rules, No Regulations—It Is Merely a Meeting Place Where Sales Are Made—Belgian Duty on Flour May Be Reduced Soon.

Copyright, by Rollin E. Smith. ANTWERP, BELGIUM. Antwerp, the greatest of the continental grain markets, owes importance to two things, its location and the state railroads. It is not a natural market place, made so by proximity of grain fields and mills, neither is it an elevator center, where supplies are stored. It is the great central point of the continent to which cargoes from all the grain-exporting countries of the world come to be unloaded and the grain to be again distributed. From Russia, the Balkan states, the Argentine, America and Canada, ships of grain are continually headed toward Antwerp, and finally meet in this port. Then the cargoes are redistributed, spreading out again, going by barge thru the great canal systems, or by train to Holland on the north, through Belgium, into Germany and northern France. Antwerp keeps but little of what it receives. It is, first, an international market and second, an international distributing place.

while the mills of Germany or northern France have their buyers here. Do Not Like American Inspection. Some of the importers, while having connections in the United States, are becoming less and less reconciled to the grain inspection at export points. The head of one of the large houses here told me that he should be compelled to quit doing business in America unless there was a change. During the last winter he had lots of No. 2 hard winter wheat, so graded, which were poorer than No. 3 should be. Again, he had a lot of No. 3 that was better than his No. 2. American certificates of inspection are final—there is no redress, no matter what the shipment may be. Yet it is not the system of inspection and certificates that is complained of, but the abuse of it. I have nowhere heard any such complaints of Canadian

inspection, the principle of which is the same. A large part of the grain business of Antwerp is done on London contracts.

Cargoes Distributed. Cargoes of grain are usually sold before they arrive, and they are divided among many buyers. An importer buys a cargo say at Buenos Aires or the Black sea. As it requires about four weeks for it to arrive, he has that length of time in which to dispose of it. It is desirable to sell it before arrival to save charges, for there are no elevators at Antwerp, tho' there are two large "silos" or warehouses. When a cargo of grain arrives at Antwerp, it is immediately unloaded for distribution, and no more perfect facilities for distribution for imports of any kind can be imagined. Yet the actual unloading of grain is not done by the

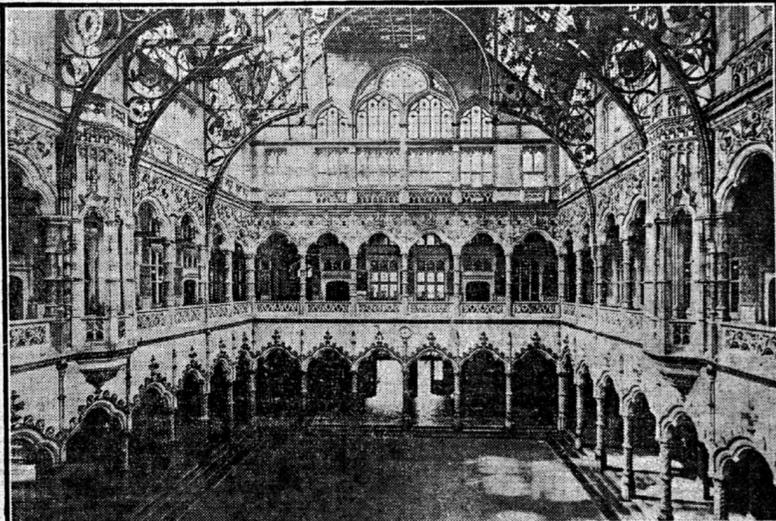
quickest and most modern methods. The steamers are brought alongside the docks and are unloaded directly on to cars, if desired, or to barges on the other side of the canal. The large Rhine barges hold 55,000 bushels, equal to seventy carloads. Thus the grain finds its way through the whole of western Europe, often in the shortest time, within a few miles of its destination, where it is finally—the short haul—brought by rail.

While the grain must be unloaded as soon as the vessel arrives in port, it is not necessarily shipped inland at once, altho there are no elevators. It may be, and often is, stored in barges, which are chartered by the importer when he has not sold the grain previous to arrival. He is therefore not compelled to sacrifice the grain if the market is not satisfactory.

The Bourse and the Market. The Antwerp grain market is unique, when compared with American markets, in that there is no trade organization; in fact, there is no grain to go by canal. It is an open and free market. Neither are there any official quotations or prices, for there is no one to say "future," "term" or option market here. It is a cash market, trading in the actual grain by men who have it to sell or want to sell again, or to grind. The only feature resembling an organization is an arbitration committee.

The members of the grain trade, or representatives of the various grain houses or mills, meet at the bourse every business day at 2 o'clock, remaining until 3. This meeting is for the conclusion of business that may have been done in the morning. It affords buyers and sellers an opportunity to get together to close contracts after canvassing the situation during the forenoon. Then, too, out-of-town millers and grain buyers come to the Bourse for the purpose of meeting the seller. During the forenoon the salesmen of the importing houses are busy calling or telephoning to the buyers. Of course, some business is concluded in this way, but as a rule the buyers, after getting prices, etc., prefer to wait until the meeting at the bourse to make their purchase.

Bourse Owned by the City. The bourse is owned by the city and anyone may transact business here on payment of a small sum annually. Excepting from 2 until 3 o'clock the doors are open. Between 2 and 3 the entrances are guarded by policemen and it costs every one who has not an annual membership ticket, 1 franc to enter. Members of different trades meet at the bourse at this hour, but half the large exchange room is occupied by the grain trade. The exchange room, which is practically the whole of the bourse, is a beautiful chamber. The galleries on the four sides, and columns extending to



INTERIOR OF THE BOURSE, ANTWERP.

the roof, half of which is a great skylight, all with an artistic touch to the decorations, form a decidedly pleasing effect. It is one of the finest exchange rooms in the world.

During what may be called the session at the bourse, the room is densely crowded, particularly on Wednesdays and Thursdays. All business transacted is of a private nature. There being no organization, there can, of course, be no record kept of prices nor anything of the kind. In this respect the market is of the most primitive nature. It is merely a coming together of business men to buy and sell, without restrictions, limitations, rules or regulations.

Basis for Prices. Having no future market in which to hedge their purchases, the large houses must buy relatively cheaper than they would otherwise—as near as possible to a bedrock basis. The large mills of Belgium are owned by stock companies, and the managers are not permitted to take chances on the market. When they cannot sell flour they do not buy wheat. Under such conditions the hazards of the grain market are neither more nor less than those of any other merchandising business. Asked what constitutes the basis for prices in the Antwerp market, a large importer sa—

Offers of wheat from Russia, the Danubian country and the Argentine; offers from millers, stocks, the amount of the movement in America and Canada, and crop conditions the world over—these form the picture of our market.

"Of course," he continued, "the Berlin and Liverpool markets have an influence, and New York and Chicago are closely watched during years of normal crops in the United States. But American prices are not regarded as an expression of trade opinion. There is too much manipulation in those markets."

A dozen or so years ago there were many big speculators in Antwerp. They traded in the Liverpool, London and New York markets. This has practically all ceased, however, and any grain speculation there may be is more in the nature of a commercial chance which every merchant is bound to take. Of course, when an importer buys a cargo of wheat in the Argentine, it is after a manner a speculation, for he does not know when he will sell it, to whom, nor at what price. Yet the same might be said of the merchant who buys a bill of goods. The dividing line between speculation and what is called "legitimate" business is, after all, like the line between two states—it is not visible.

Up to 1894 Belgium was a large importer of flour. In that year the conservatives came into power, and one of their first acts was to place a duty on flour, among other things, which was practically prohibitive. Since that time the Belgian mills have largely increased in size and number, and now, besides supplying the home market, they export something like 1,000,000 barrels annually. The duty was a hard blow to American exporting mills, particularly those of the northwest. There is now, however, some hope that the rule of the conservative is drawing to a close and that the liberals will again come into power. The next election will be on May 26. At the last election the liberals, who are opposed to a high tax on flour and other article of food in general, won nine members in the two national bodies. This year they feel confident of gaining as many more, which will give them a majority. Should they secure a majority, it is believed that they will reduce the duty on flour one-half at least. This will permit American millers to again compete in the Belgian markets when wheat prices are on an international basis, owing to the superiority of their flour over that of the Belgian mills. Rollin E. Smith.



SOME FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURY BUILDINGS, ANTWERP.