

IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN

TRAVELS IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JOSEPH AND JACOB.

The Home of the Israelites as a Cotton Plantation—Its Queer Villages and Odd Farming Scenes—A Look at Bubastis, Where They Worshipped the Cat—Brick Making in Egypt—The Virgin's Tree and Other Traditions of Mary's Visit to the Nile Valley—Young America at the Obelisk.

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ZAGAZIG, Egypt, Sept. 10.—Come with me this bright Sunday morning for a look at the old land of Goshen, where the Israelites settled when they first came into Egypt. I am writing this in the center of it, not far from the road down which Joseph was carried by the caravan of Ishmaelites, or Bedouins, who had bought him of his brothers and were on their way to sell him to Potiphar. It was over that same road that the ten sons of Jacob, Benjamin having been left at home, came down here to get corn; and it must have been about here that they had their dealings with Joseph, who was then the chief officer of Pharaoh and the premier, as it were, of his administration. You all know how he came into Egypt and came to be the greatest man in the country. He was so influential that he was able to give

to exist, and it was as late as the middle ages, when the people gave credit to a story that cotton of India came from a sheep which grew on the end of a bush, and which now and then bent down to eat the grass which grew around. The cotton plant was supposed to thrive in Hindustan, and it was not until centuries later that the real cotton seeds were planted in Egypt. Today Goshen is covered with cotton. There are many plantations near Zagazig, and I have seen thousands of acres of this crop throughout different parts of the Egyptian delta. It is the chief money crop of the country and it will bring in upward of one hundred million dollars this year.

A Great Stock Country. This land of Goshen is a fine stock country. Camels, buffaloes and donkeys are staked out in the fields, and flocks of sheep and goats feed there, watched by shepherds. There are, also, domestic camels grazing on the ground, chewing their cud. All have their heads turned. There are no fences in Egypt, and the fields are bounded by imaginary lines. Sometimes the lines are marked by ditches, or the little embankments made for irrigation.

It was as stock raisers that the Israelites came to Egypt. They were a pastoral people and it may have been for that reason that Joseph had Pharaoh give them this land of Goshen, the eastern part of which is fringed by the desert, with places of scanty vegetation, where the stock could graze.

Today the land is well cultivated. Most of the fields are kept like gardens, and I see half naked men bending over and digging the soil with great mattocks. Here the farmers are plowing, using the same one-handed plow of the days of the scriptures. Some of them have donkeys or buffaloes hitched together, and now and then one sees a plow dragged along by a cow and a camel. There is much artificial irrigation, and the water is lifted from level to level by means of buckets and baskets to which ropes are slung. In other places the water is raised by the sakiyah, a rude wheel which is turned by the coes of another wheel, set at right angles to it. On the perpendicular wheel, clay jars are fastened, and as this moves through the water these fill and turning empty themselves into the troughs which lead to the little canals and the fields. The motive power in this case is a blindfolded camel, bullock or donkey, the animal going around like a horse in an old-fashioned bark mill. Many of the fields are now under water and the silvery streams shine out through the emerald green of the crops.

The Villages of Goshen. When the Israelites first came to Goshen they probably lived in tents such as the Bedouins use today. These are made of sheep's wool or goat's hair, rudely woven by hand. They are upheld by ropes and poles and are so low that the people must crawl into them. We know that Abraham lived in a tent and it is probable that this was the case with Isaac and Jacob.

After coming to Goshen the Israelites probably copied the houses of the Egyptians and built villages of mud built not unlike those I now see. These houses are made of mud and the walls of them are not over twenty feet square; they have flat roofs and are often so low that one can look over them as he rides by on a camel. There are no gardens or lawns about them. They face the street and are huddled together without regard to beauty or comfort.

The roofs form the woodyard of the people below. The only fuel used is cornstalks, straw, or the bushes from

which the cotton has been picked. This stuff is tied up in bundles and laid away on the roofs until used.

There are but few trees to be seen. Now and then an acacia grows along the roadway, and here and there over the country are clumps of date palms. There are occasional fruit gardens, and one frequently passes an orchard loaded with oranges.

The roads are usually high above the rest of the country. They run along the canals, and consist of the dirt built up to hold back the water. The side roads are chiefly camel paths or foot paths, and one sees everywhere the traffic moving along through the fields. Even on the chief roads there are very few wagons. The most of the freight is carried on donkeys and camels, and they form the chief riding animals as well. Long-legged Egyptians in turbans and gowns sit on the humps of little donkeys, their feet almost dragging, or on looking a sakiyah, their headstresses tied on with ropes, bob up and down as they ride on their camels, their heads apparently bowing at every step of the beast.

There are camels loaded with alfalfa, the grass covering them, that they look like miniature haystacks walking along. There are donkeys with boxes and bags and mules and bullocks carrying freight of one kind or other. Out in the fields one now and then sees a buffalo with a half-naked boy sitting on it, and at nightfall the paths are lined with men coming from the fields riding these ungainly beasts, and balancing their one-handed plows in front of them as they move slowly on.

The City of the Cat. It was here in Goshen that the Israelites worked after they were enslaved by the Egyptians. They went from here also to build cities and towns in various parts of the Nile valley. The archeologists who are now excavating in Egypt tell me that they frequently find bricks which were probably made by them, and assert that the sun-dried bricks of today are practically the same as those which the children of Israel molded under the last worshipful task.

This is the case in the ruins of the Bubastis, or the city of the worship of the cat. This town was situated within a stone's throw of the Zagazig of today. The ruins of the city are now a mass of crumbling mud brick and there the walls are plainly visible. Bubastis dates back to the time when the pyramids were young. It is supposed to have been built by the Israelites, and was a great city until it was captured by the Persians. In 352 B. C. Bubastis was noted for its temples devoted to the cat-headed goddess. This lady had the form of a lioness with the head of a cat and she held in one hand a lotus leaf as a scepter. Herodotus speaks of her as this city, saying that the temples were gorgeous and that the stone road leading to them was 1800 feet long. He says that the people came in crowds here to worship, and at their annual festivals something like 700,000 worshippers were present. He relates that many of the worshippers were women who often danced and acted otherwise, "in an unseemly manner," leading us to believe that they were by no means so good as they should be.

Egyptian Brickmakers of 1910. Riding out to Bubastis, I found there a brickyard in full swing. It was situated right on the edge of the ruins and the Fellahs of today were molding the clay used by the Israelites for the building material of the city.

As I looked at them my mind went back to the days of the Pharaohs when Moses was still living and saw his people laboring under the lash. These men and women are working under the same conditions. Their hands are made of mud and they are half-clad persons were burnt black by the tropical sun overhead and they looked not unlike slaves. Here they were grinding the mud, here they were molding it into bricks and further over they were firing up the bricks which had been dried in the sun, the carrying of the bricks was largely done by young girls, who labored under a burly negro with a stick in his hand. In this direction the girls took the bricks of their heads and carried them off on the trot. I got a photograph of this scene by bribing the negro; and I doubt not my picture was a fair type of that which went on in those long ago days, when Pharaoh drove the Israelites to similar work without straw.

With the Virgin Mary in Egypt. It was down through Goshen that Joseph and Mary came with the infant Saviour when they fled from the horrid Herod who slaughtered the innocents. This was then the chief highway from Palestine to Egypt and there is no doubt that they stopped at Bubastis, they went on to Heliopolis, where the temple and college still existed at the time Christ was born. There is a tree near the Obelisk of Heliopolis under which Mary and Joseph and the young Jesus are said to have rested. It is about five miles from Cairo and guide books speak of it as one of the stock sights of Egypt. I doubt the reliability of their statements. The tree may be the descendant of one which stood there in the time of Christ. It is an old sycamore, gnarled with many years and scarred with the names of tourists. It is on one of the estates of the khedive, and it may be seen through the bars of a fence which has been built around it to keep off the relic hunters. During my visit there I tried to climb the fence in order to get a photograph of it, but some of the family of servants came up and warned me not to go in. The tree is surrounded by orange orchards, which are irrigated by sakiyahs drawn by water buffaloes with blankets over their eyes.

As I went by I stopped at one of these sakiyahs and the men brought me some oranges from the khedive's orchard and sold them at the rate of eight for 10 cents. They were wonderfully refreshing, and as I sat in the shade of the trees outside the fence I wondered whether Mary and Joseph had not perhaps thus quenched their thirst in that same place, now over nineteen hundred years ago. Any resting place must have been welcome after the long ride through the country to the edge of the great city of the sun.

In addition to this there are other stories told of the stay of the holy family in Egypt. One is that Joseph and Mary took our Saviour out to the pyramids, and from there to the sphinx. It is said that Mary laid him in the lap of the Sphinx, and that He slept for a night on the paws of that

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These stories seem vivid as one travels through Egypt. I went down the other day to the banks of the Nile where the little baby Moses is said to have lain in the bulrushes in his basket of papyrus, and as I stood by the Obelisk at Heliopolis I was reminded of the virgin and the Saviour by a young girl who had a babe in her arms. She must have been about the same age that Mary was then, and the little one laughed and crowed as she rested there under the tropical sun. At the same time a score of other children, ranging in age from two to 12 years, gathered around me and posed for my camera with the obelisk behind. The obelisk was undoubtedly there when our Saviour was carried through Egypt, and it was erected long before Moses was found in the bulrushes over there on the banks of the Nile not far away. The great stone seemed to tie the past and the present together, and the little ones of today brought back those of the times of the Saviour.



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of Illinois. You are English, aren't you?"

"No, I am an American, and my home is in Washington city."

"Oh, yes," said the urchin. "I know all about that place. President Taft lives there. Say, what is the name of your ball team?"

"That was the interesting thing to him. Out here under the shadow of this obelisk 4000 years old, on the spot where Joseph was married to Asenath; where Plato philosophized and where Moses played, within plain sight of the pyramids and near enough almost to hear the whisper of the sphinx, he cared nothing for them. He was a live boy, and he wanted live things. Therefore the pitchers, catchers and short-stops of the great American diamond were worth more to him than all the stories of history and all the mummies of the museums. And so they are."

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