

IN THE WAKE OF THE RISING SUN.

By 'VIATOR.'

Beirut, Syria, Dec. 6, 1900.

ALEXANDRIA.

We were early awake on the morning of Tuesday, November 27, for the first streak of dawn was to herald our entrance into the harbor of Alexandria, the open gateway of modern Egypt. From the bridge we watched not in vain. In the roselate haze the Pharos rose in lonely grandeur, all alone out of the warm mists of the morning, but soon circling at its base—for it is a low reach of sand—we picked out the extending piles of the modern city. Up the narrow channel we thread our way, past many steamers lying at anchor, past the Khedive's yacht and the Khedive's Palace, till we find our berth alongside the quay. Of the ancient city of Alexandria, seat of science, and art, and culture, scarce a vestige remains, but beyond the purview of the native quarter, that in the Far East changeth not, rise the usual bright buildings of modern times. Though France has had to yield her sway in Egypt, there is much to remind the traveller of the impress made here by our Gallic neighbors when her power for colonising was stronger and more enduring than in these degenerate times. The names of the streets tell of fair France; most of the officials in the Civil Service hail from that country, and in the stores and shops on the boulevards, in the cafés, in the churches, you hear the echoes of the French language. Guides and dragomans, city police and railway officials, cab-drivers and donkey boys—all in their ready if halting language tell of the past ascendancy of France in these parts. What Chaucer wrote so slyly of the Abbess in his 'Tales' may without strain be quoted of the disjointed French spoken in the streets of Alexandria.

'Her French was the French of Stratford-at-Bowce,
For the French of Paris was to her unknowe.'

All trace of the Ptolemies and the Neo-Platonists is lost in modern Alexandria—a glittering city, save where the swarthy races foregather, and streets with a decidedly continental finish. But quite lately, within the last three or four months only, accident has unearthed the most startling discoveries of a buried city lying dormant and lost during the ages under piles of earth and rubbish. The antiquarian and the archeologist will have in disclosed streets and buildings and tombs a big field for study and discussion. We had a look at 'Pompey's Pillar,' at the canal running into the Nile at Cairo, at the public gardens rich and glorious in flowers, fruits and giant palms, at the Franciscan Church and the Jesuit College, and then took train to Cairo.

Leaving Alexandria at 4.30 we covered the 130 mile distance to Cairo in three hours and a half over a country peopled by the toiling fellahen of Egypt, still hugging the primitive past; still lagging on time's highway; still corded victims of manners, habits, and customs that bring the observer back to biblical pictures and biblical stories with a reality quite startling to western races. If aught is to be gathered from the toilers in the cotton, rice, and maize fields, from the mud huts crouching under the lee of the modest hills, from the toil-worn limbs and half-clad forms, albeit interesting in their many colors setting off the dusky skin, there is too in the land of the Nile a system of land tenure whose first principle is not to gift the toiler with the best fruits of his labor. Here for the first time are seen the Eastern women thickly veiled, or decked as to the visage with hideous 'yashmak' cunningly contrived to conceal the face and features, but with just enough opening for the eye to fix the gaze on others.

'Forsitan ut spectent, sed non spectentur ut ipsæ.'

In a little over three hours we cover the 130 miles between Alexandria and Cairo—in railway carriages quite up to the ease and comforts of Western countries. As we near the capital of modern Egypt, the Libyan chain of mountains is seen in the distance, gardens and neat cottages rush past the railway line, and minarets rising sheer in the still evening air tell us we are at Cairo. As we alight at the railway station, built in arabesque style, we are the centre of a mixed throng of dark and dusky noisy figures, befezzed and beturbaned, standing out in red, and yellow, and blue, and turquoise, and gold, and spotless white, all awaiting the 'express' from Alexandria.

CAIRO.

Cairo, the largest city in Africa, counts a population of more than 600,000 souls, of whom only some 25,000 are Europeans. The native population is made up of Arabs, Fellahs, Copts, Turks, Jews, Bedouins, Numidians, and others. It stands on the east bank of the Nile some 10 miles south of the point where the Rosetta and Damietta branches of the lordly river divide. Since the middle of present century, Cairo has rapidly developed on the European side, and as the principal residence of the Khedive, and of the Consul-General, the seat of Government and State Administration, is the centre, during the season, of a large and varied fashionable society. The strong hand of England is scarcely veiled under the filmy shadow of native administration, and the native in his own haunts is a thing not reckoned with. He is veritably a hewer of wood and a drawer of water in the ancient land of the Pharaohs. 'Shepherd's Hotel,' to which we were driven in an open drag with four horses, picked out of the many cabs and carriages hitched on to the wiry animals of Egypt, that lie in wait for the traveller, is a hostelry appointed in modern style of the highest order of comfort. We sauntered after dinner into the open streets, and in the clear moonlight breathed the late November air, as fresh, and soft, and clear as its fellow-evening at its summer best in far New Zealand. But we sauntered not far into the native quarter, that ramifies in lanes and passages and malodorous byways just off the European district—a stubborn proof of the strict conservatism, in spite of the

invasion of the restless Western, in spite of plague and epidemic—a conservatism writ large on Oriental habits even in the capital of Egypt.

Cairo would seem to me the rallying ground of wealthy Europeans seeking to cheat the rigid winters of the West, and anxious to gratify a natural desire of seeing the wonders strewn over this ancient land. Would that I could add that the motley peoples who cluster in these parts benefit to a slight degree by association with these birds of passage. Insoluble problem! They go their ways, and cherish their customs, and tread the beaten path of their fathers and glory in their unalterable ways, however dark-some, punitive, revolting, with a conviction and steadfastness of purpose that seek not of modification or change—'Quare fremuerunt gentes, et populi meditati sunt inania?'—Of the highest order of interest is Cairo with its environs.

THE JESUITS.

At Fagollah, a quarter of an hour's walk from Shepherd's Hotel, the Jesuit Fathers, always in the forefront of the battle, have a church and a college. I was able, through the courtesy of the Superior, to say Mass each morning, and with professional interest had a close insight into the college, its professors, pupils, opportunities, curriculum, and management. The church—public—is large and modern, of Roman style. The college is built of stone, with wide and airy corridors, for the heat from March to October is very trying to the staff. Here in the heart of Egypt, amid Mohammedan domination the Fathers of the Society pursue their noble work of education and culture. Here I saw in the various classes, Mohammedans, Copts, Greeks, Armenians, with a large number of Europeans, 300 in all, under the masters' eye, clearing the difficulties that beset the path of knowledge. The ubiquitous Irishman is here in the person of Rev. Patrick Kane, S.J., of Dublin, who did much to make our stay in Cairo interesting and profitable.

'One in fame and one in name
Is the sea-divided Gael.'

I was very much interested in the fact that in this fine, progressive College of Fagollah—where every intelligence, enthusiasm, personality is at the head—Moslem, Greek, and Christian sip the waters of sound and wholesome knowledge at the clear springs opened to their pupils by the pioneers and past masters of education, the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. Other churches there are in Cairo, but for me all the attraction was at the College and Church of Fagollah.

THE PYRAMIDS.

Out in the bright sunshine, under a cloudless sky with a rustling suspicion of breeze, we drive through the new Ismailizeh quarter, over the grandiose bridge—Kasr-el-Nil—that spans the eternal Nile, out on to the Ghezireh where we debouch on to a fine carriage drive, lined by acacia trees, that leads to Ghizeh and the Pyramids. We stop on the way to hastily glance at the exhibits shown in the Ghizeh Museum, a Palace boasting of close on 100 apartments built in an extensive park by Ismail Pasha at a cost of nearly one million pounds sterling. The Egyptian collection herein stored and classified is singular above all other collections in its wealth of monuments of the first six dynasties, and in the absolute reliability of the antiquities that startle and fascinate the visitor. Here you see a famous collection of *scarabs* or sacred beetles, the wooden statue of Shekh-el-Blod, the stone of Tanis with the celebrated decree of Carope, the treasure of Queen Aoh-hotep, the royal mummies of Deri-el-Bohay, and stones, inscriptions and mummies of every size, order, condition and class. A half-an-hour more brings us to the border of the Libyan desert, the home of the Pyramids and the Sphinx. A sumptuous hostelry—the Mena House Hotel—rises at the edge of the desert sands and here invalids inhale the fresh, dry air of the desert. On the sands are grouped the Ghizeh Pyramids, three in number, and the Sphinx. Pyramids are found only in the centre of a Necropolis, and thus furnish strong reason for believing that they were erected as tombs for the Egyptian Kings who reigned before the invasion of Hyksos, 1780 before Christ. According to some Arab authors, they were built by King Sarid 300 years before the Deluge. And here are they still. An interesting fact in connection with their position is, that the cardinal points are always exactly determined, and that the entrance is always on the north side. But tho' they rise bold and defiant on the desert sand, they were oft-time rifled of their treasures, and torn by greedy builders, who regarded them as mere quarries for supplying blocks of stone. Many of the mosques and sacred buildings in Cairo were erected with blocks taken from the Pyramids. The highest and greatest of the Ghizeh Pyramids—the Cheops—dates back, it is said, to Chufu, the second King of the fourth dynasty, before Christ, 2800. The measurements of the Cheops pyramid are at present 755ft at the base, and in height 451ft. But the original dimensions were greater by some 30ft or 40ft. The blocks of stones of which it is constructed are from the quarries of Mokattam and Tuna, near Cairo, and the contents amount to 85,000,000 cubic feet. We did not find the ascent too tiring, assisted as we were by two Bedouins to each of us, yet the stones average three feet in height. From the top, which is flat, a very charming view is to be had of the Delta. In the interior of the pyramid are three mortuary chambers, and the entrance is by sloping narrow passages, so close and low as to compel visitors to stoop and creep in passing through them. In the upper mortuary chamber is the red granite sarcophagus of Cheops, and in a chamber above the name of Cheops is found painted in red on the blocks.

It is recounted by the Greek historian Herodotus that this pyramid took 20 years to build, and that 100,000 men were employed in its construction. The pyramids, meaningless heaps of out stone, are immense, overawing, colossal, but they make no claim on the elegant or the æsthetic. Crowds of Bedouins took us in charge, or threatened to do so, as we stepped from the verdure of the plain of the Nile on to the eternal sands of the desert, but our faithful