

Scenes in an Egyptian City.

The Harbor of Alexandria—A Pilot—Permits and Passports—Alexandria—A Motley Crowd—Oriental Dresses—Appearance of the Women—Life in the Streets—Cairo—Egyptian Life.

We crossed the Mediterranean in five days from Naples to Alexandria. The passage was a pleasant one; for a large, strong, English ship, good accommodations, excellent fares, gentlemanly officers, and the most delightful weather imaginable, all combined to make it so. Midwinter, as it was, there was no need of overcoats, even while walking the deck in the evening.

Before we had entered the harbor at Alexandria, some of the peculiarities of Egypt began to appear. Its low, flat coast line rose into view slowly and with apparent reluctance, and the city seemed to be hiding itself behind the shipping. The lighthouse and the palace of the pasha were at length made out, and not long afterward the flat roofs of the larger buildings and the upper portion of Pompey's Pillar disengaged themselves from the monotonous mass and became distinct objects.

A pilot boarded us, whose personal appearance, oriental dress, dirty turban, strunken bare legs, twisted eyes and barbarous English, suggested antiquity, and strongly appealed to the sense of the ludicrous. Before we had dropped anchor half-a-dozen boats gathered about us, whose occupants became marked features in the novel panorama, and objects of curious study. By gestures, smiles and nods, and with an occasional mispronounced English word, to set off and emphasize the pantomime, they busied themselves with an effort to engage our attention and secure us as passengers to the shore and hotel.

After being visited by two or three sets of officials, who talked in sententious terms with the captain while they got the needful information, and chatted sonorously in Arabic gutturals and aspirates with each other as they discussed it, permits were obtained for our landing. We opened our valises and showed our passports in a small, dirty room, dignified with the name of Custom House. Standing close by the dock, we waited while our names, &c., were copied by a squatting scribe who wrote backwards in a cursive script that looked like fossil bird-tracks, and after receiving two or three intimations that some "buck sheesh" would be very acceptable, passed through half a mile of dirtier and meaner looking streets than the Five Points in New York can show, and found ourselves at a hotel where there is more dirt; an ample supply of fleas and mosquitoes, and a more exorbitant rate of charges (four dollars a day in gold) than it had ever before been my misfortune to encounter.

And thus we entered the ancient, the storied, the wonderful land of Egypt.

I had felt not a little anxious lest it should fail to impress me with its antiquity. But the fear was soon dispelled. The trip over the Mediterranean, though covering but a little more than a thousand miles, seemed to have put us back historically four thousand years, and into the midst of a world strange enough to belong to another planetary system. Once fairly set down among the people, even at Alexandria, the long-preserved customs of oriental life thrust themselves upon the attention without delay or asking leave, and are odd enough to keep an American busy with eye and brain. The European element has become quite prominent and noticeable in Alexandria, as the city is not populous, the number of English, French and Italian residents is pretty large, and the Frank quarter is the central and the only agreeable portion of the town.

In the principal square, fronting the hotel, a most novel and picturesque scene is presented. All complexions are there in the motley, moving, kaleidoscopic crowd,—white, olive, mulatto, yellow, bronze and black. There is also a composite of nationalities,—the Copts, or ancient Egyptians, Arabs, Greeks, Turks proper, Nubians, and representatives from all the larger and prettier realms of Europe. The various languages boil and mingle in the air as do the ingredients in a soup or chowder. There are salutations in Italian, compliments in French, which, in turn, are heard above the din; while there is a perpetual murmur or undertone whose stream is fed by tributaries from a score of dialects.

The dresses appear almost endless in their variety of detail, while preserving the general features that have so long marked the costumes of the East. The turban takes the place of the hat, and the shawl is substituted for the bonnet,—though in color, size, showiness and arrangement, the patterns are named legion. Everywhere is the loose external robe, terminating anywhere from the middle of the thigh to the ankles, and in quality extending all the way from the coarsest blue cotton or the roughest undressed wool, to the richest silk or the finest alpaca. Beneath this robe there may be rich vesting, embroidered under-clothing, nice Turkish trousers, spotlessly white stockings, Congress gaiters or fancy-colored oriental shoes; or there may be all sorts of articles of apparel representing every quality of material,—or, indeed, there may be nothing save the garment which nature gave, shining like a bronze shield where it is exposed at the breast, and protruding in the long, unwashed limbs, like parts of an ancient petroselin.

The developments of active life are also new. Here a marching yellow turban salutes a stationary pair of huge bagging breeches with a double kick on the heels; there a gorgeous silk girdle, striding majestically in one direction, touches toe tips to the fingers and puts them into the palm of an elegant embroidered robe that is patting its path along the opposite way.

Most of the women are veiled from the hair downward to the eyebrows, and from the feet upward to the eyelashes; the organs of vision

peering out along the horizontal crack. It seems to be meant as an ostentatious display of assumed modesty, which appears ridiculous enough; it is, in fact, an arrangement which covers what I judge is generally a pretty large area of ugliness; and on this account it is to be appreciated. Most of the well-dressed women in the streets are short, chubby, oleaginous specimens of their sex, who appear always trying to make their loose, flowing silk mantillas extend laterally as far as possible;—they are quite as often seen mounted astide the donkeys, riding with arms akimbo, and their gay colored, pointed-toed slippers thrust out prominently to view on either side;—the entire horizontal measurement being scarcely less than the perpendicular, and but little of the jackass is left in sight save the huge ears and the little shuffling limbs, which stir up a cloud of dust that adds to the picturesqueness of the figure.

Donkey drivers shout for patronage; dragoons bow and offer unasked information in the hope of finding a customer; gay carriages preceded by elegantly dressed runners dash along the street; shopkeepers at the stands or bazaars sit with imperturbable gravity or assumed indifference, the legs drawn under the body, and acting as though a trade was a favor to the purchasers and a hardship to themselves; a train of ancient looking camels goes by with a sort of solemn silence and surprised stare; a mother passes with a child astride her shoulder, and holding on to the leg which hangs down over her breast; one of the half nude *fellahs* has rolled himself in his torn blanket and gone to sleep in the dirt beside the street, heedless of the din and danger; galloping donkeys try to bray out of their discontent, while filthy beggars call out of their wretchedness for "bucksheesh";—and so the hours go by, and the pageant does not end, and the strangeness deepens into bewilderment, and you try to rouse yourself as if from dreaming, and find that you are really standing face to face with antiquity, and Egypt is a strange, mighty fact.

Cairo is a much larger city than Alexandria, and it is much more thoroughly oriental. Excepting Damascus, it is said that no other city under Turkish rule keeps the ancient spirit and forms so well. The foreign element is here relatively small and decidedly subordinate. The volume of life flowing here is so large, and has kept to the old channels so long, that it has so far resisted the tendencies which would divert it. English capitalists have indeed undertaken to grow cotton according to the latest methods of agriculture, and are applying modern invention to aid in solving the problem of labor. I have seen a few steam-ploughs in the fields, and occasionally a force-pump is at work lifting the water from the Nile, and the railway is in operation. But the government does not openly encourage these innovations upon ancient custom, and so the old forked stick is yet dragged by a camel and a cow, yoked side by side, and scratches up the surface of the soil, under the name of ploughing; the men yet lug their goat-skin bottles of water, and the women bear the old earthen pots upon their heads from the wells, and by the aid of rope-buckets, and wheels turned by the bullock with the attached string of revolving jars, the country still gets its irrigation from the Nile; while the Arab driver of loaded donkeys or camels sees the locomotive dashing up and down the country, and prays Allah that he may not be left to starve because the devil has stolen his occupation.

But little can be done in the way of picturing the life of Egypt, or even of Cairo, in a single letter. There are so many novel and strange features that selection is difficult, and a mere enumeration is valueless. I cannot stop to speak of the four hundred mosques whose domes and minarets beautify the picture upon which you look down from the heights of the citadel; of the narrow streets, growing still narrower upward, as each story of the dwellings projects over the one beneath, till only the merest strip or the smallest patch of sky is discernible; of the larger bazaars where oriental trade goes on at the doorway of little recesses six feet by twelve; of the sonorous and gesticulating vehemence with which colloquies are conducted, or bargains made, or feeling expressed; of the lordly pride exhibited by petty officials, and the servility and timidity of the women, who carry the consciousness of social degradation in both face and manner; nor of many other things which crowd up for recognition. Nor can I now speak of the Nile,—most historic and wonderful of rivers; nor of the palus, whose majesty, and grace, and beauty are a perpetual delight; nor of the desert, whose desolation, tells of nomadic life, and suggests the great march of Israel to deliverance and a home; nor of the pyramids, which embody the ambition and the folly that flourished here four thousand years ago; nor of the ruins of that ancient city which was the theatre of Joseph's enterprize, and of Pharaoh's audacity, the seat of the plagues, and the door for the exodus.—Correspondent of W. & R. Cairo, Egypt, 1866.

A MAHOMEDAN PRAYER FOR QUEEN VICTORIA.—For the first time in India the "Khatba" has been read in behalf of the Queen of England. The event took place at Lahore, by Mir Hassan Shah, Pirzadah of Baitala, at the Eid festival in Alamgir's Masjid, which has been made over to the Mahomedans for public worship. Translation.—"O Lord! help and befriend her who has bestowed on us this splendid masjid, and has given us this noble building, namely, the Empress and excellent Lady whose empire extends from east to west, and who has become victorious over the kings of Arabia and the rest of the world; her whose name is Victoria. God preserve her empire and authority, and bestow on her subjects the blessings which flow from her government. O prince, server and gracious helper of mankind, Amen."

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letters on Revision.

LETTER IX.—QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

King Herod inquired of the Jewish priests and scribes where the Christ should be born. They gave him the desired information by replying: "In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet: and thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah," etc. (Matt. ii. 5, 6.)

Matthew, the apostle and evangelist, quotes from the Old Testament to prove to his Jewish readers that, in accordance with God's purpose and prophetic word, took place the miraculous birth of Christ; his coming out of Egypt; his being called a Nazarene; his being heralded by John the Baptist; his residence at Capernaum, and diffusing in that region his heavenly light; his healing every sickness and infirmity among the people; his riding in meek triumph into Jerusalem as Zion's King; and his betrayal for thirty pieces of silver, and that money afterward given for the potter's field.

The apostle and evangelist John quotes those ancient Scriptures as foretelling Christ's zeal for his Father's house; his riding as Zion's King into Jerusalem; the Jews' unbelief and hardness of heart towards him; his garments being divided among the Roman soldiers, who crucified him, and his coat disposed of by lot; his having not a bone broken, when he was offered up on the cross; and his being pierced with the soldier's spear.

The apostle Peter quoted "the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms" (Luke xxiv. 44), as predicting the fall of Judas; the wonderful operations of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost; the resurrection and ascension of Christ; his being raised up by God as the Prophet, whose words we are required to hear; and raised up to bless the nations, by turning them from their iniquities.

The apostle James quoted "the prophets" as proving God's purpose to take out of the Gentiles a people for his name. And the martyr Stephen, in his historic address to the Jews, made appropriate and pointed quotations from their acknowledged sacred writings.

The apostle Paul, in his recorded addresses, and in his letters to the churches, quotes a great number of Old Testament scriptures, and admirably interweaves them with his own discourse; showing that both Testaments taken together, constitute one beautiful and harmonious texture of truth. And the Lord Jesus himself often quoted those sacred writings; to explain and enforce them, and teach us how to use them.

In the whole New Testament, these quotations from the more ancient Scriptures number more than two hundred. And being thus numerous, and important in their bearing, it is pleasant to have the New Testament so printed that, on opening it to read, we may know at once when we meet them, and where each one begins and ends.

This desirable object has been satisfactorily accomplished, in the Octavo Revised New Testament, by printing the quotation, when poetical in the Hebrew, in the poetic form; and when not poetical, by spacing the letters:—

AQUADES.

For the Christian Messenger.

"The Cross of Christ"

Has been compared with reference to the believer in him, to the wings of a bird; a light burden, indeed, which carries him that bears it; yet even to day, so many years after its erection on Calvary, the "offence of the cross" has not ceased, but is still to some "a stumbling block," and to others "foolishness." It is truly surprising how long a period elapses in the lives, even of some of those who profess to be sustained by it, ere they can, from the inner shrine of the heart, hear the Holy Spirit, witnessing with theirs that they have been born of God, and respond to it, "In the Cross of Christ I glory." Yet when by the eye of faith it is seen, "Towering o'er the wrecks of time," how full of joy to the beholder must ever be the certainty that Immanuel hung thereon, and that by his sufferings full atonement has been offered for all who are willing to look to him and be saved.

How transporting the thought, when Divine grace permits it to be realized, by weak, erring humanity, that that same Jesus stands now at the right hand of his Father pleading the merits of his death, in behalf of his suffering church below, and is at the same time with each of her

individual members knowing and sympathizing with every pain and every anxiety, although they may not always be sensible of his nearness.

May all who name the name of Christ beware of appearing to drag his cross, for is not this one way in which the Saviour may be wounded in the house of his friends and the blessed anchor of our hope become a stumbling block in the way of observers?

If while looking with deep, quiet joy, to the glory soon to be revealed, we are burthened with a sense of the weighty obligations resting upon us and our inability to meet them in a way satisfactory to ourselves, what better can we do than gird on more firmly than ever the whole armour of God? for "shod with the gospel of his peace, we can walk on pointed thorns and crush them." In a little while we may see him, who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption:

"Then patience; days and years shall glide,
And we shall lay these clouds aside,—
Shall be baptized in Jordan's flood,
And washed in Jesus' precious blood."

Freed from all infirmities of flesh, or spirit, no obstacle will then be permitted to hinder our progress towards perfection in holiness.

ALETT WILFRED.

Brookside, May 19th, 1866.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Ship and the Church.

When a Ship is to be built, men are sent into the woods to cut the timber and bring it to the ship-yard. Timber of different kinds of wood, of different shapes, and different sizes are wanted. A suitable master is employed and men are set to work hewing and dressing the timber. Some are at one thing and some at another. The keel is laid, the frames are put up, the plank covering is put on, the decks are laid, the master sees that all is fitted, fastened and bolted. The workmen toil on day after day and week after week. At length the spars are made and put in their places, the yards, rigging and sails are got ready and put on, all things being done the ship is to be launched. Then comes the long looked-for day all hands are busy adjusting the ways. Crowds of people are flocking to see the launch, some are idle spectators of the busy scene around them, others perhaps have an interest in the ship. All is eager expectation. The spectators are discussing the qualities of the ship, the genius of the master builder and the future success of the ship; the master is seeing that all things are ready and secure—the word is given to "Let her go." The last blow is struck and amidst cheers and shouts she glides down into her destined element. A captain and officers are employed and a crew of men to work the ship, all are bound strictly to their several duties. She is then freighted and bound to a foreign part; the crew bid adieu to their companions perhaps for the last time; and embark with bright hopes for the future; the sails are hoisted the wind fair and favourable. Onward she speeds over the blue ocean-waves. All hands are delighted with the prospect of a pleasant voyage, they now lose sight of land. It is night and the wind begins to blow, and the billows to rise, the storm increases to a violent gale, terror seizes some of the men and they give up; the captain remains firm at his post, and with the remainder of his crew toil on. After many days of anxiety and labour the wind ceases, and there is a calm; the ship has suffered from the storm, the sails are torn, and other injuries done, the crew, now idle, begin to find fault with the captain and officers—a meeting ensues—and some are thrown overboard. Order at length is restored, repairs are made, and the wind springing up, the ship again moves on her way; sickness comes among them, and some of them die. They again murmur at the captain, he labours to pacify them, but in vain, an opportunity offers and they leave the ship. After a time new hands are procured, some more get sick and die, thus things continue, she is tossed on the billows with scarcely hands enough to keep her on her course, but a few strong hands and stout hearts remain firm to their duty, and at last shattered and bruised she enters the destined port. There we will leave her and endeavour to draw a comparison between her and a bruised and shattered church.

A few members of the church of N. removed out into the wilderness of C. the settlement was very small, and they had no school house or any other place for public worship, but they kept up prayer meetings. When a minister came along they freely offered their dwelling houses and invited him there to preach the word of life to their fellow men. But in process of time the settlement so increased that a school house was built and used for the worship of God, and for the training of the youth