

## THE AMERICAN MISSION IN EGYPT.

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Many circumstances combine to make the Egyptian Mission of the American United Presbyterians one of the most interesting and significant to be found in the entire range of effort for the world's evangelization. For example, its location is in one of the most ancient and famous of lands, in a country for twenty-five centuries so closely connected with Bible history, the rise and spread of the kingdom of heaven upon earth; of whose remarkable civilization such stupendous monuments still survive, and which, after being long Christian, for twelve hundred years has groaned beneath the tyranny of the Moslem. Further, in the modern effort to restore it to the rule of the cross we have one of the finest examples of Christian comity, since by common consent practically the entire work is left to be performed by a single denomination. Finally, so well is the undertaking supplied with instrumentalities various and vigorously wielded, that in almost every particular the gains have been steady and encouragingly large.

The land of the Nile is altogether unique among terrestrial regions, is easily one of the very strangest under the sun. Its river for the last 1300 miles of its course receives not a tributary stream, and but for the annual inundations, so mysterious to the ancients, though their cause is to us well understood, Egypt, the paragon of fertility and fruitfulness, would be as empty and desolate as Sahara itself. No other country is at once so long and so narrow, since it extends from the Mediterranean southward some 700 miles to the First Cataract, but for the bulk of the distance never reaches a width of more than twelve miles, while the average is not more than six or eight. The Delta is a triangular space with base upon the sea and apex at Cairo, about 100 miles from Alexandria. Beyond that point the river valley is everywhere shut in by a double line of precipitous cliffs varying in height from 200 to 1200 feet, and back of them lies the dismal expanse of the Libyan and Arabian deserts. The only break in the sides of this trough-like chasm, which was worn down by the river in days primeval, is found on the western side, and not far to the south of Cairo, in a depression known as the Fayoum, separated from the valley by a ridge of limestone, but also joined to it by a canal long ago cut to carry in the life-giving water. This limited tract constitutes the Egypt of history as well as the real Egypt of to-day, and therefore the name stands not for any 400,000 square miles (that "fiction of the geographers") lying between the Red Sea and some imaginary line somewhere out on the waste of the Sahara, but for not more than 12,000 square miles of arable soil—a tract about the size of Sicily, or Belgium, or New Hampshire, or of Massachusetts with Rhode Island added.

In order to recall the connection of Egypt with Old Testament history, it is enough to suggest that it was the place of refuge from famine for