

The Last Egyptian

of absolute repulsion upon his swarthy face. The engineer, also an Arab, lay stretched upon the deck half asleep, but with both ears alert to catch any sound that might denote the fact that the straining, rickety engine was failing to perform its full duty. Back of the tiny cabin sat the dusky steersman, as naked and inert as his fellows, while under the deck awning reclined the one white man of the party, a young Englishman clothed in khaki knickerbockers and a white silk shirt well open at the throat.

There were no tourists in Egypt at this season. If you find a white man on the Nile in April, he is either attached to some exploration party engaged in excavations or a government employee from Cairo, Assut or Luxor, bent upon an urgent mission.

The dahabeah was not a government boat, though, so that our Englishman was more likely to be an explorer than an official. It was evident he was no stranger to tropical climes, if we judged by his sun-browned skin and the quiet resignation to existing conditions with which he puffed his black briar and relaxed his muscular frame. He did not sleep, but lay with his head upon a low wicker rest that enabled him to sweep the banks of the Nile with his keen blue eyes.

The three Arabs regarded their master from time to time with stealthy glances, in which wonder was mingled with a certain respect. The foreigner was a fool to travel during the heat of the day; no doubt of that at all. The native knows when to work and when