

electric telegraph, he cannot clear his mind for ordinary consistent thought.

Especially in Egypt this thing looks like a caricature. Scenery there is not constructed for the play of a proper civilization as most of us have become accustomed to it. Hardly anywhere is there a slope violent enough to give water the force to turn a wheel. The ineffable quiet of the indolent palms is sadly disturbed by a screech of the engine from the railway train, dashing its relentless way into the midst of the tranquil plumes. It seems more than a shame to fill our steamboat boilers from the steady Nile. You are provoked at a sarcastic or ribald suggestion to print way-bills on papyrus. It is as much as our veneration for Oriental scholarship can bear to find our railway passes worded in that beautiful Arabic type. We wonder whether the reason why the departing train is behind time in starting—as, of course, it is—must be found in the fact, which we impatiently observe, that the conductor over yonder is on the ground at the side of the road, saying his prayers. Thus the entire scene appears unreal. Civilization, Occidental and vigorous, is confronting barbarism, Oriental and effeminate. One finds himself constantly trying to smooth out the ruffle, to calm the conflict, to reconcile the incongruity, or to adjust the contradiction. When we are fairly seated in a car, labeled with the name of an English maker in Birmingham, and are asked for our tickets by an amiable guard dressed in bag-trousers, with a silk sash around his lithe waist, and are forced to meet his demand for our *billets* in French—it really makes us seem illusory; we think it doubtful what we shall come to be in the end; we grow dreamy, and feel like an imposition.

Add to this the fact that all our accustomed means of communication with the outer world fail; not a sound around us is intelligible. "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth." When the Psalmist said that he had a very becoming appreciation of the value of his tongue—for that was what he was speaking about. Any man's tongue is his glory, if he can only use it; but if fate shuts him off from first possibilities, he sinks most ingloriously into a piece of ticketed experience going dumbly through enigmas. Of itself, the Arabic language as confronted in Egypt brings not one item of information even to educated American citizens. Previous learning along ordinary lines fails at every point. You cannot read the names of the stations, or the artistic signs above the doors. You cannot copy them in your note-book, even after you have been told. Such impenetrable mysteries are around you at each moment that for once you grow humble. You hurry along on a distinctly new plane, like a bride in a honeymoon, far above all of the usual sublunary ranges of things; yet with sometimes a quite human wonder, very modestly indulged, what some of the sublunary things are.