

LETTERS FROM THE EAST.

GIBBE.

(Continued from page 554. VOL. III.)

The ride to Essouan through the desert was very pleasant, it being near sunset; and to bathe in the Nile afterwards, how exquisite a pleasure! The intense heat being past, the evening air was as balm to the feeling, cool and soft, without being chill. The next day we directed the Cangia to remain at Elephantine; the isle afforded a delightful retirement, which was indeed as a home and a shadow in a weary land. After wandering through wastes of sand and rocks, fatigued and languid, you gaze on the rich groves and unfading verdure of this isle as you would on the shore from a stormy sea. How often I have wandered amidst its shades during the burning heat of the day. There was a favorite spot where a group of trees stood near the water's edge, apart from the cottages. On the opposite shore rose a lofty range of sandhills, and the channel between was broken by some fine rocks, and one little isle covered with verdure, on which stood one or two habitations; on the left were the ruins of the two island temples. It was delightful to sit for hours here, and see the sun go down on the romantic and beautiful scenery.

The cataracts, a few miles above Essouan, are very insignificant, they fall over a ledge of rocks, extending nearly the whole breadth of the channel, being but a few inches in height, though the noise may be heard at some distance. This being the termination of our voyage, the next morning we went down the current at a good rate, and soon reached Esneh and then Luxor. At the former town there are some hundreds of Mamelukes in the service of the Pacha, to whom they are slaves, being Circassians and others, purchased by him when very young.—They are still, for the most part, men in their youth, handsomely dressed, and are commanded by Suleman Aga, the *quondam* French Colonel, by whom they are disciplined in the European manner. One day, being becalmed near the opposite shore on our return, we landed at the entrance of a little valley, confined by lofty precipices. Advancing up this romantic spot, we came to a small monastery, with its cemetery in the wild. The gate was closed and, no answer being given to the repeated calls, we entered through one of the windows, and found all its apartments silent and deserted. It must have been so for some time. In the burial ground were many tomb stones with inscriptions, in memory of the fathers who had lived and died in this solitude, which seemed not to be intruded on by human footsteps, save some chance traveller should direct his wayward steps there. A self-denying place it was altogether for this little community of fathers, who might truly say they had nothing to do with the pleasures of the world, with more reason than most who so profess in the present day.

Returning to Thebes, we sat out early in the morning on a visit to the Tombs of the Kings, and passing again near the ruins of Karnu,