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WHAT EGYPT CAN TEACH US.

BY THE EDITOR.

IV.

It seems strange to hear the snort of the iron horse at Assouan, 800 miles up the Nile. Yet there is a well-worked stretch of railway around the great cataract, and there will soon be unbroken connection all the way from the Mediterranean to far beyond Philæ. Our Canadian party, however, were too late for the daily train from Assouan, so we had to take donkeys for the six miles' ride through the desert. The popular idea of a desert is that it is a level and limitless stretch of barren sands. A glance at the picture on the following page will show that that is not correct. In many cases there are out-cropping rocks and ruin mounds.

The essential characteristic, however, is its sterility and desolation. Anything more desolate than the verdureless, hot and arid expanse is difficult to conceive. Notwithstanding, the air is so dry and clear that a sense of exhilaration is felt that goes far to overcome the feeling of heat and fatigue. We pass near Assouan, a dreary Arab cemetery utterly neglected and ruinous, many of whose crumbling brick tombs are over one thousand years old. The road passes through a savage defile bordered by granite rocks on either side, and strewn with flint shards and granite boulders in wildest confusion. As soon as we strike the river again, all is verdure and fertility. The shore is populous with native villages fairly swarming with children, even the youngest of whom, if they can say no other word, will lisp out "sheesh," and hold out their little hands and beg still more ardently with their beautiful dark eyes.

We embarked in a cumbrous river boat rowed by about a dozen coal-black Nubians, who seemed all the darker by contrast