

REUNION OF THE WATERS OF THE RED SEA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN.

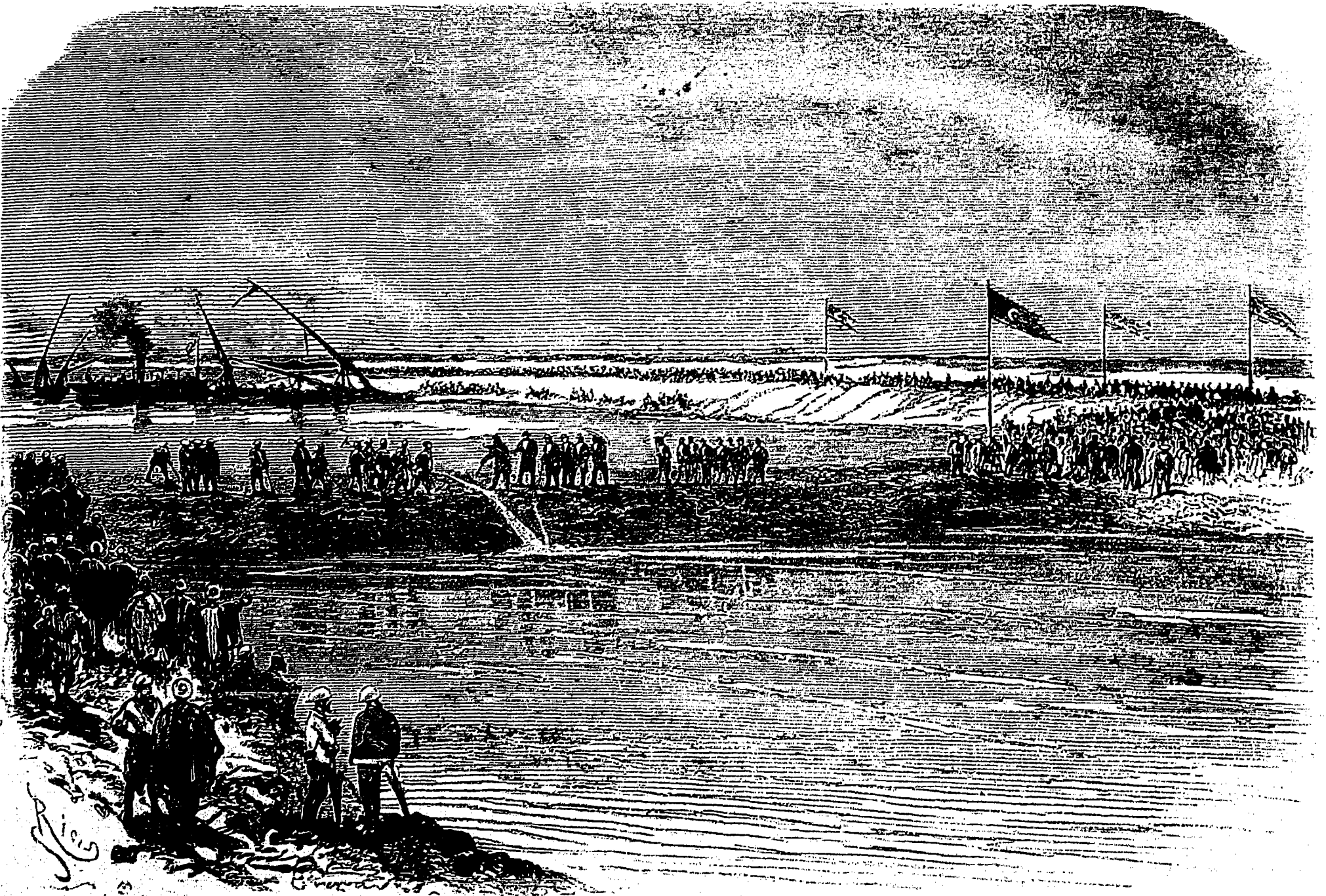
THE SUEZ CANAL.

This great enterprise is now about to be formally opened to ships of all nations sailing between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. On the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th of the present month the opening ceremonies will take place, the *fetes* beginning at Port Said on the 16th. On the following day the vessels forming the fleet, and carrying the Royal and other distinguished guests of the Khedive, will pass through the Canal from Port Said to Lake Timsah, on which stands the new town of Ismailia, where the great festivities to be given by the Viceroy will take place. Setting sail on the 19th they are expected to reach Suez on the Red Sea, and the following day the proceedings will be brought to a close. The Empress of

the French, determined to pass through the Canal, instructed M. Pauline to make a survey with the view of ascertaining whether the Imperial yacht *L'Aigle* could perform the voyage; but a despatch from Alexandria announces that M. Pauline found only twenty feet of water at the shallowest part. The Captain of *L'Aigle* informed her Majesty that his boat could not pass, whereupon the Empress has ordered new soundings to be made, and failing in finding a channel for *L'Aigle* then, that a lighter vessel be procured, as she is determined to pass through the canal. Everything is planned for the entertainment of the visitors on the most gorgeous scale of Oriental magnificence; and the difficulty at one time threatened between the Sultan and the Viceroy concerning the issue of the invitations to the Royal and Imperial guests

having been safely got over, the *fetes* will no doubt pass off as becomes the celebration of such a memorable event.

In ancient times the Isthmus of Suez was a rich, well-cultivated country, over which passed the commerce between the then thriving nations of Asia and Africa. Where to-day there are immense lakes of brackish water which have swallowed up the fertile soil, once flourished thriving communities; but their traces have been swept away. Everything that was not cut down by the sword of the Persians and Arabs, was destroyed by pitiless spring-tides or by the sirocco of the desert. It appears certain that attempts had been made in olden times to connect both seas, but it is probable that only a few of the larger cities were connected with each other by a fresh-water canal, the course of which has been



THE LAST STROKE OF THE PICK STRUCK BY HIS EXCELLENCY ALI PACHA, ON THE 15th AUGUST 1869