

resemble Nubia—a more mountainous background and rocky foreground. Water-wheels occur at short intervals instead of shadoofs. These are generally protected from the sun by mats, an indication that one is reaching the tropics. Herodotus mentions a deep well at Assouan, which is within the borders of Nubia, in which, at the summer solstice, the rays of the sun reach the bottom. In mid-stream lies the Island of Elephantine, which has been well described as a mosaic of vivid green, golden sand and black syenite. The inhabitants of the island are all Nubians, and wear the characteristic Nubian dress, which consists chiefly of white linen or muslin garb wound round and round the person. The southern part of the island is covered with ruins of ancient temples and fortifications, and fragments of pottery on many of which are Greek inscriptions in running hand. Some of these I purchased from the natives.

Assouan is a great *entrepot* of merchandise from the Soudan and Central Africa. A wonderfully picturesque place the market is, with its great piles of wheat, of *doura*—a sort of pea, used for food for camels and for bread—of sugar-cane, dates, gum arabic, elephants' tusks, rhinoceros and crocodile hides and the like, brought by camel caravans from the distant desert. The Arabs, Soudanese, Berbers, Bicherese and other native races give great variety and picturesqueness to the scene.

I rode on my donkey through the crowded bazaar followed at every step by importunate vendors of ostrich feathers, eggs, ebony clubs, shields, arrows, lances, wicker baskets, and the scanty leather loin fringe of the dusky dames of Nubia. Extensive barracks of the Soudanese troops are arranged along the river. Their snowy uniform contrasts vividly with their jet black faces. There is also here an effective camel corps, commanded by British officers.

Not Assouan, however, but Philæ, was our objective point in coming so far up the historic Nile. There is a railway for six miles around the cataract, but the single train of the day had gone, and we had to ride on donkeys through the desert. We passed *en route* a dreary Arab cemetery, some of whose mouldering tombs were over a thousand years old. We saw, also, the ancient quarry from which were hewn most of the great obelisks of Egypt and of the world. One was partially hewn out of the mountain by hands which ceased from their labour well-nigh three thousand years ago. It is 95 feet long and 11½ feet wide at the largest part. The mode of detaching the stone was by driving in wedges into holes cut for the purpose and then saturating these wedges with water, when the stone was split off by their pressure. The holes for the wedges can still be seen.