

and even beyond it, are ruins of monuments and temples which carry us back to the dawn of history itself. The eastern hills which fringe the Nile are honeycombed with the grotto-tombs of Egyptians who lived thousands of years before the birth of Christ. These tombs are adorned with pictures, still richly coloured, showing us daily scenes in the life of the long-departed men and women who lie buried within them. From these pictures we learn much of the life and customs of the ancient Egyptians. Elsewhere, as at Thebes, are the majestic remains of vast temples, with noble portals, colossal statues, long avenues of sphinxes, and forests of columns which amaze and bewilder the beholder, and reveal to him a nation which had attained to a very advanced stage of civilization long before the first page of history was written.

For the most part the Egyptian *fellah* or peasant lives in mud villages near the river. Sometimes these villages are built on high mounds; sometimes they are built on flat land, protected from the Nile floods by thick walls and a wide moat, which is full of water in October, an evil-smelling marsh in December, and dry in spring. Here the naked little children and the dogs of the village bask together in the sun. In the midst of such a village there is usually an open space, with the house of the *sheik* or chief on one side of it. Some villages possess a beautiful green, surrounded by rows of waving palms.

The richest part of Egypt is found in the plain above Assiut, where the country is low and the river banks are high. The fields are all divided by narrow drains into squares like those of a chess-board, and at every few hundred feet along the bank of the river rises the tall pole of the *shadûf* or watering-machine. "All day long at the water's edge one half-naked *fellah* fills the leathern bucket in the water, and another bronze-like figure at the top of the bank empties it into the trough that irrigates the fields. In Nubia the *shadûf* has disappeared, and is replaced by the large, round *sâkieh* wheel, to whose revolving spokes are fastened a multitude of earthen jars, which fill themselves in the river, and slowly turn round until they spill their contents into a wooden reser-