

CHAPTER II.

HATATCHA.

The mountains of Abu Fedah consist of a low range about twelve miles long and from two to three hundred feet in height. These hills are wedge-shaped, and from a narrow, uneven ridge at the summit the sides slope downward at a sharp angle on either side, affording little apparent foothold to one who might essay to climb the steeps. At the south end are pits wherein were found numbers of mummified crocodiles, proving that these reptiles were formerly worshipped by the natives of Al-Kusiyeh, which is the ancient city of Qes of the hieroglyphic texts, and was afterward called Cusae by the Greeks. It was, in its prime, the capital of the fourteenth nome or province of Upper Egypt, and a favorite winter abode of the kings of the Middle Empire. The modern village, as before explained, lies a mile or two from the Nile bank, in a fertile valley watered by bubbling springs. The inhabitants are mostly Arabs, or a mixture of the Arab blood with that of the native fellaheen, which last, in common with the Copts, are direct descendants of the ancient Egyptians.

The early Egyptologists expected to find important tombs secreted in the limestone cliffs of Gebel Abu Fedah; but careful search only revealed the mummy crocodile pits and a few scattering and uninteresting