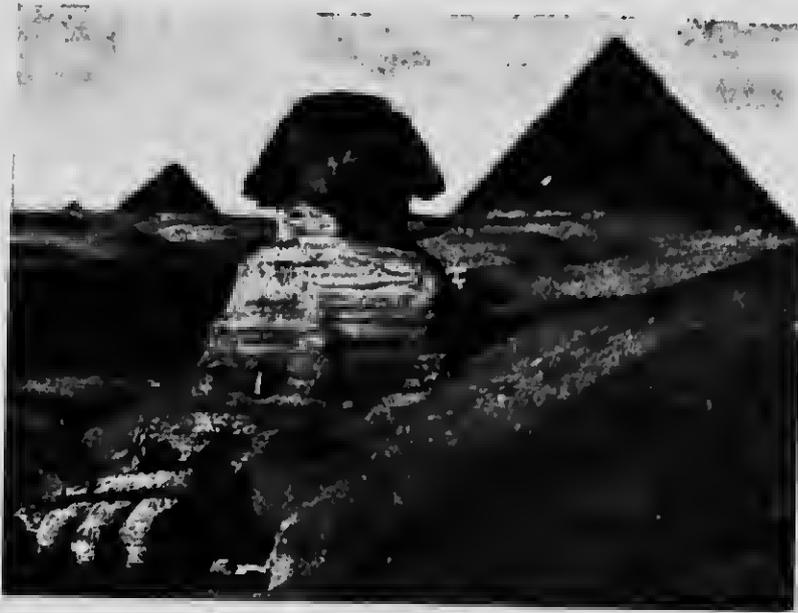


The upper valley of the Nile is monotonous, but for all that it possesses an ever-changing beauty. The hills shut in the narrow plain on the east, and the desert seems to be struggling continually to overwhelm the green fields through which the fertilizing river flows. Every traveller praises the exquisite tints of the Nile scenery, and dwells upon the vivid contrast between the brown villages fringed with palm-groves and crowned with white minarets, and the waving fields of pale green corn, sweet-scented bean, or purple lupine blossom.



THE SPHINX AND THE GREAT PYRAMID.

Every traveller, too, is charmed with the magic of the ancient river. Sometimes the vast blue sky seems to quiver with heat, and there is not a breath of wind. Then the river is like a broad sheet of glass; the great pointed sails of the Nile boats flap idly against the yard, and "the only sound to be heard is the slow, sleepy song of the blue-gowned boatmen as they drag the tow-ropes along the steep mud-bank, where the mimosa trees crowd thirstily down to the water's edge."

Along the banks of the Nile, as far as the first cataract,