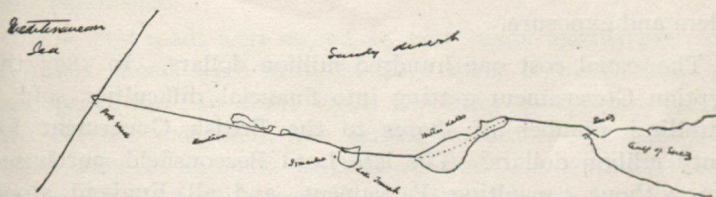


that our captain loosed top-sails when crossing the Bitter Lakes, to be able to say he had "made sail in the Desert,") we arrived at Suez about three p.m., and anchored in the Red Sea.

After the vessels had come to anchor the Empress of the French held a levee on board her yacht, at which nearly all the officers of the fleet attended, and had the honor and the pleasure of an introduction, not only to her Majesty, but to M. Ferdinand Lesseps, the eminent engineer who brought this great undertaking to completion. In the evening Her Majesty entertained at dinner on board "L'Aigle" all the nobles present, and also the British admiral and captains of H. M. Ships.

Thus ended one of the most memorable events of the nineteenth century, and one of the most delightful experiences of a life-time.



The Suez Canal, (although strictly speaking it is not a canal—having neither locks nor gates,) dates its origin away back as far as 600 B. C. At various times since then, leading men of Europe and the East have contemplated its construction, and about the year 800 A. D. a small water communication between the Mediterranean and Red Sea actually existed, but was allowed to fall into disuse and filled up. Traces of this we saw at a later period when making a survey of the canal.

It is said the Emperor Napoleon I. was the first to interest himself in the present canal, but owing to the great expense, and conflicting opinions as to its possibility of construction, it was abandoned until the year 1850, when the then Viceroy of Egypt employed M. Lesseps to consult with him as to the advisability and possibility of connecting the two Seas. The introduction of steam-ships about this time gave the project a