

From Mr. Duckingham's Lectures
EGYPT.

No one who has read the scriptures can hear the name of Egypt without the sentiments of astonishment and awe. It was the cradle of civilization; and brought to perfection all the arts and sciences which adorn, improve, and dignify mankind, when the rest of the world was lost in ignorance and barbarism; before Greece was civilized. Egypt had monuments of taste and grandeur; and it was not a little remarkable, that whilst this extremity of Africa was thus enlightened and civilized, the other inhabitants of that vast continent were sunk in that darkness and barbarism in which they remain to this day.

Egypt consists of a single valley, commencing at the sources of the Nile, as far as they have been ascertained, and extending to the sea; its average breadth is about nine miles, but in some places it is only half a mile, or even less, so that it is possible for two individuals to hold a conversation together, from one lateral extremity to the other of this celebrated country. It consists solely of the land overflowed by the Nile, and beyond this all is barrenness. In the present state of the country there is scarcely any possibility of extending the lateral boundaries of Egypt, because the whole of its fertile soil consists of the deposits of the Nile and beyond its influence the ground is sandy, rugged, and mountainous. The Nile is, therefore, the parent of the country, and the source of all its riches. It has always been a most interesting problem, both with the ancients and moderns, to ascertain the sources of this celebrated river. The ancients, indeed, appear to have considered it a point of more interest and importance than the moderns, for they were not content with sending a single traveller, or a small party to explore its recesses, but actually sent whole armies with that object, as in the times of Cambyses the Persian, and Alexander the Macedonian. There are various opinions on the subject; I incline to the opinion that the Nile is a continuation of the Niger; if it be so, the river becomes, still more remarkable, for it thus performs a course double the length of that of the river Amazon in America. Wherever that river has its source, it is certain that from the junction of the Nile and the Niger, they flow in one single undivided course to the sea, in a distance of twelve hundred miles, without receiving the waters of a single tributary stream. The most singular circumstance attending this remarkable river is its annual inundation. Recent researches have ascertained that the tropical rains are universal from the 10th degree of north latitude to the 10th degree south; but in this tract the clouds, intercepted by the lofty ranges of mountains called the Mountains of the Moon, pass to the northward, and Egypt presents the singular spectacle of the Nile swelling from June to September, remaining at its height for about a fortnight, and then gradually subsiding, and leaving behind it a highly fertilized soil ready to receive the seed of the husbandman. Lakes have been judiciously formed, as reservoirs, on the banks of the river, in order to correct its irregularities by drawing off the excess when the supply of water is too great, and supplying the deficiency when it is too small; because when the inundation does not arise to a certain height, a scarcity follows, and when it arises beyond that height, the waters remain too long, and the deposit is too rank for the purpose of cultivation. The most extensive of these lakes are in the neighbourhood of Cairo. To the south-east of Cairo there are the remains of a canal of astonishing magnitude. Ancient historians record that there was formerly a canal from the Isthmus of Suez to the Nile, connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean.—A portion of the ruins of this magnificent work is now all that remains of it. Another ancient canal was one connecting Alexandria with the Nile, and this has been recently repaired and re-opened by the present Pacha, Mahommed Ali.

Egypt is most fertile in antiquities. In other countries the remains of a Roman camp, or some other relics of former days, excite great interest and curiosity; but in Egypt, wherever the traveller sets his foot, he beholds the most stupendous remains of antiquity. It is impossible to convey any thing like an adequate idea of the greatness and magnificence of the remains of works of labour and art which it presents. Neither India, nor Greece, nor Rome, nor any other part of the world, can show any thing equal to the aggregated grandeur of the

wonders of this country. When the French visited Egypt, under Napoleon, they thought it would be sufficient to immortalize the glory of their nation to publish an account of its antiquities, and a work was, accordingly, published, which was considered so valuable that it was presented only to Emperors and Kings, and cost £500 a volume. The first town or city which the traveller usually visits, is Alexandria. The ruins of this celebrated city extend fifteen miles in length, and seven in breadth, covering a space about twice the size of London; and yet, notwithstanding those astonishing dimensions, Alexandria was but one of the third or fourth rate cities of ancient Egypt. The principal objects of curiosity are the Needles of Cleopatra and Pompey's Pillar. The latter as its name imports, is said to have been erected in honour of Pompey the Great, but it is maintained by some that it was erected in honour of the Emperor Severus, for having introduced a supply of corn into Alexandria a time of scarcity. It is of purely Egyptian workmanship. The shaft is of black granite, and ninety feet high. The needles of Cleopatra, were two obelisks, standing in front of the Ptolemaean Library. It was the custom to place before the Temples two obelisks, the usual height of which was 120 feet, and the breadth, at the base, fifteen feet, and thence gradually decreasing to almost a point at the top. To show the almost inconceivable powers at the disposal of the ancient Egyptians, it will be sufficient to mention an anecdote connected with one of these needles. About fifty years ago, one of them fell down, in consequence of the foundation giving way, and it was thus placed in a situation peculiarly convenient for removal, one great obstacle to the transportation of these monuments being the difficulty of getting them safely down. When the French, in Egypt, capitulated to Lord Hutchinson, his lordship insisted that all the antiquities which it had been intended to convey to France, should be given up to the British. The French seeing no alternative, were obliged to surrender them; and instead of showing a spirit of envy and rivalry, with a magnanimity that did them honour, gave their assistance to the British, in the attempt to remove this ponderous mass, in order that it might be conveyed to England. Rafts were built for the purpose of receiving it; but the united strength of the two armies was utterly unable to move it from the spot where it lay. The circumstance of this very obelisk having been conveyed down the Nile, as it can be satisfactorily proved that it must have been, a distance of at least six hundred miles, serves to give some idea of the power possessed by the ancient Egyptians. The catacombs are excavations used formerly for the burial of the dead. The wells are most stupendous works, being excavations so extensive, as to form a city underground. The necessity for their construction arose thus:—Alexandria, though called an Egyptian city, does not actually form a part of Egypt, that name being confined to the countries receiving the deposits of the Nile. Alexandria being perfectly independent of the Nile, these wells were excavated, and they were so capacious, that they would contain a supply of water sufficient for five years' consumption in time of drought. Canopus is a remarkable port, celebrated in the Odyssey of Homer; its baths were reputed to possess the remarkable and desirable quality of making old people young again.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



From the New-York Journal of Commerce.

PROTECTION AGAINST LIGHTNING.—Within a few days we have recorded the loss of several valuable lives by the effects of lightning, and if the history of the past is taken as a guide to the future, many others will be added to the list before the warm season closes. Under these circumstances it is the dictate of prudence, and proper regard to self-preservation, to make use of such means as Providence has placed in our power, to guard against so terrible and destructive a foe. The discoveries of Franklin on this subject, though founded in reason and tested by experience, are but little regarded in practice. In the city especially, the proportion of buildings protected by a conductor, is surprisingly small. The cost is very trifling in comparison with the value of the buildings, and still less when contrasted with the value of human life; and yet so general is the impression of self-security, that in general no precautions are used. We can scarcely

hope that any thing which we can say, will have the least effect, in overcoming a negligence so inveterate.

We will, therefore, quote from the Mechanics' Magazine, some directions which may be properly followed in a thunder storm, by persons who occupy dwellings to which conductors are not attached. And we will barely premise, that a gentleman of Boston is now living and in health, who was sitting between the two persons lately killed in Conway, Mass. when the event took place, and who would in all probability have shared the same fate, had he not resorted to one of the expedients here suggested. He remembered to have heard a remark of Franklin, that a chair without a back, in the middle of the room, with the feet of the occupant on the round, was a comparatively safe position in a thunder-storm, and adopted it accordingly. The consequence was, that he escaped nearly uninjured, while his companions on the right and left were instantly killed. The following is the communication above referred to:

Sir,—Will you permit an individual who has, four times in the course of his life, nearly become a victim to lightning, or a thunderbolt striking a house, and making its way into the interior, to enquire, what would be the best precaution to take, or the best means to adopt in an apartment, effectually to guard against the danger of being struck by lightning during a thunder-storm? I am, &c.

FULMEN.

We extract the following directions on this head from our common-place book:—Places of the greatest safety in a Thunder-storm.—In case a thunder-storm were to happen while a person is in the house, not furnished with a proper conductor, it is advisable not to stand near places where there is any metal, as chimneys, gilt frames, iron casements or the like; but to go into the middle of a room, and endeavor to stand or sit upon the best non-conductor that can be found at hand, as an old chair, stool, &c. It is still safer to bring two or three mattresses or beds into the middle of the room, and, folding them up double, put the chair upon them; for they not being such good conductors as the walls, the lightning will not choose an interrupted course through the air of the room and the bedding, when it can go through a continued and better conductor—the wall. The place of most absolute safety is the cellar, and particularly the middle of it; for when a person is lower than the surface of the earth, the lightning must strike the surface of the earth before it can possibly reach him. But when it can be had, a hammock, or swinging bed, suspended by silk cords equally distant from the walls on every side, and from the ceiling above and below, affords the safest situation a person can have in any room whatever, and what, indeed, may be considered quite free from danger of any stroke of lightning. If a storm happens whilst a person is in the open fields, and far from any building, the best thing he can do is to retire within a small distance of the highest tree or trees he can get at; he must by no means go quite near them, but should stop at about 15 or 20 feet from their outward branches; for if the lightning should fall thereabout, it will very probably strike the trees, and should a tree be split, he is safe enough at that distance from it; besides, from repeated observations, it has been ascertained, that the lightning by no means descends in one undivided track, but bodies of various kinds conduct their share of it at the same time, in proportion to their quantity of conducting power.



RELIGION.—I envy no quality of the mind or intellect in others; not genius, power, wit, or fancy; but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing; for it makes life a discipline of goodness—creates new hopes, when all earthly hopes vanish, and throws over the decay, the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights; awakens life in death, and from corruption and decay calls up beauty and divinity; makes an instrument of torture and of shame the ladder of ascent to paradise; and far above all combinations of earthly hopes, calls up the most delightful visions of palms and amarauts, the gardens of the blest, the security of everlasting joys, where the sensualist and sceptic view only gloom, decay, annihilation and despair!—Sir H. Davy.