

The following description, of a spectacle not uncommon in tropical seas, but one of which the eye never becomes wearied, will be read with interest. It occurred on the outward voyage of the expedition from Southampton, off the Spanish coast.

Page 37—"But now the most splendid spectacle presented itself that I have ever seen at sea. The ocean began to lighten up, all the crests of the breaking waves glowed with an emerald-green fire, and a brilliant greenish-white waterfall fell from the paddle-wheels of the vessel, which left in its long wake a broad light streak in the dark sea. The sides of the vessel, and our downward gazing faces, were lighted up as bright as moonlight, and I was able to read print without any difficulty by this water-fire. When the illuminating matter, which, according to Ehrenberg's researches, proceeds from infusorial animalcules, was most intense, we saw flames dancing over the sea, as far as the coast, so that it seemed as if we were sailing through a more richly starred sky than that which was above us. I have frequently observed this illumination of the sea on the Mediterranean also, but never with such extraordinary brilliancy as on this occasion. The spectacle was quite like enchantment. Suddenly I observed between the waves new living streaks of fire, which radiated from the vessel like two gigantic serpents, and, judging by the proportions of the ship, were at least from sixty to eighty feet long; they moved in a deceptive manner, in large windings beside the vessel, crossed the waves, dipped into the foam of the paddle-wheels, re-appeared, retreated, hurried forward, and finally vanished in the distance. For a long time I could not explain this phenomenon. I thought of the old tales, so frequently repeated, of the huge sea serpents which have been seen from time to time. Nothing could more closely resemble what was here before us. At length it occurred to me that it might however, only be fishes running a race with the vessel, and, by their rapid movements, brushing the surface of the luminous sea, they might produce the long streaks of light behind them. Nevertheless, the ocular demonstration remained as deceptive as before; I could discover nothing of the dark fishes, nor determine their size; but I at length consoled myself by my own conjecture."

Thebes, the city of a hundred gates, the half explored and half understood wonder of the past, is described with much minuteness. A short extract we subjoin.

"We have now been inhabiting our Theban Acropolis, on the hill of Qurna, above a quarter of a year, every one busily employed in his own way from morning to evening, in investigating, describing, and drawing the most valuable monuments, taking paper impressions of the inscriptions, and in making plans of the buildings; we have not yet been able to complete the Libyan side alone, where there are at least twelve temples, five-and-twenty tombs of Kings, fifteen belonging to the royal wives or daughters, and a countless number belonging to private persons still to be examined. The eastern side, with its six-and-twenty sanctuaries, in a certain degree of preservation, will however demand no less time, and yet, more has been done by previous travellers and expeditions in Thebes itself, especially by the French-Tuscan expedition, than in any other spot, and we have every where only compared and completed their labours, and not repeated them. We are also far from imagining that we have now by any means exhausted the infinite number of monuments; whoever follows us with new information, and with the results of more advanced science, will also find fresh treasures, and gain fresh instruction from the same monuments. I have always had a historical aim in view, and this has especially determined my selection of the monuments. Whenever I believed that I had attained what was most essential for this end I was satisfied."

"The royal temple of KARNAK, which was dedicated to the King of the Gods, embraces in itself the whole history of the Egyptian Monarchy. "All Dynasties emulated in the glory of having contributed their share to the enlargement, embellishment or restoration of this national sanctuary." It was founded by their first king, Sesurtesen I, under the 1st Theban Royal Dynasty, the 12th of Manetho, between 2600 and 2700 before Christ, and even now exhibits some ruins in the centre of the building, from that period, bearing the name of this King."

"But a far more splendid enlargement of the temple was executed in the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries, B.C., by the great Pharaohs of the 19th Dynasty; for Sethos 1st, the father of Rames Miamun, added in the original axis of the temple, the most magnificent hall of pillars that was ever seen in Egypt or elsewhere. The stone roof, supported by 134 columns, covers a space of 164 feet in depth, and 320 feet in breadth. Each of the twelve central columns is 36 feet in circumference, and 66 feet high beneath the architrave; the other columns, 40 feet high, are 27 feet in circumference. It is impossible to describe

the overwhelming impression which is experienced upon entering for the first time into this forest of columns, and wandering from one range into the other, between the lofty figures of gods and kings on every side represented on them, projecting sometimes entirely, sometimes only in part.

"Every surface is covered with various sculptures, now in relief, now sunk, which were, however, only completed under the successors of the builder; most of them, indeed, by his son Rameses Miamun. In front of this hypostyle hall was placed at a later period, a great hypathral court, 270 by 320 feet in extent, decorated on the sides only with colonades, and entered by a magnificent pylon. The principle part of the temple terminated here, comprising a length of 1170 feet, not including the row of sphinxes in front of its external pylon, nor the peculiar sanctuary which was placed by Rameses Miamun directly beside the wall farthest back in the temple, and with the same axis, but turned in such a manner that its entrance was on the opposite side. Including these enlargements, the entire length must have amounted to nearly 2000 feet, reckoning to the most southern gate of the external wall which surrounded the whole space, which was of nearly equal breadth. The later Dynasties who now found the principle temples completed on all sides, but who also were desirous of contributing their share to the embellishment of this centre of the Theban worship, began partly to erect separate small temples on the large level space which was surrounded by the above mentioned enclosure wall, partly to extend these temples also externally."

We shall conclude this notice with the description of the climate of Upper Egypt, and some of its curious results.

"In Upper Egypt, where it scarcely ever rains, it is totally different, especially with respect to all the monuments which are situated on the borders of the desert, out of reach of the annual inundation, and this is uniformly the case with the tombs, the richest storehouses for our knowledge of ancient Egyptian life, which in this country alone really fulfil their true destination by serving as an asylum against destruction and decay. The narrow district of the Nile annually recreated borders in its whole length on the wide, rocky, and petrifying desert. The towns and temples were therefore chiefly built on the boundary between the two, partly not to intrench upon the fertile ground, partly in order that the buildings should be upon a drier and more secure foundation. And thus in fact, we find the numerous temples and palaces in wonderful preservation, so far as they are not mutilated by the hand of man. Even the bricks made of Nile mud, and dried in the sun, apparently the most perishable material, have not infrequently been preserved in the open air for thousands of years, in the form in which they were built up, and with their coating of plaster. A row of great vaulted halls, built entirely of Nile bricks, and partly covered in the inside with stucco, stands about the celebrated temple of the great Rameses, in Thebes. They date from the same period as the temple itself, the beginning of the thirteenth century before Christ. This is not alone testified by the architectonic plan of the building, but most irrefutably by the bricks themselves, which bear the name of Rameses Miamun stamped upon them as a mark of the royal manufacture. At that time, and earlier, during the whole of the 18th and 19th Dynasties, it was a very common practice to line the excavated rock-tombs with Nile bricks, and afterwards to paint upon the stucco, especially wherever the rock was friable, and was therefore hewn into a vaulted roof. But the same custom is sometimes found even in the earliest period of the Pyramids of Memphis. In enclosed places, not only the building material, but the colours, both upon the stone and the plaster covering, have almost without exception retained their original freshness and perfection; and also, very frequently, where they have been exposed to the open air. The peculiar incorruptibility of vegetable and even of animal matter is, however, still more astonishing. Our museums are filled with such remains. In the most ancient tombs of Memphis, a multitude of objects are found made of wood, such as sarcophagi chests, and boxes of all kinds, chairs, instruments, small ships, likewise grains of corn, and dried fruits, such as pomegranates, dates, the fruit of the Doum Palm, nuts, almonds, beans, grapes; also bread, and other food: besides cloth made of bast, a texture of reeds, papyrus, and an incredible quantity of linen. The countless number of mummies, also, are well known, which, though taken out of their tombs, still last for centuries with their skin and hair; also all mummified bodies of animals, with their furs and feathers; even the internal parts of the human body could there be embalmed for ever, and are still found in vases expressly designed for that purpose. This wonderful conservative property belonging to all ancient Egyptian objects, depends therefore chiefly upon the sky being without rain and the dry soil of the non-irrigated desert. But the country offered another marked advantage above other lands—namely, the greatest abundance of materials, especially adapted for all kinds of monuments.