

homes of the city, and as wives and mothers to-day they are spreading the leaves quietly but surely. The American Presbyterians have a vigorous mission in Cairo also, and in Egypt as in Palestine, are perseveringly and wisely working for the evangelization of the people so dense in darkness and degradation.

It must be remembered, too, that in Egypt the Coptic Christian Church numbers many adherents, and that these Christians, so true and steadfast to their faith through the persecutions of centuries, have won a great deal of toleration from their fanatical fellow-countrymen. We visited, in old Cairo, a quaint suburb, now of the more modern city, the chief church of the Copts—an extraordinary structure, and somewhere within the dim labyrinth that led to it a Coptic school. Far up the Nile valley are communities of Copts, with their religion and their schools; and though the light is dim in the ancient church, and burns feebly all the more because shrouded in a thousand superstitions, still it is there, and if kindled and brightened might be a focus point of radiance to lighten these dark lands far more quickly and thoroughly than they could be reached by any outside agency. The Copt himself is a lineal descendant of the ancient Egyptians, and he has kept his race-blood pure by refusal to intermarry with other and inferior races. Down-trodden and despised for centuries, it may be that the Coptic race shall yet again make its mark upon the history of the Land of the Pharaohs, and help to lift it to the level it is providentially fitted to occupy.

"Egypt is the gift of the Nile," says the Egyptian proverb; and the far-reaching truth of the saying is very evident to the traveler. The land itself is made up largely of the fertile silt swept down from time immemorial by the beneficent river, and annually the largess of the inundating flood is distributed to keep up and increase the fertility of the soil. On the island of Rhoda, near Cairo, stands the Nilometer, whose graduated shaft of stone shows the anxious watchers the height to which the water rises, and the consequent certainty of good harvest or failure. A few inches above the average means abundance; a few inches below, failure or famine.

Nowhere in the world, I suppose, is irrigation by artificial means so studied and practised. Rain never falls, and the burning sun overhead speedily draws the moisture from the light soil, and constantly must water be given to the fields or they would all become dry and dusty wastes. By the banks of the Nile one hears constantly the creak of the *sakiyehs*—the great water