

Every visitor to Cairo is eager to see the Pyramids. These Pyramids were erected in ancient days above the burial-places of kings or nobles. The largest of the Pyramids stand together in a group, some seven or eight miles south-west of Cairo, on the left bank of the Nile. Let us take the electric car to Gizeh and visit them. There are nine Pyramids near this place; three of them are the largest and most celebrated in existence.

The most marvellous of all is the Pyramid of Cheops, which is truly one of the wonders of the world. It was erected more than five thousand years ago, it covers a space of thirteen acres, and it is nearly five hundred feet high. Herodotus tells us that it took thirty years to build, and that one hundred thousand men were employed in the work. It took ten years to make a causeway to the quarries, and twenty years more to hew the mighty blocks, transport them to Gizeh, and rear them into their places. We are lost in astonishment at the skill of these grand old builders, and while we gaze at their work we try to conjure up a picture of the scene when the Great Pyramid was slowly rising in these far-distant ages. We try to imagine the busy quarries ringing with the sound of hammer and chisel, the long strings of slaves straining under the whips of their task-masters, the creaking wagons on the causeway, and the vast machines which slowly swung the heavy stones into position. The base of the pyramid is square, and each side exactly faces one of the four cardinal points. The blocks of masonry which compose it are from two to five feet high, and each of them recedes from the one below it like the steps of a stair.

Near the Great Pyramid is the mysterious figure of the Sphinx, a huge man-headed lion hewn out of the living rock. No one knows what the figure represents, but there it stands, perhaps the oldest monument in the world, buried in the sand, with only its enormous head and shoulders lifted above its desert shroud. Its face has been much mutilated, but even thus battered and weather-worn it is one of the most impressive sights which this wonderful land has to show.