

Away from Home.

To the Editor of the PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE JOURNAL, Montreal :

LUXOR, UPPER EGYPT, Feb. 4th, 1882.

A FEW jottings from this part of Egypt may interest the students of the College and the readers generally of your JOURNAL. After a Nile trip of nine days from Cairo, I landed here on January 31st, and at once started to see some of the ruins of which I have read and thought, and dreamed since my boyhood. It is difficult to realize myself in this old land so intimately connected with the civilization of Greece and Western Europe. For, from this land I feel confident the Greeks received their knowledge of architecture and sculpture, the bulk of their religious ideas and the foundation of their philosophy. Through the Greeks that knowledge passed into the West, and has influenced and shaped the life and thoughts of our own race to a large extent. Long before the Acropolis was adorned with its grand temples, or before Rome was founded, the temples and palaces of Thebes and Karnak were built, and as I look at these mighty ruins I feel a deep admiration for the men who could so grandly design and execute so well in those long ago times. From Luxor to Karnak an avenue of Sphinxes and Criosphinxes extended, along which the great kings Thothmes, Amunoph and Rameses went bringing their captives and offerings to the gods of this part of Egypt. Imagination needs not to be very intense to picture Sethi or Rameses driving up that long avenue, the ruins of which are still visible, in their war chariots followed by bands of captive nobles with their hands tied, at the elbows, behind their backs, and then a multitude of the people bowing in the dust and adoring the king as a god ; and far away from Karnak to Luxor the avenue lined with officers of the king cringing like slaves before him. The 18th, 19th, and 20th dynasties saw Thebes and Karnak in their highest glory. Perhaps the small sanctuary in ruins was originally built in the 12th dynasty, 2,000 B.C. But the great hall with its grand circular columns and immense architraves and coloured figures and groups of cartouches was erected by Sethi I. about the 14th century B.C., and the halls and the obelisks were erected by Thothmes II. and his sister Hatasoo. The great obelisk of red granite 108 feet high, is supposed to have been erected by her, and the hieroglyphics are fresh as if done yesterday. This obelisk was brought from Assouan about 140 miles further south than Karnak. It was cut out of the quarries and put in its place in seven months. The three lines of hieroglyphics on the south face come down only about half the distance, and it seems to me as if it were left unfinished. It strikes one with astonishment to see these immense pillars and masses of heavy stone raised in those early days without the use of the powerful machinery that would be deemed necessary to do the same work now. The inside and outside are filled with figures and cartou-

ches relating the deeds of bravery done by the kings, and the victories their arms have won. In this land there are visible evidences in many ways of the truth of the Bible history, where it comes into contact with that recorded by the people themselves. One noted example is seen on the south wall of the Temple of Karnak. Here is figured Shishak or Shesonk with the crown of Egypt on his head. On the one side of him a large space is occupied with hieroglyphics relating the story of his wars and victories, and among other things stating that he had captured Zehooda Melchi, which may mean either a prince of Judea or the country itself. Beneath his feet and on the other side are rows of people of Jewish features and dress, tied with ropes. The king grasps a number of them with one hand, the other is raised to slay them. The hands of the captives are cut off, and they in vain implore for mercy. In II. Chronicles 12th chapter, we read Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house. In Nahum, God speaks of the strength of Thebes ; it is said to be infinite. Yet she was carried away. She went into captivity, her young children were dashed in pieces, all her great men were bound in chains. She shall be rent asunder. Her multitudes shall be cut off. This prophecy is true, literally and fully. Temples and statues are in ruins. Everywhere one sees statues of gods and kings rent in pieces, even that of great Rameses is lying on his face and riven in fragments, though the weight was 1,000 tons. The glory of No (Thebes,) and all the great temples is gone. The idolatry that gave birth to these great works has perished. The very tombs of the kings are rifled by the poor and the government. The modern Thebes and Karnak are a collection of mud hovels, full of poverty and filth. So is it visible here, that the Word of the Lord shall endure forever!

The weather is mild here now, and the fields covered with green. Beans are ripe, and barley will soon be formed in the full ear. The Doum Palm is laden with fruit, and roses and many strange flowers are in bloom. But the cry of the land is for water. It rains only twice or thrice a year here. Often high winds blow from the Western desert, and clouds of sand sweep over the country with great force, and covers man and beast ; so that it is impossible to distinguish roses from pieces of earth, and a white man from a native Egyptian. Happy are the people in these storms, who have scanty clothing, and little hair on head or face, for the fine dust of Egypt penetrates every place and remains. Poverty and ignorance are seen in all the land. Many of the Fellahin work in the fields almost naked, some entirely so. Most of them have only one garment in which to live and die and are buried. It is to be hoped that better days will soon dawn on this land of fine climate, rich soil and of ancient prowess and glory. It can only come by liberty to the people, and by the power of the Christian religion. The