

Some of the old convents date back to the early Christian centuries, when the whole of Thebaid and much of the Nile valley swarmed with Christian monks. Some of them have fading frescoes of biblical scenes akin to those in the catacombs of Rome and Alexandria.

One of the most interesting temples that we visited was that of Denderah, situated two or three miles from the landing. The number of donkeys waiting was insufficient for the persons who wished to ride. Consequently, they rose to a premium, and very



BAS-RELIEF OF CLEOPATRA.

sorry animals some of them were. I got astride a miserable beast which seemed all ears and bray, with a bone-dislocating gait. The gallant major declared, in broad Irish accent, that his donkey must be at least "a hundred years ould." Madame always fared well, inasmuch as the ladies' donkeys, with side-saddles, were of superior character. In the blithe morning air it was a merry party we made, riding through the fields of wheat, beans and lentils, past the many sakeiahs and shadoofs. This temple was one of the best preserved in Egypt. It retains still its roof, and illustrates admirably the purposes of these old temples. There is first