

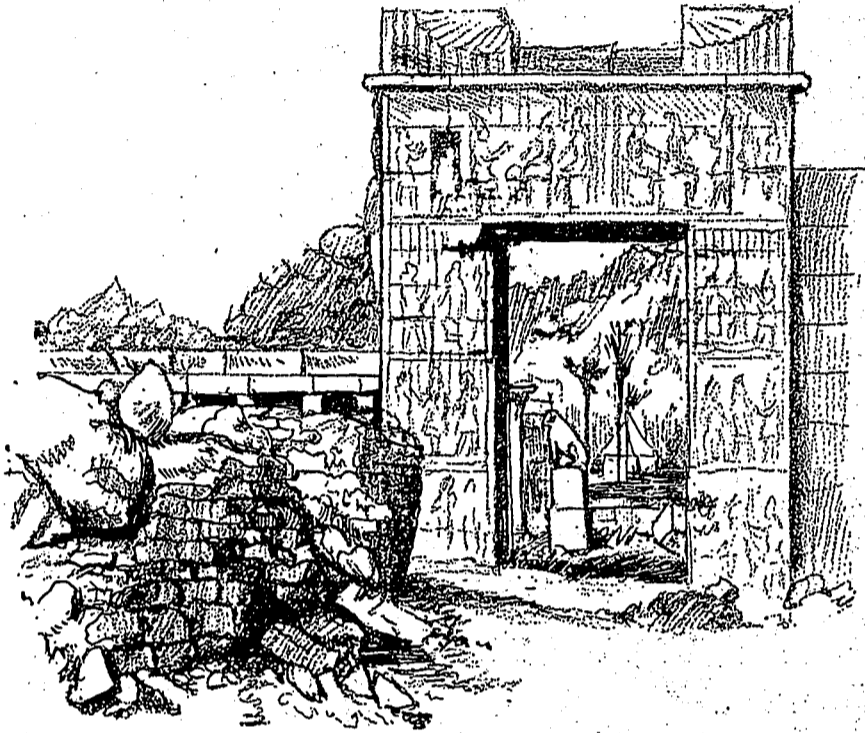


DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE,

VOLUME XXIX., No. 12.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, JUNE 8, 1894.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

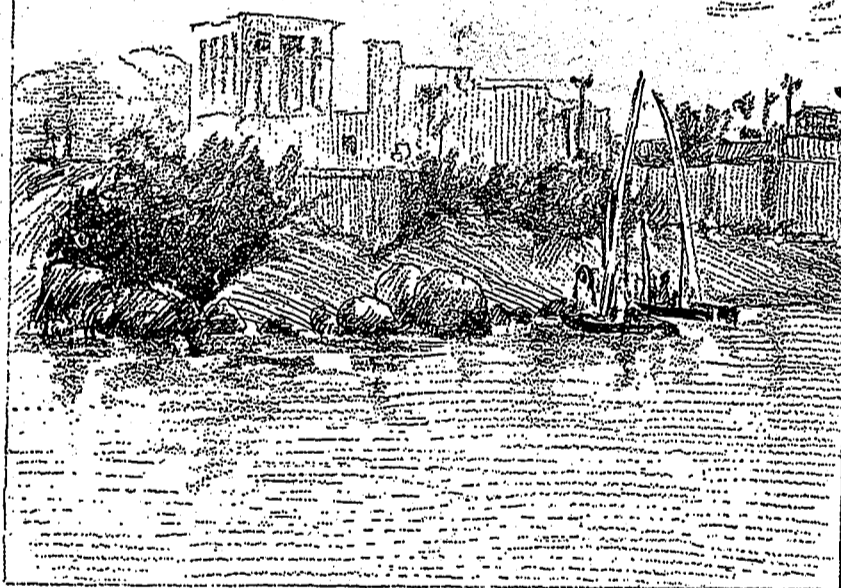


ARCHWAY AT PHILÆ.

THE ISLE AND TEMPLE OF PHILÆ ON THE UPPER NILE.

The complaint, which was more prevalent half a century ago than it is now, against the utilitarian spirit of the age, and its ruthless disregard of romantic associations, will probably be renewed, with some apparent provocation, says the *Illustrated London News*, if the Egyptian Public Works Department should finally decide on executing the scheme recommended by eminent official engineers for the construction of an irrigation reservoir by erecting a dam across the Nile at Assouan, thereby submerging the famous little isle of Philæ, with its interesting architectural remains, and destroying the most beautiful scenery, from the picturesque point of view, that tourists in Egypt can find.

It is to be hoped that the special commission of three competent advising engineers, one English, one French, and one Italian, recently sent to examine this question at Assouan, will devise some plan equally well calculated to provide a sufficient water-supply for the agriculture of Upper Egypt without inundating Philæ; but although the sentiment which demands its preservation as a matter of taste is a creditable token of mental refinement, the existing ruins are not of such sublime antiquity or of such unique monumental character as the stupendous edifices of the Pharaohs. The temple at Philæ was dedicated, indeed, to the worship of Isis, and Osiris, two of the principal deities of the older Egyptian mythology, but is a structure of much later date—little more than two thousand years ago—mainly the work of those Macedonian conquerors who ruled Egypt from 323 B.C. until the Roman conquest under Augustus Cæsar, but completed afterwards by the orders of Roman Emperors since the Christian era. It was



THE ISLE OF PHILÆ.

the policy of those rulers to conciliate the Egyptian priesthood and their adherents by supporting the native religious institutions; and it was the fashion among Greeks of the Alexandrian period, and subsequently among Romans who affected foreign learning, to profess reverence for the occult doctrine which they imagined to underlie the traditions of ancient Egypt. Dilettante patronage, therefore, not the genuine belief of a pristine age, was the motive of those who built this elegant temple, very much as if the British Government of India, prompted by enthusiastic students of Orientalist lore, had thought fit to erect and endow new edifices for the Hindoo worship.

The most poetical incident connected with this celebrated place is the traditional Egyptian custom of swearing a very solemn oath by 'Him who sleeps at Philæ.' It was understood that the beneficent demigod

Osiris, after being slain and cut to pieces by the fiend Typhon, was restored to unity by the diligence of his wife, the goddess Isis, who picked up all the scattered pieces of his body; but Osiris having died, Philæ was his burial place. Nothing is easier than to interpret this fable as an instructive ethical allegory, and to say that Osiris and Isis are personifications of good principles, with fancied male and female characteristic manifestations, contending against evil. Every mythology can be forced to yield materials of a sermon not less edifying by the same method, which several great authors, and notably our Milton, in a noble passage of his prose writings, have used with impressive eloquence. But nobody now believes that Osiris, whoever or whatever he was, sleeps at Philæ.

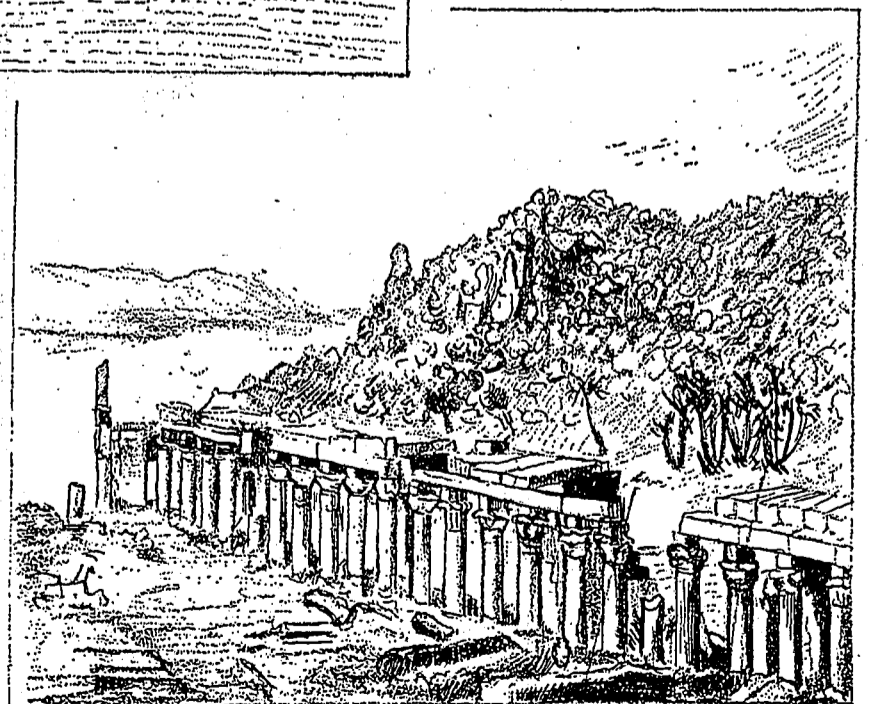
This place is a rock of blackish granite, 1,200 ft. long and 450 ft. broad, in the

channel of the Nile just above the first cataract. There is soil enough upon it to grow a few palms, and its banks are fringed with rich verdure. The islet is almost covered with ruins of the groups of building that formed the temple. Of these, the oldest part is the great propylon, or approach to the gate, erected by Nectanebes II., about 361 B.C., which is 60 ft. high and 120 ft. wide. Ptolemy Euergetes, who reigned from 264 B.C. to 221 B.C., and Ptolemy Epiphanes, who died in 180 B.C., continued the building, and the Roman colonnade was perhaps added by Tiberius Cæsar. The actual temple, at the north end, is adorned with figures representing the story of Osiris and Isis; and there is a small chapel, with a portico, above the four columns of which are sculptured faces of the goddess Athor. Without disparaging the architecture, it may be said that many finer examples of the Classical style are to be seen in other countries, and the material here used is not marble, but a kind of sandstone. Philæ owes its charm more to its situation and its surroundings, with the contrast between hard rock and luxuriant vegetation, and with the presence of a mighty river, than to its ruined temple buildings; yet we cannot wish that these should be swept away, though irrigation is a good work.

AN INCIDENT AND ITS RESULTS.

A woman, engaged in missionary work among the poor of Chicago, found a pitiable case of distress. While passing through the hallway of a tenement-house, she heard sobbing and moaning. Knocking at a door and entering a room she found a starving woman dangerously ill, with a child in her arms and no attendant.

It was a harrowing instance of human woe. Husband and wife had come from



COLONNADE AT PHILÆ.

Office Montreal
 107 St. James Street
 GUY & CO. PRINTERS
 107 St. James Street