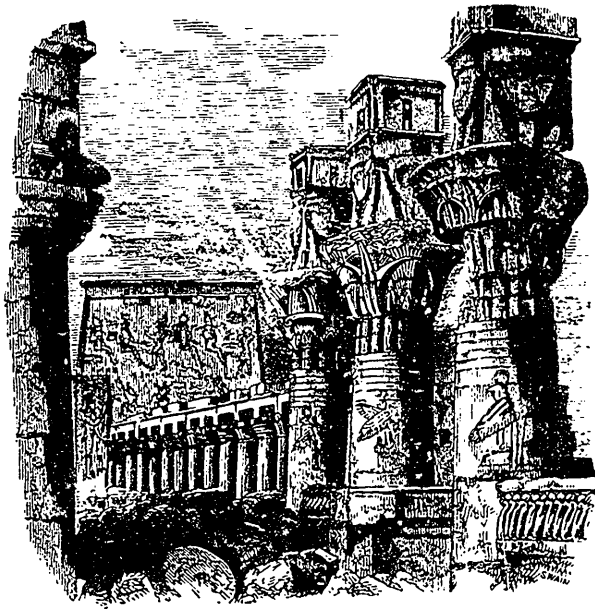


The little island of Philæ, as will be seen from our frontispiece, is crowded with ruins still beautiful even in their sad decay. Where once the college of priests guarded this sacred site now utter desolation reigns, and only one solitary caretaker wanders like a belated ghost of midnight lingering in the dawn of day. This island of dreamy beauty was a favourite resort of Cleopatra. She often moored her silken-sailed dahabeiah beneath its walls.

The temple of Philæ was strongly marked by what Sir Gardiner Wilson called the "symetrophobia" of the Egyptians. The long colonnades have no balance of numbers or design. No two of



ISIS COLUMNS WITH EASTERN COLONNADE AND PYLON, PHILÆ.

the columns are alike, but the very variety and beauty and brightness of colour against the blue sky gives them a strange fascination. Of this lovely temple, as of Cleopatra's beauty, it may be said, "age cannot wither, nor custom stale its infinite variety." Mutilated and marred as it is, it still has a pathetic interest. The carving of some of the columns is still unfinished, although the hand that last wrought at them has been turned to dust two thousand years ago.

In the great portico, shown in picture on page 320, the boat steward spread our lunch. Beneath the columns and architraves carved with the symbols of a vanished superstition, amid