

between the stagnation and squalor of the purely oriental parts of the city, and the stateliness and splendour of those quarters in which western civilization and modern ideas have paramount influence. Not, indeed, that the Frenchy, fussy and flimsy style which I apprehend to be in the ascendant among a certain portion of the upper classes, is a bit healthier or more vigorous than the uncouth, and antiquated activities of most of the lower masses. But the rapid stream of western ideas and life has met here the sluggish current of orientalism, and it is obvious enough, even to the casual observer, that orientalism must eventually be merged in and swept along with the all-encroaching tide. Already its strength is broken, its power of resistance is gone. Orientalism, by which I mean the ideals, the habits, the stationary and stagnant semi-civilization of the east, has its basis in Mohammedanism. The religion of the east has, for many a century, dominated, directed and defined its every interest and activity, but the religion of the east is *effète*.

I visited three or four of the most famous mosques of Cairo, but, with the exception of the Citadel Mosque, already described, they were in advanced stages of decay. Very lofty and very strong they had been, no doubt, and very picturesque and charming in point of architectural design and detail they were, but all were, more or less, and some very much, out of repair, and no repair had been made or seemed probable. They had seen better days, these mosques, evidently enough; but, just as evidently, those palmy days were over. I think that general out-of-repair condition of the mosques very significant, for the genuine religious interest and principle of people can be very fairly estimated by the condition of their places of worship; and, certainly, judged by this standard, the religion of the Moslem has lost ground immensely. Take the mosque of Sultan Hassan, or the immense El Azhar Mosque, for instance. How eloquently they speak of past glories. Or take those splendid examples of Saracenic architecture, the Tombs of the Khaliphs. It is a vision of beauty that will indeed be a joy for ever, the sight of those exquisitely graceful domes against the clear blue Egyptian sky; but go inside, and the broken floors, the decaying walls, the crumbling mosaics, tell of something more than material disintegration and dilapidation. Mohammedanism doubtless has a strong hold on the narrow minds and superstitious hearts of the poor and the illiterate, but surely its hold must be weak on the principles, or, at all events, on the pockets of the more cultured and wealthy of those who are