

# • Massey's Illustrated •

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### ROUND THE WORLD,

*A Run through the OCCIDENT, the ANTIPODES, and the ORIENT.*

Extracts from a series of letters written to the employés of the Massey Manufacturing Co., by W. E. H. MASSEY, Esq.)

#### EGYPT.

Tenth Letter, dated Port Said, Egypt, April 27th, 1888.—Concluded.

On another occasion we drove to the site of Heliopolis, of which there are scarcely any ruins remaining, the attraction being the obelisk—the oldest in Egypt—on which are splendidly preserved hieroglyphics. It stands over 62 feet high above the ground level—a fine shaft of granite.

Not far from Heliopolis is an ostrich farm where there are 600 of these highly prized birds, of all ages and sizes. Some of the largest we were shown stood at least seven to eight feet high. They are not beautiful, as one would suppose, but, on the contrary, are very homely. Their necks and a great part of their bodies are devoid of feathers. The tail feathers alone are valuable, those of the back and breast being small and short. The large eggs, averaging about six inches the longest way, are hatched in incubators, and the growth of the birds is most remarkable. Some, which we were told were only three weeks old, had attained more than twice the size of a full grown goose. Ostriches sometimes live from ten to twenty years.

The tombs of Egypt have now been stripped of their contents and to see mummies, sarcophagi, etc., one must go to the museums. The Boolac Museum, near Cairo, contains the best collections of Egyptian antiquities in the world. Here are to be seen thousands of most interesting relics. In the court of the royal mummies are the valuable discoveries made in 1884. Amongst other admirably preserved mummies of early Egyptians kings and queens are the mummies of Sethi I. and Rameses II., both of the XIX. dynasty—the last probably the Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites, as recorded in the Book of Exodus. (See Illustration next page.) It is marvellous how the features have been preserved. Pharaoh's countenance is still very "set."

By far the most interesting of all the excursions we made while in Egypt was that to Sakkarah.

We performed the journey as far as Bedreshayn by rail, proceeding thence on the donkeys we had brought along in the train with us. The path for much of the way led through a scattered grove of palms, and the latter part for a long distance through the sandy desert. We passed by two or three small modern Arab villages and a description of one will answer for all of these numerous and most wretched Arab habitations. We went over the site of ancient Memphis, en route to Sakkarah, on part of which now stands the modern village of Metrahy—a collection of low huts, built of mud common and closely joined together. Groups of

these miserable hovels are separated by narrow and dirty passages. The roofs are thatched and perfectly flat, no other being required since they have no rain. Bad odors are abundant, and at a distance of many feet the passer-by will find these villages offensive. The mystery is that disease and pestilence do not sweep off the inhabitants altogether. To call such places home would be a libel on the name, yet it is all the home these poor people can boast of. On the outskirts of such villages one may often see lepers and sufferers from various disease. Sore eyes are very prevalent—especially amongst women and children. Children will be seen playing in the dirt with their sore eyes literally

covered with flies, making the sight doubly hideous. Egyptian women do not cover the entire face like the Syrians, but leave the eyes exposed. The head is covered over with a black drape and a heavy black veil is suspended across the face just below the eyes, an unsightly brass piece being worn over the nose between the eyes, the whole forming a hideous head-dress. Hence their eyes, always dull and frequently diseased, are visible. To make themselves still more ugly, the eye-brows and lashes are blackened.

But this is not about Sakkarah. Nearly every trace of Memphis has been obliterated, the only interesting feature being the colossal statue of Ram-



AN ARAB SHEIK.