

Clarence Bicknell

Italy and by steamer up the Nile River, 1889-1890

5 From "Notes of a Tour in Italy, Egypt &c. 1889-1890" in a hand-written notebook illustrated with pen-and-ink drawings and water-colours from the Bicknell family collection (in the guardianship of Marcus Bicknell). Italics in the text indicate words which are difficult to read. Bicknell writes in note form, often abandoning a verb in a sentence, or just listing the things he saw. The transcript is verbatim in this respect and throughout.

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15 Our party is composed of A, B, C & D.

A is an artist and able-bodied sea-woman, prepared to nurse the other 3 landlubbers if necessary, on the water. B is her sister provided with all the requisites for nursing A C and D on land. C & D are proprietors in Italy, travelling for the benefit of their health under the care of he aforementioned A & B. Lastly C is myself who wrote this diary¹.

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Wed. Dec 4th

25 On Wed. Dec. 4th 1889 they all started from Bordighera at midday, an international crowd having gathered at the station platform to see them off. How they travelled to Genoa in the sunshine, & thence to Bologna by night in the snow, & thence to Ancona in the early morning in the rain need not be related in detail. They went 2nd class, had the carriages nearly always to themselves & reached Ancona at 8 a.m on Dec. 5th.

Thurs. Dec 5th

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Ancona is a picturesque town partly built on steep hills close to the sea and partly at their base: with a fine harbour, and a great many colliers discharging coal, and little fishing boats landing soles, mackerel, shrimps, cuttlefish, a kind of white lobster and many small crabs and *various* sea creatures. There are some broad new streets with fine houses & poor shops, a great many narrow ones, a curious cathedral with beautiful Italian gothic porch crowning one of the heights, and a white marble arch built by Trojan on the old mole². C and D spent the

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¹ A, B, C, and D were, as we find out much later, the misses Leach, daughters of the Robert Valentine Leach of Devizes and the Villa Valentina in Bordighera, and Giacomo Pollini.

² Image right, Ancona and the Arches of Trajan, Italy. Scene from 1890.

morning exploring the town but it was very cold, windy and rainy. B nursed A who had naturally suffered from the land journey.



- 5 In the afternoon B C and D went up to the cathedral and spent a couple of hours seeing the chief sights of the place. There is a squat campanile³ some way from the Duomo; and from the headland a fine view of the bay and port of *the* town. If A were not lying down I *doubt* she would have *drawn* in perspective the porch⁴ of the Duomo, one of the most graceful I have ever seen. The lions, the 2 columns of the roof of the porch are of read marble. The slender columns on either side of the doorway white and red alternately. The façade faced with white marble.
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- We dined in grand style in one of the ladies' rooms, but by 9 o'clock were all in bed, congratulating ourselves on not having gone to hear Rigoletto at the Politeama⁵. Our hotel, the Albergo de la Pace, is an old-fashioned house with large and lofty rooms, very comfortably furnished and close to the sea.
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Friday Dec 6th

- 20 The morning promised well. A had recovered, so we agreed to make a pilgrimage to Loreto⁶. At 9½ we started in a Landau, D on the box; the country very hilly and cultivated, towns on the hill tops. The roads were in very bad condition and we did not see Loreto till nearly 12 o'clock, when it appeared standing up grandly with its church dome and campanile, & the great papal palace⁷. We reach the inn about 12.30,

³ Pen and ink drawing alongside, "Campanile of Duomo, Ancona"

⁴ Pen and ink drawing of the porch alongside

⁵ Now a cinema

⁶ Loreto is 20km southeast of Ancona

⁷ Pen and ink drawing of the Papal Palace alongside

had a fire lighted and in ¼ hour sat down to some good hot soup and veal cutlets, and the deliciously crisp apples so abundant in this part of the country.

5 While we were eating the padrona produced endless boxes each & trays of objects
“*de arte*” covering the long sale-a-manger table with them, and we saw it would be
our *duty* to do our part towards the 500,000 *frs.* income which the little town of 3-
4,000 inhabitants is said to receive from the sale of such things; how you must
10 provide yourselves with some of these, she said, and take them with you to be blessed
in the “Santa Scodella” – so we were all obedient, wicked *hunters* or indifferent
though we all be, and spent about 2 *frs.* each on rosaries, medals, pictures &c., -
happily a very pretty rosary can be bought for 3 sous, though the people who make
them must be starving, and one feels ashamed of buying ‘flesh and blood’. Then we
15 set off with a young man as guide from the inn, to show us everything and defend us
from other ‘piazza touts’ who would swarm and swindle us, we were told. I did not
see them tho’ and there were not many beggars. They say however that there is a great
deal of poverty at Loreto, no business or trade, except that of providing for pilgrims.
They are a constant source of revenue though, as were the *stone* shrines of old at
20 Ephesus, and Loreto is in no way faking off, though the competition is severe, and
Loreto does not profess to work many miracles, or it is naturally less frequented by
people far away than Lourdes. The church over the Santa Casa is a fine large one:
there were any number of people coming in and going out. Abruzzi peasants and
others from far away, kneeling about or proceeding on their knees from shrine to
25 shrine. There was one *rowed* Neapolitan pilgrim, a genuine *butgreen* with scallop on
his worn rough garment, his hat slung on behind, a walnut psalmbox: he looked ill
and worn out, but was a bright happy mortal, not regretting the row he had made
feigning a serious illness and hoping to go on making pilgrimages till he died. He was
back good-looking and picturesque as well as fervent, so the ladies talked much to
30 him and dropped – probably – many gold pieces into his purse – or at least would
have done so if they knew he was unaccustomed to sous. Behind the high altar stands
the Santa Casa with its beautiful casing of marble sculpture.

Dec 10th is the feast of the arrival of the House in the neighbourhood of Loreto and
Dec 8th being also the feast of the Immaculate Conception, as all the world knows, ski
they were busy sticking candles in all possible places and the effect of the fine work
35 around the Casa was much spoilt by hideous wood and paper cherubs holding candles,
this sort of thing⁸. Near the entrance to the back part of the Casa, called the Santa
Cammino, sat 2 priests a sort of desk, or ‘receipt of custom’. They were told of our
desire to see the Santa Scodella⁹, so prayers were said which we understood not, and
one of them came and opened a cupboard in the brass-plated wall, took out a terra-
40 cotta basin set in chased gold in which we deposited our purchases. They were blessed
and he handed us the scodella to be kissed I thought so I said to the ladies ‘kiss it’ and
we all kissed it, but they thought we might have put some offerings into it. Above the
‘cammino’ which can hardly be recognised as a cammino, stands the black cedar
wood statue of the Madonna & Child, covered with jewels. We then went out and by

⁸ Pen and ink sketch by Clarence Bicknell alongside

⁹ Bicknell writes this word “Scodslea” in two places. “Scodella” means a bowl. In the context of Loreto “The shrine of the Virgin at Loreto, near Ancona, was built around the Santa Casa (Holy House), supposed to have been the house of the Virgin at the time of the Annunciation, miraculously carried from Nazareth to Loreto by angels just before the final expulsion of the Crusaders from the Holy Land. During the 14th and 15th centuries, the shrine, which also contained a venerated statue of the Virgin and the Santa Scodella (Holy Bowl) allegedly used by her, developed into one of the major pilgrimage centres of Europe. The miraculous powers of the shrine were held to be particularly efficacious against plague. (Source: Ashmolean Museum web site)

another door entered the back part of the Santa Casa with its window and two doors, and old stones untouched since 1st (and last) put together. Whatever its history, be it the House of Our Lord's childhood or not, it is very interesting, very strange in its nude simplicity; it is like the simple beauty of the gospel ideas, still discernible among the mass of doctrines and ceremonies which the ages have added. A gorgeous altar is at one side, silver lamps hang all round, and above and behind the altar is visible the glittering image. A red and white marble floor takes the place of the original pavement of the house said to remain at Nazareth, or at least to have been there whence the rest flew away. But the old walls that have in there for centuries since 1291 I think been kissed by kings and *I hope* by saints and sinners. Anyway, which is the main point, by multitudes of sons and daughters of God, the brothers and sisters of Jesus and Mary, believers and unbelievers, Catholics and Protestants, and I hope by *Jean Purles infidels and heretics* these old walls are touching. Of course I knelt down in that house – of course I kissed the shining blackened walls. Was it superstition? Is that part of the old house of Nazareth, brought from there by monks and relic-hunters or borne through the air by angels and dropped down here and then moved again and again? Or is it something else set up by deceivers to promote “the devotion of the faithful”? Who can say? What a pity that the books which tell its¹⁰ story cannot say something better to prove its miraculous arrival and to identify it with the House of Nazareth than that they do relate? For who can be content with being told that the Priest of *Pessalto*¹¹ in Dalmatia where the Santa Casa first arrived had a communication from the Madonna that St. Peter had put the stone altar in it, the apostles the crucifix and *S. Marko* had cherished the figures? Or who would be content with the assertion that holy *and tried* men had found the stone and dimensions to correspond exactly with the stone of Nazareth and the dimensions of the remaining pavement? The poetry of it all is beautiful, but these additions are dreadful. “That is the window where the angel saluted the Madonna” said our guide! The Santa Casa I greatly liked – the ‘business’ about it, the ‘roaring trade’ not at all.

Well, we drove home and bitterly cold it was. But our Ancona hotel was very pleasant with its pleasant people and good food.

Saturday 7th Dec.

Off at 7. Train at 8. Wind and rain and then snow, but, presently, sunshine. A lazy tedious journey arriving at Brindisi about 10.15. And awful confusion and *row* at the station. A big omnibus of the Grand Hotel des Indes Orientales crammed full inside and laden outside with luggage.

Part of the journey had been beautiful. Vasto¹² looks a fascinating town. The red and yellow sails of the fishing boats, like those at Venice along the shore and the flat country towards the cape and with the suddenly rising snow-covered mountains and in the distance the island¹³ of all these very beautiful.

¹⁰ Bicknell often puts an apostrophe after the “s” of the possessive pronoun “its”, writing “its’ ”. This is an unusual variation on the common error of putting an apostrophe before the “s”, confusing it with the abbreviation of “it is”. I have changed Bicknell’s text to “its” when it is a possessive pronoun.

¹¹ I have not found any reference to a religious site with a name like this in Dalmatia or modern Croatia. Please email marcus@bicknell.com if you can help.

¹² Vasto is about half way between Ancona and Brindisi on the East coast of Italy.

¹³ The only islands off the cape south of Vasto are the Isole Tremiti, 30 kms off the coast. It must have been very clear to have seen them.

Sunday Dec 8th

5 A fine morning: much warmer than Bordighera: a milder moister air. C & D walked about in part of the *queer* town with its low flat oriental-looking houses. A busy market going on. The little urchins are trying to talk English, and tourists everywhere. A fine Austrian¹⁴ Lloyd boat had come in during the night. Presently our P&O "Hydaspes"¹⁵ from Venice arrived and later the P&O¹⁶ Ballaarat¹⁷ for Australia, the finest ship of all.

10 The place was very lively. D delighted with all the big ships. After lunch we paid our hotel bills and went on board: A and B had *excellent* cabins. C in the 2nd class was well off. D the worst on the main deck near the sheep and far away from the saloon. We all walked about again: the old walls and fort are grand and there are some interesting old bits and churches here and there. The wind got up towards the evening
15 but it was full moon and lovely. A big dinner at 7 o'clock, all english and Americans about 80 in number and not all yet arrived and all bound for Alexandria. How can we all get in in Egypt? How will Cairo and Luxor and the Nile boats accommodate us all? And for 2 months the P&O boats have been crowded similarly and the other companies have likewise taken large numbers¹⁸. All promises well for the next days –
20 but when shall I be able to write again? Oh when?

..... 19

Tuesday Dec 10th

25 So far so good. Delightful weather. Calm sea. The coast always in sight²⁰. First yesterday morning he snow clad Albanian mountains, then Corfu, Cephalonia and Zante²¹. Today we have passed Greece since now off Crete. The Ballaarat passed us last night and is now a long way ahead. We have slowed down in order not to reach
30 Alexandria too soon for we cannot enter the difficult harbour until 7 on Thursday morning. We have about 100 1st class passengers, about 20 2nd.

The Tzar's 3rd son (?)²² with a large suite are on board, charming looking people. A very agreeable Roman is my best friend; he knows so much about Egypt and lands we

¹⁴ Austrian Lloyd and Norddeutscher Lloyd were different companies, the former being much older and bigger than the latter (source Paul Smith, see Annex on Thomas Cook and Son). Norddeutscher Lloyd (sometimes called the Bremen Line) had opened their new Imperial mail line to Australia via Brindisi on July 14, 1886, with the steamer "Salier". The Suez Canal had opened in 1869.

¹⁵ Hydaspes (built 1872, 2,984 tons) is listed by P&O as sold in 1898 to F. Gore in Shanghai. The sailing which Bicknell recounts might have been its last, outbound trip, or the new owner had leased it back to P&O. Thomas Cook himself actually travelled aboard this vessel as part of his pioneering world tour in 1872/73 (source Paul Smith, see Annex on Thomas Cook).

¹⁶ The Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O Line) was founded in 1836 and connected through the Mediterranean to India 4 years later. The steamers left London every Saturday for India and fortnightly for Australia and China.

¹⁷ Ballaarat was built in 1882, 4,752 tons, sold and scrapped in 1904. It would have arrived from London via Gibraltar.

¹⁸ During the winter of 1889-1890, almost 11,000 tourists visited Cairo, "of whom 1300 went up the Nile" (Hunter, F Robert, "Tourism and Empire: The Thomas Cook & Son Enterprise on the Nile, 1868-1914," Middle Eastern Studies, 40:5 (2004), 28-54). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0026320042000265666>

¹⁹ Six dots indicating a missing day on which Bicknell was not able to write... as he feared, but which he does not explain.

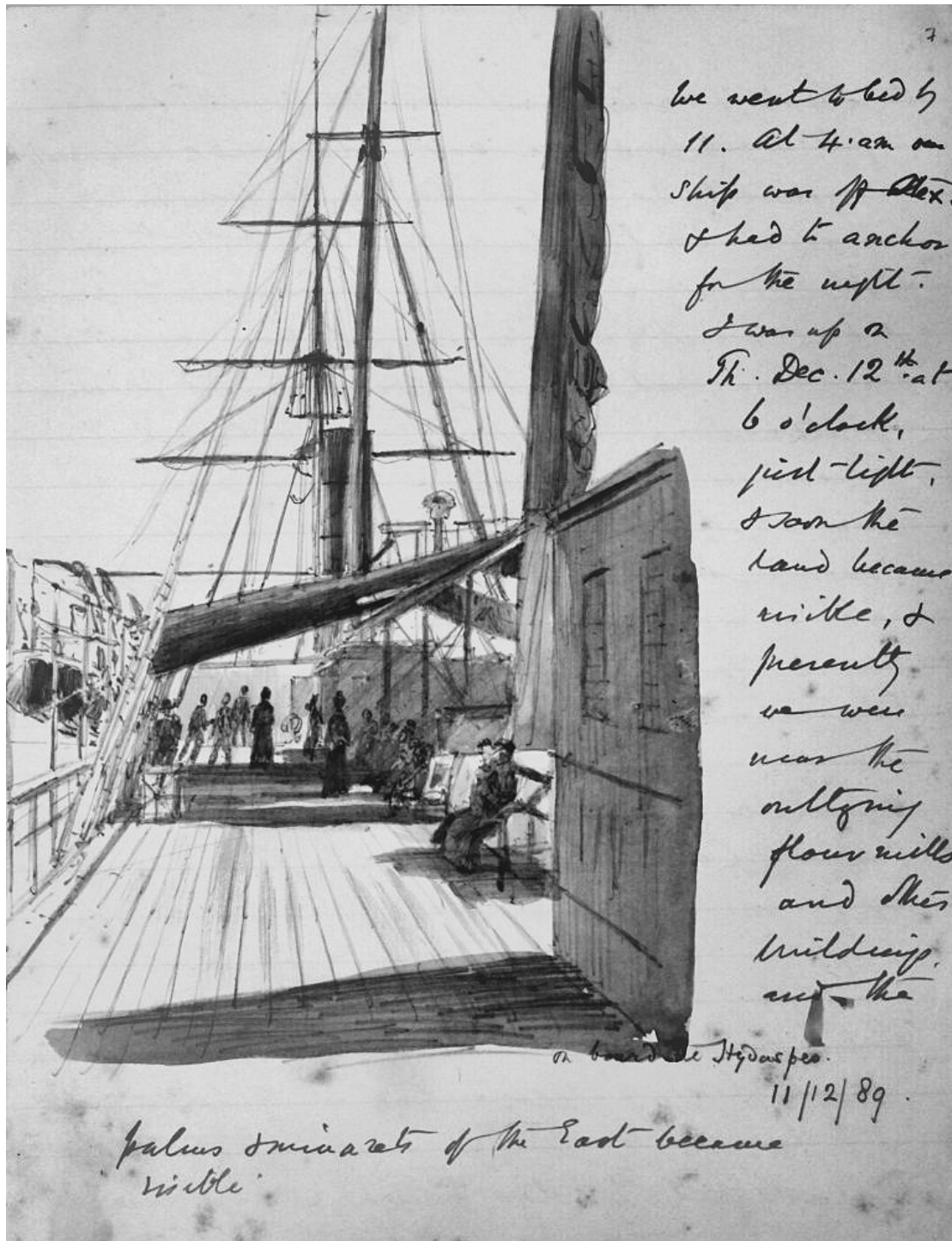
²⁰ The Italian coast would be visible for about three hours, then the coasts of Albania and Greece would be visible off to the East.

²¹ Zante is Zakynthos Island.

²² Grand Duke George was indeed the 3rd son of the Tsar. It is most likely that George's elder brother Nicholas, the future Tsar, was on the boat also, maybe travelling incognito in the shadow of his younger brother. Note that, on arrival at Alexandria, Bicknell was disinterested in the VIP travellers and reception committee (see December 12th below). "Nicholas II (Nikolai Alexandrovich Romanov) (1868-1918) was the last Emperor of Russia, Grand Duke of Finland, and titular King of Poland. On 1 March 1881, following the assassination of his grandfather, Tsar Alexander II, Nicholas became Tsesarevich and his father became Tsar Alexander III. In 1890, Nicholas, along with his younger brother Grand Duke George, and their cousin, Prince George of Greece set out on a world tour, although, Grand Duke George fell ill and was sent home partway through the trip.

look on. The *jerry peters* seem to find it dull, and have to resort continually to cricket, quoits and other deck games. One *Eng. girl* plays us delightful music, Grieg & Raff &c. Two amateur artists keep drawings sea and sky. The officers of the ship are all very pleasant; the doctor looks about 15 but is 28.

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George died suddenly a few months later, on 9 August 1899, at the age of 28. Nicholas visited Egypt, India, Singapore and Bangkok receiving honours as a distinguished guest in each. In April 1891, while travelling through the city of Otsu, Japan, Nicholas was the victim of an assassination attempt. The incident cut his trip short, yet he was present at the ceremonies in Vladivostok commemorating the beginning of work on the Trans-Siberian Railway. In 1893, Nicholas travelled to London on behalf of his parents to be present at the wedding of his cousin, George, Duke of York, to Mary of Teck. Queen Victoria was struck by the similar appearance of the two cousins, and the appearances confused some at the wedding. Nicholas II ruled from 1 November 1894 until his forced abdication on 15 March 1917. He and 16 of his family and household were executed by Bolsheviks in the night of 17 July 1918." (Source: Wikipedia). Clarence Bicknell died on the same day.

All the sailors are astonished at the calm weather, so unusual: the last voyage a fortnight ago was bad enough they say. Squalls are so frequent, *coming* down between these islands . We some high wind and rain for about an hour last night, but then it
5 calmed down again and we slept very well. I am in a cabin with a Mr. Stead going to Australia and am very comfortable. A top berth *seems to me very attractive*. My only complaint is the quantity of food: coffee in bed at 7. A huge English breakfast at 9 and a big lunch at 1, tea at 4 and awfully long dinner at 6.30 always ending with curry of some kind. An old college acquaintance, Mr Kinglake²³ is on board.

10 There are 3 Eng. *Gents*, alone, going to do *the* Egypt and Syria. Many are only bound for Cairo. The barometer is going down.

15 **Wed 11th December, 3 pm**

Calm and sunny. Cricket matches going on furiously, but every few minutes the string bales, made by the sailors, go into the sea and someone or other is fined 6d. Our ship will be off Alex. at 4am and at 7 we shall get into harbour. All today we are in open sea: the very gulls have deserted us.

20 **Th. 12th Dec**

Last night the moon rose of a fiery orange colour; and the sea became like a lake. There was a great deal of singing on board, but with the exception of a very good but quite *constrained* tenor voice, the English *exhibition* was of the lowest nigger type, and all the going Britishers soon took to howling and bawling in the most rowdy way, disgusting us and making us feel ashamed of our countrymen. The the captain ordered up all the sailors and they stood in a circle on the main deck and sang but very badly raucous songs and choruses, the inevitable Santa Lucia and Ai Caroli! among them. I
30 jhad much talk with my charming and cultured Italian friend whose name is Com. Carlo Restagni, Dollore in Cellere, secretary to the minister for instruction and Commandato al Ministero degli Affari Estere. It seems that the Italian authorities in Egypt did not want him back, but there has been something wrong going on and Signor Crispi²⁴ said “go out at once” – noone expected his approval, so he could
35 pounce down upon them unexpectedly, before they could hide their misdeeds. Signor Restagni has promised me a letter to one of her dependants in Athens and if he is in Cairo on our return will be glad to see me.

40 We went to bed by 11. At 4 am our ship was off Alex. and had to anchor for the night²⁵. I was up on Th. Dec 12th at 6 o'clock, just light, and soon the land became visible, and presently we ere near the *outlying* flour mills and other buildings and the palaces and minarets of the East became visible. By about 7 we had entered the grand harbour full of ships and were soon alongside the quay and rejoiced in the first sight
45 of the groups of men in lovely colours of skin and clothing. Oh! How different to anything seen before and how much more beautiful than anything imagined. On the quay was the Governor of Alexandria with the Russian Consul to receive the Grand

²³ R.A.Kinglake competed for Cambridge in the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race of 1864, which means he could have been a contemporary of Clarence Bicknell (21-22 years old in 1864).

²⁴ Francesco Crispi - Prime Minister of Italy (1887-1891)

²⁵ Pen, ink and wash sketch by Bicknell alongside, “On board the Hydaspes 11/12/89”

Duke and Duchess – but we were chiefly interested in Cook’s *galley* for which came on board a magnificent tall Egyptian with a host of his porters in scarlet dress. We put ourselves under their protection. Bade some hurried farewells and with the Miss Cookites were soon in carriages, about 4 of them, and *all* omnibuses also crammed en route for the station. Cook²⁶ gets all thru’ the Douane without any examination or trouble, by bribery I suppose, but from the boat to the station all is done for one for 5/- a head. At the station confusion indescribable, but finally we get all luggage registered and at 9.20 are off 2nd class in the English crowded train: but we were the only 2nd class passengers: we were very glad of this as lots of the natives came in from one station to another and we saw and learnt much. The 2nd carriages were like Swiss ones. At ¼ to 1 we were at Cairo. The journey was one continuous wonder and surprise. The mud villages of Fellaheen²⁷, the groups and sometimes great groves of palm trees, very tall and looking quite different to our Bordighera ones, i.e. looking at home and much more beautiful and healthy. The multitude of people everywhere, working in the fields, going along with strings of camels, or on donkeys, squatting about on the ground, watering the crops *for use*. And everywhere in the flat country, buffaloes, cows, sheep, donkeys and *piggeries*, while the air is full of wild birds, rooks and hawks and quantities of little ones, and some of them so beautiful. The Delta is perfectly flat with here and there the mud villages and occasionally a fine town such as Santah²⁸. An Egyptian who came in there and sat by me at once offered us all white sugar crystals, which we ate, and presently we exchanged cigarettes. The I took my first lesson in Arabic and asked the name for a cow, horse, buffalo, camel, the numerals, the dates, the pigeons, the oranges &c. &c. He was so pleasant and we all laughed heartily. The me, and especially the young ones are so graceful, erect and dignified and so polite. Cotton fields everywhere but nearly all *gathered*, wheat, broad beans and lots of crops coming up. Many of the fields still muddy from the Nile inundation. 2 men stand holding a long flexible cane at each end with bucket below²⁹ which they let down into the canals and then swing it up into the little conduits flowing down the fields so nothing more miserable and poor can be imagined than the Fellaheen villages, but nothing more picturesque. The camels are delightful. Many of the women in the country, and there at work are not *covered* but in the stations and towns they are all so, dressed in black and dark blue, with a queer brass thing down the forehead to hold up the little black piece of crepe which covers up the rest of the face. They are extremely handsome and so are the men; the boys beautiful. We see Nubians, black Sudanese, Arabs, Egyptians, Greeks, Turks and who knows what beside. At Cairo, before reaching which we saw the pyramids in the distance and the long lines of the reddish yellow hills of the desert, we *left* the Hotel Royale *oncontres* and were soon at a delicious lunch with dates, bananas and large mandarin oranges a cup of café turc to finish up with. Then we all went into the town, down wonderful streets and into strange dark bazaars with carpets stretched across high up between the houses almost touching the sky. What a crowd of foot passengers, donkeys, carts and carriages, an occasional camel, water carriers, *cuels* of sorry description, *bundles* of sugar cane, crates of pomegranates, queer nuts and vegetables and eatables. Mud on dust in the narrow uneven streets. Every imaginable colour of costume among the

²⁶ If “Cook” could get them through customs with such ease, it is likely that the traveller was John Mason Cook, the only son of Thomas Cook and the managing director of Thomas Cook & Son, travel company, at that time. See endnote.

²⁷ Fellah (plural Fellaheen or Fellahin) is a peasant, farmer or agricultural laborer in the Middle East and North Africa. The word derives from the Arabic word for ploughman or tiller. A fellahin could be seen wearing a simple cotton robe called galabieh. The word Galabieh originated around 1715–25 and derived from the Egyptian Arabic word gallabīyah. (Wikipedia)

²⁸ Pen and ink sketch of the town by Bicknell alongside

²⁹ Pen and ink sketch by Bicknell alongside

men. Rough looking street arabs, tall polished elegant old Egyptians. The scene like a kaleidoscope and all *an* ever changing picture of form and colour. Then the houses, the latticed windows, the minarets and doors of the mosques, the queer stalls with cross legged vendors, the piles of carpets, the black courtyards but lit up by *lacups* and coloured stuffs. In some parts there are little scarlet and white flags across the streets and thousands as there is a festival going on. In the broad streets every now and then comes a S... i.e. a beautiful and *bouncey* fellow with short white linen trousers and bare legs, a *nicely gold* embroidered jacket and a red fez holding up a long stick and crying out, and he rushes down the street calling to people to get out of the way before his master's carriage. Some grandees appear to have 2 of these elegant and picturesque servants. We walked till we could walk no more and then we went home, dined out and in the evening *sticked* out to buy photos. We all 4 feel the effects of the sea so much. The earth seems to be *rolling* as in an earthquake. We saw Shepherd's celebrated hotel³⁰, but are so thankful we are not there as it seems all English and is so grand and so expensive. There is no wine under 6/- a bottle and pension without *that and extras* is 16/- or 17/-³¹ a day! Ours is only 10/- and wine at 2/6 or 4/- dear enough. On the table are the earthenware bottles of filtered Nile water, very cool: but you should *up and* see the Nile before you drink it, as it is all of a muddy yellow colour, with refuse and vegetable matter floating down it, and such mud in its banks.

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Friday Dec 13th

We *really began* a thorough sight seeing. At 9 with a dragoman³² we all started on donkeys, such strong good little donkeys! But mine set off galloping I couldn't stop him, my stirrup broke and I thought every moment I would be pitched over his head or tumble off, but I clung on like grim death and survived! We all 5 rode about the citadel, but there was a wind and sort of sand and desert storm and we could hardly see anything. We visited the splendid new mosque of Mohamed Ali³³ with its multitudinous hanging lamps and gorgeous carpets: but most beautiful in the great courtyard and fountains of oriental alabaster. The man at the entrance put large slippers over our boots and then keeping our hats on, in we went. After that, remounting the donkeys we went to the glorious old mosque of Sultan Hassan³⁴ with its wrought brass doors and lovely fountains. Then to various bazaars where we bought slippers, rosaries, scents etc. It is immense fun donkey riding in Cairo: the beasts are so well-behaved and obedient, and in the compression and throng of the narrowest streets among people, carts, horses and camels one has absolutely no difficulties: they are beautifully kept and have lovely embroidered and most comfortable saddles. We paid 2/- a piece for the whole morning. Our dragoman was a splendid fellow, very pleasant and has the reputation at the hotel for honesty and experience, and he remembers well my brother³⁵ who made the pilgrimage to Mecca

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³⁰ Shepherd's Hotel was the leading hotel in Cairo and one of the most celebrated hotels in the world from the middle of the 19th century until it was burned down in 1952. A modern hotel called the Shepherd Hotel was built nearby in 1957. (Wikipedia)

³¹ £1 or 20/- is worth £90-£110 in 2014 using the retail price index inflation but £430-£637 using average earning or per capita GDP. Using £500 as today's value of £1 then gives that bottle of wine at index gives the bottle of wine at £150 and the room rate £425 a night.

³² A *dragoman* was an interpreter, translator, and official guide between Turkish, Arabic, and Persian-speaking countries and polities of the Middle East and European embassies, consulates, vice-consulates and trading posts. A *dragoman* had to have a knowledge of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and European languages. (Wikipedia)

³³ The great Mosque of Muhammad Ali Pasha or Alabaster Mosque is a mosque situated in the Citadel of Cairo in Egypt and commissioned by Muhammad Ali Pasha between 1830 and 1848. (Wikipedia)

³⁴ The Mosque-Madrassa of Sultan Hassan is a massive Mamluk era mosque and madrassa located near the Citadel in Cairo. Its construction began 757 AH/1356 CE with work ending three years later "without even a single day of idleness". (Wikipedia)

³⁵ Herman Bicknell, Elhanan's 3rd child, (1830-1875), an FRAS, British surgeon, orientalist, and linguist, became a distinguished oriental scholar and traveller. He was the first Englishman to make the pilgrimage to Mecca totally undisguised. He was a

about 20 years ago. After lunch we took a carriage and drove first to see the performance of the “howling dervishes”³⁶ and then we went to Old Cairo, a very picturesque and interesting town. Then we saw the ancient mosque of Amer³⁷ with an immense court and a solitary palm³⁸ of great height near the fountain. Then we saw the Coptic village³⁹ and church, very dirty and dark. *I watched* English and French and some of the young Copts who were there, and saw the children at school learning Arabic and French. We saw the people making all sorts of clay water *bottles* of pretty shapes: Beggars abounds everywhere and the Copts are almost worse than the others. We crossed the Nile in a ferry and visited the Nilometer on the island of Rhoda⁴⁰ and ate delicious oranges in the garden: but the wind was furious and the air filled with a blinding dust, so that we saw little else but the great broad Nile, ½ mile across I should think, with *numberless* picturesque boats on the shore, and the forests of palm trees towards the desert, just visible in the thick mist. The dust in the road is awful, and though there are Lebluek and Sycamore trees, and ‘Gagia’s’⁴¹ and others on is very little sheltered. We passed enormous rubbish heaps mountain high everywhere and then returned into the most wonderful; streets of old houses and mosques without end. Then Giacomo and I, *as it rained and now dark*, which it does very suddenly, went *for a 1½ hours!* *Stroll* in the streets, where the lamps were being lighted in front of the crowded shops and we *peered* into the barbers and arab *caffèes* and all sorts of strange places. After dinner we bought photos. Sundance mats, stuffed lizards, Nile electric fish, fly flaps etc. The streets are always full of life and colour; figures lie or sit on the pavements or huddled up under doorways: wild looking arabs in “white” *black sundancers*, many of them once slaves are everywhere, young men in a gorgeous array of embroidery pass by every moment, and one is never weary. The photos are a *model* of cheapness, 4½ francs per dozen.

Saturday 14th Dec.

Off in a carriage at 8.20 with a horrible wind and dust to Heliopolis⁴²: nothing remains but one granite obelisk, of the once famed City of the Sun God, whence came the priests of On: *but very beautiful* it is standing up alone in the middle of the fields, near the village of Matareeyeh: we made out much of the inscription by the help of

passionate mountaineer who made more than one ascent of Vesuvius during an eruption, and survived a serious accident on the Matterhorn, later to make one of the early ascents of that mountain. “All the European travelers who made the Pilgrimage to Mecca, from De Varthema to Hurgronje, had dressed in native costume and concealed their original nationality. The first European to enter the Holy City without disguising himself in any way was an English Muslim named Herman Bicknell. Unfortunately, although Bicknell must have had some intriguing encounters, dressed as he was in trousers and boiled shirt, until he put off his English identity with the assumption of the Ihram, he has left no account of his Hajj. But he is important in any survey of Western visitors to Mecca, for he marks a turning point in the relations of the West with the world of Islam. He is representative of the increasing number of Europeans who embraced Islam in the latter half of the 19th century—and embraced it sincerely.” (from *The Lure Of Mecca* by Paul Lunde www.saudiaramcoworld.com)

³⁶ cf the image in the Illustrated London News dated 1893 “English People Cairo Visiting Howling Dervishes Mosque Mohammed Ali”

³⁷ The Mosque of Amr ibn al-As, also called the Mosque of Amr, was originally built in 641–642 AD, as the center of the newly founded capital of Egypt, Fustat (now Cairo) (Wikipedia).

³⁸ Pen and ink drawing alongside

³⁹ Coptic Cairo is a part of Old Cairo which encompasses the Babylon Fortress, the Coptic Museum, the Hanging Church, the Greek Church of St. George and many other Coptic churches and historical sites. (Wikipedia).

⁴⁰ Rhoda Island or Rawdah Island, is an island located on the Nile in central Cairo. The El-Manial District, and the Al-Manyal Palace Museum and gardens, are located on the island. The island has one of the oldest Islamic buildings in Egypt, the Nilometer on its southern tip. (Wikipedia)

⁴¹ In Greek mythology, *Gaia* was the primordial Earth-Goddess from whom all life sprang. A Gagia or Gaia tree is not specifically referenced in sources.

⁴² Heliopolis was one of the oldest cities of ancient Egypt, the capital of the 13th Lower Egyptian nome. It is now found at the north-east edge of Cairo. The ancient Egyptian cult center Junu, named “On” in the Hebrew bible, was renamed Heliopolis by the Greeks in recognition of the fact that the sun god Ra (Helios in Greek) presided there. Junu is mentioned in the Pyramid Text as the “House of Ra” (Wikipedia).

the guidebook and at any rate if I learn nothing more let me remember that the builder of it was Rah Neperska of the 12th Dynasty date about 2433 BC or 3000 BC and his royal name is Osirtasen 1st and the 2 cartouches of these are... and ...

5 We did not care to go and see the *Virgins* here, but instead visited the Ostrich Farm by a quarter of an hour's donkey ride over the desert. The first thing my donkey did was to tumble down so of course I was pitched over his head – so I said bad donkey to the boy and jumped up on another. It was very interesting. There were 500 birds some 6
10 years old, some 5, some 3 4 and some just born. In some of the pairs the male birds were sitting on the eggs in the sand, and we frightened them up. At least the keep did tho' he was afraid to go very
20 near as the beast looked very savage and opened its mouth wide at him. And it was a beautiful sight to see the bird spread out his great black wings and settle down again over his large pile of
30 eggs and one little one just out of the shell. Their hens lay eggs in the laying season every other day, and when there are about thirty they sit on them and as far as I understand, but many must be hatched artificially. The farm belongs to a French
35 company, and pays well. We drove home to lunch at 12h30, but at 1.30 our dear donkeys were ready, the strong one of yesterday for me, and off we rode through the town and out the other side and then through *myriads* of tombs till we reached the open desert and saw before us the strange and lovely sight⁴³ the 'tombs of the Khalifs' with mosques and their minarets and cupolas all dotted about over the yellow sand.
40 The beauty of this sight fairly took away our breath: we wanted to stop and sketch every moment. We first entered the tomb of Sultan Berkook (died 1398) falling into series: then that of Railbec and several others which I cannot attempt to denote. Then we rode about the desert among the *miracles* of architectural beauty and dismounted and sketched and finally climbed up to the top of the rubbish hills where are the old
45 windmills, from whence one gazes over the whole city at one's feet with countless minarets, the broad Nile, the pyramids and the desert beyond and on the other side the desert again with all the tombs and the red and yellow cliffs of the Mojattam hills. These palisades and lines of the desert and the desert hills are indescribably lovely: all pale yellow and pink. I have never seen anything approaching this scene. Below us in
50 the town was a fair with roundabouts, acrobats &c., flags and *carpets*, and music and a tremendous crowd of people. We rode back in the dusk among the excited people and the lighted streets, a strange sight indeed: every hour it seemed more *extraordinary*.



55 Sunday Dec 15th

The morning was so fine that we decided to start for the pyramids. SO with plenty of luncheon including a bottle of good Egyptian wine, 10 oranges for 1 piastre⁴⁴, of great weight and delicious flavour, we started in a carriage at 8.20, a long and cold drive,

⁴³ Image right, "One of the Tombs of the Caliphs, Cairo" c.1849 by Clarence Bicknell's brother-in-law David Roberts R.A.

⁴⁴ Although the Piastre was replaced by the pound in 1834, it continued to be used as the word for a cent or a penny i.e. 100 piastres to the £.

the air clear but the wind from the north blowing fiercely. Part of the road runs along of the Nile where boats were discharging load of sugar and cane, and many camels were being loaded. There was a large concourse of people near the village of Gizeh (*Giza, Ed.*), Sunday being the market day or fair there. There the road runs straight
5 under an avenue of Lebbek⁴⁵ trees at the foot of the pyramid plateau, and winds up to a small house close to the great pyramid. There we were at once beset by the Arabs (Bedouins) who have the right to conduct visitors up to the top of the great pyramid, and whose services you are bound to accept. A fee of 2/- each has to be paid to the sheik and 'backshish' to the men, and then nobody is content. We at once began the
10 scramble, so often before disuted, for the whole casing of polished stone except a few at the very base having been long ago pulled down for building the 4 surfaces, now consist of great blocks of nummulitic⁴⁶ limestone from 1-4 feet high, arranged in steps.

15 Of course it would be easy enough to go up quietly, and I cannot conceive anyone being giddy on such broad steps, but the arabs seize both one's hands, and a third pretends to push behind, and so they drag one up and hardly allow one time to rest. We however insisted on stopping several times. The climb did not seem to me very long and soon we were on the flat platform, 30 feet lower than the tomb was when
20 completed. We stayed there a long time, but we were greatly worried by the men wanting us to buy things, talking incessantly about their 'backshish' &c. A boy came up too with a water bottle and *leager for* to wash your mouth out &c. &c. Going down jumping from one stone *crusoe* to another is *scary* enough. I worried *my man* by stopping to collect nummulites: arrived at the entrance to the interior, we decided to see that too, but at the bottom of the downward passage A. & D. declined to go on so
25 B. and C. with 2 men each holding candles went on alone. At the beginning of the grand gallery there is a *rads* piece and the whole ascent is very slippery, as the little steps cut in the polished stone floors are so slight. In he Kings' Chamber with its solitary red granite sarcophagus we lighted magnesium wire and remained a little
30 while and then returned easily but very hot and dusty. We then paid the sheik 4/- each and 4/- backshish for the men – and finally the man who said he was the sheik but turned out to be the 2nd fiddle wanted something also. We had a tiptop lunch in the shade on the steps of the house, and then set off for an excursion in the neighbourhood, for *all round* the 3 larger pyramids are *multitudinous* small pyramids and their tombs.
35 The Sphinx was at first disappointing but gradually one recognised its colossal size and its strange beauty, which by degrees fascinates one – and there it has been, this great stone creature half beast half human looking out at the sunrise for who shall say how many thousand years. Close by is a temple of massive red granite & alabaster floor. We sat a long time and sketched a little, and then walked about the 2nd Pyramid

⁴⁵ *Albizia lebbek* is a species of *Albizia*, native to Indomalaya, New Guinea and Northern Australia and widely cultivated and naturalised in other tropical and subtropical regions. English names for it include lebbek, lebbek tree, flea tree, frywood, koko and woman's tongues tree. The latter name is a play on the sound the seeds make as they rattle inside the pods. Being one of the most widespread and common species of *Albizia* worldwide, it is often simply called "siris" though this name may refer to any locally common member of the genus. It is a tree growing to a height of 18–30 m tall with a trunk 50 cm to 1 m in diameter. The leaves are bipinnate, 7.5–15 cm long, with one to four pairs of pinnae, each pinna with 6–18 leaflets. The flowers are white, with numerous 2.5–3.8 cm long stamens, and very fragrant. The fruit is a pod 15–30 cm long and 2.5-5.0 cm broad, containing six to twelve seeds.

⁴⁶ A nummulite is a large lenticular fossil, characterized by its numerous coils, subdivided by septa into chambers. They are the shells of the fossil and present-day marine protozoan Nummulites, a type of foraminiferan. Nummulites commonly vary in diameter from 1.3 cm (0.5 inches) to 5 cm (2 inches) and are common in Eocene to Miocene marine rocks, particularly around southwest Asia and the Mediterranean (e.g. Eocene limestones from Egypt). Fossils up to 6 inches wide are found in the Middle Eocene rocks of Turkey.² They are valuable as index fossils. The ancient Egyptians used nummulite shells as coins and the pyramids were constructed using limestone that contained nummulites. It is not surprising then that the name "Nummulites" is a diminutive form of the Latin nummulus meaning "little coin", a reference to their shape.

of *Capluen*, then I *stecked* with a pleasant and intelligent Arab up one of the great ruined causeways and crawled into several *pariled* tombs, with the cartouche of Khufu on them, and saw the well wherein in which the *summary* was deposited and many *inscriptheries*. A Helix was abundant out on the sand and one alive little plant here and there, now in seed. We saw before leaving the two untouched *casing* stones of the pyramid in situ, wonderful in the masonry. They knew how to build in those days. We were home by dark.

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Monday 16th December 1889

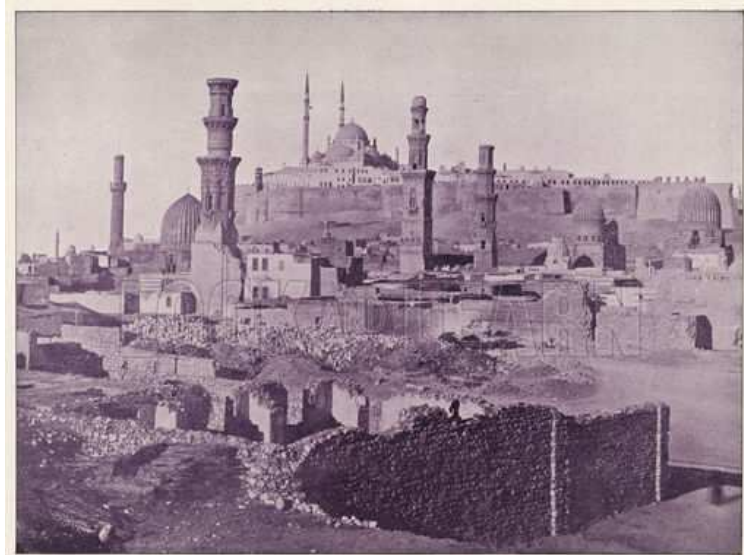
In the morning we went to the great tomb area below the citadel toward the west, and the so-called Tombs of the Mamelooks (photo, right, taken in 1890) and the new one of the reigning family and rode through many bazaars and queer streets. In the afternoon we tried a little sketching among the Courts of the Khalifs and watched the sun setting behind the Sphinx and pyramids from the top of the

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TOMBS OF THE MAMELOOKS, CAIRO, EGYPT.—Mamelook being interpreted as white slave, and the Mamelooks were originally Circassians held in bondage. In the course of time they became favorites, then tyrants, and established a line of sultans, of whom El Meher Hassan, who built the mosque of Sultan Hassan, was one. Most of them lie buried in the decaying tombs at the edge of the desert just outside of Cairo, of which the picture appears with this paragraph. In 1277 the Mamelooks were dispossessed from the supreme power, but they continued to exist as a powerful band of nobles dangerous to Egyptian interests, until Mohammed-Ali exterminated them, in the year 1811. He invited them to meet him at the citadel, had a talk with them, and distended them into a narrow roadway within the building. There they were shot in and shot—459 out of 470, only one escaping, Emin Bey. He leaped his horse over a gap in the wall and galloped off into the desert.

rubbish heaps. Very interesting *one there* enormous rubbish heaps full of fragments of old pottery of the most brilliant colours and quaint designs.

Tuesday 17th December 1889

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A. went off sketching in the streets, sitting in a carriage to do so. B. C. and D. armed with a permission card walked with Selim the dragoman to the Mosque of El-Azhar, the University. Shoes were put over our boots as usual, and then we walked into the magnificent open Court crowded with groups of students, boys, men and children, some learning, some praying, some *gating* and chattering. It seems that the poor people from the country get their education gratis, and 4 loaves a day, round *flabby* bread like enormous muffins. They seem to have a really good wash in the great tank in an adjacent court before coming in. Beyond the court in the immense mosque, which also was full of groups of students, it was very necessary to see some children saying their lessons to the old teachers. Many were writing with ink on zinc or steel plates, larger than school slates – such an extraordinary scene I never witnessed. They said there were 7000 students, many of them seemed 3 or 4 years old but we cannot judge the age of these people. Selim declares they are all poor people and only learn to read, write and recite the Koran, but the guide book says different. Anyhow it is the most picturesque and extraordinary spectacle conceivable, these crowds in the huge forecourt sitting or lying on the stones under the great minarets and a deep blue sky.

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They all seem to look very contemptuously on us Xtians⁴⁷: certainly there does not seem any chance of the Xtians converting them. After that we walked about through the dark narrow alleys of the gold- and silver-smiths' bazaar, and then went to the Jews' quarters and their ugly and very dirty synagogue. The sort of *ark heney* with curtains inside and out was opened for us where were all the books of the O.T., parchment rolls in gorgeous cylindrical case or boxes. These people were very *rapacious* – men, women and children rushed after for money and persecuted us more than anyone has got. All day long we say iniskee, iniskee, rua, to the beggars; *already* the reiterated cry “backshish” rings in our ears. But the arab and Egyptian children are charming. There are beggars covered with sores and blind, in such rags, awful to behold, who will walk a mile after one to get a penny: but *shezonie* one is not troubled: they are all terribly afraid of the dragoman, and on the whole seem to me to be better behaved than the Italian children. Besides which the grown-up people never stare, or are rude, and they take us all quite *quietly*. What astonishes one their apparent indifference to selling: they don't seem to care at all. They look as if it is a sort of *farcourt to isle*: and that I like. I always imagine that “if God will” is their idea or *like* that “all comes to him who waits” so they are in no hurry. I tried to by a complete dress today but when we had concluded the price, as I could put it on to try the size, in the street, we asked the man to bring it to the hotel. First he said no then he said yes and finally never came. The crowd are xxx increasing in that part of the city where the fair is. We passed the mosque in honour of whose founder, some counsel or other of Mohammed, the feast is held, but we were not allowed to go in. Some women tho' were going in. Selim says they only go in on festas when the tomb is open to see the tomb, but otherwise they don't go to service and do not pray or do any devotions in the mosque – the men do it all, neither do the women learn the Koran. The great strength of their religion seems to be that all the men⁴⁸ do so much – and the great charm the cleanliness of their churches, the simplicity of their rites and doctrines. The Copts, the Catholicks and the Jews have dirty churches. In the mosques one seems to feel their creed “the God and Mahomed his Prophet”.

After luncheon we had our dear donkey again and spent the afternoon sketching among the Tombs of the Khalifs; nothing surpasses that spot, with the glowing sunset tints on minarets and halls and water and the great purple shadows coming stealing across the sand. And then we return to crowded and lighted streets where vendors of sweets are sitting high up in their booths surrounded by sugar figures (of the saint whose face is going on perhaps!?) and people are calling out their wares and strange foods are being made and arabs are sitting smoking and card playing in their dark dirty caffés, and all is light and colour and life. But in the evening, the last night of the fair, it was still more marvellous. Great glass chandeliers, holding candles, were alight down the streets and in the bazaars. Flags being across the road, carpets stretched over, awnings hanging of every kind. In the Turkish bazaar where are all the embroidered stuffs and carpets the shops were *heavy* with them, and we were invited here and there to eat “lumps of oclyll” to *decide* cognac or tea or coffee. We went into one grand carpet warehouse, a huge sort of courtyard by day, but by night roofed in with hangings, every scrap of floor and wall covered with most exquisite things. The little mecca tables covered with embroidered cloths put in front of the divans ranged all

⁴⁷ Bicknell uses the letter X as an abbreviation of Christ, so this word simply means Christians. This is similarly used by Aldous Huxley in a letter of 1915.

⁴⁸ Can Bicknell really be saying that the churches are cleaner because the men do it all? He is certainly saying that churches other than the “Arab Egyptian” ones are dirty.

round and we were invited to sit down and a servant brought us glass tumblers (and saucers) with very good pale tea. Lots of people of all nations come in, and several English, and when we wanted to go the host said he had good and cheap carpets to sell; such a *row*, such a crowd, but all so well behaved and no quarrels or fighting and not a soldier or policeman to be seen. Then every now and then came a procession of men some of them carrying the bell shaped lanterns of muslin holding a candle inside, and others playing *ugly* music with a sort of flageolet. There were dervishes going to the mosque, Selim said, we walked about till we were thoroughly tired and then took a carriage and drove home.

How enjoyable this life is: a succession of marvels day after day. The Khedive⁴⁹, they say, went to the mosque at 1 a.m. and the fair continued all night: but there are next to no drinking places here and one never saw anybody intoxicated or fighting in the streets, which is indeed a wonder considering how the streets are packed. The crowds in there always look contented and careless, and they walk along with a sort of *sang* grace and dignity: the only people who behave badly are the Dragoman who thrust them aside to let us *riches* people go by: and one day I saw two horrid English officers on horseback in a passion and using their whips. This seems to me just the place for the English soldiers to give themselves air and exert their imagined superiority.

Wed. 18th Dec.

Off by carriage at 7.30 to Boulak station – by train at 8.30 to Becharein: which amid the howling of donkey boys and donkey masters Selim chose our 5 beasts, and we started off by the picturesque village embowered in palm trees with large pools of water close by. But there are no smells in this place: *hang* of any even in Cairo. We rode along among forests and the ruined heaps of ancient Memphis, till in an hour and a half we reached the edge of the very sandy desert, where begins the ancient necropolis of the once greatest city of Egypt. Pits are open everywhere, the whole ground is in mounds of broken plaster and stone among the sand drifts: and yet in the 12th century all kinds of remains were to be seen at the city of tombs, but all has been repeatedly pillaged. We soon reached Mariette Bey's house where he spent 4 years excavating⁵⁰, and then visited the Irapensius, a long corridor with passages cut in the rock with side chambers containing enormous granite sarcophagi wherein were buried the regal and sacred Apès⁵¹, the bulls of the Temple. By the aid of magnesium wire

⁴⁹ The term **Khedive** is a title largely equivalent to the English word viceroy.

⁵⁰ François Auguste Ferdinand Mariette (1821 – 1881) was a French scholar, archaeologist and Egyptologist, and founder of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities (later Supreme Council of Antiquities). Entrusted with a French government mission for the purpose of seeking and purchasing the best Coptic, Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopic manuscripts for the Louvre collection so that it retained its then-supremacy over other national collections, he set out for Egypt in 1850. After little success in acquiring manuscripts due to inexperience, to avoid an embarrassing return empty-handed to France and wasting what might be his only trip to Egypt, he visited temples and befriended a Bedouin tribe, who led him to Saqqara (one section of Memphis). The site initially looked "a spectacle of desolation...[and] mounds of sand" (his words), but on noticing one sphinx from the reputed avenue of sphinxes, that led to the ruins of the serapeum at Saqqara near the step-pyramid, with its head above the sands, he gathered 30 workmen. Thus, in 1851, he made his celebrated discovery of this avenue and eventually the subterranean tomb-temple complex of catacombs with their spectacular sarcophagi of the Apis bulls. Breaking through the rubble at the tomb entrance on November 12, he entered the complex, finding thousands of statues, bronze tablets and other treasures, but only one intact sarcophagus. He also found the virtually intact tomb of Prince Khaemweset, Ramesses II's son. Accused of theft and destruction by rival diggers and by the Egyptian authorities, Mariette began to rebury his finds in the desert to keep them from these competitors. Instead of manuscripts, official French funds were now advanced for the prosecution of his researches, and he remained in Egypt for four years, excavating, discovering — and despatching archaeological treasures to the Louvre, following the accepted Eurocentric convention. However, the French government and the Louvre set up an arrangement to divide the finds 50:50, so that upon his return to Paris 230 crates went to the Louvre (and he was raised to an assistant conservator), but an equal amount remained in Egypt.

⁵¹ Referred to today as Apis.

we saw it all very well. The to a grand tomb of *Geih*⁵², a courtier and chamberlain of very early date, the wall covered with paintings. Close by is the step-pyramid of Sakkara, of great bricks crumbling away, to the north the Pyramids of Abusir not far off, and then those of Glugeh - to the south the pyramids of Dahour⁵³ and westward
5 an endless expanses of the great Saharah(*sic*), very flat. We entered also the interesting pyramid of King Oonees⁵⁴ with hieroglyphics and containing an empty sarcophagus. Coming back to Meliahene we saw a colossal Ramases and stayed to sketch by the lake, a lovely spot. Everywhere such groves of palms, compared to which ones in Bordighera are indeed miserable things.

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We lost the 4pm return train and had to wait till past 6, but it was pleasant by the Nile watching the feluccas⁵⁵ sailing down and all the confusion of the boats going off to cross to Helouan⁵⁶, laden with people and donkeys, and the camels on the bank, and great stacks of of the large Egyptian waterpots, which the women poise so gracefully
15 on their heads. We were home by 7.30 after a delightful day, full of surprises, as usual.

Thursday 19th Dec.

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Shopping, wandering around in the town and sketching in the morning. In the afternoon donkeys up to the citadel and then on to the ruined mosque on Gebel Mukattam⁵⁷, from whence a magnificent panorama. Then we descended and went to the mosque built at the foot of these same cliffs and rode around among the tombs of the Mamelooks coming home in the dark and being nearly run over by carriages and nearly running over numberless children: and it is very difficult not to do so, seeing
25 the little smiles toddle about in the sandy roads, and cannot hear anything coming, unless the donkey boy shouts out o-ur, reglag – mind, take care, and other sentences. And then there are so many people lying and sitting on the ground. At night there are men *rolled* up in some sort of covering lying asleep *and in* the porticos. But I should think in these mild evenings, that *it's* infinitely better than the crowded *houses* in the small streets. Selim brought his pretty little girl of 7 to see us today, gorgeously arranged in crimson with a long net veil, artificial flowers in the hair and many bead necklaces as all the children have. He has had 19 children by 2 wives and lost 17. Bt Selim is more alarmed to go out of doors except once or twice a year and then accompanied by some old woman to visit a tomb in a mosque where a festa is going
30 on. He does all the shopping. She only works and cooks. He does not even talk to her, he says, about his affairs; that is not her business. The women do not go to the mosques, or pray like the men. Selim calls everything and everybody “he” – speaking

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⁵² Could be the funerary monument today called [Gisr el-Mudir](#).

⁵³ Referred to today as Dahshur.

⁵⁴ Probably the Pyramid complex of King [Unas](#)

⁵⁵ A felucca is a traditional wooden sailing boat used in protected waters of the Red Sea and eastern Mediterranean including Malta, and particularly along the Nile in Egypt, Sudan, and also in Iraq. Its rig consists of one or two lateen sails. They are usually able to board ten passengers and the crew consists of two or three people. Despite being made obsolete by motorboats and ferries, feluccas are still in active use as a means of transport in Nile-adjacent cities like Aswan or Luxor. They are especially popular among tourists who can enjoy a quieter and calmer mood than motorboats have to offer.

⁵⁶ Helwan, also spelled Hilwan or Hulwan or Holwan, is a city of Greater Cairo, on the bank of the Nile, opposite the ruins of Memphis. Bicknell spells it Helouan, but it is not known whether this was the spelling of the time or his phonetic interpretation.

⁵⁷ Fifty Years Ago mountain, which is known by the name of Gebel el-Mukattam ; there were no buildings there except the fortress, now called Kasr esh-Shema and el-Mo'allaka. There the Roman governor, who presided in Egypt on the part of the Caesars, used to reside when he came from Alexandria; and he was accustomed to remain here as long as he pleased, and then to return to the seat of government, which was the royal palace at Alexandria. This fortress overlooked the Nile, and the boats came close up to its western gate, which was called el-Bab el-GedId, or the New Gate.

http://www.forgottenbooks.com/readbook_text/Cairo_Fifty_Years_Ago_1000120368/19

of his wife he says “he always stop at home: he would be ashamed to be seen in the street.”

Friday 20th Dec.

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Sketching and shopping in the morning. Donkeys to the tombs in the afternoon. Wind and clouds in the morning. Rain in the afternoon. A wretched cold day but just at sunset the sun blazed out and the minarets and the citadel turned crimson. We rode home as usual through byways and all sorts of queer places – and for a *wander* there were some nasty smells; for it must be acknowledged that Cairo is beautifully clean and sweet compared to most of the cities of Southern Europe. There are no heaps of rotting vegetables, egg shells and xxx, no filthy corners. The people don’t spit. Their behaviour is very respectable. Beggars too are exceedingly scarce. People do not stare and are not half as troublesome when one is sketching as in Italy. They seem very agreeable but at the same time one cannot help feeling that these Muslims hate the Christians and today I have been told that they particularly dislike to see a woman in the University Mosque. An Englishman who knows Arabic went with a lady friend but said he heard such insulting remarks, that he should not take ladies again and this accounts somewhat for the very disagreeable behaviour of the Sheik who accompanied us the other day. They never look pleased, and do not say anything like thank you when you tip them on coming out of the mosques, but *just* look at the money contemptuously with a sort of growl, and sometimes a complaint that it is not enough. Today we visited 2 mosques, that of Sultan Kalaoon and that of Ghoree, but the exteriors are much more beautiful than the interiors⁵⁸, and there is not much to see in them, as there are no pictures or sculptures as in Xtian⁵⁹ churches, and the wood carving is all of the same kind and the tomb of the founder is not particularly interesting.

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Sat. 21st Dec.

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Wandering about the town sketching in the morning: admire I Boulak⁶⁰ and the other side of the Nile, followed by shopping in the bazaars. A day of cold & wind & dust, very disagreeable, as bad as the worst days of Bordighera. It is very difficult to arrange our excursions e.g. the Petrified forest, as the Carmel *men* want 10/- for half a day; we shall have to go on donkeys after all. Today A & B *about* their Egyptian women’s dresses which are being made by Selim’s wife. I gave 28/- for a ready-made

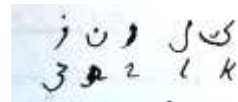
⁵⁸ Bicknell’s uncle David Roberts R.A. (Clarence Bicknell’s sister married Roberts’ son) probably disagreed. His “Interior of the Mosque of the Sultan El Ghoree” of August 1st, 1849, depicts the emptiness and expanse of the mosque’s interior as a landscape of great beauty. The only decorations are hanging lights so Roberts enlivens the image with groups of men talking with each other. Roberts was the first independent, professional British artist to travel so extensively in the Near East. His tour in 1838-9 produced 272 sketches, a panorama of Cairo and three full sketchbooks, enough material to “serve me for the rest of my life” (Roberts, eastern journal, 28 Jan 1839). Over the next decade he made “a series of entire new drawings” for the large coloured lithographs executed by Louis Haghe for The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt & Nubia, which was originally published by subscription, 1842-9. No publication before this had presented so comprehensive a series of views of the monuments, landscape, and people of the Near East. “Robert’s Holy Land was one of the most important and elaborate ventures of nineteenth-century publishing, and it was the apotheosis of the tinted lithograph” (Abbey, Travel). These lithographs were originally published in twenty parts, most parts containing six plates, the price for each part with coloured plates (the most expensive state) being 3 guineas. Sketches in Egypt and Nubia, from Drawings made on the Spot. 1846-9. Bicknell does not mention Roberts here; the paintings of Egypt were published when Bicknell was a little boy, but he must nonetheless have known about his uncle’s work.

⁵⁹ Bicknell uses Xtian for Christian throughout.

⁶⁰ **Bulaq** (also spelled **Boulaq** and **Bulak**) is a district of Cairo, Egypt. It neighbours [Downtown Cairo](#), [Azbakeya](#), and the [River Nile](#). There are claims that the name Boulaq comes from the French ‘Beau Lac’, which literally means ‘Beautiful Lake’, however, the name is much older than the period of French influence starting in the late 18th century. Clarence uses various spellings himself, for example, a day later, ‘Boulac’.

suit in the Turkish bazaar, but, as I expected, it was much too small, and if I cannot exchange it, it is no good to me. The shops are full of beautiful stuffs from Syria and Turkey: the Arab silver work is very pretty: Egyptian curiosities abound, ancient or modern – the beads are a feature of the sheets, & the number of people selling odd sweetmeats, nuts, rosaries &c. Today we bought some rough brass seals upon which our names were to be engraved in Arabic characters: though whether they will be at all accurately written or not I cannot say; but the man listened as we said *each of our* names in turn, and write something down. According to the Arabic alphabet in the guide book mine ought to be made of these consonants:

We shall see when they are done.



15

Transcription task taken over by Valerie Lester from this point. MB
Sun. 22nd Dec. (CB has written January, in error).

The day looked threatening, but B.C. & D said they would risk it, and at 8.15 started on donkeys for the petrified forest, which is distant from the town a walk about 5 miles across the desert east of the tombs of the Khalifs: [we are a ??] felt a few drops before we had gone far, and when we were half way, there was some [rebellious??] talk of turning back, but C. insisted, and on we went. Every here and there were plants, all quite new to me, and 7 of them were in bloom.

25

The desert here is very curious: there are low hills of dark red rock, & loose stone looking like burnt brick or cinders. It is not possible to tell how far off any *hites*⁶¹ are in the desert as one sees no living creature except a stray bird and all is much the same colour: the *hites* one settles in one's mind to be close turn out far off & vice versa — In about 2 hours we began to see the silicised wood lying about looking just like pieces of ordinary wood but in another ¼ of an hour we saw long trunks 30-40 feet long lying about half-buried in sand.

30

We then turned back & the rain began in earnest. Of course there was no shelter so we had to go on: but my donkey was very troublesome. He wouldn't go on; he had a stupid boy too — and the beast kept stumbling and [Giacomo — crossed out⁶²] D did the same and we walked, picking up stones & plants & the same Helix which I saw at the pyramids, for about 3 miles, but mounted again when we reached the deeper sand

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& just near the tombs. On entering the city gates, we found a miserable sight — thick black sticky mud, very slippery — the donkeys could hardly go on. Selim & B had gone out of sight long, long ago on the desert, and C & D with the slipping donkeys & the stupid boy hardly able to plough his own way through the mud, and the laughter of the people in their shops and caffés, had a bad time of it. Truly

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⁶¹ “Hites” could be a local spelling of “heights”, as in a place name referring to a bluff or higher ground. On present day Egyptian real estate adverts, both Heights and Hites are used in names of up-market residential estates.

⁶² This is the only place in the diary where Clarence lowers his guard and identifies one of his party. “D” is therefore Giacomo Pollini, father of Luigi Pollini, both, in their time, servants and colleagues of his.

the city streets are deplorable in such weather, but it was ridiculous to see the folk all slipping about with their feet covered with mud, or their slippers useless in such weather, stuck in the mire. We did not reach the hotel till nearly one o'clock and had to change everything, but were well contented to have made the excursion and seen
5 Cairo and the desert in all weathers — and truly such a large city reduced to such a condition just by the fall of 2-3 hours rain is an odd spectacle. We sent to Shepherds⁶³ for letters in the afternoon, and found news from Bordighera, Switzerland, Austria, England, Ireland & Sicily, all good news from good friends, very cheering on such an unegyptian day. We stopped indoors, writing, reading, tea-ing, &c. and admiring our
10 own works in watercolours! The streets were in an awful state at night, but we sat on the benches outside the streets, watching the draggled & dirty skirts of the men, and the naked feet splashing across the road. All the poor people who sleep under the porticoes, rolled up in a thick quilt, & looking likes mummies, were there as usual. They alone are a queer sight for the chief streets of a great city.

15

Monday 23rd Dec.



⁶³ Shepherds' Hotel was the leading hotel in Cairo and one of the most celebrated hotels in the world from the middle of the 19th century until it was burned down in 1952 in the Cairo Fire.

Hearing we could get permission to see the museum, we drove to Boulac but found it could not be given us till the next day, so we came home again, had lunch prepared, and at 9.40 set off for the Pyramids once more, reaching them after an hour and ½'s ride in a cold & strong wind. Selim told the Arabs we didn't want them, & packed them all about their business, & so left in peace we wander off to see some of the tombs we had missed before; and presently finding a lovely warm & sheltered place above the Sphinx and near the third pyramid, we ate there; then we explored further, looked for fossils of which the rocks are full, sketched out the Sphinx & saw the rock tombs or sort of catacombs excavated in the face of the cliffs facing Cairo, just above the Arabs' village, in many of which are hieroglyphics and sculptured figures. The smallest of the three large pyramids must have been beautiful with its casing of red granite, the blocks of which now lie in great confusion all around. Great *occtical* pits lie open everywhere, from when the mummies have been extracted, places to be looked out for and avoided on moonlit nights. One sees the remains of great causeways leading up to the pyramids, remains of smaller pyramids and of mastabas⁶⁴ (*present day photo below, and mini-sketch by Clarence*) which are the portion of the tomb above ground in shape in all directions, portions of roman walls of black mud bricks, fragment of ancient pottery, chites⁶⁵ of all kind of granite, mammulites⁶⁶ great & small. In the evening after dinner C & D went with Selim first to a café in the Ezbekieh Gardens (*photo below c. 1880*), consisting of a beautiful long curved Arab tent, with tables and chairs & a kind of summerhouse of wood at one side, in the window balcony of which were 4 or 5 Arab girls, not very good looking but in

⁶⁴ A mastaba or "pr-djt" (meaning "house for eternity" or "eternal house" in Ancient Egyptian), is a type of ancient Egyptian tomb in the form of a flat-roofed, rectangular structure with inward sloping sides, constructed out of mud-bricks (from the Nile River) or stone. These edifices marked the burial sites of many eminent Egyptians during Egypt's Early Dynastic Period and Old Kingdom. In the Old Kingdom epoch, local kings began to be buried in pyramids instead of in mastabas, although non-royal use of mastabas continued for over a thousand years. Egyptologists call these tombs mastaba, which is the Arabic word for stone bench. (s: Wiki)

⁶⁵ Probably a shard of stone (MB)

⁶⁶ No definition found. Likely to be a kind of stone.

gorgeous array of cheap jewelry, who ate, drank, smoked, talked to one another, but sang all the time in unison, if their music can be called singing. A queer Arab kept clapping his hands all the time to make them go on. All the songs seemed to me to be alike, and the burden of the songs was much the same, according to Selim. Each paid 5 ½ franc for a cup of coffee. It was very dark and we soon left and went to one Arab caffè in the town, one of a great number all together, where so-called musicians in a row, cross-legged on a divan played ugly instruments, three of stretched wires, & a tambourine, while occasionally a man sang thro' his nose. This music was like the girls' singing, very hideous & it never stops. The European waitresses said it gave them a headache, but the Arab who *belied* the place, drinking tea, coffee or sherbets, & playing backgammon seemed to like the ceaseless noise. It was at any rate a queer sight to us.

15 Tuesday 24th.



Pouring rain. A visit to what remains of the Egyptian antiquities in the old Boulak Museum in the morning, where we saw some lovely jewelry, painted pottery etc. followed by shopping; and in the afternoon a 2nd drive, by which time the rain had left off but left the streets in the same state as on Sunday, an indescribably quagmire, to the new museum at Ghezireh⁶⁷, in the grand palace built by the late Khedive⁶⁸, in the midst of immense gardens, with all the works in designs of coloured pebbles, & bordered with white marble, grottoes, pools of water, cascades &c. The museum is a splendid one and at present it is in great confusion, and nothing is named. We saw all the mummied kings and queens and endless beautiful sarcophagi, & stelae⁶⁹ &c. Some of the

⁶⁷ Probably the Gezira museum built in 1873, although there are also web references to Gezira Egyptian Museum 1858–89

⁶⁸ The term Khedive is a title largely equivalent to the English word viceroy.

⁶⁹ upright stone slabs or columns typically bearing a commemorative inscription or relief design, often serving as a gravestone.

ornaments on the painted wooded mummy cases was exceedingly beautiful both in design & colouring & there were some statues in wood carved as I had no idea Egyptians had ever been able to carve so well. It is an immense palace, & one wanders on through countless rooms, & the old Harem here they say the Khedive had
 5 600 women. Most of the Europeans seemed going to the military races, so there were few visitors. We had our names, or what the Arab engraver at the corner of the street could write from hearing us say our names, engraved on brass seals for 3 piastres each, and then came home. Today I hoped to have met an old English gentleman, who used
 10 once to keep a hotel at Suez, and whom my brother⁷⁰ knew very well, but on account of the bad weather he could not come out, and tomorrow is Christmas Day, & I shall not see him. His daughter remembered my brother's going to Mecca. She has an English shop, sells Xmas plum puddings &c and is a widow now and has 5 children, the sons in banks &c. A very pleasant person.

15 Christmas Day 1889.

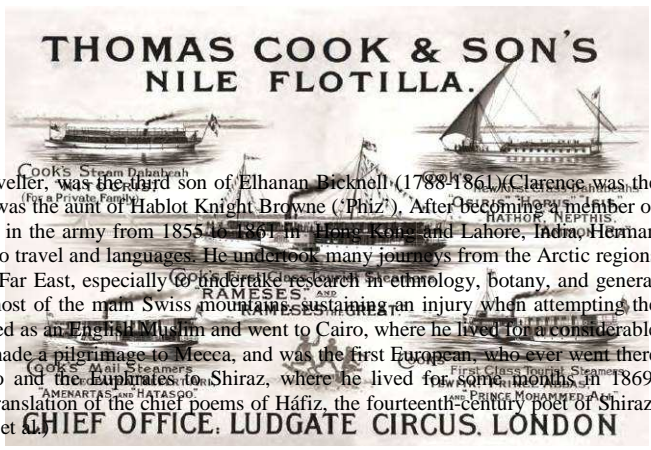
Some of us went soon after 7 to Mass at the Italian church, and afterward to a portion of the Coptic mass which was curious & incomprehensible. Hardly anyone there, & the place very dirty, & the officials looking so also. The Coptic & Greek Xmas is
 20 much later than ours. The streets had practically recovered from the rain, altho' in some there were huge pools of mud & water, and many places were quite impassable; nevertheless after breakfast, as A & B went shopping with Selim, C & D went out walking exploring that most beautiful part of the city between the Abdeen Palace⁷¹ &



25 the citadel, making rough pencil sketches here and there.

After a grand Xmas luncheon beginning with mince pies, we all took donkeys for the last time & went out to our favourite tombs of the Khalifs & across the desert to the Red mountains, which we ascended for the magnificent view;

the day was simply perfect, with the clouds casting deep purple shadows over the sand, the city bathed in light. A long Xmas dinner finished up the day, and nearly finished us up also, but some letters from Shepherds' were very welcome, containing all good wishes from kind Bordighera &
 45 other friends.
 50



⁷⁰ Herman Bicknell (1830-1875), orientalist and traveller, was the third son of Elhanan Bicknell (1788-1861) (Clarence was the 13th) and Lucinda Sarah Browne (1801-1850), who was the aunt of Hablot Knight Browne ('Phiz'). After becoming a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1854 and serving in the army from 1855 to 1861 in Hong Kong and Lahore, India, Herman resigned his commission to devote himself entirely to travel and languages. He undertook many journeys from the Arctic regions to the Andes of Ecuador, and from America to the Far East, especially in order to research in ethnology, botany, and general science. He was a keen alpinist and had climbed most of the main Swiss mountains, sustaining an injury when attempting the Matterhorn. In 1862 he started from London disguised as an English Muslim and went to Cairo, where he lived for a considerable period in the native quarter of the city. In 1862 he made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and was the first European, who ever went there wholly undisguised. In 1868 he passed by Aleppo and the Euphrates to Shiraz, where he lived for some months in 1869, familiarizing himself with life in Persia, to aid his translation of the chief poems of Hafiz, the fourteenth-century poet of Shiraz. (From the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography et al.)

⁷¹ In 1863 Khedive Ismail Pasha began constructing Abdeen Palace as the seat of his government and a symbol of Egypt's strength. It was a royal residence until the end of the monarchy in 1952 and is still used by the president for official events (s: Supreme Council of Antiquities, Egypt, website)

Thursday, 26th Dec.

5 Goodbye to Cairo at last! Left early and off in the hotel omnibus after saying goodbye to the very pleasant hotel landlord and the equally pleasant porters, and the Italian chamber — men — off to Cooks' landing stage, the rest of the 24 tourists, the cheap excursionists soon arrived and about 9.15 in a sharp shower of rain we were off. But it soon cleared up. The fresh breeze and sun dried the decks, and we began to enjoy our first experience of Nile travelling.

10



There are some Italians, French, Swiss, Americans, Germans, many English & 3 brothers whose nationality I don't at present know. The boat is small but very comfortable with upper decks fore & aft provided with awnings, & apparently much nicer than the arrangement of the big boats, the Tewfik & Rameses, where the cabins are in the middle of the deck & one cannot have a view of the whole horizon. The boat goes very slowly – slow & sure — and on we go; the river is crowded with the beautiful feluccas⁷², and here and there a dayabehr⁷³.

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About 11 we lunch, and at 1 o'clock we reach the landing stage of Bedrasheyn⁷⁴ and most of the people rush on shore, seize donkeys, and galop off towards Sakkara⁷⁵. 3 of us selected to stop quietly on the boat. We tried a shore walk but the children were too annoying, so we returned and drew boats &c - note next pages (*Clarence's sketches reproduced below*) - about 4.30 we were off again, and soon



45 began the glories of the sunset. I never witnessed anything equal to this. First the Mokatean⁷⁶ hills as far back as Cairo turned crimson, with purple shadows, and as they became grey, the western sky lighted up in gorgeous hues of yellow, orange, red, green & blue, and the pyramids of Dashoor⁷⁷ & the palms stood out dark against it, and the low sand banks & fields with lines of water aglow with light and the *naci* the palest blue with stripes of the colours in the sky.

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The light on the Nile is indeed wonderful. There is a something we have not seen in Italy, a clearness, a transparency, a fullness of radiance of light which I have never seen before - and then as it grew darker, great butterfly-sailed boats came bearing

⁷² A felucca is a traditional wooden sailing boat used in protected waters of the Red Sea and eastern Mediterranean including Malta, and particularly along the Nile in Egypt, Sudan, and also in Iraq. Its rig consists of one or two lateen sails.

⁷³ A dahabeah, also spelled dahabeeyah, dahabiah, dahabiya, dahabiyah and dhahabiyya, as well as dahabiyeh and dahabieh, is a passenger boat used on the River Nile (s: Wiki)

⁷⁴ A village on the east side of the Nile, with a view of the Pyramids.

⁷⁵ Saqqara, also spelled Sakkara or Saccara in English, is a vast, ancient burial ground in Egypt, serving as the necropolis for the Ancient Egyptian capital, Memphis.

⁷⁶ The Mokattam (or Mukattam) Mountain or Hills, is the name of a range of hills in southeastern Cairo, now a suburb.

⁷⁷ Dahshur (in English often called Dashur) is a royal necropolis located in the desert on the west bank of the Nile approximately 40 kilometres south of Cairo. It is known chiefly for several pyramids, two of which are among the oldest, largest and best preserved in Egypt, built from 2613–2589 BC (S: Wiki).

down the river, and later on great groups of boats at anchor seemed to be suspended in the air, with perfectly clear reflections in the water. Then the moon, though only 3 days old, shone out most brilliantly, and all was ghostly & grey & silver, but still most luminous. We stood entranced from 5 to ½ past 5, watching the continual changes, and wishing one could have painted a dozen pictures, if only they could have been anywhere near the reality.

10 *Watercolour from this page of the diary*
"Boys & girls at Bedrasheyn"

Dinner at 7, service very slow & bad, but things will get better no doubt. The donkey excursion seemed to have been fairly successful — only 2 people were thrown! But the dragoman explained nothing to anybody, & they did the Sakkara tombs, & all the rest of it in a wonderfully



30 short time. Directly they were all on board, we started, & the boat went on till about 9, when we seemingly steered straight for the mud banks & ran aground whereupon a lot of men jumped ashore, great piles were driven in, & we made fast.

35 A watch fire was lighted on the shore near; the lamp was lighted on the deck, and though most of the people played cards or read in the *salle-à-manger*, some of us sat on deck reading & writing, enjoying the cool but not cold air, the brilliant stars, and the novelty of the whole situation. Most enjoyable has been this first day on the river. I had read & heard of the light & the colouring in Egypt, but it all far surpassed my most sanguine expectations & the quiet & peace of it all is pleasant after the streets of

40 Cairo.

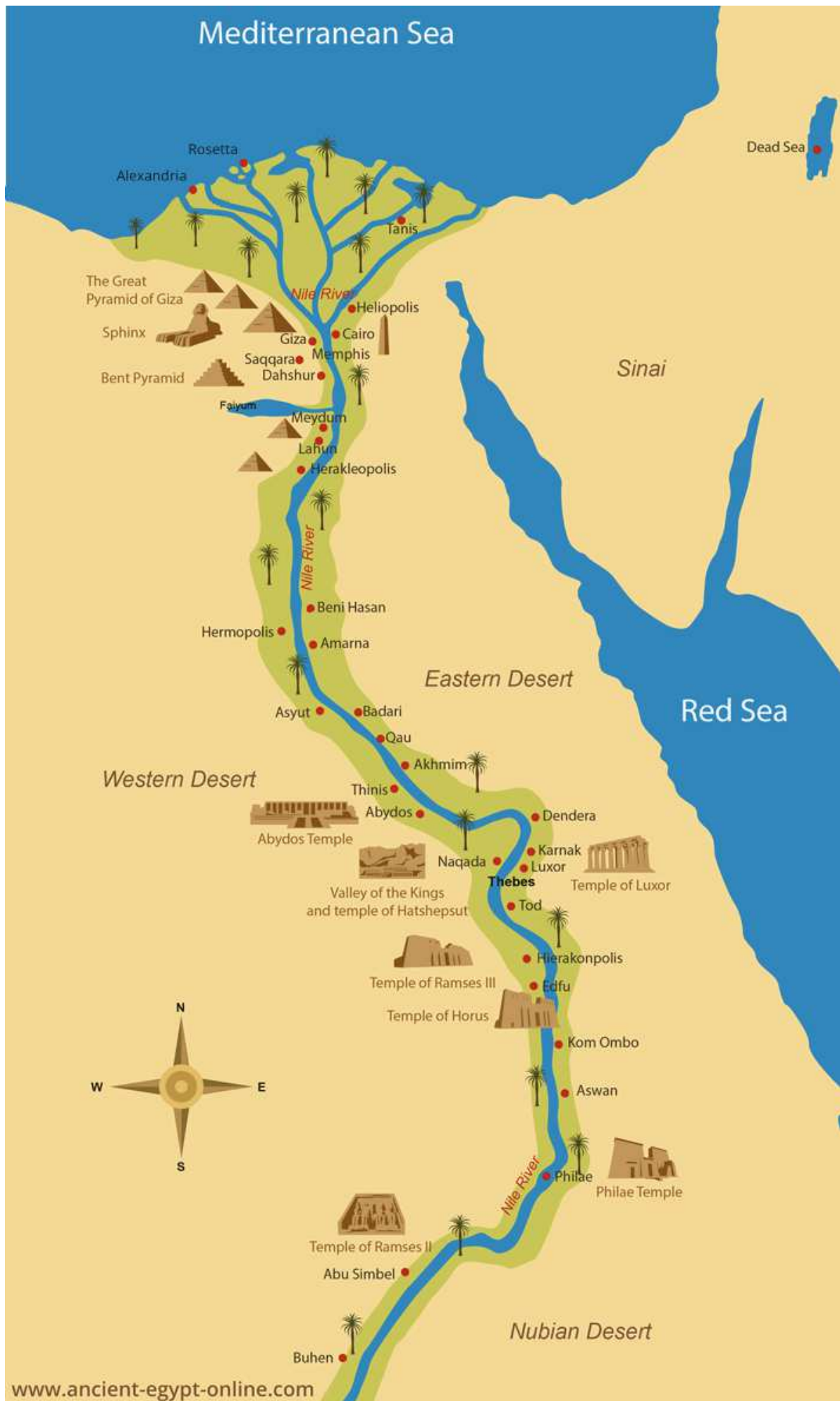


Friday 27th.

- 5 A windy day, and the journey rather
 15 hell, with no stops, and only going 4
 25 miles an hour. Still the mud villages,
 the palms, and the boats, the camels
 along the banks and the black dressed
 women filling their water pots at the
 river are all picturesque. B. not very
 well though with headache from the
 perpetual vibration of the screw. We
 passed a private dahabeyah, which
 sent off a small boat to us for some
 parcels & letters from Cairo. They had been 12 days on the journey.



- 30 The dahabeyahs are too slow, while the steamboats are too quick, and I should often
 like to land when I see plants along the shore or mounds of ancient towns. The sunset
 very mild & gorgeous, but we had not the wonderful light of last evening.



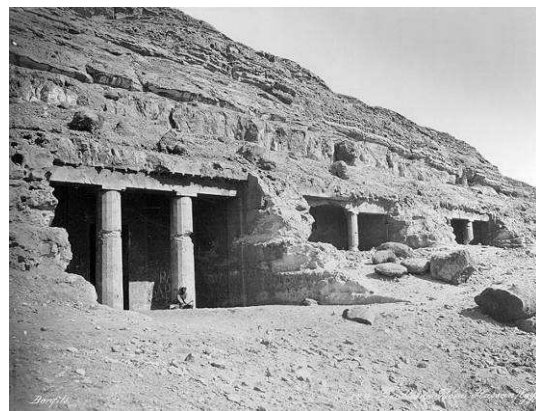
Sat. 28th Dec.

We went on till 7 in the morning when the engineer worked hard & put things right so that today we quickened the pace to 6 miles an hour, and the air was milder, wind less, and scenery more beautiful. What an immense no. of birds one does see here, and towards night there are always quantities of ducks flying across the river. Most of the people sit behind the funnel but we prefer the fore deck where we have a better lookout and more room for walking & a table to ourselves for all our books &c. Writing and drawing tho' are both very difficult, as this diary shows, from the continual shaking.



About midday the scenery greatly improved, with precipitous limestone cliffs on the E bank of the river and on top of them an old village & Coptic monastery. Here a man from the village on the shore close by came swimming down the river, almost under the steamboat, and climbed up into our small boat at the stern, screaming for baksheesh. He wanted to climb up into the cabin, but being stark naked this was objected to, and finally a sailor jumped into the boat with a coil of rope, gave the poor fellow's black hide a good many whacks, & beat him off into the water again, not however without his having several small coins in his mouth. It seems that the monks used to do this, and indeed occasionally do so still, but it has been forbidden by the Coptic patriarch.

The scenery after this was beautiful with the worn cliffs & wady's (*sic*) and little villages with their palm trees in the middle of the sand. There is the narrowest possible strip of cultivated land here, and I don't know how the people live if they have no other possessions on the western bank. As the afternoon goes on it becomes clear we shall not arrive at Beni Hassan⁷⁸ before sunset for the rock tombs in the cliffs (*photo from early 20th century, right*). About 4.30 they became visible with distinctly marked causeways leading up to them, formed by two ridges of large dark boulders but the steamer goes on and on, and the sun sets and the village where we are to land is still some way off.



Pyramid of Meydoom⁷⁹

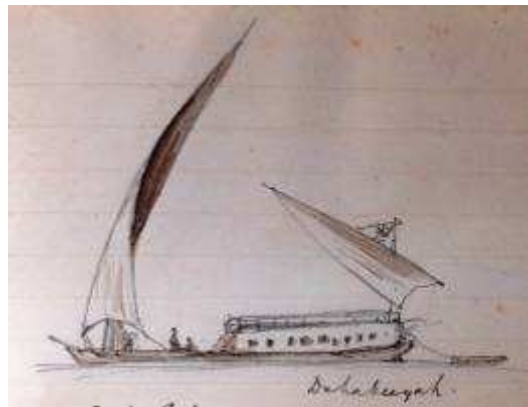


⁷⁸ Beni Hasan is an Ancient Egyptian cemetery site. It is located approximately 20 kilometers to the south of modern-day Minya in the region known as Middle Egypt, the area between Asyut and Memphis (s: Wiki).

⁷⁹ Meidum or Maidum is an archaeological site in Lower Egypt. It contains a large pyramid and several mud-brick mastabas. The area is located around 62 miles south of modern Cairo (s: Wiki).

It is almost dark when we pass a lighted dahalereyah drawn up by the shore at the further end of Beni Hassan, and we ourselves finally run into the bank, and the Arabs & donkeys dimly seen in the half-moon light come hurrying up from all quarters. We land though many of our passengers turn faint-hearted at the last and stay on board.

10 As 2 of the gentlemen desire to walk, C & D settle to join them, and while the usual fight about the donkeys & the saddling goes on, we get a guide given us and start ahead. Beni Hassan is one of the worst places on the Nile, the people are renowned for robbery & worse, but there are 2 soldiers & policemen with guns who come down to search the party & some of our people have revolvers, and we pedestrians provide ourselves with sticks. We pass some rough fields behind the villages & palm groves & are soon in the desert, making straight for the hills behind. Our wild looking man, though we can't see much of his blackface in the halfmoonlight, keeps shouting out 'come on' with a great deal more in Arabic, what, alas! We understand not. Soon his conversation turns to baksheesh, as usual, & while wishing to keep ahead of the donkeys which go so fast, we can't resist stopping occasionally to listen for the caravan, as black figures occasionally start up from behind the bundles of maize stalks in the fields and we don't know where we are being led. In about ½ an hour we reach a savage looking gully in the rocks and there we prudently stop till we descry the moving figures coming over the sand. They come up to us & dismount, and we all light candles & go into a large square chamber covered with hieroglyphics hollowed out in the rock & which we see better of the aid of magnesium wire⁸⁰.



⁸⁰ In the 1850s came the discovery that burning magnesium wire produced an extremely bright light similar to daylight; black and white photographers were soon setting off magnesium to record the wonders inside British coal mines, Kentucky's Mammoth Caves and even Egypt's Great Pyramid. The thick clouds of white smoke the magnesium produced, however, drove the cameramen choking into the open air after they had managed to get no more than one or two black and white pictures.



Then we all start again for the tombs we had seen from the boat about 2-3 miles off, the boat captain cantering about on a fine Arab horse, the 3 soldiers on donkeys with their guns, about 17 of us on donkeys with all their attendants, the sheik of the village and others carrying a sort of hatchet on the end of long sticks. We were advised to keep all together being assured that if we separated we might at any moment be *mown* down and robbed, and indeed there were nasty places all about, the deep open *wells* leading to mummy pits in the open desert as well as in every one of these rock tombs. We had a long sandy tiring walk & then a climb up to the best of the tombs. We entered 3 only the best being the northern ones which have beautiful fluted columns, predating the Grecian Doric by some 3 thousand years, cut out of the solid rock, and the walls covered with coloured hieroglyphics, beautifully executed but disappearing, and sadly spoilt by the hideous charcoal scrawls of visitors. I need not describe the pictures as the guide books do so thoroughly, and in a limited time & with a large party we could only get general impressions. But I know they are of the time of the Heliopolis obelisk⁸¹ and of King Unterhasen⁸² of the XIIth Dynasty.

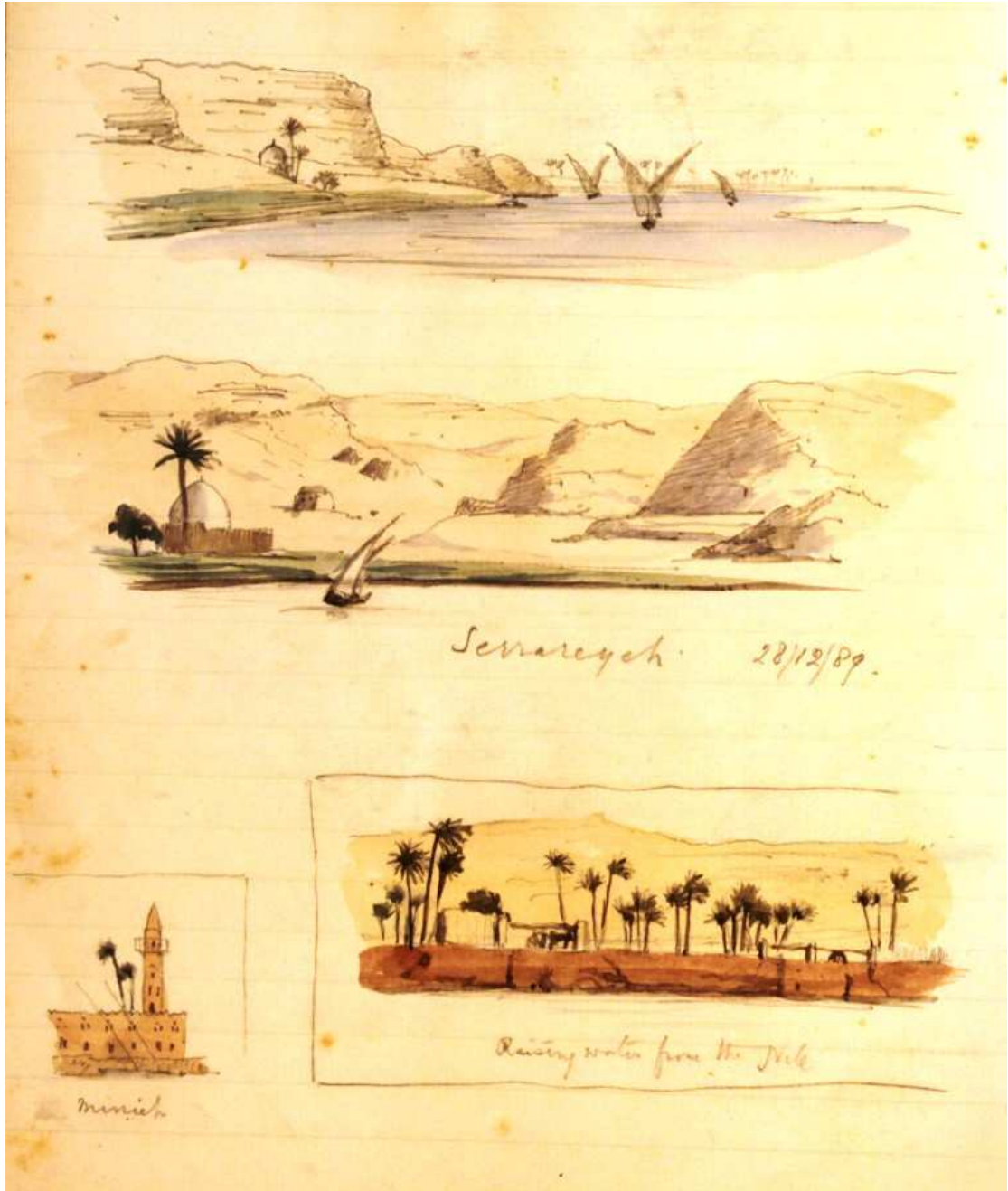


It was a strange night, with the moonlight without, & all the savage looking people & the men with guns at the entrance to the tombs, and the yawning pits inside into which some one's friend might easily push on. Then came the walk back by a different route nearer the river through the palms, and we were on board again

by nine o'clock, much to the relief of those we had left behind, who were clamouring for their dinner, already delayed 2 hours. Having washed some of the sand out of our eyes, we too were glad to sit down at table, hungrier than the others. The boat started again at once, but it was evident something was wrong as we stopped twice, and just after the end of dinner, past 10 o'clock, came a sudden stop, the anchor was let down about 20 yards from the W. bank, and we heard a screw of the cylinder had broken & we must stop till it could be repaired. Such a row & a talking, with all the sailors, captain, engineer &c gathered down below, then the raking out of the fires, and finally about 11 p.m., absolute quiet, during which we went to bed.

⁸¹ The Heliopolis obelisk in Cairo dates from the 20th century B.C., time of the XIIth Dynasty, but...

⁸² ... there is no King Unterhasen listed among the XIIth Dynasty kings of Egypt, nor similar.



Sunday 29th Dec. (Slide 3)

5 The engine was repaired during the night, & about 5 a.m. we started again, but going slowly, hoping to repair more thoroughly at Siout⁸³. The morning was delicious but very windy; however the river was covered with the beautiful boats, now a flock of them, for they look like birds with their 2 great outstretched wings, dark against the southern sky in fact, now a flock behind their sails dazzlingly white in the pale sunshine. Now one just ahead tacking across the river, against the wind, now one just astern darting by close behind us. The hites with serial tombs, and more often quarries
10 in the steep cliffs, always near the river, with more or less stretches of undulating sand & then a narrow line of brilliant green by the shore, & lots of grasses & other plants, which I long to see near at hand; all very beautiful and enjoyable.



15 Every here & there is a primitive machine for raising water; further north where 2 stone or mud pilasters with a wheel & earthenware jars, turned by an ox, but here only very queer arrangements. 2 bunches of maize stalks tied tightly together and coated with mud [SKETCH] with a pole across the top and a lever bucket. Sometimes there are (Slide 15 page 33 ends) 3 one above another, each lifting the water into a trench
20 higher than the preceding one till it reaches the level of the cultivated land & dark Nile mud. [PEN AND INK SKETCH and words "Some of these have 2 buckets to each lever with 2 men working."] Later on all the sand banks now beginning to [appear??] as in the river, will be cultivated with water-melons &c. and no scrap of available land will be left, for they have all too little of it, for the inexorable desert of
25 yellow sand is close by, and there seems to be a perpetual contest between the wind carrying the loose sand, & the river water with its beneficent mud. How thank we are in Egypt, at least in Dec. to have our thickest coats & rugs & clothes too, for there is nearly always more or less wind, and white horses on the water, and one wonders the boats with their very high spaces & large sails are not more often capsized in the
30 constant bends of the river.

⁸³ Asyut (Coptic: Siowt) has one of the largest Coptic Catholic bishopric churches in Egypt; the ancient city of the same name (also called Lykopolis or Siout in history) is situated nearby. See the oil painting of Siout by Gifford, Sanford Robinson at <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/art-object-page.107525.html>

Towards evening the engine partly breaks down again, then our speed is greatly reduced, if any reduction from 4 miles an hour can be called (page 34 ends) great [WHOLE PAGE OF WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES OF BOATS]

5 — finally we run onto a sand bank — the sun goes down in a cloudless sky, with a wonderful afterglow of pink & esp [?] streaming up through the yellow into the blue, and this lasts a long long time after the rest of the sky has become very dark. Of course we are terribly behind time and do not arrive at Siout till 10 o'clock, after countless windings of the river, and at night time the journeying is very mysterious, with the flat land on either bank of the broad river, we always seem entering upon the
10 open sea. Having taken a few turns on shore, unmolested by anybody, without armed soldiers or ferocious black at one's side, we go to bed, and sleep in peace.

Monday 30th Dec.

15 C & D are up at 6, and before 6.30 out among the fields & palms looking for plants, of which we find a good many evidently wild, & others doubtful. Coriander seems much cultivated & 2 kinds of clover. Breakfast today at 7.30 & at 8 we are nearly all mounted on famous strong donkeys, & go off at a great pace to the town ½ a mile off, a most picturesque place with many graceful minarets, & nearly all the houses of brown sundried brick, [WATER COLOR OF MANFALOOT ?? 29.12.89]
20 passing through one or two streets, we emerge in among the fields on the west & ride up to the hills behind the town, which are honeycombed with tombs; we visit the chief of these, large chambers cut in the rock, and one of them with beautifully painted roof, and all having more or less sculptured walls, but almost effaced. Outside on the hillside lie countless bones & pieces of mummy cloth and some tombs probably of
25 [wolves??] seemed to have been lately opened, for there were large pieces of animals, still unwrapped, lying all over the place. I saw also one entire human skull. We then went through one of the bazaars & bought pipes, the red & black Siout pottery, & ebony & ivory i.e. bone & stained wood sticks & on returning to the boat, [LOVELY WATERCOLOR SKETCH OF FELUCCA] found a multitude of vendors of the same,
30 also of antiquities so-called, the imitation gold ornaments worn by the women, pipes & all sorts of things, which amused us while the washing of decks was going on, preventing us from going on board; not that we were in any hurry, for we had not had half enough time ashore, and the dragoman had hurried us most unnecessarily. However we hope to see Laguin Siout on our return. [P. 36] Very beautiful was the
35 view of the golden brown town from the hills, lying in the middle of the green field, with the winding river and distant hills [PEN AND INK SKETCH OF TOWN WITH TWO MINARETS AND DOME]; but these streets of mud bricks have a wretched appearance, and it is really depressing to see what numbers of poor people live among the tombs ancient or modern, with bones lying all round them. However we visitors
40 live chiefly among tombs in Egypt, and even elected to spend our Xmas afternoon in such places, though one of our company, D, did feel this to be somewhat gloomy.

We left Siout about 12 and passed a very [something missing] afternoon & evening, with less wind & cold than usual, & continually improving scenery. In the evening after dinner we sat out on deck as usual, watching the most exciting
45 navigation of the river, for in the bows we have a man with a long pole, who is constantly sounding; he reports to the pilot [TWO WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES, ONE OF PIGEON HOUSES] who shouted to another man, who in turn passes the word on to the engineer or man at the wheel. They use certain English expressions such as half speed, easy, stop, etc. Many times we were nearly on sandbanks, and then
50 the excitement was intense; the pilot who stands on a [ZOFEN??] in space in the bow

of the upper decking leaning over to watch the man below, and the calls to change the direction & the speed coming one after another in quick succession, as the boat feels her way through the difficult place. About 10.30 we lay up near [MAGHAGHA??] for the night

5

Tuesday 31st Dec. [p. 32] [FOUR LOVELY WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES OF BOATS] We started about 5.30 but shortly after stranded in the mud & got so much sand into the condenser they said that we had to go to shore and clean out, which took about an hour. The weather was colder than ever; bitterly cold, the journey very beautiful & interesting with many boats on the river, and most picturesque villages & towns. We found the place where Nestorius died, and the hills & desert where so many of the early Xtian anchorites & hermits dwelt. Today nearly all the villages had great pigeon houses, painted with white & bright colours at the top. There were several Coptic church, villages, and we longed to stop everywhere. One minute there are great mounds & rubbish heaps of forgotten cities of ancient Egypt, another, cliffs full of tombs, a little later palm gardens & trees one does not know, queer wells, in some unusually picturesque village or palm grove — then a Xtian monastery or Moham. [?] tomb in he desert, then sandbanks with multitudes of pelicans, or other large birds — then we race with the beautiful boats or meet a steamer coming down the river, or a great barge laden with huge jars & waterpots. All about are remains of tombs & temples if we could but land and explore. There is not a mile devoid of interest, and we never tire of worrying the captain & pilot with questions about towns and villages, though certainly we are the only ones who do so, and braving the wind are resolved to see all that can be seen, for our fellow-passengers gathers in groups in warm corners, below, chatting. One young lady reads novels all day. I draw boat & make flying sketches, [TWO WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES] then study the guide book, reading up the description of the grand things we hope to see so shortly. It is the last day of the year. May the cold winds go with it, & the new year bring us pleasanter weather. Yes, and to others as well as ourselves the many other & better things than these. The last day of the year brings many thought with it, and more than ever here one keeps wondering over the story of the bygone years & centuries & ages, & thinking of the lives of the early Egyptian architects & sculptors & painters, suddenly coming out the the unknown, with all their developed powers & then of the Israelites in Egypt, and many another race ho sailed he Nile & lived on its banks. And then the suppression by fore of the religion of the country by Xtian emperors, and the desert peoples with the monks & ascetics, soon to be swept away by Islam. What changes have taken place here in those 6000 year & now one rushes quickly by in a 2 1/2d steamer & passes ruined cities and empty caves, and abandoned churches & decaying morgues & wonders what will come next? A better religion? Who can say? All the afternoon we have a continual sand storm whitening some of the fields like snow, covering the sun's face, blotting out the horizon, filling everything, & the yellow waves are lashed up against the banks & base of the cliffs, as if they were the seashore, & we sit huddled up in rugs & cloaks. We see great white pelicans swimming the water & [GRYIH??] being washed away by the river. The gentlemen are getting up a New Year's Eve entertainment. It gets colder & colder & colder towards evening, & the figures landing from the ferry boats, donkeys & all, look black against the snow-like sand, but later on it clears & after dinner we pass under great cliffs brilliant in the moonlight. [TWO WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES, ONE OF DOUM PALMS, AND ONE OF DROMEH] Before 9 we go down to play games, which with singing, much

drinking of health in toddy, punch & champagne lasts till past midnight, but the boat goes quietly on till past 3 a.m., & starts again at 5.

New Years Day 1890.

5 A lovely but very cold morning; such a sunrise & illuminations of the mountains
Doom palms become very common. At 11 we reach the shore opposite Keneh and
find donkeys though not enough, and some have to wait for others crossing by the
ferry boat. Some of the gentlemen walk n, along sandy roads across the fields, and in
10 about ½ hr reach the temple of Denderah, half concealed among enormous rubbish
heaps & buried black brick walls. The enclosing walls have gone, but the gateway
remains. The entrance halls of the 18 columns is grand, though the huge 4-sided
capitals of them are heavy. It is impossible to make out the story told on the walls,
15 every inch of which in every chamber is covered with sculpture. As one penetrates
further & further into the recesses towards the most holy place of all, which hardly
any daylight reaches, it becomes more & more solemn & impressive, but the most
interesting parts are narrow underground passages, the places for concealing the
[LOVELY WATERCOLOR OF RIVER NEAR KENEH 1.1.1890. SECOND
20 SKETCH OF ?? & PENCIL DRAWING OF MAN]] chief treasures of the temple.
The stair cases in the massive walls too, with figures of the king & priests & in
procession going up the walls with one are very interesting, & then the temples on the
roof, and the walk all round the top of the walls. This is a wonderful place. We resist
all the attempts of the dragoman to make us come on, and with dandles & guide books
in hand go religiously through all the chambers, making out which were sacred to
Osiris, which to some other divinity.

25 Finally we go round behind where are sculptured figures of Cleopatra & her
son. The wasps are in swarms everywhere, as at Heliopolis, filling up the interstices of
the sculpture with their mud homes. Much of the outside of the building is buried
deep in rubbish and horrible modern vandals have cut, painted & scrawled their names
everywhere — & torches have burnt & blackened the sculptured & painted ceilings.
30 The colours has in great measure disappeared. On the N & S walls are grand
gargoyles of lions, & near are small temples dedicated to Isis. We spend 1 ½ hours
there which goes all too quickly. We cannot see much, but we have an idea of the
once magnificent structure & splendor of the sites for which such a place has been
built. We are back on the steamer at ¼ to 2, & while at lunch meet the Tewfik steamer
35 returning & see many old Hydaspes and Cairo acquaintances & stop a minute or two
to receive a visit from Mr. Thom Cook, who came aboard & hears from our captain
about our bad engine &c. The mountain behind Denderah is of fine shape, & exquisite
shades of red & purple and it is an ideal Nile day at last, with a calm river, and the
sands & hills of the desert glowing in the light. [BAD DRAWING OF CAMEL.
40 LOVELY WATERCOLOUR SKETCH OF HILLS BEHIND DENERRAH,
1/1/1890]

Soon after 10, in the brilliant moonlight, we come in sight of the great stately
columns of the Luxor temple, & are soon made fast to the shore. Immediately some of
us step off the boat, and are soon wandering about in the marvelous pile of ruins that
45 lie close to the river side; then to bed.

Thursday 2nd Jan.

What a day of wonders! All the party off at 8, some of us having revisited the temple
before breakfast. We cross the river in 2 boats, are carried ashore through the water &
50 get onto donkeys, while a great camel is laden with the provisions of some 30 people.

The great ugly beautiful beast, looking so quiet & so restless so good tempered & so cross, so graceful & so ungainly, so stupid & so superior to everything & everybody, with the great proud nostrils, his strange [FUR??] feet, his strap for a tail, & his coat of old bits of worn out sheepskin of different ages & colours.

5 Of course the first thing my donkey does is to tumble down & pitch me onto the hard sun-baked ground, but after that I have no more accidents & winding our way up & down sand & mud dykes, & through flat green cornfields, we reach the desert & shortly after the temple of [GOORMAH??]

10 We get some little idea of this beautiful memorial built by Sethi 1st to his father Rameses 1st and finished by Rameses 2nd, & then remounting we shortly enter the Bab-el-Molouk, or Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, a tortuous ravine of sand & stones, all white, red & yellow, without a sign of vegetation or life, becoming every minute more confined and at length where the limestone & mudstone cliffs are more perpendicular, we stop & with an excellent dragoman see 4 of these marvelous
15 sepulchers, most interesting & most beautiful for all the brilliant colouring on the walls & roofs. Every possible subject seems to be represented, and if they lack the grace & drawing of the earlier tombs at Sakkara & the pyramids, they have infinitely more variety; and are much more elaborately coloured. We have an excellent luncheon in the shade of a [CHOKED APLOMB??] to an entrance & then after a little
20 rest we begin to mount the range of hills between the Valley & the cultivated land, till we reach the crest, or rather a low pass a few hundred feet high, and can look over all the Valley of the Nile with the [ENNIS??] of Karnak & Luxor across its banks, and below us a multitude of ruined temples, tombs & other buildings in great confusion, & in the middle of the wheatfields the 2 colossi, looking very small in the vast plain. The
25 ship's captain is with us today & keeps order everywhere, and Cooks' the large party very well, but it is misery to see temples & tombs with so many people, half of whom only look on the ground vainly hoping to pick up treasures. The tombs of the kings seem protected, but numberless painted walls & chambers of the temples are exposed to all, & there is nothing to prevent the tourists chipping piece off as the Arabs do for
30 ale. All day long we are literally pestered with antiquity sellers. One carries a skull, another a mummy foot; one has pieces of painted wood, another [?? Figures??] scarabs, bottles, everything you can imagine, and nearly all if not quite all except the portions of the dead, in [IT ITEAS??] but which they rate "antiche, very good, how much" & all which are to be had for next to nothing. Descending from the mountains
35 we visit an interesting temple & then for a short time the Rameseum, after which we scamper off to the perpetual call of 'come on', the poor donkeys are thrashed into the boats to cross an arm of the river & finally we reach the mainstream, are carried into the boats, U rowed across home. We watch a glorious & calm sunset & strode in the temple of Luxor till it is well lighted by the moon. After dinner I go to see some
40 friends at the Luxor hotel. A very interesting but too humid day. May I never travel again with a party & be personally conduction. The dragoman & Cook's authorities do their best & do it well, too, but the travelers are too trying, and the shout 'come on' directly you try to begin to see anything is maddening. However we cannot do more than get ideas of these great temples. It is impossible to study the sculpture & designs
45 in a short visit, and one feels one is leaving all this to some other visit in the future.

Friday 3rd January

50 Sketching in the Luxor temple in the morning before breakfast, afterwards with Dr. Porges, an Austrian, & the American doctor, and our own dragoman and a porter carrying a huge basket of lunch, we started for Karnac along an excellent road, and on

truly noble donkeys. I felt as safe on mine as on a granite sphinx; he never stumbled, walked at a marvelous pace, was No. 11 and called George Washington. In a short time we arrived at the avenue of broken sphinxes leading to the first great Pylon before the temple of Khons, Rameses 2nd. Then to the great temple of Karnac, and the

5 hall of the 134 columns of which one has heard & read & thought all one's life, and I am sorry to say I was disappointed at first; it seemed so much less grand & so much less tall, less coloured & less perfect, but by degrees it began to grown upon one, and before long one appreciated the immense circumference & height of this glorious erection. Then we wandered into the great court, through the Gate of the large Pylon,

10 & climbed to the top of it. Then back again to the hall of columns & the obelisks & so on & on from temple to temple longing to understand something, and see it all thoroughly & quietly. Oh what [BEARS??] after a [TUTTI??] Cooks' excursion. Then we landed in the small granite sanctuary & then began to wander again. Now to the top of the old brick walls that once surrounded all the maze of temples, now to

15 some other Pylon broken statues, the sacred lake, or the grand groups of tamarisks & palms on the outskirts of the ruins. The day cloudless, a delicious breeze tempering the heat. We only reached home, i.e. our boat, just before sunset in time to draw in the temple of Luxor. I dined with friends at the Luxor hotel, but at 8 ½ our party of the morning, minus the American, took our donkeys again, and went off to wander at

20 Karnac by moonlight. We were back about 10.30 after a most delightful excursion, but we hardly know how to take leave of the great Hall of Columns, and the obelisks & the massive pylons, and it was so weird trotting on in the brilliant moonlight & now in the deep shadow, accompanied by one of the temple guardians with his long stick, and of course several of his satellites, to whom the [INEVITABLE??] baksheesh had to be given before leaving; but one cannot grudge these trifling presents of a piaster or two to these poor & pleasant people; & at Luxor they seem particularly nice. Directly

25 you land off the steamer for a stroll on the bank, one or more people attach themselves to you and never leave you, though occasionally by very clever management I was able to get into the temple unobserved and perhaps be alone for 10 minutes, but usually this is what occurs: a boy sidles up & says "Good morning. Are you very well today? I am very happy to see you today. You know me? I am number 27, have a very good donkey, best donkey in Luxor. Everybody know me. Everybody want my donkey. His name George Washington. Beautiful donkey, go to Karnack today? Good moon tonight. You very good gentleman. I am very happy to know you. I know you

30 always. You never forget me; remember No 27." And so on & they seem so good natured, and are many of them very good looking. They have all complete & perfectly white teeth, good figures & supple limbs. They wear next to nothing & lots of them sleep out, and in the country their mud huts, of clay & straw look wretched enough; no beds, no furniture, no utensils except waterpots & sort of saucepans as far as I can see.

35 In the desert you see small enclosures with a mud wall, or else a palisading of maize or [DHOOSA??] stalks, either a mud hovel open to the air, or a place scooped out in the hillside, and generally some extraordinary clay erection s which serve as table & beds in the summer shaped like cups, & pots & fungi, so on what you see a few articles or else some green stuff, or fowls walking about. [PEN AND INK SKETCH]

40 Sometimes there is a wolf-like dog barking. It is very odd to see a string of men, looking so grand & so graceful with their turbans & sweeping back or dark blue cloaks, come walking by, and suddenly they stop & all squat down on the ground in a row. They lie tobacco very much, & the men all ask first, and produce cigarette papers. Nearly everybody at Luxor possesses 'antichi' from the veriest trash to nice string of

45 beads, large paper-weights & scarabs, & all sorts of things.

50

Saturday, 4th January

In the morning at 6.30 went out & sketched in the temple, & walked about the village with an escort of three boys, who promised to be faithful to me for life, and who all had the best donkeys in Luxor & so on. I also went on to the R.C. church, a queer little place, very small & dirty, where a few children were crouched on the floor. On never sees anybody washing their clothes here in Egypt, nobody washes in the Nile, though on the coldest mornings I have seen men strip & bathe & then come out of the water & throw over them in a second or two their one blue cotton garment, a cloak & turban & walk off across the fields. Sometimes one sees men saying their prayers on the river bank, they never turn round or look at the passing steamboat, but remain facing Mecca, i.e. eastward, absorbed in the ritual & devotions. Nor does one see women carrying anything on their heads but the waterpots, large or small, and one very seldom sees them eating; they eat [DHORN??] & beans, & corn. Their greatest luxuries are tobacco & coffee. Some few have nose rings, all of them necklaces of beads or berries sometimes of cowries, bracelets & many cheap brilliant rings, also large earrings. The little girls on the west bank are [SUGUTECLY??] picturesque & attractive. They follow you whether you will or no, offer you occasionally their turbid unfiltered water, beg hard for baksheesh, then pretend to cry at not getting more & finally say 'goodbye' very [CONTENTED??] & run away. At Luxor all the Arab men & boy donkey boys, temple guardians, sellers of curios &c, [LATTE??] more or less English; they don't generally understand more than the few things necessary for bartering and bargaining. Today at 8.30 a boat load of us [crowd??] the river, were carried ashore, got donkeys, mine a very good one, owned by an extremely handsome man who had lots of corn land he aid & a large house, 2 wives, 5 children & 2 very good donkeys. I went of first to the Rameseum where we examined the sculpture & the rains of the largest granite colossus of Rameses 2nd ever cared. Then to a most interesting took in the rock with paintings of men carving sphinxes & obelisks, then to a beautiful little Ptolemaic temple, called Deir-el-Medineh where was a most lovely little window, in 4 divisions, with lotus & [FIGURE??] pillars between [PEN & INK SKETCH OF WINDOW] & lastly to the great temple called Medinet Abou, containing a palace of Rameses 3rd & then the splendid courts of the temple. Here crowds of Arabs were hard at work, filling sacks with the dust of the old Coptic village which had one [once??] filled the buildings for putting on their land, or perhaps making fresh gardens in the desert. Much of it had [any??] lately been cleared out. Mny of the men & boys work naked; indeed today most of the men were naked, though the wind was cool & the sun none too hot. How can they stand this, & what can they do in summer, if they can't remove their skins. There were most interesting sculptures of Rameses' battles, one grand work of his being carried in procession attended by princes and servants bearing fans, and the colour of the roof & figures in many parts was quite fresh. We lunched here, and then rode back across the plain facing the colossi of Rameses & Memnon sitting in the green field. The figure of Memnon is the [ILLUSTRATED??] one that was so much visited in early days, as in the morning it emitted a sound, and people thought it was miraculous & pilgrims have inscribed on its legs their names & admiration of the wonderful voice they had heard. We were back in the steamer about 2 o'clock & at 3 sailed A splendid sunset & delightful voyage as far as Esneh, which we reached about 9 o'clock, without many difficulties, tho' once or twice we were nearly on a sandbank. Last year our captain was stuck on one for 3 days, so we are always excited when we see the man at the bow sounding, & in rapid succession the orders all shouted, half-speed, stop, turn a

stern, and then we have as it were to feel our way out into some deeper channel. We found today a man who makes wonderful scarabs, imitations of the old one, & there were more mummy heads & hands & feet for sale than ever. By the bye, at Karnac, on one of the temples, were figure in the most natural way the flora & fauna of some country, 'the divine land' that had been conquered by the king who build the temple. There were excellent figures of some kind of [ARUM??], crises &c.

[WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES OF PYLON OF EDFOU AND A WATERWHEEL]

10 Sunday 5th January.

I got up at 3, and half-dressing went ashore in hopes of seeing the constellation of the Southern Cross, but I either did not see it because of some houses & trees hiding the horizon, or it was not visible. There is a splendid hard promenade along by the good houses on the river front of Esnah, palms & orange gardens, and anyhow I enjoyed the strange quiet of the night's stroll, not even disturbed by the bark of one of the jackal-like dogs. At 7.15 most of the passengers went ashore, and walk to see what is visible of the Ptolemaic temple of Esnah, far below the present level of the town, just like the portico of Denderah only with more beautiful palm & lotus & papyrus capitals to the columns. The rest of the temple is buried below the houses. We were soon off again & steamed quietly till Edfou, at 1.30 where donkeys took us to the splendidly preserved temple built abut 222-142 BC, the most perfect in Egypt. The magnificent propylon towers & walls of enclosures nearly perfect, but nearly all the heads of kings & gods have been [SUNTOTALED??] by the zeal of early Xtians, I suppose, tho' our manager told us the Persians did so 3 or years ago! The sculptures & decorations are very inferior on these later temples but the columns are much more beautiful. We lingered a long time in the court and first hall, & then safe back to the boat. A cloudless sunset, and then the full moon. Nile travelling becomes more fascinating every day, & though we are glad to set foot on shore we go back gladly to our boat. Today I have added 2 more plants to my small collection. I see things occasionally on the bank which I long to stop & gather, but when we land by towns there is never anything but sand & dust. I hardly know either what is & what is not wild in the cultivated fields. The desert ways near Cairo, & some sandbanks near the river opposite Luxor have yielded me most of the plants I have found. People have often assured me there are no wild flowers, because they do not see large blue & red & yellow ones, but I have found a good many by no means wanting in beauty. It is difficult to get anything when on donkey backs, as if I get off a crowd instantly assembles out of space, and every piece of the thing I am after is pulled off by the head, in the hope of attaining baksheesh, and I cannot explain anything to the boys. What a scene at the Edfou landing place today! A man came on board to take our saddles and distribute them among the donkey boys, & men, who as soon as the steamer whistles afar off to announce her approach are seen rushing up from all directions, raising clouds of dust. In what system these were give out I do not know, but there was a sort of free fight among everybody, in which saddles were dropped & fought for, whips & sticks freely used and for the moment the crowd of quiet smiling dignified [TWO WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES 6/1/90, SUNRISE & FORT AND TEMPLE] people turned into a set of roaring & raging devils. Occasionally the head man rushed at on to the landing stage, slashing out right & left with his whip [WATERCOLOUR SKETCH OF HEAVILY LADEN FELUCCA] & our manager rushed out also, whereupon everybody fled, jumping off the landing stage on to the mud bank. This scene always occurs when we want donkeys, and at Luxor it was

really necessary to have a stick to frighten & keep people away, for they back donkeys on to you, almost force you on, telling any amount of lies trying to palm off their donkey for one that may have been ordered & so on. The police used to be most helpful, hitting out freely, and it was said, generally taking somebody or other off to
5 prison. But the moment the donkeys are chosen there does not seem to be any more swearing or fighting, but everyone is as calm && quiet as ever.

[WATERCOLOUR SKETCH OF NILE NEAR ASSOUAN]

10 Monday 6th Jan.

I was up soon after 6 in time to see & the fort & beautiful temple of Kom Ombros against the yellow sky; after that a delightful journey to Assouan. The river much narrower but a green strip of lupins, & castor oil, & large dense groves of palms; the sand of a very warm yellow colour. Last night we had a most exciting time of it for an
15 hour or more before 11 o'clock, we finally lay up for the night against the E. bank. We could not cross over the river for the sand banks, & every now & then we ran in to one then turn astern, turn her head, stop, and down we went back again with the strong stream. Then we tried again, half speed, easy, stop, & another bump, & this again & again. We thought we should never get out of the difficulties.

20 By 11 ½ today we were at Assouan, charmingly situated among the palm trees, with the river full of great rounded granite rocks, and the long island of Elephantina a few hundred yards away. Instead of the crowd of donkey boys, we had a number of boats crowding round the steamer to take us across to their so-called island of flowers, where a Nubian village & a few ruins. Of course we all blindly got into the boats, and
25 did this very stupid excursion in a blazing hot sun, but there was nothing to see when we got there, and the only amusement was in seeing the queer things offered us for ale, no longer 'antiche' but spears, arrows, daggers, & swords supposed to come from the Soudan, and mats & shell necklaces & such like. After lunch we went to see the Assouan bazaar, where the people were more interesting than their wares for there
30 were many regular looking savages with plaited hair, & women with nose rings & nose ornaments, and tall black as black as coal with immense white turbans; an on the shore camels without end. A stick is necessary here to keep off the boys. C & D walked along the shore & then right away over the desert finding a few plants
35 [WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES OF CAMELS AT ASSOUAN 7/1/90] & afterwards along the shore southward by the granite quarries & huts & barking dogs. The scenery is strangely different here with all the islands dividing the Nile into narrow streams. The evening was chilly & unusually dull, so I went to be early glad to be away from the row of the natives ashore, & the vulgar American a & his chief allies on board, who play cards & talk slang & behave worse [than] the Arab in the salle-à-manger.

40

Tuesday. Jan 7th 1890.

Up with the sun, and at 8 the cavalcade of donkey riders start, my beast a sorry one but much better than the wobbling saddle, on which I had to balance myself as
45 best I could.

[WATERCOLOUR OF ELEPHANTINA I, FROM ASSOUAN]

We rode out to the quarries to see a place where a huge block of red granite was being
50 cut out. It is called an obelisk in the guide books, but there are the beginnings of

transverse cutting as if it as destined to be worked into large sarcophagi. Then on through the wild desert, with remains of a very thick mud brick wall on along one side, probably Roman, and modern telegraph posts, and among hills of rounded granite and immense boulders lying everywhere and sometimes perched on the top, like the
5 Cornish [NOGAN??] stone.

[WATERCOLOUR OF PASSENGER BOAT]

10 After about an hour's ride over the burning yellow sand, but with a cool northern wind blowing, we suddenly came in sight of the river again, bordered with palm trees, & sycamores, the water as calm as a lake studded with island & and that of temple-crowned Philae not far from the shore. Boats were ready manned by about 6 rowers each who kept time to a curious sort of singsong chat and took us over to the island, where we had 2 ½ hours to roam about and explore the ruins and gather the few wild
15 plants that grew there till luncheon. Very beautiful is this quiet spot, with its unsymmetrical temples, from the roof & pylons of which there were lovely views up & down the river, and some of whose columns have still all their original colouring of harmonious blue & green. I think the capitals of [LOVELY SEPIA WATERCOLOUR OF TWO BOATS AT ASSOUAN 6/1/90] of these columns of
20 these late Ptolemaic temple the most beautiful of any I have ever seen, with their raised designs of palm & papyrus branches I found several new plants, and some bivalve shells in the river. Here we met some [HYDORSPER??] friends just landed from their [dahabeyah??] on their return from the 2nd cataract. We spent a truly delightful time, but little worried by the Nubians selling necklaces of beads & rough
25 pieces of amber, spears, knives, silver ornaments &c, and I bought some rough silver rings of bold design. After an excellent lunch we were rowed down the river winding about among the granite islands to hear the so-called cataract, down one channel of which the deep water rushes & roars in great waves. No end of little black boys came paddling off on logs of woo, their legs stretched out in front [PEN & INK SKETCH]
30 steering & balancing themselves with their arms & hands. We landed and standing on a projecting rock, our manager selected 5 big naked fellows who jumped down one after another into the boiling water, and swimming hand over hand were carried down the rapids in a few seconds, and ran up the shore again, demanding the promised baksheesh. They did this 3 or 4 times; many of them however made their exciting
35 journeys without any reward, and as for the little log-riders, I fear they got nothing, but the seemed greatly to enjoy themselves and to be as much at home in the water as the crocodiles are. These latter unfortunately we did not see. They have all gone further south now, disturbed by the steamers & sportsmen, tho' they say one is still occasionally seen as far north as this cataract. After their bath the blacks lay on the hot
40 and to dry. Many of them were good looking fellows, but it was a wild sight, surrounded as we were by so many howling bellowing naked men, & the manager used his [CONSBACH??] pretty freely to keep them in some sort of order. There were several flowers in the sand, the beautiful yellow one I had seen near Cairo, and a little pin & white Lotus. Some of our party then went down the rapids, but by a more
45 quiet part of them, and reached Assouan by water, while the rest of us were rowed back upstream about halfway to Philae, and then landed where our steeds were waiting, & road [sic] home through the desert & every now & then by the river side. Everywhere out of their mud huts came women & children, selling strings of shells & beads, and rough coloured grass mats or baskets. We were back at the steamer, which
50 is always a real haven of rest after any excursion on land with all the fighting &

begging & vociferating, about 3 ½, and an hour later bade adieu to Assouan & at a great pace went down the river, stopping for the night by the bank near the village of BLANK SPACE having done about 25 miles from Assouan It was just 7 when we stopped. Lots of donkey boys, all saying a few words of English were on the bank, and imploring us to have a ride over the moonlit sand, but we had had enough of donkey riding for one day. They looked very cold, wrapping themselves round in their one white cotton garment. Very pleasant it is to be sitting, as I am now, writing or reading, on the upper deck with the lanterns lighted, and the hangings all round sheltering me from the cool not to say cold night wind. The limit of our Nile journey has been reached, and beautiful Philae, its' rocks, its' palms, its' mimosas & its' temples are things of the past, and we are going northwards & homewards, but with much to think of and read about in the days to come. Nearly all our passengers had invested largely at Assouan with warlike weapons, [COURBASH.] of hippopotamus hide, Madam Nubias as the people call them, that is leathern fringes ornamented with shells for the ladies only clothing farther south, leathern purses & other strange things, but I only spent a piaster & a half on a string of shells & beads. There has been a row on board, one of our passengers a wealthy and very clever & accomplished Austrian having said something offensive to one of the Hungarian counts; the former seems to have made himself disagreeable to most of the people, and they have all been ready to take offence very readily, but today some apology had been offered through the mediation of an Italian on board & our English officer at Assouan, this latter having refused the Hungarian's wish that he should act as second in a duel, of which he said he did not approve, and finally peace has been made, for which we all feel grateful.

[WATERCOLOUR OF QUARRIES AND TOMBS [SILSILEH??] 8/1/90]

WEDNESDAY, 8TH JANUARY

A brilliant day, but till after luncheon it was very cold, as now we meet the wind from the north, and feel it much more than when it was behind us in coming up. We go down stream at a great pace, and though I missed the beautiful Rom Ombos in the early morning, I looked out for the quarries & grottoes of [SILSILIN??], for Edfou with its' great pylons towering up above the town, and for Esneh where we had spent such a peaceful moonlit night, and for all the other points of special interest. In the afternoon the wind dropped, the water was unruffled, and words fail me to describe the beauty of the mountains east & west [WATERCOLOUR SKETCH OF EDFOU. 8/1/90], rosy & golden in the light with the loveliest of purple shadows. The palms & feluccas reflected in the water. But on board our boat a huge ?? continued, as there was some unpleasant discussion about the manager, and the carrying out of the programme &c. Everyone seems to have got into a lonely condition, and is ready at the slightest notice to fire up and then explode in some remark or other that would better have been left unsaid.

We reached Luxor about 4 ½ & passed the big Rameses, Cooks' 50£er and her [GB??] passengers, there, and in the evening as they gave a dance & invited all of us, some of us went & danced a little but with difficulty on the very sloping and slippery deck, [FIVE LITTLE WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES AT ESNEH 8/1/90] We wandered around & bought photographs. We stay at Luxor all tomorrow though by so doing we run the chance of missing other excursions, as if we go on a sandbank, or are otherwise delayed, the manager will have to change the programme. Many of us would have preferred starting at midday and being half a day ahead, as the manager

wished, but some of our party are afraid of being done out of something or other, and insist on remaining at Luxor till Friday morning.

Well, we have had no accidents today, and got over all the most difficult part, the sandbanks [TWO WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES OPPOSITE GEBILLAYA
5 8/1/90] above Silsileh, where we stuck so long the other night, and the hidden rocks below, so we hope all may yet go well and that we shall not miss Abydos. Tonight we hear that a little while since a Dahabezeh with Greek gentlemen on board was attacked at night by 30 Arabs hidden with sugar cane near here, but *the gentlemen fired and killed several of the robbers & threw them into the Nile. Some of our young
10 men have gone off into the desert tonight to look for Jackals. The only wild animal that I have seen alive was a hyaena muzzled & and dragged about by a rope in the streets of Siout, but most of the village dogs are remarkably like jackals, and many of the natives are worse than hyaenas & jackals combined. No letters for us at Luxor, a great disappointment after waiting so long.

15 *This turns out to be an exaggeration.
Thursday, 9th January.

As we were to stop all day at Luxor, though some of our tame jackals on board objected to stopping, [WATERCOLOUR SKETCH OF LUXOR] we selected to go to
20 Karnak again. So at 9 we started with dragoman, lunch & all as before including my dear George Washington. We sketched, wandered about the great hall looking at the sculptured walls again, and the reflections in the sacred lake, and lunched in the granite sanctuary, and then sketched again & I found some tamarisk in flower, and another plant which I saw along the edge of the desert towards Silsileh and near
25 Assouan, but there unable to gather. There were donkey & camel races at Luxor in the afternoon which the & [sonas??] folk seem greatly to have enjoyed, but we were only back in time for the sunset. The river without a ripple and [WATERCOLOUR
KSKETCH OF LUXOR BY MOONLIGHT FROM THE BOAT 8/1/90] the water auburn broken by bars of blue & green. I spent part of the evening with friends in the Luxor hotel, where the Grand Duc Pierre, who was with us on the [HYDUSPES??] is
30 now staying.

Friday 10th January, 1890

A quiet day with 1 ½ hours stop at Keneh (for we left Luxor at 5 a.m.0, which
35 some of the party visited, but I wandered about in a mud village near the shore, and looked but in van, for plants — then wind getting worse & worse towards evening till we reached [Belieaneh??] about 5.30 and made fast to the high mud banks. 3 English [Dahelaghs ??] were tying up too a little further south.

The squabbles on our boat continue, and someone or other is always in a bad temple (sic), and using unparliamentary language. We have certainly some of the
40 most vulgar, cross-grained, nasty-tempered people I have ever met. [TWO WATERCOLOUR RIVER SCENES] It may be that the dry air, or the abounding dust, or the difficulty of fathoming the history of about 40 Egyptian dynasties which disturbs their nerves. So it is. [TWO WATERCOLOURS OF RIVER SCENES] We have one person who had paid to Cook his deposit of 10£ for a berth on the
45 50£ excursion steamer and then because he changed his mind when the advertise 9sic0 meal of his 10£ was not returned, though he has anyhow saved 20£ by the change, and has been furious ever since. We have a lady who is said to go into our salle-à-manger and pull all the other chairs on her side of the table close together to get more room for herself, and who sits down early at the tea table and pockets all the
50 sweet biscuits, who also swears at her old father, and calls the other

[WATERCOLOUR SKETCHES OF DONKEYS AND TURBANNED MEN AT KENEH, 10/1/90] gentlemen 'old boy' or feels their whiskers. We have the man who eats so enormously that everybody watches to see how much he puts on to his plate, and grin to one another if he takes half the cheese [LANDED?]. We have the gentleman who 'loaned' his vis—à-vis in a glass of whiskey, when they were on speaking terms, bur who after a quarrel asked him at the table to return the loan, and pushed over his glass, and whose wife since the said debtor refused to help him but said he might do so himself filled his glass for him. We have the man who rushes ashore to to secure the best donkey for himself, but who thinks & says that others are all trying to get some advantage for themselves on every possible occasion.

Now there are a whole lot of burning questions going, which provokes everybody if they are raised. If the manager wishes to start a little earlier or later [PEN AND INK DRAWING OF PEACOCK-LIKE CAMEL. BILLIENEH] some cry out "stick to the programme"; if he does wish to stick strictly to it, people thing he is trying to prevent our seeing something If one gentleman suggests getting up a subscription for the sailors, another strongly disapproves. If one wants to lunch in a temple, another wishes to come back to eat on the boat. We should all kill one another like the KitKenny cats if we were cooped up in the steamer much longer. Our hair & claws are growing, our clothes wearing out, our nerves are getting twisted by the dry air & continual winds; we shall soon be worse than the 13 [SOHAZIN??] semi-savages we saw at Assouan. Some of us don't take to some others on board, some others don't come near us. Some growl across the table. Some make unnecessary noises to annoy their neighbours Some think it fine fare to whip the poor patient natives. Others swear at them in English. We all say 'get away & lift up sticks when they come near us. When we have been 5 minutes in some splendid temple that tells the stories of mighty monarchs 3000 years ago, some say "we've had enough of this; let's go back to the steamboat." Many think there is nothing to see & never give one look at the reflected palms & the rosy & golden cliffs & the white sided boats laden with corn or the big amphorae or the shaves of sugar can.

Saturday 11th.

At 7.45 the usual scrabble for donkeys, & off we going all but four; one was ill, one lazy, one thought it too far, & one hates all sightseeing. Bad donkeys & a long ride of 1 ¼ hours, but a very pleasant one through the green corn & the sweet broad beans in full blossom, with thousands of pigeons flying about, & little woolly camels not yet looking conceited & cross. 2 mounted soldiers accompanying us, & every now and then begging us to keep together, but why I know not. Poor D's donkey fell down with him 4 times. At length we reach Abydos at the edge of the desert & behind the village come to the temple of Sethi 1st, unlike all others in form, and more beautiful than all for its bas reliefs, exquisitely painted I did not know anything was so beautiful. The figures most graceful, such an abundance of varied designs, such grace in the figure & such harmonious coloring. The stone a beautiful compact white limestone. Sethi offering a golden image of himself to a divinity, Sethi assisting his boy to lasso a whild bull, & similar subjects, with sculpture far finer than at Karnak, & colour better preserved than anywhere else. The natives kept slinging stones at the birds with primitive things made of cocoanut fibre or something similar, & selling us their slings. The we saw a half-deserted temple of Rameses 2nd & finally a very queer little Coptic church in a wall-enclosed village in the desert, [PEN & INK SKETCH] miserably poor and dirty, all brick domes from outside. We were back at 2 tired & dusty & at once the steamboat left, & at 4 o'clock we were at Gizeh, & visited the miserable

bazaars, & and dirty dusty alleys of the town, but it has many picturesque minarets, & mosques, & there are beautiful views from the river bank. In the evening the postal boat came down from Assouan, bringing the letters it had forgotten to leave us at Luxor, & we were rejoiced of news from England & Italy.

5 The sky is getting cloudier & the wind colder, and sitting on deck is getting more & more uncomfortable, while the salon is always equally insupportable. Well, our excursions are over & we shall soon no more hear the continual cry of baksheesh, baksheesh, nor watch the queer figures huddled up in corners or squatting in rows like birds on the telegraph wires along the mud bank.

10 Sunday. 12th January. Off at 4. A dull, cloudy, windy, cold day, all the beauty of the Nile gone. The air misty and no colour on the hills. We lunched early & were at Assial ?? by 7, and went on ashore while bread & cold [??? Perhaps he means coal] were being taken in to feed ourselves & the engine for a little while longer. We
15 bought more sticks & pottery in the Siout bazaars. On the way back a boy offered sticks for sale, and when we doubted if they were really made of ebony & ivory, he said “the no liar American missionary, no liar, good” adding [HORENS??] when B. had bought a stick for 2/- “You say at steamboat, you give 5/-.” We ran into the bank early as the pilot refused to [GON??] in the dark, with so many sandbanks in the water,
20 then by having a good squabble with the manager. The latter seemed inclined to kill the former, but our pleasant captain, who says the pilot is the best on river, took the pilot’s part. The manager seemed sulky & appeared no more, not giving us the usual after-dinner announcement of the next days’ programme. On the eve of the Abydos excursion, it had been as follows, “Ladies & gentlemen, tomorrow morning breakfast will be at 7.30. At 8 donkeys will be ready to start for Abydos which you will reach after 1-1 ¾ hours ride. The programme says that luncheon will be taken in the temple but I propose you should return to the steamboat for these reasons: it is not easy to procure a camel to carry the lunch; the dust is very bad & if the lunch is on a donkey the dust will get into it & spoil it, and there is no convenient place to eat in.” As we
25 knew a lot of people wanted to return for lunch we said nothing, but all these excuses of the captain’s were inventions for his own purpose.

Two camels were kneeling on the shore, presumably saying their morning prayers i.e. asking to be hired, from a very early hour. [PENCIL SKETCH OF GATEWAY AND PIGEON TOWERS NEAR RODA]. There was if anything less
35 dust than usual & the beautiful temple was as convenient to lunch in as any other place.

It was said at Cairo to one of your passengers that Cooks’ boats always arrived sooner than advertised. So we suppose this to be our manager’s reason, and imagine he hopes to stand well with Cook by economizing coal, or else that the provisioning
40 of us is his affair, and he wants to be saved a day. Certainly he was a whole day ahead when we arrived at Luxor, and we can’t imagine what he would have done with that had he gone on at once. Today by the bye a wretched looking [SKEYK??] who lives by the river up in the rocks came out in a small boat to meet us, and threw on board 2 bundles of [FDHOORA SLATTES??] tied up with rag; one fell in the bow & the
45 sailors immediately threw it overboard; the other struck one of the waiters as he was coming out of the salon & knocked some crockery out of his hand & smashed it. Hardly any passengers were on deck, so no one put any money into the straw, which the holy man looks out for, and he did not venture to hang on behind as the swimmer had done, probably discomfited by the disastrous effect of his 2nd shot. So he lost his 2
50 money bags and infuriated the manager who would have liked to shoot at him, he said

[PEN & INK SKETCH OF RIVER AND PALM TREES] but he would like to shoot everybody & everything, or anyhow whip them with his [COURBASH??] he is of a fiery temper, of Venetian parents, born at Jaffa, & brought up in America, but I think he has Arab or Syrian blood as well as Italian. [PEN 7 INK SKETCH OF FELUCCA]

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Monday 13th. Started at 4. Many sand banks & many 'easy's' & 'stopp-o's. Breakfast at 8. At 9 we stopped at Roda and walked through a large sugar factory. It was a chance to see such a lot of machinery going & so many people at work, tho' at the same time there were about as many standing or squatting about doing nothing, & many sleeping on the ground, perhaps those who had been at work all night. It was a pretty sight to see a number of men unloading the great purple canes, and others packing them on to the planks which carried them up to the rollers. They were apparently twice crushed & then the liquid was boiled & the result of the first operation seemed to be the troughs full of dark brown crystals, & of the last a liquid treacle. This was our last excursion.

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[PENCIL SKETCH OF BENI HASSAN]

[WATERCOLOUR SKETCH OF HAMAR]

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Just as we were finishing luncheon today about 2 p.m. came a succession of tremendous bumps and we knew at last we were well onto a sandbank, the long-threatened danger. The paddles paddled in vain. The sailors all tried to push off with half a dozen great punting poles. No, we were thoroughly fast. At last the boat put off carrying the anchor, which was cast over about 100 yards distant. Then the rope was brought aboard, and all worked with a will to pull ourselves off the shoal, which was happily accomplished in about ½ hr. This little excitement, more amusing to us than the manager, and those of the passengers who have a train to catch tomorrow evening as we have, more amusing than to us, cost us about an hour and a half. Just after we got off, our old friend the swimmer appeared, hung on as before, got a mouthful of money & finally smoking a cigarette swam off to shore. The river today perfectly calm, but no sun; it is beautiful but all grey and the desert looks bleak and cold. About dark we pull up to a big sandbank and some of the poor sailors jump right into the river.

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Tuesday. 14th January. We were off early, in pouring rain & it rained all day. How miserable the villages looked & the slimy banks with the poor women slipping down them to fill their heavy jars with the muddy water, and struggle up the banks again with difficulty. The pyramid of Magdooom [??] & later those of Abusir & Sakkarah & Ghizeh gloomed through the fog, but it was pleasure to see this much once again. As we neared Cairo the Mokabean [??] hills were of a beautiful purplish colour and the citadel looked grand as ever. We met various dehabasks [??] starting on their [WATERCOLOUR OF VIEW FROM WHERE WE STUCK ON A SANDBANK. 2 P.M. 13/1/90] southward voyage, and the Mohamed Ali, Cooks' last big steamer. Finally we reached the landing stage about 3.30 in worse rain than ever, and sent out for carriages, having bid goodbye to all our companions good & bad. Right sorry too we were to say adieu to the charming Italian on his way to Madagascar, & to the gentlemanly English architect & the charming French lady & her Italian husband & the German ladies — but there were the other sect the vulgar, stingy quarrelsome ones

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we were thankful to leave behind. At last some carriages came for us & we struggled up thro' unutterable mud & at last got our luggage & drove off among the first through feet of mud & acres of mud & water to the Hotel Royal. It had poured all day in Cairo. Of course no one had ever seen such a thing before, but all seem agreed that the Climate is changing for the wearse year by year, some say because of the great avenues of Lebbeh trees all round the city, others because of the new canals & increased irrigation. Anyhow the country is benefited by it, but the day will come soon when the town must be drained and then [PAVED??], for [TICKET OF PERMISSION TO VISIT THE MOSQUE EL AGHAR & UNIVERSITY – in Arabic.] it is at present with nothing but dust & dirt & never a stone, & never a conduit of any kind to carry off the water. A few hours rain suspend all the traffic & makes he place a lake of mud & water, which who so has not seen cannot believe Arrived at our comfortable H. Royal with all its pleasant people to welcome us, we went to Cooks' to get tickets for Alexandria & for the boat to Athens. Dined at 7 p.m., pottered about, unpacked, talked to Selim &c until 10 ¼ & then drove to the station & at 11 were off in the train. The night was very cold, but we slept on & off till we reached Alexandria at 6 .m. [PEN & INK SKETCH NEAR CAIRO. 14/1/90] where an excellent man from Cooks' met us, drove us to Abbots' hotel where we washed & breakfasted, fetched us at 8.30, took us to the ship's office to procure our berths, rowed us to the [BCHERA??], saw us get on board, & did everything in the most comfortable way possible. There were few passengers, & those chiefly bound for Constantinople, the boat clean, cabins large & airy. At 10 I brilliant sunshine we started, sorry to leave Egypt glittering in the light & Alexandria's splendid harbor crowded with vessels of every kind. We soon had lunch & then sat on deck till feeling sleepy & land being well out of sight & went to lie down, but soon after the sea became a little rough and from that moment to Friday at noon I saw many companions no more, except D. once the next day, who paid me a visit, gasping & groaning That night the sea was rough, but all Thursday it was much worse, the waves swept over the deck, the wind howled, everything & nearly everybody too made ugly sounds, including some cats on board. I in vain tried to get up on deck, but at last gave it up. The time passed badly enough but on Friday morning about 7, it was calm & I got up & found we were just entering the group of the Cyclades, opposite Santorini & henceforth I stopped on deck & managed some breakfast at 9.30. But what had become of A, he 1st class, the able-bodied seawoman who was to have been our saviour on the sea? Did she hold up our heads, rub our feet, cheer us in our agonies, wipe our clammy hands, bring biscuits & soup & soda water to revive our fainting frames? No, not a bit of it. She turned out a broken reed in the house of distress, false & faithless, she wo had found it so cold on the Nile boat that she could not stand the deck & so hot on shore that she couldn't walkm & whom we had all tended with the greatest devotion, was now worse than all of us tree B, C & D, not evening putting in an appearance at dinner to which the rest of us sat down when we were nearing the Piraeus. Beautiful were the hours of our sea voyage as the Acropolis came in sight & Mount Hymettus slightly powdered with snow & the [monastery??] behind Salamis & the port & the houses & ships stood out clear in the evening light. We found a boat from the Hotel d'Angleterre at Athens whose men ably took charge of us, got us ashore & through the douane & away we rushed I 2 carriages & before7 were in a very snug hotel in this most modern looking city, very dull & dreary looking after the East, with its common-looking shops & uniform people & empty streets. Tea, a stroll to the Telegraph office along the boulevard toward the Acropolis & to bed early. [PEN & INK SKETCH OF THE ACROPOLIS.]

Saturday Jan 18th. A festival, the Epiphany I suppose, the Acropolis closed, so at 8.30 we start of wandering. A brilliantly clear morning after a sharp frost. Such a view from our window of the ruins crowning the precipice & towering up in the sky above the houses. We walk out to the ruins of the temple of Zeus. What a glorious colour ar these fluted columns, from white to a rich burnt sienna. Then on past the Theatre of Dionysus & the Odeion & up the hill of [blank space] where se sit a long time gazing at the view. I had no idea the situation of Athens was so splendid; nor the mountains so rear & varied in form. [PSUTETIKON??] is covered with snow. We make up our minds we must stop more than 3 days, as there seem to be plenty of boats from Patras & A [written over something; could it possibly be Alice??] is longing to sketch everywhere. The Acropolis from all point of view is superb; the sky is such a colours, the mountains such a purple background to the white & [GHOW??] glistening marble; but the town is hopelessly white & ugly. Happily one pays no attention to it, as from any point one's eyes are drawn towards the Acropolis & mountains or the undulating plains & Piraeus & the Saronic gulf & Salamis & the islands Lunch at 12 & at 2 we climb up to the Chapel of St George on the Lykabetian hill & greatly enjoy the fresh air & splendid panorama, but I am sorry there is no fresh vegetation, only the leaves of the Asphodels & a few Arisarum blossoms, but the undulating red plains & purple shadows are beautiful indeed, and the distant mountain. Afterwards * & D went to see the stadium of Lycargus & wandered about over the rocky hills crossing & recrossing the ditch of the once famous Ilyssus. The wood & the olives seem to have disappeared. There are singularly few trees anywhere, & no gardens with flowers. The palms & everything else in the public or royal gardens look dying of cold & winds. The evenings are deadly dull. There is not a creature in the streets, & no amusements, hardly any shops open & nobody in those that are. The town is indeed a depressing place. All the glory of Athens seemed centered in that undying Acropolis & the hills & islands & plains around made famous by great men & great deeds. A big white royal palace of the ugliest possible type, & good clean roads & boulevards & new white houses like the suburbs of any other town make up Athens, and for itself one could not spend an hour there. There is however a graceful new building of white marble & this [PSULETI??] marble seems to me much more beautiful than the Carrara stone. The Academy of Sciences, next door to the university. The modern cathedral is ugly & gaudy inside & out.

35 Sunday. 19th January, but 7th January here, so yesterday really was the great feast of the Epiphany. C & D went out to the Latin church early but as mass had not begun, we left & went into a Greek service; a good many men & boys in the nave, women in the aisles. The singing rather pleasant. It was odd to see everybody getting a little unbleached wax taper at the door, and lighting it, and putting them in stands prepared for them, the which when they had burnt down about an inch a sacristan drew out, removed & threw into a basket. Perhaps they became his property, or the churches, but anyhow God or the saints were content, I suppose. I am always more and more impressed with the certainty that popular worship is the same, under different forms & that there is next to no difference between the Jewish & Egyptian temples or the Greek ones or the R. Catholics. They all have a mystery, with priests & sacrifices & hidden places & sacred objects, and gods [May??] they be called Jupiter, Osiris, St Joseph or any other name. They have nothing to do either with religion or with the teachings of Xt. Still the apparent reverence of these Greek church people is pleasant to see, and making the cross hundreds of times & kissing pictures & all the rest of it

may make them happy. Perhaps the simplicity of the Mahometan mosques impresses me most, if only the women were admitted too. But here in the East the men seem to do more I the way of church observances. At ¼ to 9 with a cicerone, a pleasant intelligent Greek, we all walked off to see the Theatre of Dionysus; very interesting as having been the great Athenian theatre & the cradle of the Drama & where the great plays of the tragedians were performed. And it is interesting too to see the marble chairs inscribed with the names of the priests and others who used them. Then we looked at the ruins of the Temple of Aesculapius, & the Odeion, & finally ascended by the Propylaea to the Temple of Nike & to the Parthenon & Erectheion. I like it all better afar off, but very grand are these ruins on a cloudless morning, as one thinks of the scenes that had been enacted there & of the multitudes that had worshipped & of the altars to the various gods, & the offering — & then the old story, churches built, barbarian invasions, bullets & explosions & destruction & lastly excavations & tourists & custodians. The museum containing so many remains of the earliest Parthenon sculptures is most interesting. We spent the whole morning there till midday, enjoying it all greatly. The views of sea & plain & mountain are so exquisite. After lunch we visited a little Greek church made up of old fragments, the Temple of the Winds, the almost perfect old temple called the Theseion, & then walked up the hill of Pnyx where is the stone-cut Bema where the orators addressed the people. There we rested & sketched and gazed at the glowing Acropolis, and afterwards when A & B went off again to see the old cemetery & other remains, we others wandered over the rocks & patches of springing wheat, gathering anemonies & finding land-shells & were home a little before dark. Nearly everybody wears European dress, but there is a regiment of soldiers with the national short frilled petticoats & the curious strong upturned boots with the great rosette on the toe, and many of the country people, shepherds, & milkmen & others worn queer coarse goat-hair jackets & these white frilled ballet-girl petticoats, only not pink stockings but thick woolen leggings or tights. There were a good many Cretans in the town. We found a funeral of a little child, the body is borne uncovered on an open bier and so laid in the ground, The people are very clean looking & so quiet. No beggars or louts anywhere, a wonderful contrast after Egypt. Nobody stares or pursues one, & all seem fairly well to do, & the children especially are nicely dressed and clean & happy & healthy looking. The shops are mostly very uninteresting but there are a few with those national boots, & costumes, & red 2-handled amphorae.

By the bye there were some slight earthquake shocks last night, at least A & B are sure of it, tho' D thought it might have been a carriage, but on mentioning this to the cicerone, he seemed to take it as a matter of course, only saying he did not remember any for the last 5 months, as if that were a long time to go without them. The cracks & repairs in my room speak clearly to an experienced eye of earthquakes.

Monday 20th January

Another lovely morning after a frosty night! Was there ever such weather before in January? Off in a carriage & pair with luncheon at ¼ to 9 to Eleusis, with one horse that jibbed & one that shied. Consequently when well out into the country we were nearly overturned in a ditch into which the shier took us, and a nasty deep ditch too, one of the 2 which lined both sides of the road. We had to get out, which we did with more pleasure than getting in again. On our return the other jibbed & turned round. Then both horses whirled round; then No. 1 shied. Then by way of a change both galloped over the hard road full of holes & strewn with rocks at the pace of a shooting star. However we got home safely by 5.30! Going along the Sacred Way where once

the processions went to the Temple of the Mysteries, we presently ascended the hills with woods of Aleppo pine, stopping to see an old church with half-destroyed Byzantine mosaics. Then we descended to the sea, the lake-like bright blue bay of Eleusis, with Mt. Parnassus, snow-capped far away. 2 ¼ hours drive brought us to the struggling village of Eleusis, where very many men wore the national costume & the women home spun jackets & aprons of brilliant coloured stripes and a sort of door-mat shaped black & white thing behind, all over an embroidered white skirt, their heads tied round with a handkerchief. There were many very good looking people & all looked well, clean, happy, & kindly. They all behave charmingly to strangers. One longs to be able to talk to them. We spent an hour among the vast ruins of which I understood nothing except that it had been a glorious shrine, and then luncheon under a tree in the village tasting the horrible country beverage, something like the Italian Fernet, being a good red wine made disgusting by the addition of turpentine from the pine trees. Our cicerone Constantine assured us they drank no fine wine, only this. Children [were ??] bringing home from the fishing boats sacks full of large Pinnae & the shore was a mass of shells. I found one or two flowers, but the country generally is terribly bare & dried up & frozen up. One sees men in the country like this [PEN & INK SKETCH OF MAN] with their stiff coarse short & road-sleeved jackets, with huge hood hanging down & their turned up boots with the big tassel on the tip. And they or their donkeys carry pretty coloured bags.

Tuesday 21st January.

Sketched the Acropolis from one end of the Hill of Pnyx in the morning & from the other end in the afternoon. Another brilliant day. We passed through a bazaar where the red shoes are made, & the rough coloured stuffs. An Englishman at the hotels tells us it hardly ever rains here & that the heat & dust of summer are intolerable. He finds it the dullest place in the world, as beyond the situation & the antiquities there is nothing to see, do, or hear. We met some of the Royal family, including the Crown Princess in the afternoon & took tickets for the French Italian opera, la Favorita, for the evening. Today I tried a 4th kind of Greek wine. Attique rouge. I like the cheap white Santorini, much like the Sicilian Corvo; the mousey Parnes not at all. Attique is good, & the best white Oinos Aediforos. The opera house is a fine one, fairly filled, very plainly decorated, with pit raised some height above the stalls, and with wide projecting sort of balcony. It is lighted by electric light, as the hotels, many of the streets of Athens.

Wednesday 22nd January.

Change of weather. Warm & violent south wind with fearful dust. In the morning we visited the museums. The Schliemann Museum is very interesting, containing all the beautiful gold ornaments found in the tombs of Mycenae. I & D took the steam train to Phaleros in the afternoon, walked about on the shore picking up shells & home by the road. All wind & dust & dryness.

Th. 23rd.

We started by train at midday & had a not tiring journey to Patras, seeing the cutting of the canal between the gulf of Corinth & the Saronic gulf, the remains of old Corinth, the lovely bays of Eleusis &c once more, & the varied and beautiful scenery of the Gulf of Corinth with Mt. Parnassus 8000 feet, snow covered rising up above the clouds. We reached Patras at 7. Were much helped by Cooks' interpreter, & conducted to the hotel to dine. We could not go on board the 'Minerva' (Austrian

Lloyd line) from Constantinople till past 9 as she was late, & when we did it was not pleasant tossing about in a heavy harbor sea for a long time to reach the far-off ship. When we did at last get on board, we sought our cabins & soon turned in. She started about 10 p.m. It was soon evident we were in for it! & we had a horrid night. But towards
5 10 I was better & got up on deck. The ship long, narrow & dirty. 1st class passengers not many, chiefly German. The day was cold, cloudy, rainy & wretched & the beautiful coast hidden up. And B was too ill to appear till later. About 1 we anchored at Corfu, but it rained so we could not go ashore. It looked an enchanting island. Just after starting again at 4, we had dinner, the water perfectly calm. We had great hope
10 for the Adriatic, little knowing what was in store for us with storms raging all over Europe, a furious 'Borra' blowing down the Adriatic. [DRIED WILD ANEMONES FROM ATHENS] & the sea mountains high. About 7 it began. The waves swept over the deck; the water poured down into our cabins through the windows that would not fasten, and poor D had at least of a foot of it rolling about where he slept and all his
15 clothes soaked. A truly fearful time of it. Of course we were hours late, & arrived on Saturday morning at 10 o'clock in a pitiable condition at cheerless, comfortless Brindisi, with its horrible hotel. Pitiless place, infernal wind, and impudent gamins. To bed we went, but by 4 p.m. we were off in the train, A, B, & D home via Bologna, I to Rome.

20

Sunday. Jan 26th.

Reached Rome at 2.30. Was met by kind Dr. Tehini, who feted me with all the courtesy & geniality for which Italy so excels.

25

Monday 27th.

Spent the morning in the Museum & left at 1.30 for Florence.

Tues & Wed, 28th & 29th.

30 At Florence enjoying St Grove's Herbarium & despoiling his packets of duplicates of flowers for myself. Left at night & on

Th. 30th at 9.30 a.m. reached HOME —

35

40

Annex: Clarence Bicknell writes on the inside front cover a list of the Egyptian dynasties and Kings as a memory aid when visiting different sites:

5

1500.	iv. Dynasty.	Kheops etc.	Pyramid of Gizeh
3300.	iv. v. . . .	Menes.	Sakkarah
2800 2500	xii.	Cheops etc.	Abu Hassan. Abydos. Heliopolis.
2200 1700	xiii.		Abydos.
	xviii. xix. xx.	Amunhotep Thothmes. Rameses i Seti. Rameses ii. iii.	Thebes -
980.	xxii.	Shishak.	Karnak.
700.	xxv.		Sabaco (Karnak)
600.	xxvi.	Shishak	Karnak. Luxor.
532.	xxxii.	Alexander the Great.	Elephantine, Karnak sanctuary
505.	xxxiii.	Ptolemais. Cleopatra (52. BC)	Dead Sea, Esneh, Ombos, Philae.
A.D. 300	xxxiv.	Caesars.	Denderah, Esneh.
170.			

Clarence Bicknell and Thomas Cook & Son.

5 Clarence Bicknell's nephew Edward Berry had arrived in Bordighera, where Bicknell lived, in 1891 as manager of the English bank, as Thomas Cook & Son's agent, and later as British vice-consul. Thomas Cook had retired from the company at the end of 1878; his only son John Mason Cook (1834-1899)⁸⁴ officially gained control of the business at the beginning of 1879 (although, in reality, John had been running things since 1873). Cook's [Tourist's] Handbook to the Health Resorts of the South of France and Northern Coast of the Mediterranean, Including Marseilles, Toulon, 10 Cannes, Hyeres, Nice, Monaco, Bordighera, San Remo, Genoa, and Pisa" was first published by Thos Cook & Son in 1885 an another edition in 1889 which shows that Bordighera was on Thos Cook & Son's list of destinations for tourists. It is possible that Berry and Bicknell got to know John Mason Cook, 8 years older than Bicknell.

15 Thomas Cook had conducted his first party up the Nile in 1869 (<http://timea.rice.edu/NileCruise.html>). John Mason Cook promoted, and even led, excursions to the Middle East where he was described as "the second-greatest man in Egypt"⁸⁵. Thomas Cook & Son had a substantial business in Egypt which developed further over the next 10 years⁸⁶.

20 Clarence Bicknell starts this diary by calling the four travellers A, B, C, D as if to protect their identity. But upon arriving at Alexandria by boat he identifies one of the party as "Cook" and others in the party (probably A and B, the nurses) as the "Miss Cookites". Bicknell relates that this man "Cook" got the party through customs with ease. Could it have been that "Cook" is John Mason Cook, the only son of Thomas 25 Cook and the managing director of Thomas Cook & Son, travel company, at that time, or even Thomas Cook? Paul Smith, the Company Archivist for Thomas Cook UK & Ireland, thinks not⁸⁷: "*I'm not sure that Clarence Bicknell is referring to a specific person when he says that Cook got the party through customs with ease. I think he is more likely to mean the corporate "Thomas Cook", although perhaps in the person of a dragoman (or other representative). It is also highly unlikely to have been John Mason Cook himself.*"

30 However, the presence of "Cook" weighs heavily in Clarence's diary. He writes on New Year's Day 1890, page 33 above, "*We are back on the steamer at 1/4 to 2, & while at lunch meet the Tewfik steamer returning & see many old Hydaspes and Cairo acquaintances & stop a minute or two to receive a visit from Mr. Thom Cook, who came aboard & hears from our captain about our bad engine &c.*" Could Clarence have been mistaken? While he uses "Cook" or "Cooks" in places to refer to the 35 company, he does also single out "the man from Cooks" or "the interpreter from 40

⁸⁴ In 1872, Thomas formed a partnership with his son, John A. Mason Cook, and renamed the travel agency as Thomas Cook & Son. The firm's growth was consolidated by John Mason Cook and his sons, especially by its involvement with military transport and postal services for Britain and Egypt during the 1880s, when Cook began organising tours to the Middle East.

⁸⁵ In 1884 John Mason Cook was asked by the British Government to organise a relief expedition up the Nile to rescue General Gordon from Khartoum. Arrangements were made for the movement of 18,000 troops, nearly 40,000 tons of supplies, 40,000 tons of coal and 800 whaleboats. To transport the coal from Tyneside to Boulac and Assiout via Alexandria, 28 large steamers and 6000 railway trucks were required. An additional 7000 railway trucks were needed for the military stores, while on the Nile 27 steamers and 650 sailing boats were used to carry the troops and supplies. John and his Egyptian managers acted as overseers of the entire operation, which relied on the labour of 5000 local men and boys, and completed their side of the contract in November 1884. Despite all the efforts, however, Khartoum fell in January 1885 and Gordon was killed.

⁸⁶ Thomas Cook & Son published their guide to the Middle East including Egypt and the Nile in 1876 (*Cook's tourists' handbook for Egypt, the Nile, and the Desert*. (London: T. Cook & Son, 1897) and constructed their own Nile steamers from 1884 onwards.

⁸⁷ Email from Paul Smith to Marcus Bicknell 5 Jan 2018.

Cooks". On page 7 he says "we were chiefly interested in Cook's *galley*" where Cook could be the chef of a man named Cook, it's unclear. But here he seems so firm about it being Thomas Cook himself. A sentence later he writes "*and with the Miss Cookites were soon in carriages, about 4 of them, and all omnibuses also crammed en route for the station*" where he must mean "ladies in the Cook party"

It is also documented⁸⁸ that John Mason Cook wrote to his son Bert⁸⁹ in Egypt between 1889 and 1893 so it is likely that John Mason Cook, if it were he, was on his way to visit his son.

Subsequently, John Mason Cook, while arranging for the German Emperor Wilhelm II to visit Palestine in 1898, contracted dysentery and died the following year⁹⁰. The business was inherited by John's three sons: Frank Henry, Ernest Edward and Thomas Albert⁹¹ ('Bert'). His founding grandfather Thomas Cook had retired from the business in 1879 and died on 18 July 1892, having been afflicted with blindness in his declining years.

End

⁸⁸ <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/download/GB2065%20ARCHIVES>

⁸⁹ John Mason Cook's youngest son was Thomas Albert Cook, usually referred to as "Bert" (but never Albert). Source: Email from Paul Smith to Marcus Bicknell 5 Jan 2018.

⁹⁰ Some sources mention John Mason Cook's brother Thomas but this is an error. Thomas Cook only had one son.

⁹¹ Note letters from his father to Albert in Egypt, above