THE NILE IN 1904

For some years past the rapid development of this country has attracted much attention to Egypt. More than twenty centuries ago Herodotus wrote that "Egypt is the gift of the Nile," and nearly every interest in Egypt still centres in that remarkable river. The author of the book under review in his introduction says, in an eloquent passage, "The most interesting river of the ancient world, it is still the most interesting river of our time, and, in spite of all that ancient and modern discoveries have unfolded, its discharges are to-day more difficult to unravel and weave together than those of any other stream in either hemisphere. These discharges are still a mystery, and it will need years and years of patient observation and study, to enable us to state with exactitude why its floods rise and fall with such regular and stately precision, why they are never sudden and abrupt, and why its summer supplies can never be completely cut off even in their traverse of over 3,000 kilometres through the burning and parched Sahara."

In his preface Sir W. Willcocks modestly says that his object is to bring up to date the brilliant essay on the Nile of the Italian engineer Lombardini published in 1865. We think the author has done much more than that, for in a book of only 220 pages he lays before us, not only the results of the most recent studies, but such a complete, and at the same time concise, epitome of the hydrology of the river as has never before been published in a connected form. While largely acknowledging the many different sources of information utilised by him, he is also bound to say that he has himself studied the Nile for fifteen years, and even if he had not said so, every page of his book bears evidence to the fact that it is written by one who is a complete master of his subject. Our readers are well aware of this, as the author has frequently contributed to our columns; sometimes we have shared his opinions, and sometimes we have not done so, but we always recognise that they have been very clearly and forcibly stated. The plates inserted in the text are of great assistance. We doubt if any published section of the Nile ever gave so much information in so small a compass as does Plate 2, extending from the sea to Lake Victoria, a distance of 6,000 kilometres.

In chapter I., devoted to the main river, we find many interesting remarks. Referring to the Blue Nile, the author says: "The Blue Nile is the true parent of the land of Egypt. The deposits of its muddy waters have made Egypt. The Atbara has added its quota, but the Blue Nile is incomparably the chief contributor; fed by the timely and plentiful rains of Southern and South-Eastern Abyssinia, it contributes 65 per cent. of the waters which pass Assouan.

The climate of the Nile valley is well described, but we do not agree with the author when he states that the heaviest rainfall at Alexandria in any year has been 12 inches. We have in our possession records of the rainfall in Alexandria, which show that in at least one year it reached 13.55 inches. Many interesting references are made to the varying discharges of the Nile. From these we note that the mean discharge which passes Assouan is 3,040 cubic metres per sec-nd; of this, 2,100 cubic metres per second reach the Mediterranean, and only 940 cubic metres per second are used for irrigation, and this must include a certain proportion which escapes by evaporation.

Chapter 2 treats of the tributaries of the Nile, and begins with the following paragraph: "Lake Victoria, the true source of the Nile, lies on the Equator, and fed by abundant rains and numerous streams, discharges its surplus waters over the Ripon Falls and gives birth to the Victoria Nile." This chapter includes an able treatise on the Nile sudd, from which we extract the following: "The real sudd region lies between Ghaba Shambe and Lake No, on a length of 380 kilometres. Between Fort Berkeley and Gondokoro, the flood as well as the summer supplies are within banks. Between Gondokoro and Bor the summer supply is well within banks, but the floods overflow the valley. Between Bor and Ghaba Shambe the summer supply is just within banks, but the floods overflow freely. Between Ghaba Shambe and Lake No the summer supply overflows the banks, and hence there result the periodical barrings or sudds of the Nile by the floating vegetation so common in this region. While the summer supply is within banks it can insure a clear waterway; but when not only the floods but the summer supplies ordinarily overflow the banks, the stream must be aided artificially if it is to keep its waterway clear" (p. 33). Again, on page 37: "The Sudd region of the Albert Nile lies north of Ghaba Shambe and corresponds to that part of the river where not only do the floods overflow the banks, but the summer supplies can do so in many places. It is the delta of the river in a very embryonic stage. There are two main branches to the river, the Albert Nile proper and the Zeraf, which have both been already described. Both these rivers are liable to be blocked by sudd, or blocks of living vegetation. These blocks are sometimes as much as 5 metres thick and capable of turning nearly the whole supply of the river out of its course. They are formed of papyrus, weeds and watergrasses, which grow on the half-sandy half-peaty banks of the lagoons and marshes traversed by the river, and which, under the double action of a rising flood and strong winds, are torn up and driven into the channels wherever they are confined in width, and there jammed into solid masses of floating weeds, filling the whole width of the river, very nearly the whole depth, and sometimes over a kilometre in length. In addition to the local weeds and grasses there are always at hand in high floods dense masses of pistes weeds which have come from the upper waters of the Albert Nile south of Dafile. While the sudd floats it is not so bad as when it sinks, as it has done at block No. 15 north of Gaba Shambe, where the Nile has left its course for 37 kilometres owing to sunken sudd. When the sudd sinks it becomes putrid and loathsome.

"The sudd region is unmistakably, as Lombardini pointed out years ago, an old lake which has silted up and become full of peat and sand deposits. At one time the lake must have had an extreme length of 400 kilometres and width of 400 kilometres and been a larger sheet of water than Lake Victoria. The Sobat river flowed into it, and the Blue Nile may have flowed backwards up the bed of the present White Nile for tens of thousands of years. The north-east corner has been better filled with deposit than any other part. The dense masses of papyrus and water grasses which shut out the horizon in every direction intimidated the expedition sent up the Nile by Nero, and it returned northwards without having accomplished anything. From Nero's time to that of Mehemet Ali little was known of these regions. Mehemet Ali made a determined effort to discover what lay beyond these inhospitable regions, and sent up a well-equipped expedition under D'Arnaud.

(To be continued).

* The Nile in 1904. By Sir William Willcocks, K.C.M.G., F.R.G.S. London: E. and F. Spon, 57, Haymarket. Price 7s. 6d.

NILE NAVIGATION.

At a meeting of the Society of Arts yesterday week, Sir R. Hanbury Brown presiding, a paper was read by Sir William H. Preece on "The Navigation of the Nile." As the Chairman mentioned at the conclusion of the lecture, most of those present expected that Sir William would have dealt with the matter from the point of view of the electrical engineer, but he declared his main object to be to consider the question of the navigation of the Nile from Assouan to the sea, the regulation of its currents, depth of water, channels, and banks, so that the progress of the boats should be possible at all times and seasons both up and down stream. He had devoted a great deal of attention to the subject of navigation during the past fifty years of his practice as a submarine cable engineer, and there were few parts of our coast, channels, firths, and rivers that he did not know well. The chief point for careful consideration was not only the control of the water, but the control of the silt. Thirty thousand tons of valuable mud were lost in the sea every year, and the rise of the bed of the river in the Delta was a serious question. The outlets could be cleared by dredging, and currents could be regulated by storage and barrage, but what was most needed was the protection of the banks and the training of the river. Sir William Preece did not follow his paper literally, but from time to time displayed and commented on a number of beautiful photographs taken by his daughter a year ago, showing the important works which have been carried out and the effect of the currents on the banks. In thanking the lecturer Sir R. H. Brown said he feared the training of the river as suggested could be only carried out at a prohibitive cost.

VISITORS' LISTS.

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Mrs. Steel, Mr. Buckley, Mr. Rogow, England; Mr. Acatis, Greece; Mrs. Tungliesch, Vienna; Mr. Messter, Miss Messter, Germany; M. Henry d'Udehem d'Aout, Belgium; Mr. Wallis and family, U.S.A.; Mr. Jones, Mr. Flynn, England; Dr. and Mrs. Logan Carr. Mr. Poore, Mr. and Mrs. Watson, Mr. Gill, U.S.A.; Mr. and Mrs. de Jong, Antwerp; Mr. Hart, England; Mr. Genteiline, Russia; Mr. Najim Houry, Cyprus; Mr. Conrad, Germany; Mr. Jachs, England; Mr. Roeber, U.S.A.; Mr. Dittrich, Germany; Mr. New, England; Mr. and Mrs. Schuessler, Geneva; Mrs. Kapp and party, U.S.A.; Mr. Setion, Smyrna; Mr. Musa and family, Suez; Mr. Humphrey, England; Dr. and Mrs. Schunemann, Germany; Mr. and Mrs. Gilbertson, England; Mr. and Mrs. Woodruff, Misses Woodruff, U.S.A.; Mr. Krans, Germany; Mr. Phillips, England; Mr. and Mrs. Gonterland, Netherlands; Mr. Prevost, France; Dr. and Mrs. Hanauer, Germany; Mr. Brown and family, U.S.A.; Dr. Dunlop and party, Mr. Crone, England; Mr. Martin, U.S.A.

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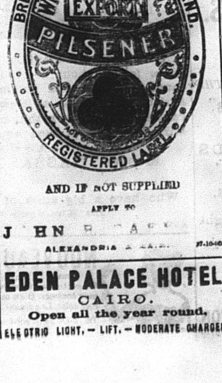

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We do not hold ourselves for the responsible opinions expressed by our correspondents, but we wish, in a spirit of fair play to all, to publish — within certain necessary limits — free discussion.

MISSIONS TO MOHAMEDANS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EGYPTIAN GAZETTE.

Sir,—Your leader in yesterday's "Egyptian Gazette" is a timely warning to those who are responsible for peace and order in this country. The proposed establishment of a "Nile Mission Press" and the weekly publication of a missionary paper in Arabic and English, "Orient and Occident," naturally arouse the attention of those interested in the religious situation here, especially when we remember that there are indications of a more active spirit among the followers of the Prophet.

The "Likoma Quarterly" said lately — "Everywhere we can see Mohamedanism at work, and its teachers are keen that we should not get a look in among the people." Again, the "Zanzibar Gazette" recently announced that the Sultan had started a Mohamedan college in Zanzibar. Similar tidings have come from elsewhere.

If these statements represent the truth it would seem that they betoken a rally on the part of Islam, and it is important that those who dwell in a Continent which numbers some 40,000,000 Mohamedans, should treat the question of missions to Mohamedans with the serious attention it requires.

Englishmen are somewhat too prone to under-estimate their adversaries. The matter must be dealt with from the standpoint, not of the devoted missionary whose outlook, politically, is limited, but from that of the well-informed, trained, and impartial observer who realises the gravity of the situation.

The experience of centuries should have taught us that Mohamedanism is a formidable religious system, admirably adapted to men in a certain stage of development, and that it brought to the negro in Africa a very remarkable advance in civilisation, while it has banished some of the worst features of African heathenism. It thoroughly fits the make of the African mind. Among tribes which have embraced Islam, education of a kind has been to a certain extent organised, and even manufactures "involving considerable skill" and a system of commerce have made their appearance.

The article offered by the modern Western missionary for the acceptance of the Moslem, the Hindu, and the Buddhist, is thoroughly Western in *evolution* and *presentation*; in fact, as modern research has abundantly shown, we Westerns are all at sea in our interpretation of the Gospel, till we have made allowance for its rhetorical method and the Orientalism of its form.

If it should be granted that Christianity should be preached to the Moslem, it is distinctly an arguable point how far the cool literalism of the West can hope to effectively and acceptably present to Eastern minds the contents of an Eastern book.—I am, etc.,

AN OBSERVER.

Cairo, February 8.

EGYPTIAN INVESTMENT AND AGENCY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EGYPTIAN GAZETTE.

Sir:—I beg to address you these few lines in connection with the paragraph in your issue of yesterday on the Egyptian Investment and Agency which was a reply to some articles appearing in some Cairo papers. As I did not see these articles I do not know on what ground it was based, but I should like to point out some facts for which this Company is to be blamed.

The directors ought to have allotted to every applicant so much per cent. of the shares applied for, in proportion to the total applications, for when making a rule they have to follow it. For instance, before the allotment I read in some papers that for the immense demand the Co. thinks of giving shares to all those who applied for 500 shares and upward only in proportion to the demands, and defer all other applications below these figures. Why did they not do so!

I was one who applied for 100 shares and have remitted the required amount to be paid on application and was prepared to meet any call. When remitting same a correspondence was held which assured me that the Co. was prepared to divide justly its shares between the subscribers. Other applications were forwarded the same day I applied, and a week after I received a noticed from the company that they found it impracticable to entertain my application for shares, owing to immense demand, while a week after I received my notice the others who applied received their advices. One was allotted the whole number of shares he applied for, which was equal exactly to the numbers of shares I applied for, and another received a certain number of shares which he was promised before the subscription.

If they intended to differentiate among the applicants, and to allot to their friends and leave the others, why make the subscription publicly and why they did not mention this in their prospectus!

I, and am sure all the others who had the same chance like me, protest against such doings of the company. I and the greatest part of applicants applied for these shares through the confidence we had in the directors in Egypt, and specially in the respected person of its managing director, Mr. Richard Abdy, and never thought that we would be treated in that way.

I regret for not taking any recommendation when applied for these shares had I known that result.—I am, etc.

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Calendar of Coming Events

ALEXANDRIA.

February.
Fri. 10 — Alderson's Garden. Variety Entertainment. 4 p.m.
Ras-el-Tin grounds. Football. School v. Mr. Strange's XI. 3.30 p.m.
Zizinia Theatre. *Le Monde ou l'on s'ennuie*, in aid of Orwa el Woska. 9 p.m.
Sat. 11 — Moharrem Bey Common. New Ground. St. Andrew Football Club v. "A" Coy. 2nd R. Berks. Kick-off 3 p.m.
Abbas Helmy Theatre. Italian Opera Company in *Carmen*. 9.15 p.m.
Eden Theatre. Margherita Society's Ball. 9 p.m.
Wed. 15 — Khedivial Club. General meeting of A.S.C. 9 p.m.
Thurs. 16 — H. M.'s Consulate. Ordinary Annual General Meeting St. Mark's Church Voters. 5 p.m.
Fri. 17 — New Khedivial Hotel. Recital by Fitzner Quatuor. 9 p.m.
Sat. 18 — Monferrato's Hall. Germania Lodge's Charity Ball. 9 p.m.
Fri. 24 — New Khedivial Hotel. Recital by Fitzner Quatuor. 9 p.m.
Sat. 25 — Cercle Mohamed Aly. Ball. 10 p.m.

CAIRO.

February.
Fri. 10 — Zoological Gardens. Performance by Ghiseh Boys' Band in afternoon. Mena House. Officers Inniskilling Fusiliers "At Home."
Khedivial Opera House. Gala performance of *Rigoletto* in aid of Orthodox-Syrian Benevolent Society. 9 p.m.
Verdi Theatre. Italian Operetta Company. 9 p.m.
Theatre des Nouveautés. Variety Entertainment. 9.30 p.m.
Trocadero. Variety Entertainment. 9.30 p.m.
Sat. 11 — Shepheard's Hotel. Band Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 4 to 6 p.m. Savoy Hotel. Small Dance. 10 p.m.
Mon. 13 — Ghezireh Agricultural Show. And four following days.
Abdeen Palace. Khedivial Reception. 3.30 p.m.
Tues. 14 — Abdeen Palace. Khedivial Kourban-Beyram Reception. 8 a.m. Abdeen Palace. The Khedivah receives European ladies. 3.40 to 4.40 p.m.
Wed. 15 — Military Tournament.
Thurs. 16 — Railway Institute. Opening of Foot ball Competition. Mena House. Gymkhana. Ghezireh Palace Hotel. Small Dance 10 p.m.
Fri. 17 — Helouan. Third Winter Race Meeting. 2.30 p.m.
Sat. 18 — Ghezireh. K.S.C. Horse Show.
Mon. 20 — Agricultural Bank. Annual general meeting. 3 p.m.
Wed. 22 — K.S.C. Third Winter Race Meeting. Khedivial Opera House. "Pirates of Penzance." 9 p.m.
Thurs. 23 — Ghezireh Casino. Grand Ball.
Fri. 24 — K.S.C. Third Winter Race Meeting. Shoubra. Trials of Steam-ploughing Machines. Esbekieh Garden. French Benevolent Society's Ball.

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