

It is a curious fact that the first impression that the traveller receives on entering Egypt is not that of hoary antiquity. Alexandria, almost destroyed along the water front in last decade, is one of the most modern appearing of Eastern cities. Even its sole remaining relic of the past - the so-called Pompey's Pillar - a monolithic granite shaft crowned by an unfinished Corinthian Capital - dates from a late Roman period, ~~and~~ looks strangely like some modern attempt at imitation of imperial magnificence. The journey that follows, across the Delta too, gives ~~the~~ impression of a new country - the Temporary farm buildings rendered necessary by the periodical flooding of the country, the lately built factories and iron rail-road bridges are not at all in keeping with the Egypt that we read about. In my own case this feeling was increased by the fact that I only stopped in Cairo long enough to take a night train up the Nile to Lingeh and thence the steamer on the river itself. It was owing to this arrangement that, with exception of a shadowy glimpse of the pyramids by moonlight as I passed, the first ancient monument that I met was the Temple of Dendera, almost as far up as ancient Thebes. I consider this in a way fortunate, for the profound impression produced by this noble monument, reached after a walk of half an hour from the river bank through the dense fields, due not only to its being the first example of a strange architectural style that I had seen, and the strong contrast of ~~an~~ between the production of a ~~finished~~ polished civilization and the half-civilized rustic scene that surrounds it, but also to the noble design of the building itself, ~~was~~ ~~a~~ ~~lasting~~ one, ^{and} ⁱⁿ every way favorable to my appreciation of the building that I met with later, which without this preliminary study might have been mere senseless ruins to me. Dendera is not one of the older of the Egyptian temples - in fact is one of the very latest in its most striking part - the vestibule portico that extends across the entire front. But early or late, leaving small details out of the question, I consider this noble approach one of the very best and most effective architectural compositions in Egypt. Whether seen from a distance, where the fine columnar facade contrasts well with the ^{low} ~~high~~ ~~shells~~ that flank it, or from within, where the enormous columns rise like towers with their capitals half lost in the obscurity of the dimly lighted apartments it is always impressive even awe-inspiring, and one cannot help admiring the genius that conceived of and developed forms and arrangements so well fitted for their purpose - the home of a god. Edfu, also, is another of these later works that help us to form a correct estimate of what Egyptian architecture really was. For with the exception of quite unimportant parts both of these temples stand complete, and would only need a little dusting here and touch of color there to be ^{ready} for the solemn procession of priests as they were 3000 years ago. The temples that I had the privilege of examining more or less completely were these temples of Hathor at Dendera and Horus at Edfu, the Isis Temple and famous Pavillion on the island of Philae above the First Cataract, the temples at Kourneh, Medinet Abou, Luxor, the Pantheon at Thebes and the noble group at Karnak, as well as ~~that~~ ^{those} at Abydos, and the smaller buildings that include the Mansions at Dendera and Philae, the palace Pavillion at Medinet Abou, the so-called ~~white~~ Temple near the great Sphinx and other less important buildings others of great interest however in their sculptured details. None than in any other country, in the

the study of the architecture of Egypt ~~and~~ led to consider the Tomb, the very
mind of the primitive form of and origin of the temple architecture - shall
always play such a prominent part in the history of the art in all ages.
It is an old story to refer to the Pyramids as the most striking and wonder-
ful examples of Tomb architecture to be met with anywhere. I will only
say that I went to the Pyramids, feeling that I was to see nothing new, that
almost every stone would be familiar. That after the first sensation of pleas-
ure at seeing this famous group of structures was past I should feel a
proper contempt for the primitive mind that thought size the only re-
quirement for sublimity, and a display of expended labor the proper expres-
sion of regal magnificence and power. After I had followed out a sight-
seeing programme - had climbed to the top and burrowed into the heart of
Cheops, had stepped off Cephren, had examined the excellent construction
of the smaller Third Pyramid and was turning with a feeling almost of relief
to look at the curious Mastabas that cover the desert to the west I happened to
look back at familiar old Cheops, at the simple forms of his fellows and I
felt a conversion as sudden and miraculous as that of Saul. They seemed
as if removed at an immeasurable distance from me, I was as a grain of
sand in the desert at their feet. I realized that great size is the all
important element in sublimity, that display of labor is not only the
expression of regal power but the measure of a god - it was the crush-
ing weight of 6000 years of existence that drove every feeling of contempt
and familiarity from me, and I left the place with the realization
that I had been in the presence of true monarchs of art. So much for
the sentimentality of the Pyramids. I found much of everyday interest in their
construction. The great Pyramid, and in fact nearly all the others, are not as
carefully built as I had imagined. The stones are roughly squared, of course,
but not closely fitted, and the spaces are merely filled in with broken stone
and a coarse concrete. The courses are as a rule about 30 inches high, the blocks
4 or 5 feet long - all of the coarse granular limestone quarried from the hills
on the opposite side of the Nile above Cairo. The interior of Cheops, however, shows
some fine mason work. The lining of the passages and chambers is of a highly
polished granite where the joints are almost invisible. I visited only the Queen's
and King's chambers - both much larger than I had expected, especially the latter
where the ceiling was almost invisible by ordinary candle-light. But I was fully
repaid for the difficult, I might almost say dangerous scramble over the rough
floor of the tunnel around the great drop-block and the slippery incline further
on by viewing the imposing Grand Corridor that leads to the King's Chamber. Here
constructive ingenuity is combined with excellent workmanship and imposing
dimensions to make the most effective apartment among these older structures.
The Mastabas or Tombs of the nobles that lie in great numbers to the west of the
desert great Pyramid I found very interesting. Their form is that of a truncated
pyramid, with considerably greater length from north to south than in the
opposite direction. All I think show blind doorways with the decorative charac-
teristic of this period - the "palm-leaf" lintel, the decorative panels at the sides
and tops and simple relief ornament. None of these seem to have interesting
interiors, although I visited as many as my time would allow - in fact they
are nearly solid masses of masonry. But this masonry in itself deserves
attention. As a rule the blocks of stone are remarkably large, and as in the
case of the Pelasgic masonry in Greece often show eccentric cases of fitting
- notches cut in a lower stone to accommodate a projecting corner in an upper

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small square blocks set in to fill a corner, and abrupt interruption of a regular course to introduce a large block. I think a careful examination of all the earlier masonry must prove to anyone that the stone was cut and fitted after it was brought to its place. In fact ordinary masons still seem to work on that principle. For - I think it was at Minifeh - I saw one Arab-builder ring an arch over a door that was to show a moulding on the face. The blocks were brought to him merely worked on the face and to the required curve without reference to regular courses. He placed them at random cutting a face for the joints as he proceeded, and on reaching the Keystone cut and broke until the last piece was small enough to fill the space. The principal interest connected with the other tombs of these earlier dynasties - the Tomb of Nubier; Campbell's Tomb and others near the Great Sphinx, and above all the remarkable Mastaba of Ti at Saccara, is their beautiful and instructive sculptured decoration. Quite different in character spirit as well as decoration are the famous Tombs of the Kings in the cliffs that enclose the desolate gorge of Bab-el-Melook near the site of ancient Thebes. Here the tomb with its great passages and imposing burial chambers is entirely hewn from the rock, and forms ~~some~~ an artificial cave that extends for hundreds of feet into the heart of the mountain. The entrance is effected by means of a long square corridor, perhaps 15 feet high and wide, which usually runs horizontally to the chambers at the end, although there is an exception in the case of the famous Tomb of Seti I. the so-called Belzoni's Tomb where imposing flights of steps lead down until a depth of 150 feet is reached. The point of greatest interest is reached in the tomb chamber; often several in number in the more important tombs - an apartment with flat or coiled ceiling and often furnished with supporting piers. Corridors, chamber walls, ceilings and piers are completely covered with painted illustrations nearly all in remarkable preservation. By a discreet use of baksheesh I was also able to see many of the minor tombs of this district, many imitating enough from the exterior - mere mummy-pits in some cases, but Aladin's caves, after the long, hot and dirty shaft had been passed, disclosing wonders of ancient Egyptian art in a preservation not even approached in the more famous and frequently visited places. It is quite unnecessary to write a detailed description of the temples of Egypt, much less of their arrangement and style. Personally I was not disappointed although I expected much. In fact I was quite unprepared for the sensation I felt when standing in the noble courts and imposing halls of the better preserved examples at Edfoa, Philae, Dendera and Luxor. It is not at all the effect produced by the Greek temples, any more than the changing purples and blues of the Greek landscape are like the floods of luminous yellow that pour over the desert with the rising sun or the deep orange glow that fills the west in the evening in the valley of the Nile. They are types of their age, and a true reflect of the spirit of their builders. I think no one can appreciate the excellence of Egyptian art, or form any ~~correct~~ idea of its wide reaching capabilities until he has stood in the actual presence of these noble monuments after the long journey through the East that is necessary to reach them. This calls to mind the conviction that I felt

in Egypt of how liable we are to prejudice an art. All things Egyptian ap-
pear to us stiff, formal and unnatural, but if the traveller is blessed with
even ordinary powers of observation I think he cannot fail to leave Egypt with the
most profound respect for the remarkable way in which natural forms are
reproduced for decorative purposes with so little loss to their character. One
must see those sharp-nosed dogs that attack him as he walks up to the
temple gate, the long-horned cattle in the fields, the broad-jawed donkey
that he rides and above all the placid expression and statuesque poise
of the Spts of today to realize how little Egypt has changed on its
outward surface and how perfectly the old artist has reproduced all
~~in~~ granite and basalt or traced the forms on the creamy surface of the
limestone. Perhaps in one case only have writers led our expectations a
little too high, and must I say that it is in regard to the Hypostyle
Hall at Karnac? That it was the most profoundly impressive of all
Egyptian buildings I think there can be no doubt. But at present,
surrounded by the tremendous ruins of the temples on all sides, roofless,
half excavated only, partly ruined, to place it on a pedestal of fame
so far above anything that is to be met with in Egypt is to do an in-
justice to the noble vestibules at Esneh and Dendera, the courts at
Edfou and Philae, even the grand colonnade at Luxor. Size alone considered,
however, Karnac is the most astonishing thing in Egypt, and it is greatly to be re-
gretted that it is not in a state of preservation that would allow us to form
some idea of the effect of the whole in its best days. Nearly all of the temples met
with are of the well known arrangement of court and roofed hall, but I saw interest-
ing variations in the picturesque terrace temple at Der el-Bahari at Thebes and the singu-
lar memorials of Seti I at Abydos where there are seven sanctuaries, each dedicated to a
separate god. The so-called pavilions at Medinet Abu was, to me, hard to understand, but
although in appearance so different from anything else met with in Egypt and mean-
ingless in its position, yet it stands in direct communication with the temple beyond,
and without much doubt was only a portion of its vestibule. I was interested in
visiting the obelisks, and managed to see all that still remain in Egypt - the oldest
that at Heliopolis a few miles out from Cairo; the companion of the one in the Place de
la Concorde, that at Luxor -; a small one at Philae, and the four at Karnac - two
fallen and broken in pieces - two standing, remarkable the one for size - it is about
100 feet high and 8 ft 2 inches square at the base, the other for its beautiful form.
It was in examining this latter shaft - erected by Tutmos I about 1600 B.C., that
I made, to me, an interesting discovery. I say "to me" because it seems impos-
sible that it has not been remarked, but I have never read of it. That is the knowl-
edge and use of entasis by the ancient Egyptians. In this elegant shaft, cut
and placed in position at least 600 years before the siege of Troy, the sides show
a most subtle outward curve, and the curves of the pyramidal top a decided
convexity that is easy to distinguish even in a photograph. After seeing this I
kept my eyes open to see if it was repeated. Although without measurements I
should not like to assert it, yet in my own mind I am convinced that
entasis exists in the columns of the famous Hypostyle Hall, and what is
more, in Tomb No. 4 at Beni Hassan. I saw a 16 fluted column of the
so-called Proto-Doric style, dating from at least 2300 B.C., that showed a
decided curve. I was sorry to remark however that the famous Proto-Doric col-
umns in Tomb No. 2, at Beni Hassan, are straight and hard as are nearly
all the columns that I examined. I am inclined to think that the curve was sug-
gested by the custom of contracting the base and neck of the Lotus and Papyrus
so well known to all students of Egyptian architecture. (Went's plan) J. H. Meyer.

Dear Professor:

Enclosed is a few pages of my impressions of Egypt, I ran out of paper on the voyage here and must put off telling you of what I saw of Mohammedan architecture in Cairo until later - that was not the least interesting by considerable, especially in the matter of minarets. I arrived here last night after a remarkably pleasant voyage of 12 days from Port Said, and even on shore, although only 8 degrees from the equator, it is not unbearably hot. My few hours in Ceylon have been full of interest so far - everything but the omnipresent Englishman is new and strange; the vegetation, people and especially vehicles. The streets are full of two wheeled carts with a woven grass cover, drawn by bulls with tremendous horns and a queer hump between the shoulders, and the "jirikshaw" a sort of baby-carriage for a grown person drawn by a $\frac{9}{10}$ naked coolie. On my arrival I was disgusted to discover that my old companion-in-travel the Asiatic Cholera had arrived just before me, and was thinning out the population at the rate of 700 or 800 a day in the very district that I must visit first - southern India. But I certainly cannot give up such places as Tirnevelly, Madura, Michinopoly Tanjore and the Seven Pagodas if

There is a little danger connected with it. I only mention this so that if you never receive the final number of my Egyptian novel you may class me as an architectural martyr or a blessed fool for adding India to my list. Please accept my best wishes for yourself and the department for the New Year, and I will add the hope that I may be there in person on the next new year's day, even if only as a visitor, to see the improvements I am sure you have been able to carry out in the new building.

Colombo, Ceylon
Jan 10th 1894 }

Sincerely yours
J. A. Meyer J.

Dear Professor. Calcutta Feb-10 '94

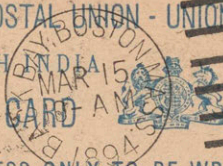
I have just arrived in Calcutta and found the circular announcing lectures by Prof. Townes and Despradelle. For the Lowell Course addressed to me in your handwriting. I was glad even to see that familiar sign that you were still at the head of affairs in what must now be to you familiar quarters in the Architectural Bldg. I have already travelled over nearly 3000 miles of India - still have 3000 ahead of me - and seen such buildings as I never dreamed of. Of Hindu architecture proper I cannot say that I am in raptures over it excepting in the matter of beautiful workmanship in the details - but of the Mohammedan work, of which I have as yet seen only a little, that in Bijapur, it impresses me as worthy of the closest study, and sure to excite warmest admiration, both in detail and general design. Yours very truly
F. M. S. H.

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