

WINTERING IN THE EAST.

By EMMA BREWER.



WHAT a host of fascinating visions are called up by the bare idea of wintering in the East, and yet nothing that the imagination can picture or foreshadow comes up to the reality when at length we find ourselves in the midst of the new surroundings which fill hearts and eyes and intellects with pictures and impressions never to be effaced.

To winter in Egypt means that we have all the advantages of Italy with fairyland thrown in. We are not much behind the Athenians of old in our craving for something new, and it has become quite a fashion for English, Americans, and Germans who have money enough to gratify this craving to go to Egypt for the winter.

A large number go in search of health or to ward off threatened disease, but the majority make their way thither for a new life full of change, fascination, and pleasure—in fact, to live over again the *Arabian Nights*.

Perhaps the reason why books and exhibitions have failed to bring home to us the actual life in Egypt is because they could not by any possibility convey to us the climate, the soil, and the ever-changing population, which render it so different from any other place. So wonderful is our first experience of it that we are overwhelmed with delight and surprise.

The great aim and object of all visitors is to get to Cairo as quickly as possible. Many never care to go beyond, for it is a city that attracts and fascinates the world, and contains enough within itself and surroundings to occupy visitors not only one winter but many. For example, there are the bazaars, the mosques, the Pyramids, the Sphinx, with its grand solemn face looking out over the Lybian Desert as if watching for someone; Heliopolis; the ostrich-farm; the howling Dervishes; the dancing Dervishes, and a hundred other attractions, both outside and inside the hotels.

The people, however, who really go to Egypt for health do not remain in Cairo very long, but make their way either to Helouan, Luxor, or Assouan, living quietly there

for the winter; or, if rich enough, they hire a dahabeah or house-boat for the season, and live on the Nile. As a rule an English clergyman, doctor, trained nurse and house-keeper live in the hotels of these health resorts on the Nile, and in case of sickness, beef-tea, arrowroot, and suchlike food can be had quite as good as at home.

There is a railway from Cairo to Luxor and Assouan, but it is a long weary journey, and most people prefer to go by Cook's big Nile boats or by their express boats. For the return journey by the first the cost is £50, which includes a fortnight on the Nile, and one week on land, food (not wine or mineral waters), and all expenses connected with sight-seeing.

By express boats, which are very comfortable, but not so luxurious as the big ones, the cost is £21 for journey and living, but does not include expenses connected with sight-seeing, which are considerable, but need not be undertaken if the traveller does not wish to join in the excursions.

From November to the middle of March is the best time to be in Egypt, not only for the climate but because everything that forethought and money can arrange for the comfort and convenience of travellers is then in full working order—the bazaars, the hotels, the gardens, the boats, the natives, are all ready and expectant for the travellers who come in their thousands.

There is no doubt about the wonderful effect of the climate upon sick and delicate people. It is most beneficial for all diseases except heart trouble. As far as my experience goes and that of many others, I should say it would be better for people with heart-disease not to winter in Egypt.

In case of bronchitis, rheumatism, cough, or breakdown of the nervous system, the effect of spending a winter there is most beneficial; and if the death-rate is somewhat high, it is greatly owing to the recklessness of the visitors, who will insist on doing too much in the way of sight-seeing and in exposing themselves to the intense heat of the sun. It is difficult to keep them within bounds; sick or well they think it incumbent upon them to see everything, and they hate to be left behind when an excursion is on foot.

One of the things which strike visitors as strange is the absence of women-servants in Egypt; even for the making of beds black or bronze chamber-men are employed, and they look so dignified and prince-like that one is almost ashamed to ask them for such a trivial thing as hot water.

A necessity for travellers in Egypt is a dragoman, who, as a rule, is very faithful to his employers, and certainly will not allow anyone else to cheat them. He should not, however, be chosen haphazard from the crowd outside the hotels, but on the recommendation of Thos. Cook and Son, or the porter of the hotel in which the travellers are staying. It is well to have an understanding with them, before accepting their services, as to time and money. Their fee is generally five shillings a day and all expenses paid.

People so frequently ask us what sort of clothes they should take with them to Egypt. Those made of thin, soft materials of wool or silk are best. Nothing heavy should be worn, and, if possible, neither linen nor muslin dresses, as the expense of laundry is very great, and the way the clothes are washed is most destructive. One or two smart blouses and one best dress for evenings should be taken, as everyone dresses a good deal for *table d'hôte*. Heavy outdoor wraps are not necessary, but thin woollen and Shetland shawls are very useful, both on the boats and on the verandahs. A light straw hat with broad brim is almost a necessity, together with a blue gauze veil.

By all means take an old riding skirt for donkey-riding—any blouse will do if you have a skirt. Very thin cashmere stockings are better than silk, which draw the feet in hot climates, and certainly open worked ones should not be

worn, as the gnats and mosquitoes get in and cause a good deal of pain.

Formerly it was difficult to buy any English goods in Cairo. There is now a very good shop kept by Bryan Davis and Co. where you can buy all that is wanted, but at a higher cost than at home. There are very good chemists also at which prescriptions can be made up.

There are one or two ways of reaching Cairo from London. One is to go by P. and O. boat or North German Lloyd to Port Said or Alexandria direct and thence by rail to Cairo. The other is to take express train to Brindisi, and then boat to Alexandria. For those who are not good sailors the latter is perhaps the best; it certainly is the shortest sea passage, and the rail from Alexandria to Cairo is very much shorter than that between Port Said and Cairo.

On our first visit to Egypt, some ten years ago, we took the Brindisi and Alexandria route, and we shall never forget the morning we approached Alexandria. We were all on deck at four o'clock, watching the superb sunrise on the African coast, and as we drew near the low flat shore, with

its date-palms, mud huts, and one-storeyed houses, we saw a crowd of men—black, brown, and yellow, in red, white, and green gowns, red fez and turbans, who formed a picture such as we had never seen before. We passed Pharos, where the first lighthouse ever built once stood, and in due time we landed, were packed in an omnibus, our luggage passed, and in a few minutes were having our breakfast in the Abbat Hotel. As soon as we had finished the dragoman came for us to show us all that could be seen in the one day, for we were off to Cairo next morning. It was here we gained our first experience of Oriental life. We walked through bazaars, drove along avenues of date-palms and sand-heaps, eating sugar cane and mandarin oranges, till we came to a Bedouin encampment, with its tiny babies and camels, and then along the Nile to Pompey's Pillar. And the next day we reached Cairo after a journey of one hundred and fifty miles, during which we caught a first view of the Pyramids!

Settled in the verandah of Shepherd's Hotel, drinking tea after the journey, one wants nothing more, at all events for the time being.

PIXIE O'SHAUGHNESSY.

BY MRS. GEORGE DE HORNE VAIZEY, Author of "About Peggy Saville," "More About Peggy," etc.



CHAPTER XXIX.

PIXIE did not go home for the Easter holidays, for everything at the Castle was so sad and unsettled that Bridgie felt it advisable that the little sister should stay away a little longer, and an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Vane came as a happy alternative. On the whole she spent a happy three weeks, thoroughly enjoying the luxury of her surroundings, and the attention lavished upon her by every member of the household. Mr. Vane still remained grey and serious, but he was unfailingly kind; while his wife belonged to the type designated by schoolgirls as "simple darlings," and seemed to find no greater pleasure in life than in making young people happy. It was evident that they were both devoted to their only remaining child, though there was a reserve in their manner which seemed to Irish Pixie perilously allied to coldness. She was all unconscious that her own fearless intimacy of manner made a precedent for little demonstrations of affection which had hitherto been unknown in the household; but so it was, and her host and hostess felt that they owed her a second debt of gratitude, whenever Lottie volunteered a caress, or added a second kiss to the morning greeting. Perhaps, in their determination to overcome their daughter's faults, they had erred on the side of firmness, and so brought about another temptation in the girl's terror of discovery, and if this were so, what better instrument could have been found to draw them together than fearless, loving, audacious Pixie? When the time came to return to school, she received many pressing invitations to return to a home where she would always be welcome, and was able truthfully to assure the girls at Holly

House that Lottie had been "an angel" to her throughout the holidays.

After that the ordinary routine went on for a few weeks, broken by nothing more exciting than the weekly letters from home, then came an episode of thrilling interest, when Geoffrey Hilliard was shown into the drawing-room, and Miss O'Shaughnessy summoned from her class and sent upstairs to brush her hair, before going to interview him. He was leaning against the mantel-piece as she entered, looking very tall and handsome in his long frock coat, and he was smiling to himself with a curious shiny look in his eyes which at once arrested Pixie's attention.

"How are you, Pixie? How are you, dear little girl?" he cried gushingly.

Pixie remarked that she was in excellent health, privately not a little taken aback by his fervour. "He seems to be mighty fond of me, all of a sudden. Over at Bally William he didn't care half so much. I suppose he missed me, after I'd gone." She smiled at him encouragingly. "And you are looking very well yourself. I'm pleased to see you!"

"I am very well, Pixie. Happiness agrees with me. I'm very happy—the happiest man in the world! Do you know why? I am going to be married. I came on purpose to tell you. Can you guess who 'She' is?"

"How could I guess? I don't know your friends. There's no one at all that it could be, unless perhaps——" Pixie stopped short suddenly, as certain memories darted into her mind. The extraordinary manner in which Mr. Hilliard was always appearing at Knock Castle during the Christmas holidays; his interest in everything Esmeralda did and said; the fixity of his gaze upon the beautiful face. She gasped and blinked with surprise. "Not—not Esmeralda?"

"Yes, yes, yes! Esmeralda, of course! Clever girl to guess so well! It was settled only last Wednesday, and she sent me across to tell you first thing, and ask your consent, as she couldn't be properly engaged without it. You see this is an important matter for me, so you really must be kind, for I can't give up Esmeralda, after waiting for her so long. Will you have