

## AN ARTIST AMONG THE FELLAHEEN.<sup>1</sup>

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WITH PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR.

I HAD occasion previously to make some slight comparison of the desert Arab with the «Fellah» of Egypt, to the disadvantage of the latter; and though truth compels one to admit that in manliness, intelligence, and, above all, cleanliness the Fellaheen fall far short of their neighbors the Bedouin, I would be ungrateful did I not bear testimony to their equal hospitality, kindness, and good humor, and many little pleasant traits which have in course of time generated in me a feeling almost of affection for these simple country folk.

In judging any person or race, origin and environment must always be taken into consideration if one would be just. Unlike the Arabs, whose traditions are warlike and independent, and whose free and vigorous life has developed all that is manly and honorable in their character, the poor Egyptians look back upon thousands of years of slavery and cruel tyranny, and have, through all the generations of their existence, been subjected to the rule of a superior race, and denied the right to think and act for themselves. The result is childlike obedience to the stronger will which rules them, and a somewhat cringing and servile attitude to the representative of place and power. In addition to this, the climatic conditions and the flatness of the country have an enervating effect upon the character, and predispose its people to indolence and *laissez-faire*.

The conditions of the life, however, demand incessant labor from the agriculturist, and no one could work harder when occasion demands; but, the daily task finished, the Fellah loves to sit in the sun, idly gossiping with his neighbors, or to enjoy the perfect pleasure of «doing nothing.»

As a race they are a lying and improvident people, working because they must, ignorant, more or less fanatical, and instinctively cruel to dumb animals. Utterly devoid of initiative and powers of administration, the Fellaheen are, and always must remain, a subservient race, requiring the guidance and control of

a more enlightened and honest government than it would be possible to create from among themselves.

Side by side with this incapacity for the control of affairs is, however, a certain childish simplicity which is very engaging; and their contented acceptance of the «things that are» has preserved intact the customs and costumes, of their forefathers of Pharaonic times, which renders country life in the provinces of Egypt one of the most fascinating and picturesque it has been my lot to enjoy.

To me the province of Sharkiyeh, or the eastern province, has always seemed the most interesting. This is virtually the land of Goshen, full of Old-World suggestion, and still retaining many traces of Israelitish days. Its people are the most primitive of Egypt, and its scenery is more varied than that of any other part of the Delta; and, railways being few and the «tourist» still unknown, one finds here the Fellah in all his unsophisticated purity, reverencing the stranger, and preserving that instinct for hospitality which is always one of the most charming characteristics of the Mohammedan.

My headquarters have always been the town of Fakous, a picturesque village surrounded by rich fields and date-forests, freely intersected by large irrigating-canals. Here lives the sheik Mahomed Abdoon, a large landowner, whose hospitality is as proverbial as his uprightness and kindness of heart, and whose dinners must be enjoyed to be properly appreciated.

Let me describe my first meeting with him. I had just come down from Cairo, and was putting up at the irrigation rest-house—comfortable enough quarters provided by government for officials, but in this instance unoccupied, and therefore minus any commissariat department. It was after sunset, and I was on the point of sending out my servant to buy what provisions he might be able to find, when two men, carrying lanterns, knocked at the gate, and, with the «salaams» of the sheik, begged that I would honor him

<sup>1</sup> «Fellah,» singular («Fellaheen,» plural), the soil-cutter.

with my company at dinner. Though tired, I was too hungry not to be thankful for the prospect of a dinner, and did the intervening mile of rough walking in record time. The sheik met me at the gate of his compound, and, kissing me on both cheeks, bade me welcome, saying that he was honored by the presence of an Englishman in his house. He conducted me to a small room built in a corner of his inclosure, and we sat down to coffee and cigarettes while dinner was being prepared. This room was rather a shock to me, being furnished in modern French style, with gaudy chairs and sofas, and crystal candelabra; but the old sheik was evidently so proud of it that, against my conscience, I felt compelled to offer my congratulations and compliments, which pleased him greatly. After half an hour spent in smoking and desultory conversation, my hunger became almost unbearable, while my host and his servants were evidently becoming more and more uneasy, for some reason not then apparent.

Presently *more* coffee was brought; and seeing before me a prospect of another hour spent in the same way, I exclaimed desperately: «Ana mūsh ouse, kahwah kaman ya sheykh. T'fudd'l b'il akl amil maroof, ana geean ketire» («I don't want any more coffee, O sheik. By your favor, bring on the dinner; I am *very* hungry»). This was evidently what he was waiting for, and with the greatest alacrity he jumped up and led the way to the dining-hall, while servants ran off to fetch the food. Poor man! I have no doubt that he was as hungry as I was. I afterward learned that the guest is expected to say when he is ready to eat, etiquette forbidding the offering of food until the guest announces his readiness for the meal. This in the case of a guest formally invited; food is immediately offered to the casual wayfarer.

The dining-room was a long, narrow building overlooking the compound, into which it opened by three arches, which virtually made one side entirely open to the night air, and consequently cold and drafty. The meal was quickly served in a large tray, around which we sat in the usual way. The dinner itself, the first I ever ate in a Fella house, is worth description; here is the menu:

1. Soup (very greasy, with lemon squeezed into it).
2. Salads.
3. Baked turkey stuffed with rice and nuts.
4. Spinach in oil.
5. Haricot-beans.
6. Boiled beef.

7. Chops.

8. Knuckle of veal.

9. *Malfoof* (rolled vine-leaves inclosing chopped meat and spices).

10. Mutton hash.

11. Potatoes fried in oil.

12. Pudding made of fine flour, honey, and oil.

This I imagined would prove the end of the feast, and I was rather disconcerted to see appear other courses—

13. Sausages. Then

14. Stuffed tomatoes.

15. Boiled mutton.

16. More potatoes.

17. *Mish-mish* (stewed apricots).

18. A huge fish.

19. Sheep's brains.

20. *Riz b'il laban* (the usual rice-and-milk, which almost always concludes a meal).

Each of the above twenty courses was served separately, in addition to the piles of flat loaves, radishes, cucumbers, cheese, and mixed herbs with which the tray was loaded. Servants stood about us, some holding lanterns, others jars of rose-scented water, from which each one drank from time to time.

Being my first experience of the kind, curiosity impelled me to eat a little of everything; and although it was many years ago, I still recollect the feeling of thankfulness with which I afterward lay on a divan, silently smoking. And I remember yet the indigestion which was my constant companion for days afterward. Since that time I have frequently been the guest of Mahomed Abdoon, but never again have I had such a dinner as this first one.

He was an interesting man in many ways, and was particularly fond of talking of Arabi's campaign, and of Lord Charles Beresford, who visited him at that time. In return for hospitality received, Lord Charles invited the sheik to visit him on board his ship, *H. M. S. Condor*, at Alexandria. Sheik Mahomed told me all about it afterward—how he was received on the quay by an officer, the boat's crew with oars «up»; how the marines on board presented arms as he came up the ladder; etc. But what particularly seemed to strike his fancy was the gun drill which was given to entertain him. «An order was given by one man, and immediately a hundred ran to do it. No one asked why, or made any noisy talk. Wonderful!» was his summary of this episode. *Silent* obedience particularly impresses Egyptians, who are very noisy talkers, and fond of argument.

On his return to Fakous, he called his

villagers together, and narrated his experiences, concluding thus: «Oh, my children, the Egyptians were fools to pretend to fight the English. We are pygmies beside them. Why,» he exclaimed, «England could take Egypt in the hollow of her hand, and throw it into the sea!»

During my first visit to Fakous I had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of McCullough Bey, whose perfect knowledge of the country and people, and whose companionship in many long rides through the districts, gave me an insight into Fellaheen life I could never have otherwise obtained. He was then engaged upon a survey and sale of government lands; and I accompanied him in many of his tours, thus reaching places and people I would never have heard of, and under his pilotage I saw many beautiful spots and met with many picturesque incidents. In attendance upon McCullough as clerk and factotum was Abd-el-Messieh,<sup>1</sup> a big, handsome man of negroid birth, who might have been my own servant, so assiduous was he in his attention to my comfort. We had occasion to visit, among other places, a most picturesquely situated village called Kahboona, reached after a long day's ride through a country of richly varied beauty. It was on this journey that I had my first experience of the Arab horse, which began in a very ludicrous, though somewhat alarming, manner. The streets of Fakous are narrow and tortuous, and my *cavass*,<sup>2</sup> intending to show me the way, suddenly dashed past me to get in front, and so alarmed my steed that with a leap he raced after the man, and a helter-skelter chase through the town began. I found it impossible to hold my horse in, so let him go, and trusted to luck. Aware that he had acted very stupidly, the cavass looked over his shoulder to see if I was angry, and seeing, as he thought, signs of vengeance in my face, he exclaimed: «My boy, he means to beat you. You had better make tracks out of this, and get away as quickly as possible»; and spurring his horse, he made for a date-grove.

Utterly unable to restrain my horse, which had now fairly bolted, this breakneck race continued. Dodging in and out among the palm-trees, every moment threatened with almost certain death had we collided with one of the huge trunks, I had an anxious quarter of an hour. The ground was broken, and the trees were so close together that it

was all I could do to keep my seat as my horse jerked itself in and out among them. I was, however, gaining on the cavass, and at last, in desperation, he set his horse at a small canal, hoping to escape me and my supposed vengeance; but his horse «declined,» while mine took it at a stride. A few minutes later I was in an open bit of country, and able to rein in and dismount. The cavass never appeared till next day; but half an hour later McCullough and Abd-el-Messieh found me enjoying a quiet smoke, and were much relieved to see me alive. Thus began my reputation for horsemanship; though I can hardly claim to be an adept, I have in its practice certainly been attended by a great amount of luck in the various difficulties I have met with.

We were now a long way out of the track, but making, as near as we could judge, a true line for Kahboona, we continued across country. Presently we met a small boy herding goats, and asked him if we were «right for Kahboona.» «Yes, your Excellency,» he replied; «and if we had known you were coming this way, we would have had a road made straight for you.»

This reply was made in all seriousness, and is another instance of the graceful imagery of the East to which I have referred in former articles.

The country about Kahboona is, I think, the most beautiful in Egypt. Being the center of the date-growing industry, large groves of palms are so numerous as to be almost one continuous forest, broken here and there by small open patches of *bercime*<sup>3</sup> and vegetables, principally beans, the fragrance of which in the early spring is delicious, and, under the hot sun and with the drowsy hum of the wild bees, makes one long to lie in the shade of the trees and dream forever. The town itself is buried in the midst of a particularly dense grove, and on one side is the usual *birkeh*, or pool of infiltrated water, common to all villages, and meaning so much illness and epidemic among the people. These *birkeh* are formed by the excavation of the mud with which the houses are built, and, filling with water, they usually become open cesspools into which all the filth of the village percolates, breeding millions of mosquitos, as well as malaria. As if this were not enough, the village cemetery was placed on the brink of the pool, the graves being below the water-level; and I actually saw women drawing water from the pool for domestic use! Needless to say, I touched no water in this village, except that which my own men brought from

<sup>1</sup> Slave of the Messiah.

<sup>2</sup> Mounted messenger.

<sup>3</sup> A kind of rank clover used for fodder.

a distance. The old *omdeh*<sup>1</sup> of the town and his head villagers met us at the outskirts, kissing our hands and feet, while thanking Allah for giving them the honor of our visit.

After my adventure of the morning I was glad to get out of the saddle and rest in the guest-house, and I thoroughly enjoyed the

bring one out somewhere near the desired spot.

As a rule, the villages have the appearance of fortifications, the outside walls being frequently without doors or windows, and the lanes of the village terminating in massive wooden doors, which are usually closed at



THE ROAD TO KAHBOONA.

simple but wholesome meal of rice and mutton. I have already described the customs of the table, which are much the same among all Moslems, and need not be repeated here.

The village, however, is a typical one, and, with my sleeping accommodation, merits description.

Built entirely of sun-dried mud, the small, low huts, from considerations of economy and space, join one another whenever possible. Narrow and tortuous lanes, left at haphazard, form the only thoroughfares, in which at first appears to be a huge mound of mud, surmounted by heaps of cotton and durra stalks, which serve the dual purpose of thatch and fuel. Many of these lanes are merely culs-de-sac, ending abruptly in a neighbor's courtyard, and forcing one to retrace his steps and try again. Experience has taught me that it is never wise to assume that the streets lead in the direction at first suggested; it is often safer to start the other way, and trust to the winding of the path to

<sup>1</sup> A lesser title than sheik.

nightfall, and guarded on the inside by the village *guffrah*, or night-watchmen.

Each « house » has usually one door, opening into the lane, small and low; and the few windows, if provided at all, are merely slits in the mud wall, innocent of glass or shutter, but ornamented with a lattice of split bamboo, placed crosswise during building. Ventilation there is virtually none, the smoke of the fire of dung or corn-cobs finding its egress by the door, and well-nigh choking the inhabitants, which include not only the family, but chickens, turkeys, pigeons, goats, and whatever live stock the inhabitants possess.

Every effort to exclude air seems to be made, the houses being too low to feel the breezes, and the streets too narrow to allow of any air circulation. The roofs, covered with piles of rubbish for fuel, afford accommodation for a second instalment of goats, pigeons, cats, and especially dogs. One wonders how life can be supported in such conditions; yet the people are well-conditioned



THE APPROACH TO KAHBOONA.

and healthy, living their lives in the fields, and returning to their houses only to eat and sleep. Insect life naturally abounds, the Egyptian flea particularly being a prodigy of manly vigor and activity; but the Fella has a hide like a *gamoos*,<sup>1</sup> and even travelers like myself eventually become impervious to its onslaught. Outside the village, and almost at their very doors, the filth and offal of the place are deposited, resulting in the development of that plague peculiar to Egyptian life, — «flies,» — disgusting, but very necessary as scavengers, without which and the equally valuable rat these villages would quickly become uninhabitable.

Through the narrow lanes I was conducted to my bedroom, accompanied by a *gaffir*<sup>2</sup> with long stick and lantern. As we walked, or rather stumbled, along the narrow, uneven lanes, the dogs running along the roofs perpetually snapped at our ears, necessitating the free use of the stick, while the frequent pitfalls and morasses in the road made the lamp an imperative necessity. My room proved to be a mud cupboard about six feet cube, with a heavy door, but no window. On

entering, I stood in a kind of well, just large enough to allow the door to swing, the rest of the chamber being occupied by a dais of mud—the bed proper. Underneath was an opening which proved to be a fireplace, but minus a chimney; and as my guide set fire to the rubbish used as fuel, the pungent smoke soon filled the chamber and almost suffocated me. I found, however, that when lying down I hardly felt the smoke, which I hoped might have a soporific effect upon the entomology of the place, and so tried to sleep. A very few moments dispelled any illusion I might have had on the subject, and proved the Kahboona flea to be superior to any process of fumigation. After patiently enduring for some time, I was at last forced to seek refuge outside, where, groping about in the dark, I found a sort of raised platform of dry earth, on which I rolled myself in my blanket and went to sleep. Somewhere about 5 A.M. I awoke, wondering where I was, and, on looking round, found myself in a kind of thatched courtyard, the common kitchen of several houses. The women were busy preparing early coffee, and fulfilling various other domestic duties, while I was sitting on the top of an earth oven, the fire of which had just been lighted. In addition to the women,

<sup>1</sup> The Egyptian buffalo.

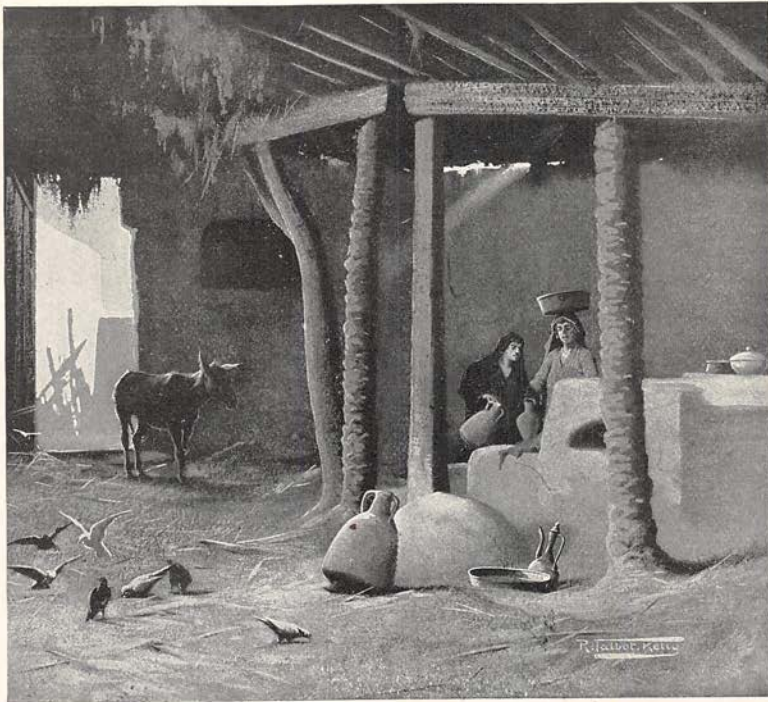
<sup>2</sup> Singular of «guffrah.» The word has much the same meaning as the English «gaffer.»

a camel, two donkeys, several sheep and goats, and fowl innumerable were fellow-tenants of my quarters. So far I had not been noticed, when, realizing the humor of the situation, I laughed till I could laugh no longer, scattering the women in confusion, and exciting a cackling and braying among my fellows which soon filled the court with the omdeh and his officials, wondering what was the matter. Strangely enough, I had enjoyed my sleep, and felt as fresh as possible, and was soon at work making a sketch of what was, up to that time, the most curious chamber I had ever occupied.

While at work I overheard a man say to the omdeh, «Why is the effendi painting this poor place?»

«Hush!» said the omdeh. «He is a friend of the Queen's, and he will take the picture to her, and say: (See, your Majesty, what poor houses these people live in!) and she will say: (Yes; poor fellows! Here is five hundred pounds; go and tell them to build better ones.)»

Talking of date-palms, I may mention the fact that there is a great difference between the cultivated palm and the wild ones such as one sees growing on the Nile banks and in the environs of Cairo. The latter are always weedy and overgrown, the trunks frequently sixty to seventy feet high, and produce little or no fruit; whereas in districts where the date is farmed the trees are invariably much less in height, and more fully clothed with foliage. Each fruiting date-palm pays a government tax of one shilling per annum, trees under three years old being exempt. Consequently the Fellah farmer cuts down the old tree as soon as it ceases to produce profitably, and so escapes the tax. The usual fruiting life of a cultivated tree is from seven to nine years, the annual yield varying from five to six hundredweight; and the crop is so eagerly bought up by European dealers that even a month after the harvest is finished hardly a date can be found in the most productive center. Date-growing implies a certain amount of intelligent manipulation on



MY BEDROOM AT KAHBOONA.

Still, in spite of apparent poverty, these people are really well-to-do, their date-crop that year selling for fifty thousand pounds, I believe; and I have no doubt that, were all the floors of Kahboona dug up, a large sum of hoarded wealth would come to light.

the part of the farmer, the trees requiring systematic pruning; and in the early spring the female blossom must be fertilized by the male pollen, each tree having to be separately climbed, and the blossoms intermixed by hand.

The intervals of date-growing operations

are spent in other agricultural pursuits, while every inch of ground between the palm-trunks is made to produce something.

Bucolic life in Egypt is perhaps as picturesque as any in the world, every operation having a special interest, while the country itself, widely varied in character, lends a different setting to each picture. No less than by the similar life among the Bedouin, biblical times are suggested. How many Rebeccas does one meet in a day's march, while each youthful shepherd may well be a Jacob or a David! The flocks are still ring-streaked and speckled, seldom all white; and in harvest-time, while scaring crows, every urchin shows the most remarkable facility in the use of the sling.

Highways are few in number in Egypt, though the government is now building several agricultural roads through the Delta. Traffic is mainly carried on by means of canal-boats, the high canal-banks serving as towing-paths or roads. Riding along these banks is very enjoyable. Most canals are fringed with tamarisk, thorns, and palm-trees, the margins being prolific in their growth of bulrushes and other water-plants. At frequent intervals is a *shadoof*<sup>1</sup> or a *saccia*<sup>2</sup> for raising water; and from time to time small

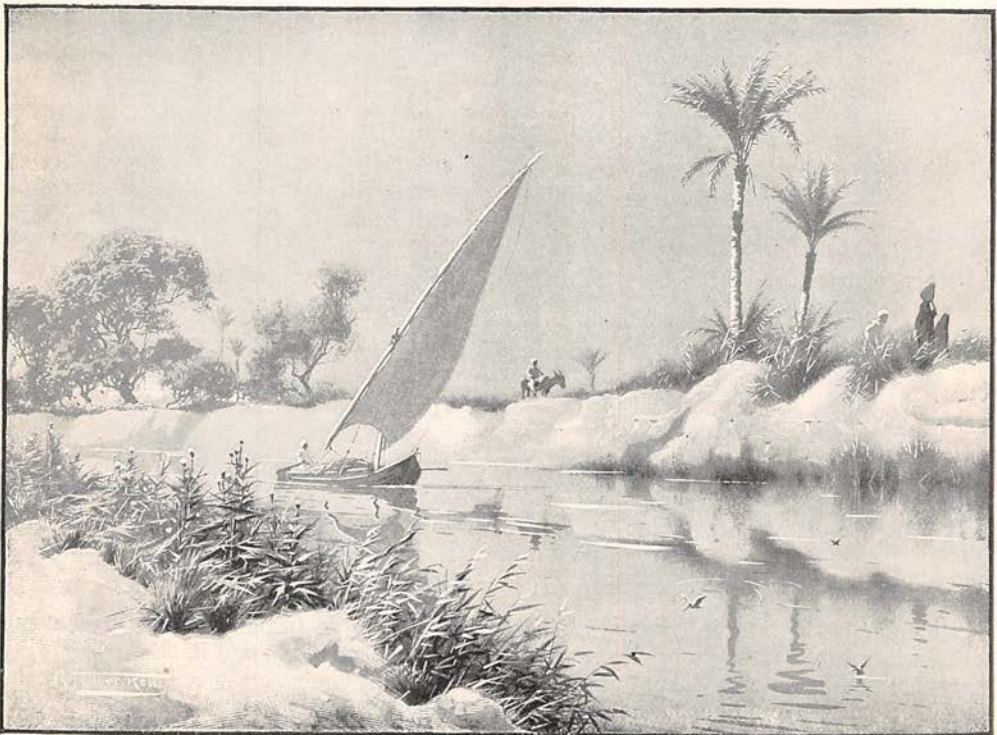
inclosures, carpeted with clean straw, serve as praying-places for the devout wayfarer. Every incident of field life comes under one's constant notice, varied by the passing of a *giassa*<sup>3</sup> in the canal, or by a fisherman throwing his hand-net.

Riding along canal-banks, though pleasant, has a certain element of risk. The thrifty Fellah is much addicted to cutting away the land side of the embankment to serve as "top-dressing" for his fields, until frequently only a narrow ridge, some six or eight inches wide, is left—little enough even for a sure-footed horse; in addition to which, intersecting water-courses render an occasional jump necessary, or a perilous crossing on a bridge composed of a single palm-trunk. I remember once riding along the Bahr-Fakous in the twilight, a beautiful evening of calm starlight, when the chirping of grasshoppers and the croaking of bullfrogs perhaps made us a little drowsy after our day's ride. Abdel-Messieh was riding ahead, and in crossing one of these primitive bridges his horse slipped, and both fell into the canal,

<sup>1</sup> A long pole on hinges, a bucket being suspended from the end by a rope.

<sup>2</sup> A water-wheel turned by bullocks.

<sup>3</sup> A lateen-sailed boat used for cargo.



A CANAL IN THE SHARKIYEH.



THE GUEST-ROOM AT EL-GHAZALI.

twelve feet below. The canal was too deep to wade, and the banks were so steep as to render climbing impossible, so nothing was left for him to do but to swim until a ford was reached. Fortunately, he escaped unhurt; and we, forewarned, dismounted, and led our beasts over the treacherous crossing.

Between canals, tortuous bridle-paths innumerable wind among the fields, and in riding through them one is brought into constant intercourse with the natives. Politeness to the stranger is general. It is one of the most pleasing traits in the character of the Fellah; and I could recount numerous acts of civility on their part that have helped to make tolerable, and even enjoyable, my life among them, which in other respects is a record of rough housing, rough living, and discomforts of many kinds.

I have often been agreeably surprised by a youngster at work in the fields shyly offering a basket of green mulberries or other refreshing fruit or vegetable; and coffee has often been brought to me from huts at a considerable distance, my kind host, squatting in front of me, keenly relishing my evident appreciation. The coffee is *always* good, which, unfortunately, cannot be said of much of the food necessity drives one into eating.

In contrast to the generosity of table pro-

vided for guests in such houses as that of Sheik Mahomed Abdoon, a description of my «daily bread» in the poorer villages may be interesting. We rise early, and a cup of coffee is always offered, sometimes accompanied by a piece of bread, or a small cake made of flour mixed with honey or oil. Somewhere about midday, if we are within reach, some light food, such as boiled eggs, bread, and coffee, is sent to us. In many cases the eggs are boiled hard, shelled, and served in a large bowl of oil, and the meal has the added interest of the endeavor to catch the slippery morsels as they bob about in the liquid. The taste for oil or *semna* (clarified butter) is one that must be acquired; both are frequently more or less rancid, and are liberally mixed with almost everything you eat. At night, from 6 to 8 P. M., the only real meal of the day is prepared. It is almost always the same. This consists of a little very greasy soup to which is added *semna*, stewed or boiled mutton or goat's flesh on a pyramid of rice, and the ceremonial dish of *riz b'il laban* (boiled rice-and-milk). This last is always good, and in most cases is the only thing eatable. Pigeons and turkeys form a pleasant variety when offered; but few hosts give one the choice, a «lamb or kid of the flock» being considered a more



«honorable» dish, and demanded by one's position.

I had a great altercation once with the omdeh of El-Ghazali on this subject. In riding into the village I noticed thousands of well-conditioned pigeons swarming among the huts, as well as several seductive-looking turkeys.<sup>1</sup>

whole place is surrounded by a filthy birkeh, noisome and stinking. The guest-house is built close by this pool of abominations, and therefore alive with every form of stinging insect which Egypt produces. My sleeping accommodation was alive with lice, and I felt that nothing would induce me to enter it. The night mists, however, are malarial



A FUNERAL AT EL-GHAZALI.

I called the omdeh, and told him I wished pigeons or turkey for my dinner. He seemed amazed, and exclaimed that that was «no food for a pasha.»

«Never mind,» I said; «I prefer turkey.»

«But, my bey, turkeys cost only sixpence,<sup>2</sup> and I would dishonor myself if I did not kill a sheep for your Excellency.»

I insisted, however, that I wished turkey, and turkey I would have; but when dinner arrived, although I got my bird, the sheep was there also.

Occasionally, at great feasts, the sheep is cooked whole, its interior being filled with rice, nuts, and stuffed pigeons, the whole baked for half a day in an earth oven. It is delicious to a degree, and the clever way in which the whole carcass is broken up by hand is interesting to witness.

This village of El-Ghazali is, with one exception, the dirtiest I have lived in. The

<sup>1</sup> Pigeon-rearing may be considered almost an industry in some villages, but of this I will speak in a future article.

<sup>2</sup> Two piasters, really fivepence.

and dangerous; and being too far from civilization to run any risks of illness, I eventually felt compelled to retire indoors. Wrapping my blanket closely about me, half dead with cold and sleep, I plunged in, and was asleep in a moment. On waking in the morning, I was dimly aware of creeping horrors all over me, and thought I felt one particularly large creature promenading my forehead. Only half awake, I brushed it off; and, fortunately, curiosity making me turn on my elbow to see what manner of beast it was, I found it to be a large scorpion of a peculiarly venomous character, the sting of which, though not likely to prove fatal, would in any case have meant a painful illness—a prospect not to be lightly regarded in the absence of all medical stores or advice.

There seems to be some peculiar fatality in things which makes the most unwholesome and disagreeable surroundings so imperatively beautiful that the artist perforce endures them in the interest of his mistress. I willingly suffered these nightly visitants for the sake of the exquisite picturesqueness of

El-Ghazali. The old omdeh, also, poor old soul, was so genuinely kind that I quite got to like him.

Here is an instance of his willingness to oblige. I was making a sketch of the village cemetery, and wanted only a funeral procession to complete my study. I remarked to the old man: «What a pity there does not happen to be a funeral going on, so that I might put it in!» His reply took me by surprise; for, jumping up, he said: «There is a man ill in the village, and he must die soon; I'll go and hurry him up!» And, sure enough, he bustled them all so much that an hour later my sketch was complete, and the man safely interred! And I believe that the bereaved family considered themselves especially honored by my interest in the ceremony!

Let me here remind my readers that I am now speaking of a district probably the most primitive and unspoiled in all Egypt. Such an occurrence would have been impossible in many other districts, where fanatical feeling is kept in check only by the binding laws of hospitality, and where occasional disagreeables have sometimes to be faced.

In these remote places the curiosity of the men is equaled only by the excessive shyness of the women. The latter are not always veiled in the country villages; but, on meeting them suddenly in one's wanderings, they will either run to hiding through the nearest open door, or, failing that, cover the face and turn to the wall until the danger is over, and the evil eye of *el Frangi* (the European) has carried its baneful influence elsewhere. Chil-

dren will be hurriedly picked up and rushed to a place of safety; and several times, when I have met them unprotected, the little mites have burst into tears and run howling to their mothers. Things improve after a few days, when they have become accustomed to one's presence; but I have always found the greatest difficulty in obtaining girl models for my work, and have succeeded only by straining the claims on my host's kindness. I made one little friend here in a very pretty way. In wandering about the outskirts of the village, I happened upon a melon-patch hedged by cactus, and I thought I would taste one. On getting through the hedge, I surprised a pretty little girl of ten, who was sitting at the mouth of a bamboo hut, sewing a *gelabieh*.<sup>1</sup> With a cry of alarm, she bounded into the gloom of the hut, leaving her sewing on the ground.

While eating my melon I sat by the door, and tried to coax her out again; but no artifice availed in overcoming her shyness. Presently I picked up her work to see how she was getting on, and decided to continue the operation myself. This was too much for her curiosity, and little by little she edged nearer the door, until a few minutes later we were merrily laughing away, enjoying an innocent flirtation over our sewing.

A present of a piaster cemented our friendship; and the incident, quickly spreading through the village, paved the way for enlarged opportunities for work.

<sup>1</sup> The «gelabieh» is the loose cotton shirt worn by Egyptians of both sexes.

## A SONG.

BY HARRIET MONROE.

THE wind comes riding down from heaven—  
 Ho! wind of heaven, what do you bring?  
 Cool for the morn, dew for the even,  
 And every sweetest thing.  
 Oh, wind of even, from pink clouds driven,  
 What do you bring to me?  
 The low call of thy love, who waits  
 Under the willow tree—  
 Whose boat upon the water waits  
 For me—for thee!