

### AN AUTUMN THANKS- GIVING.

#### THE HARVEST OF THE SEA.

"O all ye green things upon the earth . . .  
O ye whales, and all that move in the waters,  
bless ye the Lord."

THE Autumn Harvest Thanksgiving at St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall, presents to the stranger a curious and unusual spectacle. The chancel adornments consist of nets, real fishermen's nets, with real fish stuck in them at intervals. This curious church decoration represents well the chief harvest of the place, which consists truly of pilchards and sea-weed. The effect is pretty, too, as well as curious, for the nets are black, and the fresh fish shine on them like silver. A sprinkling of bunches of red beet-roots, tomatoes, brown sea-weed, and white turnips, add to the picturesque effect.

Such is the very curious arrangement to be seen in the lovely little chapel belonging to Lord St. Levan's castle, originally a monastery, perched on the very top of St. Michael's Mount.

The district grows no corn, therefore whether that crop be good or bad, it has no great interest for its inhabitants; their own produce of beet-root and broccoli seems to be comparatively independent of seasons, and thrives on a constant manuring of sea-weed. When the weather is too stormy for the fisher-folk to go out for their harvesting, then comes the turn of the farmers for gathering in the splendid lot of sea-weed, cast up daily by the waves on to the shores of the bay. As long as daylight lasts, great waggons, drawn by teams of handsome dray-horses, with manes and tails flying in the wind, and smaller carts in charge of boys, go backwards and forwards between the fields of the mainland and the shore opposite the Mount; often the gatherers may be seen



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rushing into the water, waist-high, with all their clothes on, hurrying to rake in a fine haul of weed that the waves threaten to float away with.

At low-tide in fine weather the causeway connecting the Mount with the mainland shore is always uncovered; there the little sand-pipers whistle and chase each other all day long over the wet sands, and the water-wagtails (who are certainly possessed of an unmistakable sense of fun) play bo-peep, like merry children, round the clumps of sea-weed. Then the cows are driven across to be milked, for they do not live on the island, and the children, who do, can safely walk across the causeway to school. But when the sea is stormy, the little island is cut off from all communication with the outer world for days together; at other times the waves retreat once in the twenty-four hours, just for a few moments; as though possessed with a sense of mischief they would tempt people to venture across, only to overtake them half-way, and thereouse them thoroughly.

At such times the school-children get a holiday, obtained for them by the kindly intercession of the waves that divide them from the school-house; and so they, too, with the sea-weed gatherers, rejoice at the wild wind that blows no good to the fishermen.

From the mainland it is difficult to realise the magnificent proportions of the rocks on the top of the Mount. The stratifications run east and west, giving them the appearance of half-destroyed walls of some giant's palace. Standing amongst them, they form a splendid framework for the lovely peeps of the hills and shore of Penzance, or for the outlook over the wide Atlantic, dotted over with distant ships.

From the shore a narrow and precipitous pathway leads us right up to the castle-door by skirting a little wood, which, being on the rocky ascent, manages to weather the constant gusts of fierce wind that beat on the rest of the island. Although the whole island is indeed nothing but a big rock with a little earth scattered lightly over it, plenty of wild flowers and bracken contrive to find root-hold in its soil; the bracken, during the autumn rains, showing from afar off as patches of deep-red on the brilliantly-green grass.

The mainland between Marazion and Gulvall is also rich with beautiful colour. The narrow fields of bluish-green broccoli, divided by hedges of golden-green elder-trees, intersect the hills lengthwise, in converging lines, exactly like the seams of an umbrella, slanting down to the sand-slopes that border the

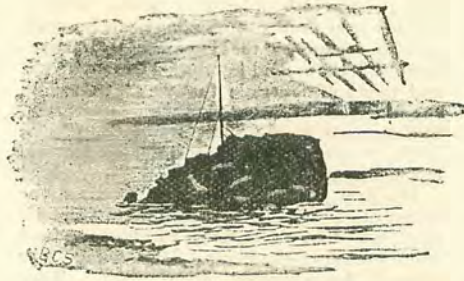
shore, where the blue sea-thistle flourishes, and even the stones are tinted pink or green.

But now that the harvest (of sea and land) is over, the wild flowers are faded and the storms have commenced, the birds think of departing too. In the dusk of an autumn evening I have seen the sands black with numberless small birds, gathering in flocks for their departure to their winter resorts. They settled on the ground, dividing themselves into three flocks of about equal size. Much fluttering and commotion was apparently caused by the unruly behaviour of the youngsters of the party, who, never having made the journey before, evidently found the preparations very exciting.

All at once the three flocks rose suddenly, and, after swarming from one stunted tree to another, at last settled themselves upon a couple of elder-trees and a big hawthorn-bush, which they made black with their numbers; and at length they subsided into calm.

The next day not a bird was to be seen. They must have taken their departure in the small hours of the morning, for they had all vanished.

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## ROMANCE IN THE DELTA.

WITHIN the last twelve years, the marvellous archæological discoveries in the land of Egypt have followed so fast upon one another, that the mind is dazed in striving to keep in touch with the progress of events, and in the effort to appraise them and reduce them to their true chronological perspective. Some have appealed most startlingly to our sympathy with what is sensational, such as the discovery of the royal mummies in 1881; others to our historical sense, such as the identification of the site of the famous Labyrinth, one of the wonders of the ancient world; but there are many others of far wider interest and of far deeper import than those which have revealed the parched bodies of old Egyptian Sovereigns, or made the heretofore semi-mythical building of Amenehat II. a great reality. And most certainly the discovery which M. Naville made in 1883 of the remains of the great treasure city of Pithom, and still later, Prof. Flinders Petrie's explorations amidst the ruins of Tanis, rank high amongst the "wonders of science." These two discoveries have been made in a region which but a few years ago had hardly been touched by explorers on account of its inaccessibility and of its dreary desert characteristics. But French and English skill and heroism have forced the waste of sand to give up its buried treasures, and these two cities of the dead past are once more instinct with vivid interest.

The ordinary tourist in Egypt, who takes his return ticket at Messrs. Cook's office for the first cataract, is rushed by rail across the Delta from Alexandria to Cairo; and from

that charming city he starts to visit the vast diorama of temple, tomb, pyramid and obelisk which line the banks of the Nile. He sees buildings which have been, for the most part, familiar to the world for centuries—to Persian, to Greek, to Roman, and to the travellers of all European countries. Science has for the past hundred years been very busy in elucidating the history of these astounding relics of a great nation, and their place in the course of time has now been determined with wonderful accuracy. From the time of Champollion, who wrung their meaning from the hieroglyphs, to that of Lepsius; from the days of Lepsius to those of Mariette and Maspero and Brugsch and Flinders Petrie, is now but little over a hundred years, and in that space of time the marvellous mosaic of Egyptian history has been put together, piece by piece, until the work has become, in its broad features, an almost finished picture and we are beginning to grasp the fact that to Egypt, Greek, Roman, and all other European nations owe their civilisation.

But to reach these now familiar monuments, the train speeds across that curious V-shaped district of the Delta, and the traveller quite forgets as he hurries through, that this stretch of marvellously fertile and highly cultivated land, was once the scene of events, quite as entrancing, quite as important, and of far more popular interest, than those which are associated with the well-known districts of Upper Egypt.

As one looks out from the railway-carriage upon the expanse of the Delta, which during

the winter months is one great sea of green, one is surprised to see rising, here and there, out of the ocean of waving grass and barley, mounds upon which are crowded the miserable huts of the modern squalid Arab villages. Some of these mounds are fairly high; some so low that one doubts whether, when the inundation comes in summer and in autumn, the inhabitants are safe from being swept away. Yet each of these mounds, upon which we cast but a casual glance, are as Miss Betham-Edwards well expresses it "a concrete piece of history." If we sunk a shaft from top to bottom of one of these typical mounds of the larger kind, we should in many cases be running it through "the relics of one hundred and sixty-eight generations of men. It would not be the remains of one town, but an immense succession of towns, stratum above stratum, with a semi-barbarian settlement at the bottom and a Christian town at the top." As the ages rolled by, race after race, generation after generation, rose upon the ruins of its predecessors and left countless traces in their turn of their existence in the deposits on the hillocks. Now it is with the results of the explorations of two of these mounds that this short article deals; yielding a history which indeed may claim to be romantic and which is moreover true, paradoxical as it may sound.

In 1883 the French explorer Naville was sent out under the auspices of the Egypt Exploration Fund to commence that series of diggings which, in the short course of twelve years, have yielded such astonishing results to