

Soon afterward he captured thirty-two prisoners, and treated them with the greatest cruelty. Alençon belonged to that old William Taloas who had prophesied about William when that great conqueror was yet a baby; and in after years the old man's prophecy was amply fulfilled, for the house of Taloas was indeed brought to ruin and to shame by the hand of William of Normandy.

When about twenty-five years old, William married Matilda of Flanders, who was always a faithful and most loving wife to him. She is popularly supposed to have busied her-

self in elaborate worsted-work while her lord was away at the English Conquest. But that quaint and intensely interesting production known as the Bayeux tapestry, by far the most authentic piece of contemporary Norman history which has come down to us, was not stitched by Matilda and her maidens. It deals exclusively with the later drama of William's life, the conquest of England, for which his long and stormy boyhood had prepared him by making him, in the words of the Saxon chronicler, "eke so stark a man and wroth that no man durst do anything against his will."

OLD EGYPT AND ITS NEWEST WONDER.

BY JENNIE DAY HAINES.



was one of the most noted places of ancient times, and she was only one of the great Egyptian cities. The Pyramids stand today, and will stand for ages, as lasting monuments of the gigantic labor and wonderful skill of the ancient Egyptians.

The Sphinx still faces the desert, as when, according to the story, she is supposed to have asked her famous riddle, "What is it that walks on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three in the evening?" Many generations of men (for "Man," who creeps, walks,

and then uses a staff, is the answer to the riddle) have walked to and fro on the face of the earth, and come and gone; but the Sphinx of the Egyptian desert still remains.

The Egyptian custom of preserving their dead is one of the most remarkable things in the history of the world, as you know from your books, and from the mummies in museums.

It is said, too, that geometry began with the Egyptians, and their system of hieroglyphic writing puzzled the learned men of all nations for ages, as St. NICHOLAS has already told you.

The oldest known canal in the world was built by Joseph (the son of Jacob and brother of Benjamin) at Pharaoh's command, and for four thousand years it has never ceased to fulfil its purpose of watering an entire province, and it has thus enabled that territory to support a large population through all these centuries.

In fact, the whole country of Lower Egypt has long been crossed and recrossed by canals, through which the yearly overflow has watered the Nile country; and the artificial Lake Mœris was dug deep, that it might draw off any excess of the river's flood.

So it seems fitting that now, during the closing years of this nineteenth century, old

Egypt should undertake a wonderful feat of modern engineering. Although about seven times the size of the whole of New England, the "practical" part of Egypt, the strip of land along the Nile, is only as large as the States of Vermont and Rhode Island, containing about ten thousand five hundred square miles of soil that can be cultivated.

Sixteen years ago the English took charge of Egypt, and the country has steadily grown in prosperity since that time. And at last, after a good deal of opposition, the English engineers have induced the government of Egypt to build a great dam across the Nile at Assuan, which will send back into Nubia a body of water one hundred and forty miles long, and create in the heart of the African desert a lake about three times as large as Lake Geneva in Switzerland. The water of the historic Nile is to be so controlled that its flood can be turned into distant channels at will — a marvelous undertaking, indeed! "Harnessing the Nile," Mr. Penfield, formerly United States consul-general in Egypt, calls this achievement in a recent number of "The Century."

The British contractors, with a large number of native workmen, are already at work, and hope to complete the great dam in 1903. It is

to be built of the same granite as the obelisk which now stands in Central Park, and the first order was for three millions of barrels of cement. Its height is to be seventy-six feet, its length one and one half miles, and the top, thirty to forty feet wide, will be used as a bridge.

During flood-time the river will have to run unimpeded through the dam for several months of the year; but when the flood subsides, and there is a surplus of water over what is necessary, it will be held for use during the parched summer months; for, as you know, Egypt is an almost rainless land. So the structure will be divided into many strong piers, with openings that can be closed at will by gates. The estimated cost of the entire work is twenty-four million dollars, to be paid at the rate of eight hundred thousand dollars a year for thirty years.

The agriculture and crops of Egypt depend on the overflow of the Nile, and the great dam from which water will be drawn with regularity for Middle Egypt and the Delta will add, it is thought, about one hundred million dollars to the value of the country, as two or three more crops may be raised every year.

If successful in its object, the great dam at Assuan which is to harness the Nile will be one of the modern wonders of the world.

MARCH DAYS.

THE sun shone warm and the south wind blew
Till ice and snow were gone;
The streamlets, loosed from winter's thrall,
Went gaily babbling on.
The bluebird sang in the city park,
In joy of a nest begun,
And the goldfish wriggled their little tails
And darted up at the sun.
The squirrel chattered, and leaped, and frisked
All over the leafless boughs,
And out of his door the nut-shells whisked
By way of cleaning house.
The peach-tree, eager and bold, with pride
Hurried her blossoms out,
And a frisky frog, up from the bog,
Piped loud, as he looked about.

Then the Winter King with a sudden bound
Came back from the North, and whirled
Thick clouds of snowflakes all around,
Enshrouding the goldfish world.
Every bush and bough he loaded with snow,
Heaped full the unfinished nest,
While the bluebird hid in the squirrel's home,
A silent but welcome guest.
He ate of the crumbs his friend let fall,
And they tasted sweet and good;
While the frog, asleep in the muddy deep,
Cared neither for warmth nor food.
But woe for the peach-tree's eager haste,
And woe for her blossoms fair,
When they felt the touch of the biting frost
And the chill of the wintry air!

Mary A. Gillette.