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TRAVELS
IN
TURKEY, EGYPT, NUBIA,
AND
PALESTINE,
IN 1824, 1825, 1826, AND 1827.

BY
R. R. MADDEN, ESQ. M. R. C. S.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LETTERS

FROM

TURKEY, EGYPT, NUBIA, AND PALESTINE.

LETTER XXV.

TO JOSHUA BROOKES, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

Thebes, July 29, 1826.

IN my voyage up the Nile, from Cairo to this far famed city of “the hundred gates,” which took me one and twenty days to accomplish, I had some opportunity of getting information on a few points connected with the Natural History of Egypt. This information has no pretensions to arrangement or erudition; but simply consists of such facts as appeared to me to be most curious.

Before I give you this account, I presume you will not be displeased to receive some little history of the particulars of my voyage, in which I perhaps may have to speak of "Antres vast and deserts idle," but as little as possible of "the Anthropophagi, and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders."

I set out from Cairo with a French gentleman, Monsieur Chantpie, who expressed a desire to accompany me, only a few hours before we started. I hired a *kangea* with two cabins, and a crew of six Arabs, including the Captain or Reis, for the monthly sum of four pounds ten shillings, out of which the Arabs had to maintain themselves, and to pay no inconsiderable portion of the *nolo*, or freight, to the government. Of the antiquities along the Nile, from Cairo to Thebes, I do not presume to offer you any description: Hamilton, on this subject, has left nothing to be desired.

The distances of the principal towns from Cairo, and their present and former names, I shall only notice; for as there is no sort of itinerary of Egypt, any account of these, however brief, must spare the traveller a great deal of research.

	Miles.
From Cairo to Benesouef	78
From Benesouef to Minieh	80
From Minieh to Antinoè	28
From Antinoè to Siout	54
From Siout to El Sharkie	36
From El Sharkie to Girgè	56
From Girgè to Kenneh	28
From Kenneh to Thebes	38

Making about four hundred miles from Cairo to Thebes. I knew this voyage to be accomplished in five days; but the average period is from fifteen to twenty-five.

The following are the received sites of the most celebrated ancient towns of Middle and Upper Egypt.

The Vicinity of Saccara	Memphis.
Ditto of Old Cairo	Babylon.
Ditto of Metarea	Heliopolis.
Ditto of Minieh	Co.
Ditto of Siout	Lycopolis.
Ditto of Achmin	Chemmis.
Ditto of El Sharkie	Antenopolis.
Ditto of Benesea	Oxyrinchus.

The Vicinity of Sheik Abadè . . . Antinoè.
 Ditto of Achmoumin . . Hermopolis Magna.
 Ditto of Dendera Tentyris.
 Ditto of Kenneh . . . (some deem) Chemmis.
 Ditto of Keft Coptos.
 Ditto of Kaus Apollinopolis Parva.
 Ditto of Carnac, Gourna, and Luxor . Thebes.

One of our first delays, at starting, was occasioned by the swarms of insects, of every sort, which made their appearance after dark: independent of the vermin, we had also reptiles on board, of a more appalling kind, and these were serpents. Two, of about three feet and a half long, were occasionally seen in the bottom planks; and when I inquired how the Arabs could think of sleeping with such venomous creatures in the boat? they told me, when serpents got into a boat all the rats quitted it; and besides, that this species was innoxious. This I afterwards found to be the case; there were few houses in Cairo and the upper country, in which these small grey serpents were not to be found in the chimneys and terraces: yet I heard of no injuries done by them.

I did not, however, like the idea of a snake

crawling over my face at night, or perhaps playfully folding round my neck while I slept. I ordered every thing to be taken out of the boat; and what with threats, bribes, and blows, I made the Arabs sink the boat on the bank of the river, and leave it immersed in water for four hours. The difficulty of this operation was very trifling, the expense small, and the advantage great. I would recommend every traveller to do the same before he embarks in a kangea.

At Benesouef we found a well-informed young man, who was employed in making a new canal in the vicinity of the town, by the Pacha's orders: he had been in England, and was said to be the natural son of Ali Pacha, of Yanina. I left him in high favour with the governor of Benesouef: when I next heard of him, he was at the bottom of the Nile. It seems that the canal he had just completed overflowed its banks, owing to circumstances over which he had no control; namely, the unusually large inundation of the river. A part of the town was carried away by the waters from the canal, and my poor friend, the engineer, was seized by order of the governor, put into a sack, and cast into the river.