By some far-seeing philanthropists, the Contagious Diseases Acts were promulgated as an antidote; but a cry of horror has been raised against such legislation throughout the land. You will hear these Acts condemned in terms of unmeasured hatred and denunciation; but, long before you leave us, you will have learned to look upon them as amongst the most powerful agencies for good in all the armoury of Public Medicine. Society has raised its voice in almost universal chorus against them, and a cry of shame and horror has swelled up through all the land concerning them; but it is raised in ignorance, and, though fostered from most worthy motives, needs only the light of a little knowledge, such as that to which your eyes will presently be opened, to dissipate the mists of fanaticism by which it is embittered, and to hush it to the silence of death. God forbid that I should seek to further any step that should tend to lessen the purity of English women; but we know only too well how deeply changed is the nature of those to whom, and to whom alone, these Acts can apply, and how infinitely below all ordinary standards they have fallen; and surely we are bound by an inflexible chain of duty to endeavour by every means in our power, in the interest of those who are yet unborn, to check the spread of the illimitable evils which this vice is capable of inflicting upon society.

They who hold that the evils which men bring upon themselves by their sin should be justly borne by themselves, as their punishment, are undoubtedly right; but they have no knowledge—they can have no knowledge—of the dreadful ramifications of the evils it is here sought to check. They forget that the effects of the sins of the fathers are to be carried by even the third and fourth generations of their children; and it is on behalf of these, the purely innocent, the yet unborn sufferers, that we should pledge ourselves to fight. You will see, during the term of your attendance at the hospital, how dreadfully common is the picture of little children brought into the world to pass through a long and weary martyrdom of miserable life; in whose eyes the light of heaven is never destined to shine; whose very forms and features are so hideously distorted as to render them a byword among their fellows; whose bones, diseased and rotten from their birth, can never assume even the common proportions of health; whose digestive organs are unable to deal with food of even the very simplest character; whose days, as long as they live, will be days of misery, and their nights only prolongations of the wretchedness to which they have been doomed; and to whom, at last, even death will come as a welcome and long looked-for friend, the only friend who is able to release them from the unceasing misery they have been compelled to bear in retribution for the sins of others. Gentlemen, I grant you this is a dreadful picture; but it is not overdrawn; not a shadow has been painted into it that you will not see over and over again with a frequency well calculated to appal those who will take such things to heart.

And, lastly, as I have said, you will find great scope for your energies, and a wide field in which to cultivate the highest usefulness of your profession, in tracking infectious diseases to their source, and in devising and elaborating the means by which they may not only be temporarily abated, but may, in the end, be altogether removed from amongst us.

Let your thoughts rest for a few moments upon what has already been effected in this direction. Look back upon the history of some of the greatest of this class of scourges. There was a time when, year by year, the whole earth was decimated by small-pox, and no human being was ever safe from its ravages; and where is that pestilence now? Buried in the grave of Jenner, or only rising up from time to time, a feeble shadow of its former self, to remind us of our want of watchfulness, our ignorance, or our fanaticism. Where is the old endemic plague of ague, which was wont, in years gone by, to lay so heavy a tax upon the population of our low-lying districts? Gone, under the system of drainage with which advancing science has taught us to unload the soil of its superfluous water charged with the products of decaying vegetation. There was a time when the plague and cholera were our regular periodical visitors, and when the whole community was left unguarded from the consequences of their dreadful visits. Of the former we hear comparatively little now; and the latter, though still unvanquished, and falling upon us from time to time with unabated virulence and too dreadful slaughter, is so much better understood now than it was in former years, that it is rarely permitted to reach us in its old epidemic form. Guarded by the wonderful power of the electric wire, no sooner does an outbreak happen in any region of the world, than every other part of it is so warned that it is up in arms to isolate it and prevent its further spread. Tracked in its origin at home to a foul or polluted water-supply, the whole deadly current may, if we so will it, be cut off at once; and our wells and springs may be so well guarded that, with reasonable care, the enemy can scarcely effect a lodgment in them; and so; to a great extent at any rate, we hold this pestilence too at arm's length.

But how about typhoid fever, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and a host of other septic and zymotic diseases? Are they not still so rife amongst us as to remain a standing and a lasting stain upon the medical knowledge of our day? Are they incapable of eradication? or are we ignorant of the sources whence they come? We know that they are the results of decaying animal matter, and yet we so dispose of our sewage that scarcely a stream in the land remains unpoisoned by it. Are we not, moreover, year by year, so saturating our soil with impurities of every kind, that a pure and uncontaminated spring must, ere long, become not only a rarity, but almost an impossibility?

Do we not shun, and that most wisely, the presence of those afflicted with infectious diseases so long as they remain amongst us; and yet, no sooner are they removed by death, than we are content, with tender sympathy indeed, and most loving care it is true (but with how much wisdom?), to lay them in the ground that they may slowly dissipate their terribly infectious gases through the soil, and saturating that, may thereby recharge the rains of heaven, as they filter through it, with all their virulence and terrible power of reproduction, in the systems of the living. I am not the thorough and entire believer in the disinfecting and depurating power of the soil that I once was; for terrible examples of its failure have, in my judgment, come under my notice.

Sir Henry Thompson has lately sounded a note of alarm on this subject; and though, for the present, it may fall upon ears unheeding or unsympathetic, I yet venture to think that, in time to come, his warning will be enforced by stern necessity, and that some better method of disposing of our dead will take the place of the burial so honoured and revered by us.

That cremation would succeed in protecting the living from many of the evils which, of necessity, result from the slow and ghastly decomposition of the dead who moulder in the grave I cannot doubt; but many years, I fear, must elapse before the public mind can be prepared for so great a change. It is impracticable, say some. Where, then, is the engineering science of our day? It is unholy, say others; but wherein consists the unholiness? What can it matter whether the body be destroyed in an hour or in twenty years? Destroyed it must be at last, and reduced to its simplest elements; and whether in the bosom of the earth, in the trackless paths of the ocean, or in the fiery flame of the purifying furnace, can matter little, so only that it rests "in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection".

NOTES OF EXPERIENCES IN EGYPT.

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IV.—THE NILE VOYAGE.

Few English who pass a winter in Egypt are content to remain the whole time at Cairo. The interest that has been awakened in the ancient history of the country must naturally make every one anxious to see the still remaining evidences of the wonderful civilisation of the Nile valley three thousand and more years ago. Almost every trace of the mighty cities built in the delta in Pharaonic times has disappeared. At Heliopolis, "the great Temple of the Sun, the high priest of which was father-in-law of Joseph, and, in later times, the teacher of Moses";* is now represented by a solitary obelisk standing, when we saw it, in a field of sugar-cane. Of the grandeur of Memphis, a single colossal statue of Rameses II lying on its face in a pool of water is all that remains. When the population of a district continues, and new towns rise up in the place of old ones, the fragments of the earlier structures are used up in their successors. This is a far easier process than digging fresh materials from the quarries. Thus Cairo has absorbed the remains of the great towns near which it was founded. Even the Pyramids were stripped of their outer casing stones to aid in the construction of the mosques of the Arab conquerors of Egypt, though the mountainous

* By far the most truthful, graphic, as well as poetical, descriptions of Egyptian scenery, are those by the Dean of Westminster, in the introductory chapters of his *Sinai and Palestine*, a work which no traveller in the East should be without. To obtain a knowledge of the customs of the people, ancient and modern, the standard works of Wilkinson and Lane are indispensable. Among numerous recent books, Zincke's *Egypt of the Pharaohs and the Khedive* may be mentioned as containing interesting and original sketches of the condition of the country and inhabitants; and Mariette Bey's *Itineraire*, and *Aperçu de l'Histoire d'Égypte*, which may be obtained at the Museum of Antiquities at Cairo for five francs each, will be found most useful travelling companions.

massiveness of their solid interior fortunately resisted the attacks of the new builders.

Many of the old buildings of Upper Egypt have, happily for us, met with a better fate than their contemporaries of the lower country. When ancient Thebes fell from its high estate, no modern city took its place. The mud of the river-banks supplied all that was needed for the habitations of the dwellers of the squalid Arab villages now scattered over the vast plain which once formed the site of the hundred-gated city. Hence there still remains an assemblage of mighty ruins, grander than can be found collected in any one spot on the earth's surface. No one going to Egypt should think of leaving it without visiting Thebes, and Thebes is only one of the many places of supreme interest met with along the banks of the Nile. Beni Hassan, Abydos, Dendera, Edfou, Esneh, Kom Ombos, Philæ, Abou Simbul, and many others, all have their tale to tell of wonder and beauty.

For visiting Upper Egypt and Nubia, none of the ordinary modes of travelling familiar to Europeans are available. There is not a single hotel, or place where board and lodging can be obtained anywhere above Cairo, except by roughing it to an extent which would not suit those for whom these notes are written. A system has, however, gradually developed itself by which all the conveniences and even luxuries of European civilisation can be enjoyed in the desert of far-off Nubia. The traveller moves on from place to place along the river in a floating-house, which he never need leave for long, as everything of interest lies within easy reach of the banks. Of all modes of travelling, this is, perhaps, the most enjoyable. With agreeable friends, a well furnished, comfortable dahabeah or sailing-boat, an attentive and intelligent dragoman, a good crew, and plenty of time at disposal, it leaves nothing to be desired. One can go from Cairo to Wady Halfeh at the second cataract, about eight hundred miles, without more fatigue or trouble than if you were staying all the while in a house by the seaside. Occupations can be continued as one moves along without interruption occasioned by packing or unpacking, and all the disagreeables and uncertainties incident upon arriving at and leaving strange hotels; there are no payments of any kind to make, all being contracted for before departure. It is a perfect rest from nearly all the little cares and troubles of the world. Besides the objects of paramount interest to which I have already alluded, there are endless minor ones: the varied scenery of the river-banks, the inhabitants, the bird and animal life, the navigation of the boat, even the uncertainties of the journey add to its zest. A fair wind may carry one fifty miles in a day, or there may be many days without any appreciable progress. There are all the advantages of a long sea-voyage without the drawbacks mentioned in the first chapter. The sleeping-cabins are light and airy; the weather is almost always fine, so that nearly the whole day may be spent on deck, and the variety and exercise of a walk on shore can generally be got at some time or other in the twenty-four hours.

Of course, as in everything else in life, there are drawbacks even to the pleasures of a Nile voyage. It is possible that, notwithstanding all the careful arrangements and precautions taken before starting, all may not be right with the boat or equipments, and, when once away from Cairo, there is no chance of remedying the defects. Then, especially to those who have near and dear relations at home, there is something trying in the isolation from them. This is, thanks to the improved Egyptian postal system, very different from what it was in former years. Regular post-offices are now established at all the principal towns along the Nile banks as far as Khartoum, to which letters will be forwarded from the central office at Cairo, according to the instructions given by the traveller, and from which they can be despatched with a considerable, if not absolute, certainty of their being delivered. Out of nearly a hundred letters which we posted to England last winter from many parts of Egypt, one only did not reach its destination; and, of all that were sent to us, I am not aware of any having been lost. There are also telegraph stations at every town of importance. This is a very great help; but still, owing to the impossibility of calculating beforehand to what place the boat will take one at any date, considerable intervals must often elapse before news can be received. The absence of professional assistance in case of illness or accident, unless a medical man be one of the party, is another drawback often felt by invalids; though even this is gradually lessening, owing to the increasing numbers of the floating European population on the Nile during the season.

To persons of impatient disposition, to those not fond of reading or of quiet contemplation of the beauties of Nature, the Nile voyage in a dahabeah certainly may prove tedious. For such, and for others whose time and means are absolutely limited, there are the steamers, now all under the direction of Messrs. Cook and Sons. Each vessel carries from fourteen to twenty passengers; and they run at uncertain intervals, according to the season and the number of travellers, which can all be ascertained at the office close to Shephard's Hotel. The time occupied

in going to Assouan and back (for they do not ascend the cataract) is three weeks, and the charge £46 per head. All the principal objects of interest are visited, a certain number of hours being allowed for each temple or tomb. This is altogether a convenient method for those who wish to "do" the country expeditiously and economically, but not to be recommended either for travellers in search of health, or for those whose object is not to return able only to say that they have seen the country, but to feel that they have entered into its spirit, and impressed it so fully into their minds as to have made it part of themselves for the rest of their lives. The very delays of the sailing voyage have their advantages to the latter class of travellers, giving time for reading and reflection upon what has been seen, and enabling one to see the country under a variety of different aspects, and to learn much as to the habits and social condition of the inhabitants, for which there are no opportunities in the hurried steamer voyage.

The life on board a dahabeah is generally a healthy one. It is essentially an out-of-door country life. The air, though perhaps not equal to that of the higher parts of the desert, is pure and bracing; for, owing to the narrowness of the strip of fertile land on the sides of the river (sometimes indeed quite absent, the rocks coming down to the water's edge), the air is practically that of the desert. On the first subsidence of the water after the autumnal overflow, the banks are muddy and damp, so it is well not to take to the water until December, by which time they are well dried by the sun, though January, February, and March are the best months. In April the water has often fallen so low, that navigation becomes difficult, owing to the numerous shoals and sandbanks. Even in autumn, malarious fever appears to be very uncommon on the Nile banks, except in the delta. The higher the river is ascended, so the salubrity increases, especially above the cataract, where the cultivated land is often reduced to a strip of a few feet in width along the water's edge, the river literally flowing through the desert.

The nights are generally clear, bright, and cool; sometimes, in the lower country, heavy mists are found to hang over the river in the early morning, which, however, are dissipated the moment the sun sends forth his genial rays. To guard against the cold of the night, a good supply of shawls and rugs must not be omitted, as no artificial heat can be obtained on board the boat, and persons subject to pulmonary affections should always keep within the cabin after sundown. Warm clothing is essential on a Nile voyage, for even in the daytime the wind is often keen.

The dahabeahs are flat-bottomed boats with huge latteen sails, generally capable of accommodating from two to eight passengers, according to their size. Through the kindness of some excellent friends, our voyage last year was made in one of the largest and best fitted on the river, belonging to Mr. Broadway of Cairo. It was 105 feet in length, and 20 in breadth, and the mainsail was 150 feet in height. We were a party of eight—two ladies and six gentlemen—with two English servants. There were also on board the dragoman and his two Maltese servants, the cook (a Persian) and his assistant, and a crew, consisting of Arabs and Nubians, seventeen in number, including the reis or captain, and steersman—altogether thirty-two souls. The sailors were an active, pleasant, merry set of men. Though we were in close contact with them for more than three months, we had nothing to complain of in the conduct of any one of them. They were always respectful and obliging, and when we made excursions on shore, one or more would accompany us, ready to carry guns, shawls, etc., and always on the watch to assist the ladies over rough places, to hold umbrellas for sketchers, or to render any little service with a quick yet unobtrusive readiness, and with a gentleness and propriety of manner not often met with in men of their class of life in Europe. Though as strong and healthy a set of men as could well be seen, their mode of living was most frugal. They slept in the open air on deck, and their food consisted chiefly of dry brown bread, crumbled into a large pan and boiled into a sort of porridge, with a few lentils added, and sometimes an onion or two. This was served out to them twice a day. On three occasions during the voyage, the head of our party presented them (as is the custom) with a sheep, but this was the only animal food they partook of during the whole time. Their drink was Nile water and an occasional small cup of strong coffee. Happily the reis and the majority of the crew were strict followers of the Prophet in the admirable regulation of abstaining from intoxicating liquors, and discipline or general opinion prevented those who were more lax in their religious observances from ever exceeding the bounds of propriety. It will be a bad time for the Arabs when this important article of the Mussulman faith ceases to be observed, but ominous-looking spirit-shops kept by Greeks are now to be seen in all the towns along the river where dahabeahs are in the habit of stopping.

Our own living on board was entirely under the control, and dependent upon the care, of the dragoman, and his cook who, considering the exceedingly limited space in which his operations were conducted, and the materials at his disposal, turned out a wonderful variety of dishes. Fresh buffalo-milk was obtained almost every morning at the nearest village; eggs, fowls, turkeys, and sheep were always to be had, and often vegetables, such as spinach, lettuce, and onions; but, for everything else, we had to depend upon the stores laid in before starting, consisting of hams, tongues, preserved meat, vegetables, fruit, flour, and the other usual requirements of the kitchen. Good bread was made daily on board. I mention these things to show that no one need fear starvation on a Nile boat. Indeed, I could not help often contrasting the almost too abundantly supplied and varied table of the saloon, with the simple fare which appeared to fulfil all the requirements of health and strength to the crew. It may happen, however, with a dragoman not liberal or conscientious, with stores insufficient in quantity or quality, and an indifferent cook, that delicate or particular persons may come off badly on a Nile voyage; but this is now rather the exception than the rule.

The river affords an unfailing supply of excellent water for bathing, washing, and drinking. For the latter purpose, all the mud with which it is abundantly charged is completely separated by filtering through one of the native large porous earthen jars or *ballas*. Anything that may be required in the way of wine, or beer, or mineral waters, must be laid in before leaving Cairo, according to the requirements of the party, for they do not form part of the dragoman's contract. Those who are particular often send their stock of wine direct from England, and this is on the whole, perhaps, the most economical way when a large supply is needed, as everything of the kind is dear in Egypt.

Nile voyages almost always terminate either at Assouan, at the foot of the first cataract, the limit between Egypt and Nubia, or at Wady Halfeh, at the second cataract. The shorter voyage occupies about eight to ten weeks, the longer one three or four weeks more. As dahabeahs cannot ascend the second cataract, it is not possible to continue the journey in the same boat beyond Wady Halfeh.

Contracts are made with the dragoman and owner of the boat for the journey. I must refer to Murray's Handbook for details as to the various methods in which these are drawn up, as much of the comfort and pleasure of the voyage will depend upon having everything properly regulated beforehand. As in the case of almost every thing else, the expense of Nile travelling appears to be increasing at a rapid rate. This is partly owing to the superior accommodation now afforded, and the larger amount of comfort and luxuries that travellers appear to need. But there is no doubt that all the necessities of living have vastly increased in price during the last few years in Egypt. The time when fowls could be purchased for twopence apiece, and sheep for as many shillings, has long since passed away.

The present cost of the voyage will, of course, vary according to the style in which it is performed. The owners of very superior well-built, clean boats, used for no other purpose than to carry travellers, will naturally be able to ask more than need be paid for the rough old-fashioned kind, which had to be sunk in the river before starting to clear off the previous occupants, and in which English ladies would scarcely care to travel. Dragomans also vary much in their charges, and the number of the party joining to take a boat always has a very important influence upon the expense. The larger the number, the less will be the cost to each. Some persons prefer to travel alone, rather than run the risk of uncongenial companions. An English lady, last year, went up by herself in a dahbeah as far as the second cataract. Sometimes parties are made up at the hotels in Cairo. Supposing that four join in taking a boat, the entire expenses may be set down at somewhere about £2 per day for each. If the number be larger, they may be reduced to about £1 10s.; but, as I said before, these figures are subject to a considerable variation in either direction, according to circumstances, among which the bargaining powers of the manager of the party must be taken into account.

It will thus be seen that Egypt offers almost every advantage for a winter residence for invalids, excepting economy. The increased expense of late years has, doubtless, been partly occasioned by the great influx of travellers, English and American, to whom it is no object to limit expenditure, and who consequently raise the prices to all others, but also very much by the greatly increased taxation to which the native population is now subjected. The addition of over a hundred millions to the public debt, at a very high rate of interest, during the last ten years, is a heavy burden upon the resources of so small a country.

It would be very difficult to predict the future of Egypt. With such a heterogeneous population, especially among the classes who have any influence in the government of the country, it can hardly be looked upon as a nation in the ordinary sense of the word. The sovereignty

of Turkey is in some respects still more than nominal and very costly, as, besides the regular tribute, vast sums are said to be expended in bribes to the ministers at Constantinople to enable the Khedive to carry out his independent views.

With a population in which nearly all the intelligence and education is of foreign origin, self-government or any kind of representative institution is impossible. Moreover, the religion of the masses of the people, Mahomedanism, has no room for improvement. Its precepts are inflexible. As all knowledge needful for man is contained in the Koran, all other books are superfluous. Unfortunately, the greatest obstacle to progress, polygamy and the consequent degraded state of the women, is associated with the whole system of social and religious life. What can be expected of children who are brought up in a harem by women and slaves, scarcely raised by any kind of cultivation above the level of animals? This naturally tells far more upon the higher than upon the lower classes. Among the latter, a man can rarely afford more than one wife, and she has to take her part in home and out-door work, and so lives more on an equality with the other sex. But the more a man rises in education, intelligence, and wealth, the greater the intellectual difference between himself and his female companions. Hence, as compared with other countries, the upper classes are relatively worse in many respects than the lower. Unless all this can be changed, Egypt can never take rank as a civilised country. The present ruler appears to see this, and the education of women is one among his numerous schemes for reform. He has set the example among his own daughters, and is building "ladies' colleges" both at Cairo and at Constantinople. But, to alter the entire social system which has existed for ages, will be a task that can hardly be accomplished in a generation. There is much that is excellent in the moral code of Mahomedanism; among others, it has this great merit, that, on many points, it causes its devotees to sacrifice *self*, and to submit to inconveniences and privations for conscience's sake. It is perfectly certain, however, that, as long as a people remain fanatical adherents to its creed, they can never become civilised in our sense of the word. But, unfortunately, when inroads are made upon the faith of a Mahomedan, unless a pure form of Christianity can be substituted, good and bad go together, and the last state of the man is often worse than the first. The very grave question as to the future destiny of Mahomedan populations may be quietly relegated to the future in many more out-of-the-way parts of the world, but it is seething to the surface in Egypt just now. In this age of motion, its geographical position at the meeting point of three great continents, as well as its other attractions to travellers and speculators, have suddenly brought it into importance and close contact with the most advanced portions of the world. Its present ruler, moreover, is a type of the general condition of the country; like his grandfather, Mahomed Ali, he has much ambition, energy, administrative capacity, and a general desire for the progress and material prosperity of his country, engrafted upon a substratum of Oriental ignorance, credulity, caprice, and self-indulgent extravagance. What his successor may be cannot yet be predicted; and a country is in a fearfully precarious condition when everything depends upon the personal character of the man who happens to be at the head of affairs for the time being.

LANCING THE GUMS.

I READ with pleasure Dr. Finlayson's paper "On the Alleged Dangers of Dentition and the Practice of Lancing the Gums", in the JOURNAL of August 19th. As I agree with the paper in the main, I will not occupy space in taking exception to any parts of it, but wish merely to say a few words on the use of the gum-lancet. Whether convulsions occurring during the period of dentition are due to disease of the brain or to the difficulty the teeth have in making their way through the gums, will in most instances be a difficult problem to solve. But, should the free use of the gum-lancet in such cases be frequently followed by amelioration or cessation of the convulsions, by all means let it be resorted to, even though empirically. During an experience of over twelve years, I have invariably found this to be the case, and in one instance, that of a fine healthy child, nine or ten months old, who screamed violently for several hours without any discernible cause, I believe that I was the means of warding off an attack of convulsions by free incision of the gums, both upper and under; for, immediately after the operation, she fell asleep, slept soundly all night, and had no recurrence of the screaming. In cases other than convulsions or threatened convulsions, I do not as a rule use the gum-lancet, but content myself with scratching the gum when it is tense with a finger-nail. I do not at present recall any case in which I regret having used the gum-lancet, nor one in which I should have used it, but did not. I have not experienced any trouble from hæmorrhage after its use.

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