

English article. The English ladies' efforts seem to be thoroughly appreciated, however, and reflect great glory on dear old Bartholomew's, whence most of them, including Miss Cutler, came.

LUXOR,
February 14th.

Returning from a hot and more than dusty ride to the great ruins of Karnak, I stopped my donkey at the door of the new hospital for natives that has been put up in a temporary sort of fashion by Cook & Sons, and which is entirely supported by the contributions of the visitors. The wards enclose a square garden flourishing with palms and sweet with wondrous blossoms. One is never tired of being thankful in Egypt for the fact that whatever its failings in other matters it has no bad smells; it is a continual surprise as one winds among the native quarters—places that would simply reek in other countries—to find they are mostly inodorous. The excessive dryness of the sand that covers everything seems to deodorise all.

I found the wards of the hospital simply white-washed walled, with concrete floors on the sand, quite clean and cool. Sickness does not seem very rife in Luxor, there were twenty-five cases in all, including one in an isolated room, which the English doctor, Mr. Longmore, has inaugurated; he had just got it ready when this patient arrived, having travelled by steamer all the way from Esna, further up the Nile, with a gunshot wound through his lungs. Mr. Longmore remarked that he should by rights be dead, instead of that, however, he is on the road towards recovering; whether it is the climate or the native toughness, it is not for me to determine, but it appears nearly as difficult to kill an Egyptian as the traditional cat. Two or three of the patients were taking lunch—squatting on their heels around large bowls of a kind of wheat pudding—in the general ward; they grinned in an amused fashion at the strange "sitt" (lady). Natives do not take much interest in sick folks themselves, unless they are blind or crippled or deformed in some loathsome way, when they are used to extract the "backsheesh" of the foolishly benevolent. For my part I drive all such off with all the expressions of disgust I can command in Arabic, and make the donkey boy say that the English cannot endure the sight of such ugly and wicked people. I should say that the Egyptian possesses an exceptionally good constitution, and the conditions of the climate should make the land a very paradise. All that is lacking is education.

Of course my own interest was in the "hareem" side; it consisted of one good sized ward—precisely like the men's; it was cool and clean, and must strike them as being palatial, seeing that they inhabit either unroofed yards, or a sort of mud cellars—both charming abodes knee deep in dust and refuse of all kinds, and swarming with flies. This female ward formed one side of a square, with a nice neat garden of its own in the centre, and enclosed in high mud walls. Two convalescents were sitting on the low steps of the room quite unoccupied—they do not know how to amuse themselves, poor things. In the beds—six in number—were five patients, four women, not very ill, sitting up in all their tattooed ugliness, decently clothed, however, and smiling and comfortable; one bed held a pretty little brown boy, who had undergone an operation the day before (for stone), who lay looking most pathetic, turning his poor little head wearily from side to side, while two old native women

kept the flies away with dried grass whisks. The trouble in these native hospitals is the Nursing, the native cannot get his head round the necessity of regularity. I should imagine the girls being trained now in the Girls' Medical College at Cairo would be invaluable when the thing is properly organised. I should suppose European heads will always be wanted for the departments, and I daresay the Egyptian Government might be induced to provide quarters for Lady Nurses in the most important towns, if the matter were taken up energetically. The more one sees of Egypt the more one realises that it cannot progress until its women are better taught.

ASSOUAN,
February 22nd.

Just beyond the town of Assouan—but before you reach the barracks for native soldiers—stands the collection of low buildings, outhouses we should call them, that are named collectively, "The Civil Hospital." It was the hour of the sacred lunch when I slid off my donkey at the gate, consequently the doctors were absent; but a tall Nubian in the light uniform, high boots, and kepi of the native soldiery, very good-naturedly showed me over the place. The wards were dismal enough, not bright and cheery as in the "Kasrel-Aini," where the touch of the educated woman sweetens everything. The women's ward in especial, was, to my eyes, a very hideous shed, fairly clean, of course, but with no attempt at decoration or enlivenment; the two or three old native women, miracles of ugliness, who stood about, were not even keeping the flies off the poor things lying in the little iron beds. Nursing, as we know it, does not seem to reach so far as Assouan in the "civil" sense. The Military Hospital that has been established on "Elephantine," an island opposite Assouan, is, I believe, a fine affair, but exclusively for English soldiers. It seems to me that there is a splendid opening for Lady Doctors and Nurses, both at Luxor and Assouan, and probably also at Wady Halfa. This I cannot answer for, as I have not been there, but the conditions must be quite as bad, and the necessity for more hospitals must be greater. The Egyptian girls now being trained at the Girls' Medical College, Cairo (of which I intend sending you a notice next week), will doubtless as time goes on, be drafted up the country, and may make an alteration in the course of years; but it wants the knowledge and enterprise of the modern English woman to start the work and take the lead; the natives will follow readily enough. I have been very much interested in finding *American Mission Schools* working at all the principal towns on the Upper Nile. I was not aware of this before, but they *are* there, and are teaching the English language and English principles all along. Where are our *English Mission Schools*? Echo answers "where." Of course things will progress. Assouan is now a fashionable playground; beautifully "gowned" women and exquisitely "groomed" men come off the many dahabeeyahs moored at Elephantine; smart Americans crowd the tourists' boats, and the hotel and *bazaars*. Some of these smart folks get ill, as occurred to one party on a dahabeeyah at Luxor; then there is anguish, and a wild telegraphing, and a terrible waiting, until hope and help in the shape of the blessed English trained Nurse arrive, and take the command of the situation.

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