A JOURNEY TO THE BIBLICAL SITES IN LOWER EGYPT, ETC.

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The work of the Palestine Exploration Fund could scarcely be deemed complete if Egypt were left out of the scope of its investigations. In the very first Book of the Old Testament, we read of Abram going during a famine to sojourn in the rich and fertile land of Egypt, and of his deceitful dealings with the king of that country, and on the very threshold of the New Testament, we are told of the flight of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph with the Holy Child to the same place of refuge, and how it was that "out of Egypt God called his Son." In addition to this, much of the Old Testament relates to Egyptian transactions, and there is, in point of fact, scarcely a better or more striking commentary upon the inspired Prophets than the present state and aspect of the ancient Biblical cities of Lower Egypt.

So far as the writer can discover, there are no Arabic or Christian traditions in Egypt, relating to the visit of the Patriarch Abram, and Brugsch's identification of a place called in the monuments *T-en Moshè*, the Island or Riverbank of Moses, with the name of the great deliverer and law-giver, must at the best be considered very doubtful. ("Hist. of Egypt," ii, 112). With respect, however, to the "Flight into Egypt," and the sojourn of the Infant Christ in that ancient land, four traditions prevail to this day amongst the Copts, who are the representatives of the ancient Egyptians, and the inheritors to some extent of the traditions, as they are the actual possessors of the property of the ancient orthodox Church of Egypt.

The first of these traditions relates to the Crypt Church of Sitt Miriam, the Lady Mary, under the fine and curious Church of Abou-Sirgeh in the ancient Roman fortress of Kas'r or Dayr-esh-Shemmah at Mis'r Ateekeh, (Old Cairo). The church in question is a small subterraneous building of very early type, perhaps as early as the sixth or seventh century. It has three aisles, each side aisle being separated from the nave by two pillars taken from some earlier Greek or Roman structure. In the eastern, northern, and southern walls respectively, there is a niche with a slab sculptured with a cross at the bottom of each, and according to Coptic tradition, the Virgin and St. Joseph reposed in the side ones, and the Divine Child in that in the centre. His Holiness Kyrillos, the present Patriarch of the Copts, whom I questioned on the subject, declared that this tradition is at least as old as the crypt to which it relates.

The three other traditions are connected with the fountain and tree at Matarceyeh a few miles from Cairo in the immediate neighbourhood of
the ruins of Heliopolis (On). In a garden a little to the right of the
road, presented with characteristic bad taste by the ex-Khediv to the
Empress Eugénie, and now profaned by a French café, is a venerable
Gemaseh, or sycomore-fig tree, under whose branches the Holy Family are
traditionally reported to have rested at the time of the Flight. Another
tradition relates that the Blessed Virgin concealed the Holy Child in a
hole in the trunk, and that a spider spun its web over the aperture so as
to conceal Him from His pursuers.* The present tree is said to be the suc­
cessor of one which died some two centuries ago, but there is nothing in the
appearance of the tree itself to militate against the idea that it is of a much
greater antiquity, and the extreme longevity of the sycomore-fig is well
known. Hard by is a fountain with a sakieh, fed probably by percolation
from the Nile, but said to have been brackish until the Virgin bathed
therein, when it became sweet. To these stories, I may add that it was
interesting to one who in childhood in his native Norfolk had heard the
legend which connects the white spots on the leaf of the "Blessed Thistle,"
with the milk of the Blessed Virgin, to find the road in the neighbourhood
of Mataareeyeh, bordered on both sides with luxuriant tufts of that beautiful
plant.

Thus much being said about the local traditions, the writer would remark
that the following notes are the result of a journey undertaken in the early
part of the present year at the request of the Committee of the Palestine
Exploration Fund, to visit the principal Biblical cities of Lower Egypt, and
the places on the route of the Israelites at the Exodus, as proposed many
years ago by Richter and Schleiden, and advocated afresh by Brugsch
Bey, who, it must be confessed, has made but slight acknowledgment of
the labour of his predecessors. The writer, in what he has to relate, has
himself no particular theory to advocate with regard to the Exodus; all
theories at present promulgated, presenting in his opinion, almost insuper­
able difficulties. His sole object has been to search after truth, and to
relate as plainly as possible what he saw, in the hope that others may be
aided in drawing safe conclusions from the facts stated and the observa­
tions made. He has not shrunk, however, from noting in passing anything
which in his opinion makes for or against a theory, which most people will
allow to be a brilliant one, and which, at all events prima facie, has much
to commend it.

Upon one point, indeed, Herr Brugsch seems to have laid too
little stress, although it tells in his own favour. It surely seems
unlikely in the extreme that a multitude of people whose main object
was to get out of the country as fast as possible—to go out into the
wilderness or desert to sacrifice unto the Lord—a multitude laden, moreover,
with rich plunder, and encumbered with flocks and herds—it surely seems
unlikely in the extreme that they should, in the first instance, have gone
utterly out of the way in the direction of Suez, and that through a hostile
country, and through the very midst of their former enslavers, when they

* Bœdeker's Handbook.
might have gone out straight and by a short cut into the desert by the well-known "royal" route into Phoenicia.

It seems probable indeed that the term "Red Sea" adopted by the Authorised Version from the LXX, has put investigators on a wrong scent, and has even led a writer of such justly high renown as Professor G. Ebers to attempt to identify the Baal-Zephon of Scripture with Gebel Attâka, many miles below Suez. The name Baal-Zephon is clearly of Phoenician or Semitic origin, and to be looked for on the road to Syria, and not in a place so utterly remote from Phoenician influences as the desert Egyptian coast of the Red Sea. If one were asked where one could naturally expect to find a Baal-Zephon, one would instantly point to some spot in the direct route from Egypt into Syria, and it is in that very direction that Herr Brugsch finds indicated in the Papyri a Baal-Zapouni, which he seeks to identify with Mount Casius. Why I am compelled to question the correctness of this view will appear hereafter.

In the ensuing notes, I propose to speak separately of the principal sites visited in Lower Egypt, and then to give a more detailed account of my journey on the supposed route of the Hebrews at the time of the Exodus.

HELIOPOLIS.

Some 9 miles from Cairo, and a short distance beyond Matareeyeh and the "Virgin's Tree" are the remains of Heliopolis, the City of the Sun-god Râ, called An by the ancient Egyptians, and On and Beth-Shemesh, the abode, that is, of the Sun, in Holy Scripture. In the LXX and Vulgate, it is called by its Greek equivalent "Ἡλευτερωμείων"; and in the LXX it is added to Pithom and Ramses, as being one of the "Strong," or rather "Temple" cities which were built by the oppressed Hebrews for the Egyptians. On was a priestly city and a place of learning, and its reputation was such that Plato is said to have studied there under the orienters for no less a time than thirteen years. Joseph is believed also to have studied there, and it is expressly stated in the Book of Genesis (xli, 45), that the Pharaoh gave him to wife, Asenath, the daughter of a priest of On, named Potiphera, one, i.e., dedicated to the Sun-god Râ. Although it never attained to the rank of a capital, Heliopolis was always a city of great celebrity. Here the worship of the Bull Mnevis, sacred to Râ, was established as early as the remote period of the second dynasty, under King Kakao, circa B.C. 4100-4751. The mystical bird called the Bennu, or Phoenix, was likewise venerated here, and speaking generally, On may be described as having been the centre of the worship of the deities connected with the sun. King Amenemhat I, the first King of the 12th dynasty, is said to have restored the shrine of Tum, the Evening-Sun-god, and to have laid the foundations of the great Temple of the Sun, in front of which amongst others was erected the noble obelisk, which still exists,
by his son Osirtasen I. The title "Lord of On" was added to the other pompous titles of the Egyptian kings, and the vast wealth of its temple, and the immense number of its priests, are recorded in several papyri. Now almost all the ancient glory of Heliopolis has been swept away by the hand of time, the greed of successive tyrants, and its proximity to Cairo, for the erection of which city its ruins must have formed a convenient quarry. The remains, however, are still considerable. The obelisk of Osirtasen, which still exists, is the oldest in Egypt of its size, which is no less than 66 feet 6 inches above the level of the pavement from whence it sprung. Like other obelisks, it is a monolith, and made of the red granite of Assouan, the ancient Syene, at the first cataract. It is now buried to a depth of between 2 and 3 feet by the deposits of the Nile. This obelisk, which was doubtless one of a pair which stood in front of the great temple of the Sun, now stands amidst a few trees near the centre of the vast enclosure which anciently surrounded the temple. It bears the same hieroglyphic inscription cut in each of its four sides, and includes the cartouch and name of its founder, Osirtasen I. Unfortunately, the mason bees have nearly obliterated the inscriptions on the north and south sides of the monument by covering them with their cells of hardened clay. On the east and west sides, however, the inscriptions appear of a brown colour on a red ground, the cells in those positions only filling up the deeply-incised hieroglyphs to the level of the red granite surface of the obelisk. The sides of the vast oblong space in which the temple was situated are still marked by mounds, or walls of crude brick, those to the east, south, and west, being of narrow dimensions. Those to the north, however, have their continuation in the ruins of the ancient town which, formed of crude brick houses, must have been of considerable extent. Here are frequently found scarabaei, sacred images and emblems in porcelain, and other antiquities. The city is separated from the neighbouring desert by a narrow strip of inundated and cultivated soil. The Pelusaic branch of the Nile, which formerly passed close to the city, is now entirely silted up.

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**TEL-EL-YAHOUDEH.**

Some 20 miles from Cairo, near the Moslem village of Shbeen-el-Kanater, rise the imposing remains of Tel-el-Yahoudeh, "the Mound of the Jew," which, although not connected with any Biblical site, are yet deserving of notice in this place, as being conjecturally the ruins of Onion or Onia. It should be mentioned, however, that Onion is placed by Sir G. Wilkinson at Belbeis, and by Mr. R. S. Poole at Leontopolis. Anyhow, the name of the place indicates some intimate connection with the Jewish people, which cannot be said of either of the other sites.

Onias, son of the High Priest Onias III. escaped in early youth from Syria, and found refuge amongst the party of the Mizraimites in Egypt,
at that time ruled by Ptolemy Philometor, B.C. 222. In order to bring
about the union of the Hellenistic Jews, Onias, encouraged by a prophecy
of Isaiah, that a time should come when there should be "an Altar to the
Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt," (Isaiah xix, 19), applied to the
king for permission to build a new temple on the site of a deserted shrine,
or fortress. Ptolemy, although marvelling that a Jew should desire to
erect a temple to the God of Israel in a place abounding in idolatrous
emblems, nevertheless granted his request, and Onias erected the temple
and town called Onion after himself. Josephus describes the temple, so
erected, as resembling a tower, and states that it was surrounded with a wall
of burnt brick, with gates of stone. In it was a golden lamp, suspended by
a golden chain. No certain vestiges of this temple can now be discovered,
but there are vague rumours of the finding of Hebrew inscriptions, now
lost; and Professor Sayce informs me that he this spring found a fragment
of stone lying on the inner slope of the mound on the eastern side, bearing
two ancient Hebrew letters. This stone seemed to have been originally covered with a thin coating of
stucco. The two old Hebrew characters would rep-
resent the square Hebrew ת ו. Be that as it may,
the extent of the ruins shows that Tel-el-Yahoudeh
marks the site of an ancient Egyptian town of con-
siderable importance, and one can scarcely doubt that it was a royal resi-
dence. The town was upwards of half-a-mile in length, by a quarter of a
mile in breadth, and was defended by a ditch and wall, which last rises
on the eastern side into a lofty fortress, built, like the walls, of crude
brick, and containing a curious windowless shaft or dungeon, ten feet
square. Beyond this, still farther to the east, extends a lower, but
equally long, part of the Tel, chiefly occupied by streets of houses of
crude brick, some of which still bear the traces of whitewash. This
portion of the town has evidently been burnt, and is apparently
chiefly of the Roman period. On the western side of the Tel might be
seen a few years since some portions of what I conjecture to have been a
royal kiosk or country residence of Rameses II. A monolithic bath of
limestone, and a few blocks of alabaster, are almost the only remains now
existing. Formerly there was visible a floor made of blocks of polished
alabaster, on which were set pedestals of granite and alabaster, bearing
the cartouches of Rameses II, and others of a later period, inlaid with
circular roundels of various sizes of brown and yellowish porcelain, of
which each one bears a six-pointed flower or rosette. Amongst the sur-
rrounding débris were formerly to be found portions of splendid porcelain
friezes, and wall decorations of various colours and designs, some of which
are inlaid with glass. Other friezes were of alabaster, some inlaid, and
some carved in relief. Amongst the latter were several heads of Rameses.
The porcelain friezes represented rows of figures of the Phoenix (Bennus),
serpents, lotus buds, and several conventional designs. Others had inlaid
figures of Semitic and Negro captives, and other figures coloured yellow, and
apparently representing people of some European race. On one occasion I
dug out a perfect figure of an Asiatic captive with my own hands, and it may now be seen in the British Museum. Besides these, I brought away tiles with the prenomen and name of Rameses inlaid in glass. At different visits to Tel-el-Yahoudeh, I have seen or obtained portions of statues and other objects bearing the names of Apopi or Apappus, an Hyksos King, Seti, or Menepthah I, the presumed Pharaoh of the Exodus, Rameses II and III, and Sheshonk I, the Shishak of the Bible. The statues have unfortunately been all broken up by the fellâheen as soon as they were discovered, from fear of the infamously cruel system in vogue in Egypt, which exposes the accidental discoverer of antiquities to flogging and imprisonment, and to the confiscation of the objects found.

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TEL-BASTA.

Fifty miles from Cairo, in a rich and fertile country, and close to the flourishing modern town of Zagazig, or Zakazik, rise the extensive mounds and ruins of Pibast, the Pibeseth of Ezekiel xxx, 17, and the Bubastis of the Greeks. The ruins at present cover a very large space of ground. The ancient city, which was visited and described by Herodotus,* was celebrated for its beautiful temple, dedicated to the cat or lioness-headed goddess, Pasht, the Egyptian Aphrodite or Venus. This goddess is represented with the head of a lioness or cat, and her sacred emblem was the cat. Numbers of bronze cats, some of which have crystal eyes, have been procured from Tel-Basta, and sent to England by Mr. Clark, of the Telegraph Department of the Egyptian Government, who perhaps knows more of the ruins of the Tel than any one else. Only a few granite blocks now remain of the splendid temple described by Herodotus, but Mr. Clark has discovered some small fragments of another, probably that mentioned by the Greek historian as dedicated to Hermes. Around the relics of the great temple, rise the crude brick mounds of the ancient walls of enclosure, which in one place assume the form of a fortress. The houses of the city, which are being continually excavated by the fellâheen for the dust, with which they manure their land, are in an unusually good state of preservation. From the top of the mounds the desert is plainly visible, although at a considerable distance. When wandering amidst the shapeless mounds of Pibeseth, and finding ever and anon pieces of skulls and other human bones protruding from the soil, it was impossible to help remembering that Ezekiel of old time had prophesied that "the young men of Aven and Pibeseth shall fall by the sword, and these cities shall go into captivity."

* "Herod." ii, 137.
TEL-FAKÚS.

TEL-FAKÚS, the Kûs of the Copts, and Phacusus of the Greeks, which, with great probability, has been identified with the Goshen (Gosem or Kosem), of the Bible, is about 4½ hours distant from Tel-Basta. It was itself a city of considerable size, and the capital, probably, of a district bearing the same name, which, as we read in Genesis xlivi and xlvii, was granted to the immigrant family of Joseph, as an habitation for them and for their children, for their flocks and for their herds. The rich and fertile appearance of the surrounding district, the “Land of Goshen,” quite bears out the scriptural statement that it was “the best of the land,” and one has no cause to wonder that the Israelites should have “grown and multiplied” therein “exceedingly.” The Tel at present is of considerable extent, but the mounds have been mostly carried away by the country folks who use the disintegrated bricks of Nile mud, and the dust and rubbish as a top-dressing for their land. The innumerable potsherds which are left, cause the mounds to be of a red colour. Part of the ancient site is occupied by palm-trees, amidst which, from heaps of red pottery, tower up large fragments of the crude brick houses. A few blocks bearing the name of Rameses II, are said to have been found in the Tel. Apart from the beauty of the site, beside a small lake, and amidst innumerable palm-trees, Tel-Fakús is an uninteresting place. I was awakened several times during the night by the melancholy cries of numbers of jackals, which were answered by the bay of the dogs, which had voluntarily constituted themselves the guards of my tent.

There are two routes from Tel Fakús to Sân. The nearest of these leads through swamps, which at the time of my visit were impassable on account of the amount of water on the track. The other conducts the traveller by way of Salaheyeh. This road passes first through a country abounding in splendid palm-trees, intersected by small pools of water, and then enters an altogether treeless district of marshes, intersected by reed-encumbered lakes, and with the desert in full view to the right of the track. The scanty inhabitants dwell in huts constructed of reeds, and in appearance, and to a certain extent in language, they differ from the other inhabitants of Egypt, being doubtless of Semitic origin. After passing a large lake covered with innumerable wild-fowl, Salaheyeh is reached at the distance of about four and a-half hours from Tel Fakús. From its position on the caravan route to Syria, Salaheyeh is an important place, and its Sheik has a widely extended authority. At the time of my visit, the Sheik, who has the title of Bey, was absent, but I was received with much kindness and gentlemanlike courtesy by his son Edroos, a handsome youth of pleasing manners, and by his brother, the Sheik Imâm. The houses of Salaheyeh, instead of being crowded together, are scattered about beside a small birket or lake, and amongst the magnificent groves of palms, of which there are no less than 54,000 in Salaheyeh alone.
SAN.

The journey from Salaheyeh to San occupies little more than five hours. The path, after leaving the palm-groves, crosses a strip of desert, when another grove of palm-trees is reached, and soon afterwards a ferry-boat takes the traveller across an ancient canal, which represents the ancient Pelusiac branch of the Nile, and runs down to Tel Dephneh, and so out into the lakes. The place now reached is called “Gezeereh,” i.e., the Island, and is an elevated tract of sand surrounded by a zone of cultivated land, and tenanted by a tribe of immigrant Mogrebi or Moorish Arabs. Seeing some splendid greyhounds near the Sheik’s tent, I accosted an ancient, and requested permission to examine them. I was thereupon invited to alight and to partake of coffee in a rude hut formed of palms, supports, and reeds, and open at one end. Here I found four superb peregrine falcons, jessed and hooded, with crimson plumes on their hoods. They are used, in conjunction with the greyhounds, in the chase of gazelles. Leaving Gezeereh, and on the edge of the waste, I diverged from the tract to the left to examine some huge granite fragments which I saw lying upon the sand. They proved to be the half of a kind of bath, and portions of what seems to have been a Colossus. Around are strewn numerous fragments of pottery and glass. I now entered “the field,” or “plain of Zoan,” the great and hideous waste which extends to the foot of the mounds of San. The soil of brown, and sometimes blackish, pulverized mud, with an efflorescence here and there of white salt, is diversified only by the flickering mirage, and by low tumps of windswept sand precariously held together by the roots of stunted bushes of tamarisk and “worgat.” In places, pools of salt water crossed the track, which only a few days before would have been impassable. As I advanced on foot, to spare the wearied beasts, the huge mounds of San appeared in front looming over the blasted marsh, and red with innumerable sherds of pottery, the accumulation of long-forgotten generations of men—men of whom of old time the Prophet Isaiah exclaimed, “Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish? Where are they? Where are thy wise men?” (Isaiah xix, 11, 12.)

The modern village of San is a small collection of mud hovels standing in a pestilential situation on the banks of a canal, once the Tanitic Branch of the Nile, about 10 miles from its junction with Lake Menzaleh and near the west end of the huge mounds which contain the Temple.

San, or San-el-Hagar, “San of the Stones,” is the Zoan of Scripture, and its antiquity is spoken of in the Book of Numbers, where it is said (xiii, 22), “Now Hebron was built 7 years before Zoan in Egypt.” Upon or close to the site of this ancient Zoan, called also in the monuments Zor, i.e., the Strong, was founded another city, but by whom it does not appear to be certain. The Sanctuary or Holy of Holies, of the great Temple, however, is stated to belong to the sixth dynasty, as the name of King Pepi (Apappus) has been found in that position, and of the twelfth dynasty.
monuments have been found at Sân, bearing the names of Amenemhat I, Osirtasen I, and Osirtasen II. That Sân was a place of great importance under the foreign monarchs of the Hyksos dynasties is certain, as Mariette-Pasha discovered many important monuments belonging to them, which are now in the Museum at Boulak. One of these is a group of two figures in dark grey granite. The heads are unfortunately much damaged, but the beards are in the Asiatic form and utterly unlike those of the Egyptians. On the base of their throne are represented aquatic flowers, and fish resembling the grey mullet and a kind of perch or bream. The fore part of a Sphynx in blackish granite, which bears the name of Ra-auen Renen Apapi in a cartouch upon the shoulder exhibits features widely different from the Egyptian. By some Zoan is conjectured, at the early time of the erection of the sanctuary in the sixth dynasty to have been Ha-awar, the Avaris of Manetho. Avaris, however, is placed by Brugsch, but as I believe erroneously, at Tel-el-Hîr. After the conquest of the Hyksos by Aahmes (Amosis) the first king of the eighteenth dynasty, the importance of Sân seems to have declined. It rose again, however, under Seti or Menepthah I, for this king, as also his successor, the Great Rameses, erected such vast and splendid buildings with the aid of the conquered Hyksos people and of the captive Hebrews, that they, and especially the latter, may be considered as the new founders of Sân, which now obtained the name of Pi-Ramessu, or the City of Rameses. The new city, in fact, under this monarch became the principal royal residence and the capital of the Egyptian Empire. Rameses enlarged and added to the sacred edifices already existing, and Brugsch states that the Papyri abound in dates relating to the building of the new sanctuaries, and to works in stone and brick, with whose erection the workmen were burdened. The Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph," was this same Rameses, the king who so grievously oppressed the Hebrews, and the father of the princess who found the infant Moses in his cradle of papyrus in what was afterwards known as the Tanitic branch of the Nile. Sân, then, or Pi Ramesses was the Raamses, one of the "Treasure" or rather "Temple Cities," (Pithom or Pi-Tum, the City of the Setting-Sun-God being the other), which are stated in Exodus i, 11 to have been erected by the Hebrews for the King of Egypt. At this period the fortifications of Sân as strengthened by Rameses were so strong and its position commanding as it did the road into Syria, so important, that the city was regarded as the "Key of Egypt." The temples were dedicated to the great Gods Amen, Ptah, and Hormakhu, with whom Rameses associated the foreign Baal-Sutekh, a deity whose worship had been introduced from Phœnicia. Brugsch mentions the interesting speculation that in the Papyri the priests of Zor-Ramses bore the name of Khar-tob, i.e., the Warriors, and considers that the Magicians summoned by Pharaoh to imitate the miracles of Moses and Aaron and who are called Khartumin in Scripture, probably derived their name from the same word.* As the capital of the Empire Zoan or Raamses was no doubt

the head-quarters of the captive Hebrews, and we have the express authority of Holy Writ for the fact that the miracles of Moses were wrought in the "field" or "plain" of Zoan. Psalm xxviii, 12. It was amidst the stately buildings of this city that the wailing of the Egyptians over their firstborn was heard, and in the reign of Menepthath II, the successor of Rameses, the Sesostris of the Greeks, the main body of the Hebrews must have started on their long wanderings.

After the Exodus, although with some fluctuations, Sân, or Tanis, as it was called from the time of the twenty-first dynasty, seems for long to have retained its importance. Thus in Isaiah xix, 11-13 "the princes of Zoan" are coupled with the "princes of Noph," i.e., Memphis, as though those two cities were the principal ones in Egypt, and in Isaiah xxx, 4, "the princes of Egypt" are mentioned as being at Zoan.* The Prophet Ezekiel also, at the time of the invasion of Egypt by the Assyrians, prophesies its destruction, and that "fire should be set in Zoan." How this prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter will be seen hereafter.

At the present time the ancient glory of a royal capital has dwindled down to an even unusually squalid village of mud hovels. Looking eastwards towards the Tel the huge mounds appear to open and the space between is filled with, as it were, an avalanche of immense stones, which are the remains of the western pylons of the Great Temple. Perhaps, however, the most striking view of all is, when coming from the north or south, one gains the summit of the mounds, and suddenly and unexpectedly looks down upon the ruins of a Temple some 600 feet in length and constructed entirely of red granite from the far-off quarries of Assouan. Strewn about in all directions are papyrus-bud columns, obelisks, colossi and shrines, overthrown indeed, but otherwise in a marvellous state of preservation; the inscriptions and carvings in the finest style of Egyptian art, being as fresh as though they had been cut yesterday. It is a great solitude, and brooded over by a deep silence, which makes the scene of ruin and desolation all the more striking. Few scenes in Egypt, the land of wonders, are more impressive, none lay more closely hold upon the imagination. The highest point of the Tel is a small wely or Mohammedan Sheiks' tomb, called "Ryeed-Sân," behind the easternmost sanctuary. Hence northwards across a marsh the eye ranges to the great Lake of Menzaleh, and eastwards and southwards, across a pestilential, uninhabited, and blasted waste; in the dim distances are discerned the tops of palm-trees, marking the limit of cultivated land. Westwards, beyond the hovels of Sân and the ancient canal, extend vast swamps, with here and there scant patches of cultivation, far as the eye can reach.

It has been supposed that the destruction of the Great Temple is owing to a burst of Christian zeal or fanaticism in the time of Theodosius.† Far more likely, however, is the supposition that the overthrow of the Temple was caused by the mighty shock of some earthquake; and this the more so, since,

† Murray's "Egyptian Handbook."
as is also the case in several other instances in Lower Egypt, the vast
structures were literally founded on the sand or mud, without adequate
support or foundations.

Approaching from the west to the left of the front of the Temple, there
is a prostrate statue of the great Rameses sculptured out of a block of the
hardest reddish sandstone of a crystalline texture. The workmanship is
admirable, and the plaits or bands of the wig or head-dress being in relief
and of a yellow colour, the monument may be looked on as a huge cameo.
Here also, cut in a block of soft limestone containing shells, is a Sphynx,
and three large broken obelisks of granite. At a short distance is a small
granite head of a king or deity surmounted by four plumes, and a gigantic
head of a king, still preserving traces of red colour. To the right of this
first compartment of the Temple is a lateral chapel constructed of limestone.

In the second compartment are several fine papyrus-bud columns covered
with hieroglyphs sculptured with amazing skill, and obelisks of magnificent
work with their apices perfect.

In the third compartment are more obelisks, on one of which Rameses
appears making an offering, in sculpture of the finest style. Several erect
colossi occur here in black basalt and yellow and red crystalline sandstone,
and some granite remains of the Hyksos. There are also several seated
statues in bluish granite, and a sandstone kneeling figure of a sacred
scribe bearing a table of offerings. The finest object, however, in this com­
partment of the Temple, is one of a pair of Monolithic Chapels or shrines.
This monument has a coved roof and is covered with sculptures and
hieroglyphs within and without. At one end is a Triad of deities, Amen,
Tum, and Mut. The carving is absolutely superb, and it is no exaggeration
to say that the figure of Rameses on the roof is cut like a gem. The
material is crystalline conglomerate sandstone, of a purple and reddish­
yellow colour. Many of the statues hereabouts preserve the colours with
which they were originally painted, one small black granite statue being
coloured green.

In the fourth compartment are more broken obelisks, and in the fifth
and last the remains of columns with papyrus-bud capitals. This is the
most ancient part of the Temple and dates back to the remote period of
the sixth dynasty. The number of obelisks and statues is, in point of fact,
quite bewildering, and Pi-Ramessu must have boasted of more of the
former class of monoliths than any other holy place in Egypt. Around the
Naos, or Holy of Holies, are the marks of a great conflagration.

Surrounding the Temple was a vast enclosure or wall of crude bricks
formed of Nile mud, with little or no traces of straw to bind them, and
beyond these are the remains of innumerable houses also of crude brick.
Farther off to the north rises a strong and massive rampart constructed
of small mud bricks arranged in a very intricate manner, the walls sloping
inwards on both sides from the bottom to the top. Between the wall and
the Temple are the remains of a gateway constructed of sandstone and
granite, near which again are the marks of a great fire. In one place, in
this part of the ruins, lumps of molten glass are strewn about in all directions. Farther north again are traces of the outer wall of the city and again the marks of fire. The mounds hereabout are strewn with pottery of an extremely rude description, from which it may be concluded that this was the poorer quarter of the city. A few hundred yards to the south-west of the west end of the Great Temple lies a prostrate single granite column, and some half-a-mile to the south-east lie the disintegrating remains of a double row of huge columns of red granite, resembling the skeleton of some gigantic saurian; these last remains being, I should imagine, of a much later period than the other ruins. The mounds of Sân are of great and unusual height and cover a vast extent of ground, testifying to the ancient size and importance of the city. Perhaps nowhere else in the world is the contrast between former magnificence and present destruction and desolation so keenly felt as it is amidst these mighty relics of the past.

FROM SÂN TO EL ARÎSH.

Had it been possible I should have preferred traversing "the field" or plain of Zoan by a line of country to the east of the track by which I had travelled to Sân, seeing on the way the Tels called in the French map Tel Dekik, Tel-el-Atieh, and Tel Chomeh, which lie a little off the track to the north of the direct route between Sân and Tel Dephneh, and in part of what is probably rightly identified by Brugsch as the district of Succoth.* The water had not, however, subsided sufficiently to permit me to deviate from the main track, or to allow me to visit the Tel further to the north-east, at which Brugsch places the site of Pithom, the city, that is, of the Solar Deity Tûm. This I take to be the place called "Tel-el-Scherig" in the French map, and the ancient chief town of the Sethroitic Nome. I accordingly returned to Salaheyeh and started the following day for Tel Dephneh. I may remark in this place that it seems to me extremely doubtful whether the Succoth of the Bible, which Brugsch would identify with the Thuku or Thukot of the papyri, but as Professor Robertson Smith believes, without sufficient philological authority, was ever applied to a definite place at all.† The name Succoth, i.e. Tents (why not huts made of reeds, like those of the present inhabitants of this part of the country?) would more probably seem to indicate a district than a town, and if it be insisted on that the name in Exodus necessarily

* To the west of the direct route there is a sandy Tel, not marked in the map, and bearing the remarkable name of Tel Faraon, the "Mound of Pharaoh." There are no ancient remains.

† It is important to notice that Brugsch, without one word of explanation, calmly changes the "Thuku" and "Thukot" of his map into "Sukot," in the text of his discourse. "L'Exode," p. 9.
signifies a *stage* in the journey of the Israelites, it might easily have been applied to some particular spot in the district inhabited by the Semitic Nomads, where a number of tents or booths were gathered together. Such an assemblage or encampment might be termed "Succoth," as being *par excellence* a place of tents. As to its position, it would surely be more reasonable to place it at some healthy, sandy spot near Sân, such for instance as the Gezerch already mentioned, or even at Salaheyeh, than in the midst of the unwholesome marshes a little farther to the north. If on the other hand Succoth were amongst the marshes and a definite place, its site would more probably be found at one of the chain of Tels already named in the direct line between Sân and Tel-Dephneh, rather than farther to the north towards Lake Menzaleh, which is altogether out of the direct route from Raames into Phoenicia. It should be remarked that Professor R. Smith looking at the question from a philological point of view regards Brugsch's identification of the *yetam* of the monuments with the Etham of Exodus as quite inadequate.*

The route from Salaheyeh lies across a sandy portion of the desert and then approaches the ancient canal already mentioned, and which, in this place is fringed and tufted with quantities of tall reeds. This neighbourhood has at present a bad name on account of its insecurity, and numerous robberies and murders have recently occurred. The Mamour of El-Kantâra has repeatedly forwarded complaints to the Mudîr of Zagazig, but has received no answer; the latter official being probably of opinion that the collection of taxes to repay those Europeans who lent their money to enable the late Khediv to erect innumerable palaces and to import French actresses, is a subject of far greater importance than a matter which merely affects the lives and property of the people. This portion of the desert is inhabited chiefly by the Massaedd Bedoueen. In five hours from Salaheyeh I arrived at Tel-Dephneh, according to Brugsch the *yetam* of the monuments and the Etham of Exodus. By some this place is believed to be the Tahpanhes of Jeremiah x, 4, iii, 9, where the King of Egypt is said to have had a residence.† It is undoubtedly the Daphnai of the Greeks. Tel-Dephneh occupies a very commanding situation on "the edge of the wilderness." To the west is a brackish lake of small dimensions, across which extends a Gis'r or Dyke, apparently artificial and ancient. It leads towards the swamps in the direction of Sân. To the north the place is defended by the ancient canal which represents the Pelusaic branch of the Nile, long since silted up. Beyond the lake and canal is a vast tract of uninhabited marsh land; more to the east are the waters of a part of Lake Menzaleh and of Lake Balas, now perhaps at a higher level than formerly. To the south there is the Gebel or "wilderness" upon whose verge the Tel is situated. The view

* Brugsch everywhere assumes that Succoth, Etham, and Migdol, indicate a single day's journey. It may have been so, but it is not so stated in the sacred text.
† Cf. also Ezek. xxx, 9.
from the highest part of the Tel is very extensive, and ranges from the
extensive lake country near Port Said to Gebel Attāka on the coast of the
Red Sea below Suez, which is plainly visible across the intervening
desert. To the east, beyond the mounds and line of the Suez Canal is seen
afar off upon the horizon, the lofty rounded form of the natural hill called
Tel-Abou-Assap, on the right of the direct route to El-Arish. On the
north side the highest part of the principal mound descends upon the
already named canal, and on the opposite bank is seen, not a Tel indeed,
but the pottery-strewn remains of a small ancient town. These two sites
are supposed to represent the two ancient fortresses, hence the plural
Δαφνας in the Greek name, depicted in a monument of Seti I at Thebes,
behind which was a town called Tabenet.* If this be the case then Tel-
Dephneh is the Pelusian Daphne mentioned by Herodotus, ii, 30, as
having been occupied by an Egyptian garrison for the protection of the
frontier towards Syria. The existing remains are extensive and show that
the ancient city was a large one. Many large hewn blocks of granite
sandstone and limestone are lying about in different parts of the ruins,
and especially around the central mound, where also I found several hewn
blocks of blue volcanic stone of the same shape as those I afterwards
found in greater numbers at Tel-el-Hir. Hereabouts I likewise picked
up three or four hammers or mullers of a hard, close-grained black stone.
About a quarter of a mile eastward of the principal mound rises another,
the remains evidently of a tower of crude brick which has been destroyed
by fire. This mound and the ruins in its immediate neighbourhood to the
south are called by the Bedoueen Tel-Farmah. To the south and east of
this spot may be traced an ancient road leading towards the lake, and the
foundations of numerous streets of crude brick houses. Amongst these
last I found the mouth of a well, and the rims of several huge vases of red
terra-cotta embedded in the soil, and apparently used to hold water.
As regards the identification of this place, once a populous city, but now a
complete solitude, with the Etham of the Bible, I will only remark that it
could be easily reached in two days from Sân, and that supposing Lake
Menzaleh had, as is probable, a lower level in ancient times than at present,
Tel-Dephneh would probably be not more than a day's journey from Tel-
el-Hir, which as will be seen hereafter, I am disposed to identify with the
Migdol of Exodus. I notice also that the Bedoueen distinctly
pronounce the name of this Tel as Dephneh, in two syllables, and not as
Defenneh in three, as it is written in the maps. From Tel-Dephneh I
went on in about 3½ hours to El-Kantāra, and crossing the Suez Canal
camped in the half-deserted village, where I was met by Arldeh, the
Sheik of the Suarka Bedoueen and his people, with whom I had
arranged for a supply of camels and for guidance across the desert as far
as Gaza.

Immediately behind the modern village of El-Kantāra, whereof the

* "L'Exode et les Monuments Egyptiens." Discours par Henri Brugsch Bey. Leipzig, 1875. Throughout this paper I continually refer to this essay.
eastern portion is formed by the deserted shanties of the French engineers employed in the construction of the canal, is the site of an ancient town of considerable extent. Pottery, glass, and other ancient débris are scattered about far and wide on the surface of the desert. The most curious objects, however, are the numerous coffins of terra-cotta, whose broken fragments cover a considerable space of ground, some nearly perfect specimens remaining in situ. Two large pots, tapering towards the lower end, were employed in each case, and the head being placed in one and the feet in the other, the rims met in the centre, thus completely enclosing the corpse. I had previously found some somewhat similar interments in a railway cutting near Alexandria. These pots are of coarse fabric, very thick in texture, and of a red and blackish colour. From these ruins two monuments have been removed and may now be seen in the French village. One of these, at present perched on the top of a deserted house, resembles in colour and general contour a red chimney-pot, but the top is conical, and it is perforated with oblong apertures, resembling windows; on one side is an obscene effigy, crowned with the feathers of Bes, and it is probably a comic representation of that deity, although the face is more youthful than is common. Like the terra-cotta coffins, it belongs to the Roman period. The other monument, which is of far greater interest and importance, is placed in the centre of the principal thoroughfare. It is a kind of obelisk, now unfortunately truncated, although still more than 6 feet high, and formed of the splendid hard sandstone conglomerate, which was used for some of the coeval monuments at Sān. On three of its sides—the fourth is entirely defaced—this stone bears hieroglyphic inscriptions, amongst which are several royal cartouches, including that of Rameses II. Above are seen the lower portions of several truncated figures. The ruins just described are, in my opinion, far more likely to have been Migdol than the paltry and utterly insignificant remains at the point called by Brugsch Bey, Tel-es-Samīt. This name, I was assured by Sheik Arādah and all his people, as well as by a most intelligent Arab who joined my company, the Hadji Abdullah of El Arish, who is perhaps better acquainted with the district than any one else, is utterly unknown, an assertion which, to say the least, is remarkable. At a distance, however, of about three hours from El Kantārā, and so far as I can judge, at the point indicated in Brugsch's map as Migdol, I found a small Tel, a mere heap of burnt red bricks and a little pottery, to which the Arabs, one and all, assigned the name of Tel Habooa. That these pitiful remains, however, can by any possibility be Migdol, I utterly disbelieve. Turning to the left, however, from the main track, across a portion of the Gebel called El Adām, I arrived at Tel-el-Hir, the Tel Uar and Avaris of Brugsch. Before this point was reached the way descended into a marsh without vegetation, save that a few stunted tamarisk bushes, and a few patches of rushes, but no reeds, grow in the salt unkindly soil. Crossing an elevation, also, a distant view is obtained of the two or three palms which grow in the desert near the Bir of Romānāh. Romānāh, by the way, is not a place as it is marked in the maps, but a district of the desert of considerable extent.
Tel-el-Hâr marks the site of a town of large extent and considerable importance, and its surface is strewn with innumerable sherds of pottery, ancient glass of fine quality, and bits of hewn stone. Of these last, the most curious are numerous rectangular-shaped pieces, cut with great care out of what I believe to be the blue volcanic stone or lava of the distant Haurân. As two of these \( \square \) shaped stones placed together form an oblong or square, I conjectured that they might be the frames of windows, but the Bedoueen thought that they originally formed the mouths of tanks or wells. This conjecture is at least as probable as the other, but neither seems to be very satisfactory. On the west side of the Tel, the one that is, farthest from the desert, rise the remains of a massive square tower, each of whose sides measures about 94 paces. The north, south, and western sides of this fortress descend into an immense desiccated lake or marsh, which extends westwards far as the eye can reach, with its brown surface unrelieved by any vestige of vegetation. The eastern side of the tower, which is built of crude brick, is joined to the rest of the sandy Tel, which extends eastwards to the desert. In Brugsch's map this Tel is called Ha-uar or Avaris, but the French map,* and that I believe correctly, designates it as "Tel Hâr, Migdol de la Bible." It is at once evident to the eye that this was an important frontier fortress, and its importance is such as to justify its being considered the Migdol or fortress par excellence, and to justify the Greeks in continuing and perpetuating its more ancient name under that of Magdolon. Scattered about in various parts of the Tel I found several ill-preserved brass coins of the Ptolemies, and on the western corner of the tower I saw one of the Bedoueen stoop down and pick up what proved to be a gold coin of the Fatimite dynasty.

It is likely that before the construction of the Suez Canal, whose distant mounds would now intercept the view in that direction, Tel-Depheh (Etham ?) could have been visible from Tel el Hâr (Migdol), and if we can suppose that lakes Mezalezah and Balas anciently stood at a lower level, which, from what is certainly known of Lake Mezalezah, is a probable conjecture, then it might have been possible to reach the latter city in one day's journey from the former. Brugsch records the interesting fact that during the eighteenth dynasty, King Amenophis IV summoned workmen from Elephantine to Samout, Samout being the Egyptian name of Migdol. This illustrates Ezekiel xxix, 10, and xxx, 6, where the marginal reading "from Migdol to Syene" is doubtless the right one, and indicates Egypt from its northern to its southern extremity; the reading in the text "from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia" being sheer nonsense.

Leaving Tel-el-Hâr, I pursued my route in a northerly direction for about 1½ hours, when crossing a ridge I suddenly saw before me the vast mounds of Tel-el-Fodha rising up from out of an immense marsh with the outlying Tel-el-Dahab at a short distance to the right. At some distance to the left rose the fortress-like Tel-el-At'l, and behind, afar off, the Kulat,

or castle of Tineh.* This square tower, for such it appears to be, rises, as I was assured by Hadji Abdullah, from the centre of a small lake at a short distance from the sea, and is built of stone. I should imagine it may be an Arab work. Tel-el-Fodha, "the Mound of Silver," is the Arabic name of the Tel which marks the site and embraces all that remains of the ancient Pelusium or Sin, anciently, "the strength" and key "of Egypt."† Tel-el-Dahab, "the Mound of Gold," of the Bedoueen, appears to be the "Faramah" of the maps; but the Arabs unanimously denied the knowledge of any such a name, and asserted that the only name resembling it even is that of Tel-Farmah, already described as a part of Daphne. The Mound of Gold rises at only a short distance to the east of the Mound of Silver, and appears to have been a great outlying fortress of Pelusium. The names by which these Tels are known to the Bedoueen have been given from the number of coins which have been discovered on their site.

Arrived at the edge of the marsh it at once became evident that no camels could pass upon the treacherous soil without being engulfed. I therefore ordered my tent to be pitched in the desert to the right, and taking with me two of the Bedoueen, prepared to cross the swamp on foot. I had gone but a short way when I found the circle of an ancient well, formed of burnt red brick. The difficulty of proceeding was great. The surface of the marsh, which extends for miles, was covered with drifting sand, and with not only an efflorescence but with long crystals of brown salt, through which, as through a cake, the feet went down into a greasy mud, of which large masses adhered to the boots each time they were withdrawn. The farther I went the wetter did the marsh become. Over and over again I was tempted to turn back, and when I was within 200 yards of my goal farther progress seemed impossible, as at every step I sank nearly up to the knees in mud. However I persevered and at last had the satisfaction of standing on the remote and rarely visited site of Pelusium or Sin. The Tel, which in truth is an island, rising from a vast lake of mud, which must occasionally be covered with water, is of very large extent, scarcely less I should suppose than 2 miles in length. Its surface is red from the quantity of broken pottery. One part of the city, near the centre, seems to have been fortified, or at all events divided from the rest by a massive wall of crude bricks. To the north-east of this is a massive fragment of a wall of burnt red brick, apparently of the Roman period, and at some distance to the west, lying on the surface of the Tel, are the overthrown remains of a small temple of red granite. Several columns remain entire; there are no hieroglyphics, but its date may be safely assigned to a late period, that, probably, of the Ptolemies. The top of the Tel commands a view of the sea, breaking on a sandy beach on the other side of a swamp, at a distance of about 3 miles, of great

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson strangely enough confounds Tineh with Pelusium. See Murray's "Lower Egypt."
† Cf. Ezek. xxx, 15, 16.
trackless marshes of brown mud, and southwards of the Gebel. The
desolation is complete and awful. There is no fresh water, no sign, and,
indeed no possibility, of human habitation, and the silence was alone
broken by the hoarse murmur of the distant waves.* I returned across
the swamp to the eastward of my former track, passing on the way a
small circular Tel slightly raised above the mud and covered with ancient
pottery. Hadji Abdullah afterwards assured me that amidst these
desolate swamps there exist signs of former habitation; wells, sakiehs,
and trees, and of these last I saw some traces myself. What can have
caused this widespread and complete desolation? and when was this tract
of country overwhelmed? The sun had set before I had crossed the
marsh, and on the edge of the desert I was rejoiced to find an Arab who
was on the look-out to conduct me to the tent. Night had fallen before I
reached it. That night on the brow of a hill above my tent, when
listening to the distant music of the sea, borne to me across the marshes
by a north wind, I saw the quick flash of the lighthouse at Port Said,
distant, I should suppose, 25 or 30 miles.

My object next morning was to visit the supposed site of Pihahiroth.
I accordingly directed my course in a north-easterly direction, and after
passing several places with signs of ancient occupation on the skirts of the
desert, I reached the open shore of the Mediterranean in about 2½ hours.
After a welcome bath in the waves I pursued my course eastwards along
the beach, making for a low Ras or headland, which I reached in little
more than an hour. This Ras, incorrectly named “C. Românah” in the
English charts, is known to the Bedoueen of the adjacent desert as Gelsêf
Hemdeyeh. On reaching it I found that it is a sandhill of moderate elevation,
with its sea-front defended by massive walls and towers of hewn limestone,
parts of which, undermined by the waves, have fallen upon the beach. The
interstices of this limestone are filled with a yellowish spar. On ascending
to the top of the Gelse I saw at once that I was indeed at “the entrance
of the Gulfs,” at the Pi-ha-Xirot of the Papyri as cited by Brugsch, if not
at the Pihahiroth of the Book of Exodus. Eastwards, far as the eye could
reach, extended a narrow strip of sand, with the Mediterranean on the left
hand, and the great Lake Serbonis on the right, upon the opposite side of
which the low desert hills shimmered in the heat and mirage. South­
wards also the lake extended itself behind the Cape whereon I stood, for
during the hour I had been traversing the sea-shore I had unknowingly
passed its westernmost extremity. I may mention here that the usual
Arabic word for a cape or headland, Ras, is unknown by the Suarka
Bedoueen, who term a promontory “Gelse,” calling this one Gelse
Hemdeyeh and Mount Casius “El Gelse,” the Gelse, i.e., or Headland,
par excellence. The name Cape Româneh applied to this promontory by
the English Admiralty Chart is also unknown to the Arabs, and is not
strictly correct, although the neighbouring district indeed, as already stated,
is called Româneh.

* Cf. Ezek. xxx, 15.
† I spell this word as it is pronounced.
After exploring Gelse Hemdeyeh, which besides the walls already mentioned, affords the usual signs of an ancient town and the shaft of a brickwork well in the face of the low cliff, I descended, and commenced my journey along the strip of sand between the sea and the lake, with the intention of regaining the desert at Mount Casius, which Brugsch's map, which I had with me, represents as joined to the Gebel by a tract of sandy desert hills. Little did I then imagine that the whole course of my route would be altered by that Isthmus being a mere creature of the learned doctor's imagination and having no existence in fact!

I travelled for 4½ hours along the strip, when the setting sun warned me it was time to camp for the night. I found the beach between the two waters to be extremely narrow, seldom more than five or six hundred yards in width and generally much less. The best track for the camels was actually at the very edge of the waves, for there the sand was hardest. Above the water mark there occur occasional tufts of stunted tamarisk, the white-leaved "worgat," and a salt shrub with small round succulent leaves, somewhat like a kind of iceplant. The roots of these shrubs permit the formation of small low tumps of sand, and their dead roots and branches afford a scanty supply of fuel, which in our case was supplemented by the abundance of drift wood upon the shore. Under the lee of one of these tumps my tent was pitched at a distance of 80 paces from the sea and 200 from the lake. A light northerly breeze was blowing, and the Mediterranean broke with a loud noise upon the beach and exhibited several lines of white-crested breakers. About 2 o'clock in the morning I was awakened by a noise, and found that the wind had changed, and a furious south-east-by-east wind was blowing across the lake, and threatening to sweep my tent away; I accordingly dressed, awoke the Bedoueen and had the tent pegs fixed afresh; I then lay down and slept in my clothes until 5 A.M. On rising I found the fury of the wind had abated, but a fresh breeze was still blowing across the lake; and threatening to sweep my tent away; I accordingly dressed, awoke the Bedoueen and had the tent pegs fixed afresh; I then lay down and slept in my clothes until 5 A.M. On rising I found the fury of the wind had abated, but a fresh breeze was still blowing across the lake. Going out, I found to my surprise that "the sea had seen that and fled." There was now a dead calm, and the sea had retired no less than 26 paces farther back from the point it had reached the previous night. From this circumstance one may form the following opinion.

Presuming that other portions of Brugsch's theory as to the route of the Hebrews at the Exodus are correct, one might admit that supposing the sea, driven by a strong north wind, were breaking over the beach into Lake Serbonis, the water would be driven back or divided by a south or south-east wind, and the track between the two waters might then be poetically described as having a wall of water upon either side. The wind again returning to the north and blowing with violence would cause the sea to sweep over and inundate the narrow belt of land, and would naturally drive any passers-by towards the lake. Here however, the sands are but quicksands, and men, horses, or chariots would speedily be engulfed and overwhelmed. Whatever may have been the truth with regard to the pursuing host of the Egyptians, it was probably in this way and near this spot that the invading army of the Persians under Artaxerxes, mentioned
by Diodorus met with its destruction. I should perhaps have mentioned before that the previous evening I repeatedly tried to get near enough to the lake to dip my hands in the water, but I failed on every occasion. When I got near—and sometimes I got within 3 or 4 yards—the treacherous sand gave way under my weight, and I was compelled to retire on pain of being engulfed in the mud beneath. The surface of the beach throughout its whole length is exclusively composed of sand, but in places layers of a sort of recent conglomerate are strewn about, which serve to strengthen the fabric of the beach. This conglomerate is formed by the action of the rain, which dissolving the lime of the innumerable shells forms a cement which binds them together with the sand into a stone of considerable hardness. It was easy to see during the entire journey how much the narrow beach would be narrowed by the rise of the sea when raised by a gale from the north, and how in some instances the Mediterranean would be driven across into the lake, then and so, as in Strabo's time, temporarily making Mount Casius an island.* This indeed in some places from the scour across the beach seemed actually to have occurred within a recent period, as indeed has been the case within the experience of my fellow-traveller Hadji Abdullah, and the deposits of pumice-stone from Santorino or some other volcanic Greek island which I found on the shores of Serbonis, shows conclusively that the sea occasionally breaks over into the lake.

I left my first camping ground between the waters at 6.30. Behind me the Gelse Hemdeyeh lay like a purple line upon the pale blue waves; in front the rounded yellow summit of Mount Casius bounded the view along shore; while a long wavy flock of countless flamingoes crossed over the beach on their way from the sea to the lake. In about 20 minutes I arrived at a point where a low natural causeway slightly raised above the water, extends in a north-easterly direction half way across the lake from the opposite Gebel. This is not given in Brugsch's highly imaginative map. After passing this point the ribbon-like lake widens considerably, extending farther back into the desert, which forms throughout its southern boundary. Far off the distant range of Gebel-el-Haleh now appears in sight. The lake here can scarcely be less than 8 miles across, but the clearness of the atmosphere on the one hand and the moving mirage on the other, alike render it hard to compute distances with accuracy. The whole coast between the two headlands along which I was passing appears to be particularly dangerous for shipping. The beach is everywhere strewn with masts, spars and other fragments of wrecks, amongst which the boilers of more than one steamer are conspicuous. The quantity of shells too, is everywhere extraordinarily great. This day's journey was very hot and fatiguing to the laden camels, and as there was no chance of reaching the Gelse before nightfall I consented to stop about an

* Strangely enough, Herr Brugsch, who cites this fact from Strabo, does not perceive that it destroys his imaginary Isthmus of communication from Mount Casius to the mainland.
hour before sunset, and for the second time pitched my tent close to the sea.

At 10.45 the following morning I arrived at the Gelse; before which point is reached the strip widens out considerably. The western prospect of the Cape shows a long gradually ascending ridge of sand scantily covered with desert scrub, running seawards from the lake, and ending in a rounded dome of bare yellow sand, whose base rests upon the sea-beach. The height is stated in the English Admiralty Chart as 272 feet. The name given in the same chart and followed by other authorities for Mount Casius, "Kas" (? Ras) Bouroum, is Turkish and signifies Nose (Naze). It is of course unknown on the coast. From its eastern side the outline of the Gelse is very different, five truncated cones of sand rising from a ridge which runs inland from the sea towards the lake. I expected to find, but looked in vain, in the sea-face of the promontory for a nucleus of rock which would account for the accumulation of sand to such an unusual elevation; all, however, was sand. Hadji Abdullah having reported the existence of a Btr on the western side of the Gelse, Sheik Arâdah sent the thirsty camels round while I ascended the hill, but the Bedoueen failed to find it. Near the summit a few hewn stones and fragments of ancient pottery and glass—sure signs of ancient occupation—are strewn about at the edge of the cliff, but I could discover no traces of the Temple of the Phœnico-Egyptian "Lord of the Lagoons" or of his Greek successor, Zeus Kasios. The remains of the Temple doubtless lie concealed under the drifted sand on the summit of the ridge, which in places is so extremely narrow as scarcely to admit of the passage of a single person. At any rate the ridge, like Slieve League in Donegal, is at best only a "one man's path." Southwards the ridge descends in steep "combes" and slopes of pure sliding sand to a small wady or rather dell, whose sides are prettily clothed with bushes, amongst which I noticed the white broom so common in Palestine, but which I now for the first time saw on Egyptian soil. Here also, as afterwards, I found an immensely large variety of Orobanche with brilliant canary-coloured flowers, which I had only found before on the small "Nelson's Island" in the Bay of Abou-kfr. Towards the bottom of this valley are one or two palm-trees, and below them the dell descends to the shores of a small bay of the lake. A few poor Bedoueens have lately come to occupy the Gelse, and they obtain sufficient food amidst the scanty scrub for their camels and asses and for a few sheep.

I am not competent to give a definite opinion whether as Brugsch-Bey alleges, Mount Casius is the Baalzephon of Scripture, or whether the identification of the latter with the Baal-Zapouni of the papyri can be sustained. On the one hand, one would certainly be more inclined to look for a place bearing a Semitic name upon what was in ancient times the high or royal road from Egypt into Phœnicia, rather than on the western shores of the Gulf of Suez, or where it is placed by Mr. R. S. Poole, about 30 or 40 miles north of the present head of the Red Sea. On the other hand if, as I am compelled to believe, the route proposed by Brugsch be
almost entirely a mistake, then I must consider the identification of
El-Gelse or Mount Casius, like that of the other places to be also "not
proven" and a failure.*

The prospect from the top of the Gelse is curious. Northwards, its
summit commands a wide view of the sea; westwards and eastwards the
eye ranges over the long yellow strip of sand between Serbonis and the
Mediterranean, with the glittering water upon either side; southwards
across the lake, are the sandhills of the desert backed by a fine chain of
distant mountains. Spite of the denial of the Bedoueen, that any access
existed from Mount Casius to the mainland, it was not until I stood upon
the top of the Gelse that I realised the utterly false impression conveyed
by the map appended to Brugsch-Bey's "Le Exode et les Monuments
Egyptiens" and reprinted in his History of Egypt. The learned savant
connects the Gebel with the Gelse at this point by an Isthmus of desert which
he colours yellow to represent sand, and shades with black to represent hills.
I was literally aghast with surprise to discover that the whole of this
representation is a sheer invention and creature of Herr Brugsch's ima­
gination. It is indeed true that a little to the east of the Gelse a narrow
natural causeway scarcely raised above the water extends about half way
across the lake in a north-easterly direction and obliquely from the desert.
It is true also, as I ascertained from Hadji Abdullah, that before 1878,
when Lake Serbonis was partially dried up by the silting up of its single
communication with the sea, a few Arabs had succeeded in wading
through the mud from the mainland to the promontory, but of an Isthmus
there is no trace; sandy, desert hills in the position indicated are non­
existent! I had read of a faith which by a striking figure of speech is said
"to remove mountains," but I had certainly no previous idea of the
possibility even of an assurance, which, in order to support a theory,
however brilliant, could invent topographical and geographical features
and then place them in a map as real! I had originally, in reliance upon
this precious map, determined to cross from Mount Casius to the desert
of the mainland, and could not imagine why the Bedoueen had pronounced
such a route to be impossible, but I now saw that it was so, and that I
must pursue my journey along the second division of the strip of sand
between the sea and the lake, and get out from thence as best I
could, all communication with the mainland being here impracticable.
It is, of course, absurd to contemplate the possibility of a vast host like
that of the Hebrews, laden with rich spoil, encumbered with flocks and
herds, and flying moreover from a pursuing army, wading through an
expanse of mud some miles wide, even if at the time there were no water
in the lake. But the presumption is that there was water; the narrative

* It is fair to remark that if Gelse Hemdeyeh be Pihahiroth and El Gelse
Baal-zephon, the curve of the sea-coast is such that the former could be spoken of
as "over against" or vis-à-vis with the latter. Exod. xiv, 2. But it would
surely be more natural to speak thus of places within sight of each other and on
opposite sides of the lake."

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plainly states, and Brugsch's whole theory of the Exodus depends upon the fugitives having passed along with water on their right hand and upon their left. In either case then the theory breaks down, and, with however great reluctance, must be given up as unsupported by facts and consequently untenable. This being so, the remark may be allowed that it was scarcely fair of Herr Brugsch to construct a map and publish it to the world without having himself visited the place depicted.

And now I must advert to another important fact which goes also to prove that Herr Brugsch's theory as to the route taken at the Exodus is utterly untenable.

Dr. Brugsch states with the utmost probability that the Jâm Souph, (translated Red Sea in the A. V. of the Bible), through which the Israelites are said to have passed, signifies the sea of "algues, roseaux, joncs, plantes de papyrus," and he assumes that Lake Serbonis anciently abounded with that sort of freshwater vegetation. That Souph, or Sâf, does bear this meaning may indeed be taken as certain. Gesenius translates the word "rush, reed, sea-weed." Thus in Exodus ii, 3, Moses is said to have been laid in an ark of Sâf, and elsewhere in the A. V. the word is translated "bull-rushes," "reeds," "flags," and "paper reeds." Cf. Isaiah xix. In Jonah ii, 6, only, the signification of the word is extended to mean seaweeds.

Now it is almost impossible to believe that Herr Brugsch can ever have visited Lake Serbonis, for if he had done so he would never have pressed the Hebrew term "Jâm Sâf," into service in support of his theory, or have imagined that the name in question could ever have been applied to Lake Serbonis. It must be borne in mind that in order to justify the appropriation of the name to any sea or lake, that tract of water must be shown to have abounded in some remarkable and striking degree with either a marine or a lacustrine vegetation. But what are the facts of the case? The waters of Lake Serbonis are salt, saltier no doubt than that of the neighbouring Mediterranean. They are salt because they are probably derived in part by the infiltration of sea-water through the sand of the intervening beach along its whole length, and because they are otherwise exclusively supplied from a single aperture from the sea. They are saltier from the constant evaporation which takes place from so vast an expanse of salt water running so far into the dry and scorching desert. The lake in fact may be regarded as one vast salt-pan. Now it is not too much to assert that a like physical condition must always have existed. There is no trace of evidence, no probability, no possibility even that Serbonis was or ever could have been other than a salt lake. Now, as every one, except Herr Brugsch, well knows "roseaux, joncs, et plantes de papyrus," which are all freshwater plants, do not and cannot grow in brine, and as a matter of fact they do not grow in Serbonis at all. The clear bright waters are as devoid of lacustrine vegetation as the Dead Sea itself. Of it there is no trace whatsoever. But more, it is likewise matter of fact that Lake Serbonis is almost equally devoid of marine vegetation. With the exception of rare and infinitesimally small quantities of a green filmy
species of ulva there are no sea-weeds of any description whatsoever in the lake. I may add that the Mediterranean also, all along the coast which runs parallel with Serbonis, is entirely devoid of marine vegetation. Not a morsel appears thrown up upon any part of the beach, the reason probably being that the sea-bottom, being entirely formed of shifting sand, affords no root-hold for sea-weeds. From all this it conclusively appears that Lake Serbonis is not, and cannot be the Jām Sūf, the Lake or Sea of Reeds.

It may be proper to notice here that the Bedoueen call both the Mediterranean and the Lake "El-Bahr," "the Sea," but commonly speak of the former as the Salt Sea or the Great Sea.

The camels which had been despatched in quest of water having at length come round into the dell, I was led over an acclivity near its lower end into a kind of deep basin surrounded on all sides by steep slopes of sliding sand. At the bottom of this were about a score of circular holes, excavated in the sand, and by scooping therein a little slightly-brackish, but drinkable, water can be obtained. The supply, however, is very scanty, and in nearly 2 hours' time we obtained only enough to fill two water jars and none for the camels. Emerging from the sandhills at the eastern end of the Gelse, I once more found myself upon the strip of sand, and in little more than half-an-hour reached the only permanent habitations upon it, a cluster of a few huts, called El-Matarieh, and tenanted by a few fishermen and their families. The surprise of the people at my unlooked-for appearance was great, as no Frank had ever passed that way before. I found the ex-Sheik suffering from a severe attack of fever and ague, and left him some quinine, with directions how to use it. The people had a few boats on the sea-beach as well as on the lake, but they draw their principal supply of fish from the latter. Their water is obtained from the wells already described at El-Gelse. I purchased a quantity of white mullets and of a sort of sea perch for myself and my Arab attendants, and found the last-named fish delicious. Unwilling to camp near a place redolent with such "an ancient and fish-like smell," and so unwholesome withal, I pushed on, and again encamped on the beach at a point an hour distant from the huts. The lake hereabout is very wide; at one point, I should suppose it is scarcely less than 12 miles across.

I started next morning at 7. At a point 1 h. 30 min. distant from my camping-place, the salt vegetation upon the beach, which had ceased for an interval, recommenced. In 2 hours 20 minutes, I passed a small island in the lake not far from shore, and hereabouts I noticed a most unpleasant and mephitic smell. At 3 hours from my starting-point, the strip becomes wider. It is somewhere here that Brugsch places in his map an entirely imaginary inlet of the sea, and the site of Ostracina. Sir Gardner Wilkinson likewise places Ostracina in this neighbourhood, and says the site is now called "Ostraki." This name, however, is unknown to the Bedoueen, and there are no ruins or other ancient remains upon the beach. Perhaps it was on the southern shore of Serbonis. At 4 hours 5 minutes, the "strip" proper ceases, and the lake retreats towards
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the desert, leaving between itself and the sea an absolutely flat waste, utterly destitute of herbage, and apparently reaching from the sea to the mountains. At 4 hours 45 minutes, the lake again approaches the sea, and the strip of beach becomes not more than 50 feet wide. Hereabouts the wet sand was marked by the footprints of a large hyena, and I learned that these animals are in the habit of swimming across from the desert to pick up dead fish which are washed ashore. At 12.30 P.M., 5½ hours from my camping-place I arrived at the end of the lake, and at the spot where a narrow channel connects it with the sea. In the midst of this channel is a tiny island, and from this, to my inexpressible relief, a small boat put off and came across. The camels were now made to lie down at the extremity of the spit of sand and were unloaded there. Meanwhile, I and my party were ferried across to the island with the baggage and water-jars, two persons only being able to cross at a time, for the boat was old, rickety, and half full of water. The sea-water was running through the channel into the lake like a mill-race, which cannot be wondered at, when it be remembered that this is the only inlet into the lake, and that the evaporation from so large a body of water must be enormous. Before this inlet was re-opened a few years since Serbonis had become nearly dry; a bog rather than a lake. The islet to which I was ferried over is circular in form, and only 54 paces across. At a few yards distance from the water is a sort of rude encampment, formed by a circular hedge of scrubby fuel brought across from the desert. Within this the fishermen bivouac in the open air. While my tent and water-jars were being brought across in the boat, the camels were driven into the sea and compelled to swim across to the islet. The scene with these ungainly animals amongst the waves with the naked Arabs screaming and splashing around them was a very strange one, and I certainly never expected to see "ships of the desert" taking to the sea. The fishermen on the islet, like those of El-Matarieh, are immigrants from the country bordering on Lake Menzaleh. They obtain their supplies of water by means of camels and asses from El-Arish, and they live upon fish. Their manner of cooking has the merit of simplicity. They chuck the fish into the fire, and when they are burnt black, take them out and eat them. The transit to the islet took nearly two hours. When the camels and baggage had all arrived, the former were reloaded, and mounting we commenced to wade across through the sea to the mainland. Fortunately, there was no wind, and the sea was perfectly smooth, but even so, the water came up to the bellies of the camels. Had the sea been the least rough, the passage would have been impossible, and I should have been compelled to retrace my steps with thirsty animals along the weary length of sand between the sea and the lake. It was, then, with the utmost satisfaction that I once more found myself on terra firma.

The route I had thus taken is undoubtedly shorter than that usually taken across "the short desert" between Egypt and Syria; but the scarcity of water, the precariousness of encamping on an exposed beach, and the chance of the ferry being impassable in rough weather, render it
one little likely to be generally adopted. None of the Bedoueen who accompanied me had ever taken that route before except Sheik Arădah, who had done so once in his boyhood. His father, then Sheik of the Suâaka, had on one occasion been employed by the Egyptian Government, to convey some prisoners from El-Arish to Cairo; and in order to effect this secretly, they passed along the coast instead of inland. Hadji Abdullah, a native of El-Arish, had traversed the strip several times.

The French map of 1861, which includes a portion of Lake Serbonia calls it "Lac Desséché," and as already mentioned, I learned that till about four years ago, Serbonis was rather a swamp, "the Great Serbonian Bog," than a lake. This desiccation was occasioned by the siltling up of the channel, which, for the greater convenience of fishing, the fishermen of El-Saranit, for so the place of passage is called, are most anxious to keep open.

Evening coming on, I again encamped near the sea-shore, and the next morning arrived at the Wady, Fiumara, or dry Torrent-bed of El-Arish, so strangely and misleadingly termed in the A.V. "the River of Egypt." The town, or rather village, of clay-houses, stands between the desert and the sea, at the distance of about 1½ mile from the latter. It is dominated by a dilapidated fortress erected by Sultan Selim. To the west of the entrance of the Wady, close to the sea-shore, and near a Wely called Nebbi Jasar are the remains of some ancient houses, one of which shows a ground plan of no less than seventeen rooms. Occasionally in winter, when heavy rains have fallen amongst the mountains inland, the Wady of El-Arish is temporarily a turbulent, rushing torrent, but as, during the rest of the year, it is a wide, dry Fiumara, it is to be hoped that the company of revisers of the Old Testament will excise the word "River," which to an English ear conveys an entirely different idea. El-Arish, or rather the Wady at that place, is the natural boundary of Egypt, and appears as such in many maps. It is not, however, the political boundary between the Turkish Empire and the Vice-realm of Egypt. That is a day's journey farther on towards Gaza, at a place called Râfeh, the ancient Raphia, where two ancient pillars have been re-erected as a land-mark to the left of the track out of Egypt into Syria.

I cannot close these notes without mentioning the aid I received in negotiating with Sheik Arădah from Messrs. Floyer and George, and from Suleymân Effendi, all of the Telegraph Department of the Egyptian Government. I have also to thank the last-named gentleman for the loan of his excellent tent. My thanks are also due to Rogers-Bey for his kindness in procuring me a letter from Riaz-Pasha, which proved of use on several occasions. To Sheik Arădah, I shall always feel grateful, for at his hands, I met with the courtesy of a high-bred gentleman, the kindness of a friend, and the ready and cheerful service of the best of attendants.