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A Ride in Egypt from Sioot to Luxor in 1879

In the second half of the nineteenth century, accounts of the journey down the Nile became increasingly common. This narrative by William John Loftie (1839–1911), who wrote prolifically on travel, art, architecture and history, was published in 1879. (His *A Century of Bibles* is also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection.) Loftie spent in total about 15 months in the Nile valley over several seasons, and justifies his book by the rate of archaeological discoveries: 'books published even three years ago are already behind the times'. He gives details of his journeys to and from Egypt, and of visits to the famous sites, but, unusually, he takes notice of the current political and economic state of Egypt, and is trenchant in some of his criticisms. He also goes off the beaten tourist track, hiring donkeys to make excursions away from the river, rather than travelling only by boat.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-08231-0 — A Ride in Egypt from Sioot to Luxor in 1879
William John Loftie
Frontmatter
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A Ride in Egypt from Sioot to Luxor in 1879

*With Notes on the Present State and Ancient
History of the Nile Valley, and Some Account
of the Various Ways of Making the
Voyage Out and Home*

WILLIAM JOHN LOFTIE



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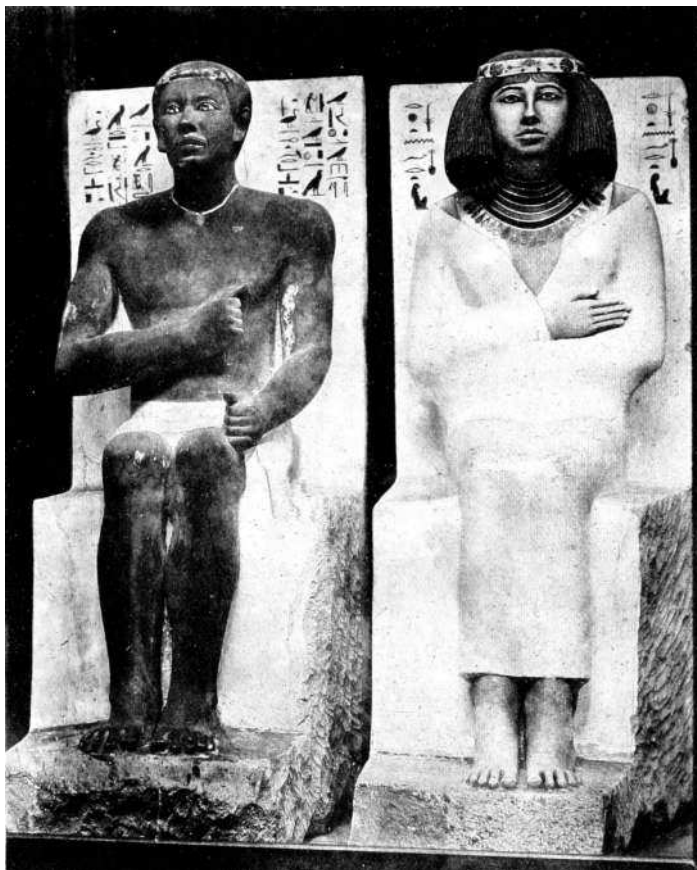
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A RIDE IN EGYPT

FROM SIOOT TO LUXOR IN 1879: WITH NOTES ON
THE PRESENT STATE AND ANCIENT HISTORY
OF THE NILE VALLEY, AND SOME
ACCOUNT OF THE VARIOUS WAYS
OF MAKING THE VOYAGE
OUT AND HOME.

BY

W. J. LOFTIE,

B.A., F.S.A., AUTHOR OF "IN AND OUT OF LONDON," "A PLEA FOR ART IN THE
HOUSE," &C., &C.



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ETNA FROM CATANIA.

P R E F A C E.

IN the following sketches an attempt is made to give some account of the present aspect of Egypt. They are the result of three visits to the Nile valley, comprising in all about fifteen months' residence.

It may be matter of surprise that another writer should venture to publish a book about Egypt. But I find two excuses both so good that the hesitation naturally felt at first thought is much diminished. The recent progress of events under the viceregal government, and especially the terrible famine of the past winter, have excited a new interest among English readers, who want to have

the latest particulars of the state of the country. And, moreover, while the history of Egypt seems to have been growing with such rapidity at the present day, that is, the latter end, the researches and discoveries of the past few years have added so much to our knowledge of the other, the further end, that books published even three years ago are already behind the times.

I have endeavoured as much as possible to avoid details which have already appeared in English books: and have confined my historical chapters as much as I could to the times of the Early Monarchy, that remote and mysterious kingdom, of which the date is unknown, but which is so vividly before us in the monuments left us of its architecture, portraiture, and literature. About Rameses and his dynasty I have said as little as possible consistently with my desire to give some account of This and Thebes. Of the later times, down to the present dynasty, I have said nothing. Indeed, I was minded when my book first began to take shape, to call it "Egypt, Ancient and Modern," for such a title would have clearly described its contents.

I have used as it was convenient the substance and sometimes the actual words of various articles

contributed during the past four years to the *Saturday Review* and other periodicals. I have to thank the editors for leave to use them, and have many acknowledgments to make to friends who have helped me with sketches, with information, and with criticism.

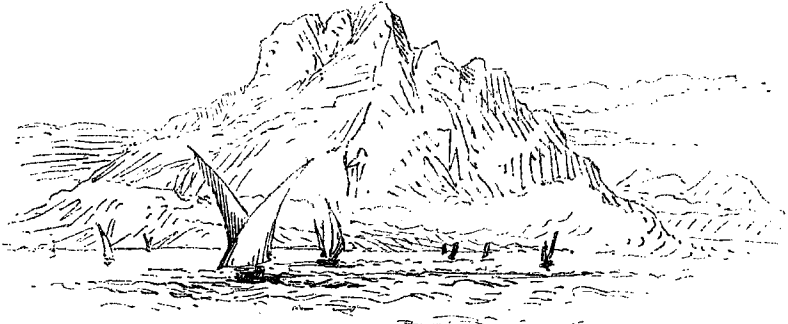
I am particularly indebted to Miss Evans and Mr. George Grahame the artists, to my American friends E. W. L. and Mrs. L., and to M. L. M. their comrade on the Nile voyage, for charming little bits of scenery. I have availed myself to the utmost of Mr. Roland Michell's stores of knowledge respecting the present condition of Egypt. From Mr. Greville Chester I have also received information of which he was in many cases the exclusive repository, but which was as ungrudgingly given as it is here gratefully acknowledged.

On my second voyage out I remained some weeks at Malta, and then made an abortive attempt to see Naples again, after an interval of nearly thirty years. I have thought it better to include my notes of these wanderings in the Mediterranean, as some parts of them at least will answer to the yearly experience of travellers who winter in Egypt.

Although since this book was written and, indeed, partly printed, the reign of Ismail Pasha has come to an end in the country he so terribly oppressed—I have not thought it necessary to alter any of the passages in which I refer to him and his acts. It is well to show to what a condition he had reduced his unhappy country as a justification of the extreme measures just taken against a prince for whom, not twenty months ago, the English press and English public had very little but praise. It is well, also, that we should remember, lest disappointment come upon us, that Mohammed Towfik Pasha is a Turk and his father's son: that what has happened may happen again: and that, above all, though I write it with regret and hesitation, an Anglo-French alliance where an unselfish and benevolent policy towards an oppressed people is what most of us desire to see, must end in failure.

W. J. L.





APE'S HILL.

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