

AROUND THE WORLD WITH WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

Experience in Egypt with Quarantine and the Pest of Flies that Annoyed Pharaoh, Together with Some Observations on the Physical and Social Conditions that Preval and the Danger that Threatens the Fellah

JAFFA, April 23, '06.—(Special Correspondence of the Bee.)—The first article on Egypt might have been begun with an account of our stay in quarantine, but as this precaution against the spread of Asiatic diseases is of modern origin, I thought it best to speak of it in this article.

The P. & O. steamer Persia, which brought us from Bombay to Egypt, was suspected of having four cases of plague on board. One man having died and been buried at sea just before we reached Suez, and three more being ill, the international health board insisted on taking charge of the ten passengers bound for Egypt. We were taken on board a barge and towed a couple of miles up the Suez canal to the quarantine station, which we reached about midnight.

Besides the four in our family, there were three Americans from Ohio, two English merchants from Egypt and an English lady engaged in missionary work in Palestine. We were comfortably housed in one story brick buildings and were informed that we would have to remain there five days unless further investigation removed the suspicion of the plague. While the members of the company proved to be very congenial, we were all anxious to have the stay shortened as much as possible on account of its interference with our plans.

At the end of two days we were notified that a bubonic germ had been discovered and that we must stay the full time. The quarantine station is situated on the bank of the canal and is surrounded on three sides by a barren desert as can be found. The buildings are enclosed by a double fence, and the only exit is to the wharf through a lane. We were permitted to go to the wharf and, under the escort of a guard, were allowed to gather shells on the bank of the canal. Thus occupied, when not reading or writing, the days passed much more pleasantly than we had expected, and we were almost sorry when the time came for us to separate. One day our quarters were visited by a sirrocco, and from the dust and sand that filled the air until the sun was darkened we were able to gain some idea of desert life.

Canal & Huge Ditch.

The canal itself is a little disappointing. It is simply a huge ditch, and with an expanse of sand on either bank seems narrower than it is. The sides are not walled as a rule, and the depth—thirty feet—does not reveal itself. Several dredges are constantly at work removing the sand which drifts in with the wind or is washed in by the tide. The canal is said to follow the route laid out more than 3,000 years ago by Rameses II. About 3,500 ships pass through the canal each year, an average of nearly ten a day. Somewhat more than that passed during our stay, some of the ships being loaded with Russian soldiers from Japan, and others crowded with pilgrims returning from Mecca.

On the afternoon of the fifth day the head physician came out and released us and at the same time conveyed to us the cheering, but somewhat belated information, that the three men taken from the ship did not have the plague; we had, however, been so courteously treated that we did not complain of the board bills or quarantine fees, even though the detention proved unnecessary. The spread of the plague through Europe would be such a calamity that we realize it is better to err on the side of over-caution. At any rate, we have added to our experience and are carrying the yellow flag (the quarantine signal) home as a trophy.

A few hours' ride brought us to Cairo, the metropolis and capital of Egypt. It is not an ancient city, as they count time in Egypt, having been founded about 1,000 years ago, but it has in the business portion the appearance of a European city and contains a population of more than 500,000. Of its inhabitants 35,000 are Europeans, the Greeks leading with about 10,000 and the Italians, French, English, Austrians and Germans following in the order named. The British would outnumber the French if the garrison were included, but the city reminds one much more of France than of England. Many of the buildings recall the streets of Paris, and the sidewalks adjacent to restaurants and saloons are filled with tables and chairs as in continental Europe.

Cairo is a city of mosques and minarets, as one quickly discovers when he takes a bird's-eye view of the city from the citadel, which stands upon an eminence in the suburbs. While the main streets are suggestive of Europe, the native quarters and bazars are distinctly oriental, many of the streets being too narrow for a carriage. The shops are for the most part little open booths, and each line of business has its particular section. On one street silver and goldsmiths monopolize the space; another street is gay with red shoes; in another the red fez, the universal hat, is conspicuous; and still another is given over to vegetables. Some of the larger stores handle Persian rugs, silks, brass ware, inlaid work and patchwork reproducing the drawings found on tombs and temples. The bazars also abound in interesting reminders of the land of the mummy, the pyramid and the sphinx.

Nile and Its Fertile Valley.

We had not been in Cairo long before we visited the banks of the Nile, that wonderful river without whose fructifying waters there would have been no Egypt. It is one of the most remarkable—in some respects the most remarkable—of all the rivers of the earth. No wonder the ancient Egyptians included a Nile god among their deities, for next to the sun, to which they raised their obelisks, nothing was so necessary to their existence as this almost magic stream. The Nile renders fertile two narrow strips, one on either bank, 4,000 miles long and but a few miles wide. For 1,300 miles it flows through a desert and receives but a single tributary in that distance, and yet, after supplying irrigation for the crops of some 10,000,000 of people, it pours into the ocean a scarcely diminished stream. The annual rise of the river not only supplies water, but it renews the land by deposits of alluvial soil.

Some one has described the Nile valley as appearing, if seen from above, like a strip of green carpet on a floor of gold, so yellow are the sands that hem it in. No one who has not visited an arid country and noted the influence of water upon the thirsty soil can imagine how distinctly the line is drawn between the verdant field and the barren desert that adjoins it. Where the waters of the Nile can be brought upon the land, a farm will rent for \$30 per acre, while a few feet away the land cannot be given away. Lord Cromer in a recent report gives the income and expenditure of a number of the fellahs, or farmers. The statements show that \$100 worth of cotton is sometimes produced from a single acre or about \$30 worth of corn. The average income, taking all crops together, often runs as high as \$50 per acre.

An increasing quantity of land is being brought under the canal, but irrigation from wells is still the main reliance of a large proportion of the people. Water can be found at the level of the water in the river, and the landscape is dotted over with old-fashioned well sweeps and with water wheels, whose blindfolded camels or oxen tread their patient round. The land produces so abundantly and there is such a variety of garden and farm products that one recalls that passage in the Bible in which the children of Israel are described as longing for the "fishpots of Egypt." Coming from India to Egypt we could not but notice the difference in the appearance of the people. In the former country they looked so emaciated and hungry; in the latter they are strong and robust, and seemingly well fed. In the markets, too, the food is heaped up in big baskets, while in India it is exposed for sale in tiny piles that speak only too plainly of the poverty of the people.

Fellah Feeds Them All.

For ages upon ages the fellah has drawn from the inexhaustible storehouse of the Nile. Cheops, Kephren and their successors built pyramids, and the fellah fed the builders; Thutmosis and Sethos and their descendants constructed tombs and temples, and the fellah supported the laborers; the Rameses added gigantic statues to the stupendous works of their ancestors, and the fellah still furnished food; the Persians overran the country, and still the hand of the fellah supplied the necessities of life; then came Alexander the Great, and the Ptolemies, Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, and the



VIEW OF THE CITY OF CAIRO.

fellah plowed on; after the Roman came the Arab, and after the Arab the Turk, followed by Napoleon and later by the Briton; but through all this change of dynasties the fellah kept "the noiseless tenor of his way," and as a middle man, handed over the bounties of the Nile valley to the rulers and their armies—and he is doing so today. Of the 1,100,000 land owners, nearly 950,000 hold less than five acres each, and almost half of the total acreage is owned by 12,300 persons. More than one-tenth of the tillable is owned by 1,600 Europeans.

Very few horses are seen in the country, the beasts of burden

being the ox (there are a few water buffaloes also), the donkey and the camel. The ox resembles the American rather than the Indian ox in that it has not hump on its shoulders and the drawings on some of the walls represent cattle with horns as large as those formerly worn by the Texas steer. The donkey—poor, patient creature—has not changed materially in the last 4,000 years. The pictures drawn of him by the ancient Egyptians show him just as he is now. Then, as now, a large part of his nourishment went to the development of his vocal organs and left the rest of his body woefully small for the large burdens which he was called upon to carry. If his disposition

Slick Work of Speculative Crooks

A PLAUSIBLE young man, who is now tied up in the District of Columbia jail awaiting trial on a number of different swindling counts, had made a couple of visits to South America, addressing his investigations particularly to Ecuador and the United States of Colombia. When he struck Washington last autumn he had the finest assortment of ornately stamped "concessions," all beautifully written out in flowing Spanish, ever put on view in this capital, where such documents are by no means out of the ordinary.

The merest cursory examination of these "concessions" was enough to convince anybody possessed of sufficient imagination that the holder had just about nabbed first chance at everything of value in Ecuador and Colombia—hundreds of square miles of gold fields (he didn't get first whack at mere mines, but whole "fields"), silver fields, copper fields, emerald beds, hundreds of thousands of acres of rubber plantations in full bearing, vast deposits of phosphates and nitrates, whole provinces of oil that was only a couple of feet beneath topsoil, and so on.

The young man, who claimed to be a Harvard graduate, a lawyer, a chemist and an engineer, chose a notoriously rich field for the exploitation of his "concessions" when he came to Washington. He even organized a little "exchange bank" of his own, consisting of a table, a couple of chairs and some neat rubber stamps for the printing of the word "accepted" on drafts, with his wife to act as draft stamper in his absence, and he was very busy telling easy Washington folks about all of the good South American things of his when he slipped the cog that landed him in jail.

This one got caught. That's something that few of the large and ingenious tribe of "concession" holders who operate in Washington do. The great majority of them get away with the swag. Some of them, the quietest and most retiring kind of workers, too, have been almost unbelievably successful in separating Washington folk from their money. Few of the smart crooks who prey on the Washington population through the medium of phony investment enterprises do their work to the accompaniment of any blare of trumpets. They install themselves in certain hotels or fashionable boarding houses, and, being excellent mixers and handshakers, they get acquainted easily enough, parade their good thing in a confidential sort of way to a few "show them" how the investment of a few hundred of thousands will infallibly grow into yachts and country villas in a very brief space of time, and thus get the word passed around. The first victims "let in on the ground floor" innocently bring their friends to the sacrifice, and thus the profitable group of investors is formed.

The Rubber Game.

A typical case was that of a chap who did a big thing of it on the strength of a magnificent rubber plantation in Chiapas, Mexico, that he didn't own. He came to Washington about a year ago. He installed himself in a high grade boarding house in the toffy residential section, called in Washington the Northwest, and proceeded to get acquainted with the folks in the neighborhood. One of his best equipments toward this end was a good southern patois, for, despite the infusion of northerners, the capital remains almost as southern as Mobile.

This cheerful worker knew everybody for blocks around the boarding house within two months after he had hit the town. He didn't say a word about rubber to any of them for a long time.

Then he took two or three of the men folk into his confidence as to that proposition. He didn't ask them to buy anything. He simply told them what a fine thing he had himself, and he always had an ample bundle of yellow money somewhere in his clothes and a trick of flashing it in a wholly unostentatious way.

He rigged matters so that they had to ask him the nature of his fine snap, and then he told them. Rubber plantation in Chiapas, ever so many tens of thousands of acres, all trees in bearing. He was acquiring some more tens of thousands of acres, however, right alongside of those already in bearing, and had organized a company to take over those new acres and finance the working of the new section. He discoursed expansively on how much money per acre rubber trees produce.

He showed the first two or three a book of photographs of the Chiapas plantation, showing his own splendid hacienda right in the middle of it, surrounded by palms and pictures of natives tapping the trees and collecting the rubber, and so on. He got them rubber mad. They pleaded to be allowed to get into the new company with a little savings they had put away. He didn't seem to be eager to

let them in, and so they wound up by demanding that he let them in. At length he let these early ones have a few thousand shares in the new plantations at \$1 a share.

They passed the word around among their friends and neighbors, and these, too, got interested in rubber. They hunted up the ingratiating rubber man, and he permitted them to accrue some of the stock at \$1.50 a share. He confined his operations exclusively to the neighborhood of his boarding house—a region embracing a radius of about five squares in the different directions.

A Nervy Shadower.

Then somebody came out with a word of doubt as to whether that Chiapas rubber plantation was entirely on the level. The doubtful word reached the ears of the rubber man. He flared up instantly, and then he did an audacious thing. He told the people who had purchased stock of him that he wanted them to select the most reliable man in the neighborhood to accompany him to Mexico to have a look at that Chiapas plantation. They picked out a dentist of the best repute, and together the rubber man and the dentist hid down to Chiapas, Mexico.

The rubber man showed him a sure-enough rubber plantation in Chiapas, and even took him to the hacienda on the plantation that he pretended was his own and showed him the furniture. He happened to know that only the manager of the plantation was living in the hacienda at the time, and as the manager didn't know the game of the rubber man from Washington, he didn't let any word fall to give the snap away or indicate that the cheerful worker from Washington didn't own the whole business.

It was a bold move, but it went through on greased skids. The rubber man and the dentist returned to Washington, and the dentist went through the neighborhood telling everybody what he had seen, what superb thing the Chiapas plantation was, what a fine time he'd had at the hacienda, and so on.

Which made it mighty fine for the rubber man. They stormed his doors to buy stock at \$3 a share on the dentist man's report, and he swam on the top crest of a veritable tide of gold for four months. Then, three months ago, he just went away from here, and nobody has seen or heard of him since. The bubble didn't burst till after he left. The folks who bought his pretty gilt embellished stock certificates know now that the plantation the dentist man was shown around in Chiapas belongs to a Mexican who has never been in the United States. The beauty of this grafter's dodge was that everything he took in was pure velvet, except for the cost of having the pretty stock certificates printed. He didn't spend a nickel for advertising.

Winning ways got it, too, for another adept neighborhood worker who pulled up in Washington a couple of years ago with three or four fine specimens of genuine uncut emeralds which he said he had "picked up" on an immense emerald claim he had staked out for himself in Brazil, together with about half a ton of beautiful specimens of tourmaline, which resembles the emerald closely in the recut state.

Irishman with a Beautiful Brogue.

This adept, who was an Irishman with a beautiful brogue, but who could talk the best of Spanish with such Latin-American legation attaches as he happened to meet, took the handsome flat in one of the best apartments in town, furnished it splendidly and proceeded to get acquainted with folks in very much the same manner as the man with the rubber stock. When they visited him at his flat he had a way of dazzling them, on their second or third visit, by suddenly conducting them to a room where he had his emerald and tourmaline specimens spread out in artistic disarray on a table having a coverlet of white velvet.

The sight of the emerald and tourmaline specimens banked around on the white velvet was beautiful in its barbaric lavishness, and, of course, evoked instant inquiries as to where the specimens came from. The host told the inquirers with a clever reluctance. He'd "picked up" the emeralds—he told them that the whole pile was composed of emeralds, and got away with it every time—on that emerald bed he'd staked out for himself down in Brazil, and as the price of emeralds was about four times that of diamonds, he had billions in sight, and so on.

He was organizing a little company, not too heavily capitalized—only \$100,000—to start work at the emerald beds. He didn't

(Continued on Page Two.)

was as gloomy in the days of the Pharaohs as it is at present, he probably annoyed them when he lifted up his voice and wept as he now annoys the tourist.

The camel, however, if the test is special fitness for the country, is the king of beasts. He pulls the plow, turns the water wheel, draws the wagon, carries burdens, and for long distance travel outstrips the horse. Equipped with emergency water tanks, he can go for several days without drinking, and for this reason is of inestimable value on desert journeys. He kneels to receive his load, though sometimes with pathetic groans, and is as docile as the horse. He has sometimes been styled "the ship of the desert," and seems to have been fashioned for this peculiar region. His large, padded feet do not add to his beauty, but they enable him to cross sandy plains into which a horse's hoof would sink.

Plague of Flies Still Potent.

The Bible says that the plague of flies brought upon Egypt when Moses was endeavoring to secure the release of the Israelites was removed when Pharaoh promised to let the people go, but one is inclined to think that they afterwards returned when Pharaoh again hardened his heart, for nowhere have we found flies like those of Egypt. They bite with unusual vigor and are very persistent in their attentions. At first we thought it strange that people should carry horsehair brushes as a protection against the flies, but we were soon driven to follow their example. These flies seem to be especially attracted to the eyes of children. As these flies, like those in other countries, carry disease, it is not strange that sore eyes should be especially prevalent here. Blindness seems to be more common than elsewhere, and a very considerable percentage of the people have lost one eye. So widespread is this affliction that Sir Ernest Cassell has established a fund of \$40,000, the interest on which is to be devoted to the treatment of diseases of the eye. Already the fruits of this beneficence are being enjoyed by the poor. The Mohammedan women in Egypt wear veils—a custom which is but slowly giving way to western ideas; if the eyes of the children were protected with half as much care as the faces of the women, what benefits would result!

England's Authority and Influence.

The government of Egypt defies definition. Nominally, the khedive is the supreme authority, aided by a native legislative council and assembly (their business is to advise, however, rather than to legislate), but back of the khedive is Lord Cromer, the agent and consul general of England, whose power is undefined and almost unlimited. England's authority in Egypt rests upon the articles of capitulation signed after the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882. In these articles it was announced that England's occupancy would be of brief duration, but in 1904 she secured from France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy consent to postpone the fixing of a date for her withdrawal, she at the same time announcing that it was not her intention to interfere with the political situation in Egypt.

England's reasons for remaining in Egypt are very clearly stated by Lord Milner in his book entitled "England in Egypt." He says: "On the one hand, our commercial interests in Egypt are so great and growing that her prosperity, which would be immediately wrecked by misgovernment, is a matter of concern to us. Secondly, and chiefly, the geographical position of Egypt compels attention to her political position. We have nothing to gain by owning the country ourselves, but we should have a great deal to fear from its falling into the possession of another power."

England's interests in Egypt are numerous. She takes most of the exports of Egypt and sells more than any other country to Egypt. In the last report of Lord Cromer it is shown that Great Britain has the benefit of considerably more than half of the contracts (about \$5,000) entered into by the Egyptian railway for supplies. Then, England's citizens own land in Egypt and they are also interested in the Egyptian debt, which, by the way, amounts to about \$500,000,000, or approximately \$100 per acre of the tillable land. The irrigation schemes now developing will require the expenditure of large sums on contract, and these will give opportunities for English capital.

The second reason given by Lord Milner is emphasized by him and is probably the paramount one, viz., that she cannot afford to have the valley of the Nile held by a rival power. Her interests in the Soudan and in India lead her to guard the Suez canal with jealous care. Lord Milner suggests as a reason why England should remain in Egypt that her withdrawal might be followed by such an abuse of government as to lead to bankruptcy and French intervention. The old argument, "if we don't do it somebody else will," is presented as the strongest support of British interference.

English influence, however, has been less harmful in Egypt than in India, and this is probably due, in the main, to two causes; first, her influence is exerted through a native government, whose authority she acknowledges; and second, because the interests which other nations have in Egypt make them oppose any encroachments on the part of England, while in India she has a free hand. As an illustration I might cite the fact that she compels the Indian to support the Indian army while she pays the ordinary expenses of the 3,000 British soldiers in Egypt and only asks Egypt to pay for the extraordinary expenses. It is no reflection upon England to say that she is better for being watched. We believe that in regard to our own public men, and it is simply a recognition of the frailty of human nature. Lord Cromer has been in Egypt for twenty-six years, and his reports indicate a desire to advance the welfare of the people of Egypt. He has doubtless been helpful to the Khedive. He has insisted upon honesty in the public service and has been a friend of education.

Debt and Danger to Egypt.

While the national debt contains a large amount of usurious interest and is therefore much heavier than it ought to be, it has been funded at a lower rate of interest and is being gradually paid off. The debts that are being incurred for the extension of irrigation will be more than redeemed by the sale of the land reclaimed, and the country will then have the benefit, not only of the reclaimed land but of the increased value of lands indirectly benefited. Although the salt tax (contrary to Lord Cromer's advice) is still over 200 per cent, the per capita rate of taxation has been reduced; agricultural and postal banks have been established, and the government railway, telegraph and telephone systems have been extended. In his 1903 report Lord Cromer presents an argument in favor of government roads as against roads owned privately.

The great danger that Egypt has to fear is the disinherence of the fellah and the alien ownership of the land. Unless great care is taken Egypt will drift into the condition of Ireland and India and be drained of her resources by foreign landlords. It is very difficult for a foreign representative to arbitrate impartially between his own people at home and the natives among whom he temporarily resides, and Lord Cromer will deserve great credit if he is able to protect the Egyptians from exploitation. However well meaning the English advisers are now or hereafter may be, Egypt's safety must lie in the development of her own people. The legislative council understands this and insists upon the extension of the school system. It is wise in so doing, for every educated man or woman adds to the moral force that restrains and directs the government.

An increase in the number of educated not only tends to the preservation of law and order, but furnishes a large number fit to be officials, and thus lessens the excuse for the employment of foreigners. There has been, among reformers, some discussion of a constitution, but as that would curtail the powers of the khedive as well as define the authority of England, it would probably be opposed at present by the Moslem leaders.

I cannot conclude without a reference to the pioneer work done in the field of education by the United Presbyterians. They have several churches and a number of very successful schools and must be credited with having contributed largely to the progress which Egypt has made and is making.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN.

(Copyright, 1906.)