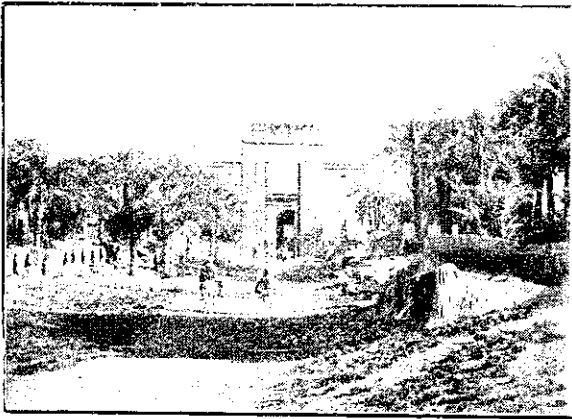


The dusk swiftly following on the setting of the sun, compelled our retirement to our quarters.

The next morning, rising early, we took boat across the Nile at 7 a.m., and landed on the western bank, the background of rugged, barren hills being baked in the fierce glare of the brilliant morning sun. Donkeys awaited us on the bank and we rode off with as much comfort as we could in the blazing heat, bound for the Tombs of the Kings in the valley of Biban el Melouk, followed it appeared by half the countryside, who appeared to rise from any odd nook, trying to sell *genuine* antiques, which shewed no sign of their recent manufacture, Ibrahim assured us, and put the gentlemen to flight with a few words which may not have been polite but were evidently forcible. However, some of the fugitives appeared to be able to keep up with our donkeys and produced at every halt unlimited bottles of lemonade from nowhere, so we quite forgave their fraudulent intentions in our great desire for moisture—we were still thirsty after drinking 7 bottles in 5 hours. On arrival at these tombs cut deep into the ragged rock we had to await



22. Entrance to Temple of Khonsu.

the starting of the electric light with which they are most incongruously lighted and then we entered.

All the tombs were very similar in having steeply sloping galleries, some now fitted with wooden steps, others with very roughly hewn stone steps and rather difficult of descent, at the bottom of which are large rooms, and then a further succession of galleries and chambers until the actual chamber of the dead is reached. The sepulchral chambers were very cunningly concealed, and in some cases false chambers were provided, and the actual chambers sealed, with difficult approaches. In most of these both sarcophagus and mummy have been removed, but we saw one which had been left in a glass case illuminated by electric light, the face still remarkably well preserved, and having nothing but a placid and happy expression. There were also in the same tomb the mummied remains of one of the Queens remarkably beautiful, the natural hair still preserved and with a lustre still remaining. Most of the chambers are covered with hieroglyphics beautifully painted on the smooth plastering of the walls, recording the life history of

the departed and his expectations of the life to come, and even in some cases giving the name of every slave employed in the work. In parts some of the work is quite unfinished, being only drawn out in charcoal and shewing the corrections of the chief artist; the death of the proposed occupant having stopped the power of the directing impulse.

From here we proceeded to the tombs of the princes, these being similar to those of the Kings, but owing to the rock being of denser quality the hieroglyphics are most beautifully sculptured on a very small scale, instead of being painted.

Our next journey was to the great Palace-temple of Rhamesses II., known as the Rhamession. The exact purpose of this building is in doubt, but it is considered as the *Memnonium* of Amenophis, and the similar building of Rhamesses III. at Medinet Hanoû, to have been a place where the monarch sat pondering on his own greatness during his life, and perfecting his knowledge, and as a temple to his memory after his death. In any case the plan adopts the general principle of other temples—a forecourt open to the air, a hypostyle hall lighted by clerestory, and smaller sanctuary without the light of day, thus gradually increasing in mystery as in sacredness. The forecourt of this building is adorned with great statues of the founder, surrounding an enormous monolithic statue of the same monarch which has been overthrown and badly broken by Cambyses the Persian, who appears to have had a particular hatred of Rhamesses' greatness. The hypostyle hall is illustrated in Fig. 9, and is remarkable for the very fine central columns with their beautiful and tasteful details. From the Rhamession we visited the tomb of Queen Hatshepsu, daughter of Thothmes I., who succeeded to the throne after the death of her husband and ruled Egypt, continuing the expeditions and conquests with great capability. Her brother, Thothmes III., who was the greatest of Egyptian conquerors and added more to its territory than any other of the Pharaohs, so detested the memory of her greatness that he destroyed her image wherever found. Her originality and character are finely expressed in this sepulchral temple. It is constructed on the side of the hill in three enormous terraces, with sloping causeways in place of steps, giving access from one level to another (Fig. 12), and each terrace is finished with beautiful colonnades of more delicate proportion than seems to have been considered right in the temples previously described. In Fig. 15 is shewn the detail of these columns which are so very close an approach to the Greek Doric as to leave hardly any doubt as to its origin. The stone work is of a fine grained limestone, the columns being built up and not rock cut, and 16-sided, and the sides slightly hollowed to give greater prominence to the sharp angles. Inside this beautiful colonnade are bas-reliefs of great delicacy and truth of expression, depicting the expedition of Queen Hatshepsu to the Island of Punt, considered by some to have been Mauritius. The extreme fineness of drawing and workmanship of these sculptures, which are far more advanced than the usual hieroglyph, give a very advanced conception of the Egyptian as an artist. This