

1828—1835.

THE SECOND VISIT TO EGYPT (1833—5.)

FOR some time after his return to England, Lane was occupied in working his Egyptian notes and diaries into the form that the manuscript of the "Description of Egypt" now wears. It has already been said that the negotiations with the publishers for the production of the book fell to the ground. But before this happened, Lane had separated from the body of the work his account of the modern inhabitants of Egypt, which it was thought would appear to greater advantage and be more widely read as a distinct book. This part of the "Description" was shown to Lord Brougham, who at once recognised its high merit, and recommended it to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, of which he was a Member of Committee. It was in consequence of the acceptance of the work by the Society that Lane determined to visit Egypt again, in order to enlarge and perfect his account of the people. This is an instance of that thoroughness which is shown in every work of his. Whatever came to his hand to do, he did it with all his might. He would never condescend to anything approaching slovenly work; and thought little of crossing the Mediterranean and staying two years at Cairo in order to bring nearer to perfection a sketch of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of Egypt, which to an ordinary writer would have seemed to stand in need of no revision. Without hesitation he went over the whole ground again, verified each statement, and added much that had been omitted from the earlier and more concise work. During the two years he spent in the Egyptian metropolis, scarcely a day passed without his going out among his Muslim friends and accustoming himself more completely to their manners, or witnessing the various public festivals of the year. Every day's experience was carefully recorded in a little library of note-books, all written in his singularly clear and neat hand, except where here and there an Egyptian friend has scribbled his own statement in Arabic. One of these note-books appears to have been kept for recording the more important scenes that Lane witnessed, and is fortunately dated, so as to form an intermittent diary. As this is this is the only journal he ever kept, to my knowledge, except a brief account of his first Nile-voyage, it is here reproduced. Besides the necessary suppression of a few passages relating to family matters, certain long passages have been omitted, since they occur verbatim in Lane's published works. It is not often that the pages of a diary can be transferred to a finished book like "The Modern Egyptians" without even verbal alteration. But it was the same with everything Lane wrote. If he was asked a question by letter, his answer was always fit for publication, both in style and in accuracy of matter.

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London, 25th Oct., 1833.—Engaged my passage to Alexandria on board the merchant brig *Rapid*, Capt. Phillips, 162 tons, for 30 guineas, to be found with all necessary stores, poultry, &c.—6th Nov. Embarked at St. Katharine's Dock.—7th. Sailed.—25th. Passed Gibraltar.—5th Dec. Passed Malta.—13th (1st of Shaabán, 1249). Arrived at Alexandria.

It had rained almost incessantly, and very heavily, during the three nights previous to our arrival at Alexandria; and the streets were consequently in a most filthy state. The general appearance of the people was also far more miserable than when I was here before. The muddy state of the streets doubtless confined most

well-dressed persons to their houses; but it is rather to the severe oppression of late years, and to repeated conscriptions, which have deprived many parents of the support they received from the labour of their sons, that I attribute the difference which I remarked in the general aspect of the population of this place. A few days before my arrival, some persons from Constantinople had brought the plague there. They were put into quarantine; and the disease had thus been confined within the Lazarette, which was surrounded by a cordon of soldiers. There had been 87 cases, and 23 deaths.—I dined and slept at Mr. Harris's country-house, which is in an angle of the garden in which the house that