

***J. H. INGRAHAM***



***THE PILLAR  
OF FIRE;  
OR, ISRAEL  
IN BONDAGE***

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EAN 8596547021759

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: [DigiCat@okpublishing.info](mailto:DigiCat@okpublishing.info)



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THE PILLAR OF FIRE,

OR

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# LETTERS

OF SESOSTRIS TO QUEEN EPIPHIA.

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## LETTER I.

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PRINCE SESOSTRIS  
TO HIS ROYAL MOTHER, EPIPHIA,  
QUEEN OF PHÆNICIA.

AT length, my dear mother, I have reached the "Land of the Seven Rivers," and do now write to you from her gorgeous capital, ON, The City of the Sun.

How shall I describe to you the grand and solemn magnificence of this city of divine temples, and convey to you a just idea of its palaces that seem rather to have been erected for the abodes of gods than of men!

Wheresoever I turn my eyes, I realize that I am in mighty Egypt; for everywhere I behold grandeur and glory, excellency and perfection. Every object illustrates the power, munificence, and taste of the imperial princess who now sits on the throne of the Pharaohs, and the splendor of whose reign has raised Egypt above the mightiest empires of the earth.

And all that I behold recalls the ancient glory, my dear mother, of our own land, the once princely Palestina and



Phœnicia—twin kingdoms which of old gave conquerors, and rulers, and laws to Egypt, under the short but brilliant dynasty of her Shepherd Kings! But, though fading with age, Phœnicia still lives in the beauty, pride, and power of her daughter Egypt.

I will not lament over the waning glory of my own dear land, my royal mother, while I can see it revived here with increased magnificence. Phœnicia is not dead while Egypt lives. Every ruin in my own kingdom is restored with augmented beauty and splendor on the green plains of this land of the shining River, whose fountain-head is underneath the throne of Thoth, far in the southern sky.

How shall I describe what I behold? Every new object enchants me, and moves my soul with a fresh pleasure. I am intoxicated, not with wine, but with the splendor of art and scenes of beauty, and with manifestations of human glory and power hitherto inconceivable. I have heard my royal father describe the glory of Salem in Palestine, under the princes of the dynasty of Melchisedec, with its gorgeous temples to the Sun, and its palaces of marble, its hanging gardens, and noble terraces overlooking its flower-enamelled valleys; but the cities of Egypt surpass this Syriac magnificence.

In coming hither, across the Levantine seas, from Syria, I seem to have crossed to the shores of that mystic world where dwell the sacred divinities, rather than only to another land of the plane of the earth; for Egypt, compared with the kingdom of Phœnicia seems truly the land of the blessed. What far-famed warriors! what stately priests, clothed with power from the gods! what superb princes! what a majestic queen! what grace and dignity in the virgins of the Sun! what a stupendous system of worship! what mighty mausoleums, both tomb and temple, rising like mountains hewn into solid triangles everywhere over the

illimitable plain! What a land of verdure and of flowers!—land of gardens and palaces, obelisks and fountains, fanes and altars, sphinxes and gigantic statues!—land, comprising all that can delight the heart or take captive the sense!

I ask myself—Am I, indeed, in Egypt, the "Land shadowing with wings," as those proud Pharaohs, Thothmeses I. and II., termed it, upon their winged globe-carved shields?—am I in Egypt, the glory of the earth, the kingdom above all kingdoms, whose queen is above all the monarchs that reign, and before the elevation of whose golden sceptre all sceptres fall?

I have not yet, my dearest mother, seen, save at a distance, as she was ascending the steps of her palace, this mighty queen of the ancient house of the Pharaohs; but the third day hence I shall be formally presented to her in the throne-room, where she receives the ambassadors and princes of the nations who come into Egypt either to learn arts or arms, or to behold the magnificence of her empire, or to study the religion, laws, and government of a nation, the fame of which has filled the earth.

Upon my arrival with my galleys off the mouths of the Nile, I forwarded to her, by a private messenger in my gilded barge, the letters written by your loving hand and sealed with the regal signet of your kingdom, commending me to her personal favor and royal consideration.

Although I have not yet been presented to the court, I have seen, and must describe to you, the royal son of Queen Amense—this proud daughter of the Pharaohs—Prince Remeses. Never did the gods set their seal upon a nobler and truer prince. Every movement of his stately and graceful person, his rich voice, his superb height, his lordly eyes, his majestic yet winning carriage, all bespeak a youth born to empire—created for dominion over men.

He is now in his thirty-fourth year, and is in the full glory of manhood. He is skilled in all the arts of war, and not less celebrated for his learning in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Sages and philosophers listen to his words when he converses, not so much with the deference that is the homage due to rank, as with the attention which intelligence lends to superior wisdom.

He received me with kindness and embraced me with affection, inquiring after the welfare of my royal mother, and welcoming me to his country with gracious and courteous words. Notwithstanding there is a difference of six years in our ages, I feel that I shall be regarded by him on terms of equal friendship, and that to his companionship I shall owe the happiest hours I may pass in the land of Egypt.

But, dear mother, as I promised to write you an account of my voyage hither, with the adventures and scenes thereof worthy of your notice, I will devote the remainder of my letter to this subject.

When I took leave of you on the marble steps of the stately pier which extends along the front of our palace, and had stepped upon the deck of my galley, I felt that a twofold cord had parted at my heart—one which bound me to thee, O mother, from whom I had never before been separated, and one which tied me to my native land.

Although for the first time in command of a beautiful fleet, numbering a score and ten galleys, and about to visit the fairest of all realms under the sunny skies of Afric, yet the pang of this twofold separation deeply grieved my soul. It was with tears glittering upon my eyelids that I gazed upon you, as you waved your adieux and called on the god of our race to bless me! It was with a voice thick with emotion that I gave orders to the admiral to spread the purple sails of my golden galley to the favoring breezes which seemed to be sent in answer to your prayers.

Long I stood upon the lofty poop of my ship, gazing towards the receding city, with its noble lines of palaces, its crowning temples, its familiar groves, and pleasant gardens. (Even now I am moved as I recall the sweet emotions of that time.) As I surveyed the fleets of merchantmen from all lands gathered about her piers and anchored in the haven, I felt my sorrow at parting, yielding gradually to a feeling of pride that I was the prince of the great city to which these argosies came bearing the merchants of all the earth. Indeed it was a noble and stirring sight, dear mother, and calculated to divert my thoughts, to see these ships, as my galley passed through them, lower their banners, or elevate their rows of shining oars high in the air, both in homage and farewell to the departing lord of the port. There were vessels for bringing the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones from unknown seas; galleys from Tarsus and the isles of the West, bearing pearls, and coral, and precious woods, and thyme-wood; gayly decked barges, that carry fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet down to Egypt from Syria; painted ships from the Nile, that receive by caravans from Ind and the East cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and ivory, and diamonds; the low dark galleys from Afric, that bring Ethiopian slaves; and the broad heavier vessels from the Delta, laden with wheat and fine flour! There were also the strong craft from Colchis and the North, with iron, and brass, and marble; and oaken argosies from further Britannia, bringing tin; tall ships from Græcia with horses and chariots; while from the south shores of the summery seas were light, graceful vessels laden with dainty and goodly fruits, and birds of gorgeous plumes and of ravishing songs! All these annually lay their treasures at thy feet!

As I moved slowly in my galley through the rich fleet of ships which filled your haven, I felt my heart beat quicker, and I returned the salutations of the ship-masters and of the

foreign merchants on their decks, with smiles of gratification at the prosperity still at least of our port of Tyre; though the half our realm has been lost by invasion and our interior cities are decaying. So long as Damascus and Tyre remain, dear mother, those two eyes of your kingdom, your power and throne will stand. The decadence of our sister city Sidon will not affect our prosperity, since her ships will flock to Tyre. Yet Sidon will rise again, if in my power to restore it.

I remained upon the poop of my ship until we had passed, not only the fleet of merchant galleys, but the fourscore war-ships with their hundred banks of oars, that ever guard the entrance to the port with vigilant eyes and arms. The sun was gilding with his setting beams the battlements of the temple of Hercules; and the columns of the graceful temple of Io were richly roseate in the blushing glory of his radiance. The last object on which my eye rested was the gilded gate of the gorgeous Fane of Nyeth on Lebanon; and I sent from my lips a prayer to the fair and kind-hearted goddess to guard thee, mother, and me for thy sake.

We soon passed the bright red Pharos, from the lofty lantern of which, as the shades of evening rapidly fell around us, streamed forth like a new-born star its cheering splendor for the haven-bound mariner. Soon in the heavens over us other lights were kindled by the gods; and the moon, rising over the lofty mountain-range of Libanus, made far out upon the sea a path of light, that seemed like a band of silver with which she would bind me still to the shores I was leaving! But in Egypt I yet behold the same moon shine down upon me with familiar radiance; and as I gaze upon her I can feel, that even here she is a link to bind me to my native land—that upon her winged beams I can send a thought to my dear mother, on whom also she shines.

My whole fleet got well out of the port before the star Aldebaran rose; and as the breeze was light, the governors of the rowers commanded them to ply their oars. Thus with the fall of a thousand sweeps into the blue sea at one motion, keeping time to the voice of a singer who stood upon the bridge across the mid-ship, we kept our course down the coast of Palestine. We would have steered directly for the Delta of the Nile, but had knowledge, by a vessel that met us, of a fleet of Rhodian pirates, which lay wait, in that vicinity, for the Egyptian merchant-ships; and, as my galleys were rather an escort of honor than a war-fleet, I did not wish to measure my strength with them, but dispatched one of my ships, the same night, back to Tyre, to the admiral of your Tyrian fleet, who, no doubt, has gone out ere this in pursuit of these sea-rovers and enemies of our commerce.

Nevertheless, after we had passed Jaffa, and the next day Ascalon in lower Philistia, we beheld half a score of ships of doubtful appearance, and, by my orders, six galleys were detached from the fleet and gave chase. They proved to be fast-sailing Ionian pirates, for one of them, being crippled, was overtaken. They had been many weeks on the sea, and were returning to their own distant and barbarous islands, richly laden. The captain of the galley took out her merchandise, and precious stones, and spices, of which she had robbed other ships, and burned her on the sea, with all the wretches who appertained to her.

The shores of Egypt were reached by us on the seventh day, without any accident to my fleet. It was two hours after the sun rose that we came in view of the low line of land which marks the entrance to the "Garden of the World," and from which open the seven gates of the Nile into the great blue sea.

Upon ascending to the castle for bowmen on the highest mast of the ship, I could discern the tall columns erected by King Menes at the chief entrance of the river, from the summit of each of which at night blazes a wonderful flame, said to have been invented by the Magi of Egypt. As our galley rowed nearer the faint line of coast, I could see numerous ships coming out and entering the Pelusian branch of the Nile—some of them in the interior so far, that only their tops could be seen above the level land. I was now suddenly surprised with a change in the color of the sea, which, from an emerald green, became clouded with an intermixture of tawny water, thick with mud, that seemed to flow upon the surface of the sea, as if lighter than itself. I soon perceived that this was the outrush of the river against the sea, with which it refused wholly to intermingle and lose itself—as if the proud Father Nilus reluctantly yielded his power, so long wielded for a thousand miles, to the sceptre and dominion of the god of the Mediterranean. Yet the latter—so vast was the volume of the yellow waves of the former—was forced a league from the shore before the conquered Nile ceased to resist his fate.

The sun shone upon the battlements of the great city of Pelusium—the oldest fortified place in Egypt, and called "the Key of Egypt," and also "the Strength of Egypt"—and lighted up the terraces of its gardens and temples; but the admiral told me that every year the deposit of the Nile is covering them, and that ere many centuries no trace will be left of a city which is older than On or Memphis. We saw, from the deck, palaces and obelisks and groves in the suburbs, and further inland a country of wonderful beauty and of the highest cultivation, but as level as the sea, from which it is elevated but a few feet. The muddy and wonderful Nile is overflowing annually these pleasant maritime plains; and as the plane of the Delta is steadily raised, these ancient cities and palaces and this fair land will become a fen for the stork

and the sea-mew! How different the site of Tyre, my dear mother! Built upon the firm coast, and defended by nature, it will stand forever as the key of Syria and of the East; and to the end of time the commerce of the world will flow into the palace-like warehouses of its opulent merchants!

As we drew near the port, one of the large fishing eagles which have their home in the Delta soared above our heads, scanning our deck with his piercing glances: and snow-white birds with black-tipped wings skimmed past from wave to wave; while others, resting upon the crest of a shining billow, rocked gracefully with the motion of its undulations. An ibis stalked upon the shore, and numerous aquatic birds, unknown to us, soared about our galleys with sharp and strange outcries.

The atmosphere of the morning was slightly hazy, and, suffused by the sunbeams, cast a soft veil over the land, investing galley, pharos, and fane with the hues of gold. It was a scene of novel beauty, and I hailed the very first view of Egypt with delight. It was a happy omen of the future.

As my galley advanced before the fleet, a large war-ship with a triple poop-deck, and propelled by three hundred oars, swept like a swift dark cloud out of the mouth of the river and bore down towards me in hostile attitude. I displayed the insignia of my kingdom at the top of the chief mast, and awaited the Egyptian guard-ship. The vessel was brought to, a bow-shot from my own, and I was asked by the governor thereof, who I was, whence I came, and my destination? To these inquiries I gave satisfactory replies through my admiral; whereupon the Egyptian captain, commanding an elegant barge to be made ready, came on board, attended by his suite, to pay his respects to me as Prince of Tyre. I came forth from my state-room to receive him, my dear mother, attired as became my rank. In the most courteous language, and with an elegance of manners



unsurpassed save in the polite land of Egypt, he assured me of the pleasure it would give his royal mistress, Queen Amense, "The Support of Worlds," as he termed her, to have me visit her court. He said she was just then returning from a visit to the temple of Isis and Nephthys, at Philæ, with a vast retinue of state and sacred galleys, and by the time I arrived at Memphis she would be either there or at her private palace at On.

By his advice, I dispatched, in our handsomest galley, my secretary, Acherres, with a copy of the letter to the queen, which you gave to me, sealed with my own signet. This done, I entertained the Egyptian officer with a magnificence becoming my position and his own. He was much pleased with the elegance of my ship, and the complete appointment of my fleet. He said he had never seen a Tyrian squadron before, but had heard much of our luxury and perfection in maritime affairs.

His ship was stately in height, and terrible with its warlike aspect. The poop bristled with armed warriors in polished helms of brass. It had four short masts, and upon each top thereof a huge castle containing a score of Libyan bowmen with steel-headed arrows. Upon the prow was a sort of fortress, on which stood a group of soldiers armed with long spears and with large oval shields, on which were painted hieroglyphic devices in brilliant colors. Arranged on the sides above the rowers were black Ethiopians, gigantic men in steel cuirasses, with long swords held before them. The captains of these warriors were stationed at various points, arrayed in rich armor of varied fashion, according to the class of soldiers that were under them. The prow of this mighty battle-ship, which carried one thousand fighting men, besides three hundred rowers, was ornamented with a lion's head and shoulders of colossal size; while across the stern stretched the broad, gilded wings of the feathered globe of the Sun, which is the emblem of the kingdom of

Egypt. Besides this gorgeous and majestic galley, there were many lesser ones near, having but a single mast and fifty oars. This fleet ever kept guard at the mouth of the Nile, and thus defended the gates of Egypt on the sea against foes.

When I had sufficiently admired his ship from my own, the admiral, whose name is Pathromenes, invited me to go on board. After viewing all the parts of the ship, and especially the noble apartments devoted to him and his officers, I was entertained with musical instruments by players of infinite skill. Then I was amused with the performances of jugglers and the wonderful antics of grotesque deformed dwarfs, who seemed kept on board only for the entertainment of these Egyptian nobles. Towards evening, a banquet was offered me. Among other rare dishes were gazelles. Before the feast, the admiral made a signal to a priest of Osiris, who presided over the sacred rites on board, and inaugurated it by a prayer to the god for the welfare of the queen and the prosperity of the kingdom. This custom recalled our own, of offering first a libation of wine to the gods. During the banquet, sweet strains of music floated around us. After we had closed the feast, and were drinking wine, an attendant entered, bearing a miniature mummy, elaborately painted and gilded. Holding this emblem of mortality before me and the admiral, he said solemnly:

"Behold this, and drink and be happy; for such thou shalt be when thou art dead!"

I was not a little surprised at this unwelcome, and, as it seemed to me, unseasonable intrusion. Pathromenes, observing my looks, said with a smile: "This introduction of a memorial of death to our feasts, O prince, is not unseasonable. It is designed to exhort us to enjoy life while we possess it, for when we are no more, enjoyment will be past." Thus saying, he poured out a vase of wine into our

golden cups, and pledged me "Thy health, my mother!" So I drank to thee, and the glory of thy reign. Nevertheless, I do not agree with the admiral, but think, rather, that the intention of this exhibition of Death to guests, is to warn them that, while life is so short, it ought not to be spent wholly in pleasure and festivities.

At length, night coming on, I returned to my ship, and the next day, with a light wind and aided by but one bank of rowers, entered the mighty Nile, and slowly ascended its powerful but sluggish stream. The courtly Pathromenes escorted me past Pelusium, and then took leave of me, embracing me more like a father than a friend. I left my fleet at the Pelusian Delta, to return to Tyre after it shall have received fresh water on board from the Nile. The only galleys I took with me are the one I came in, and that on board of which I sent my secretary to the capital in advance of me. I trust the remainder will safely reach Syria.

The shores of the Eastern Nile, as we ascended, presented an unchanging scene of gardens, verdant fields of corn, villages, temples, and tombs, all united in one unbroken belt for leagues. The river was dotted with fishers in their slender boats, and we constantly met vessels descending, bound to the open sea: some for Afric for gold-dust and ivory; others to Philistia, for copper and iron; others to Colchis, for silver, or to the Isle of Thasos. The evening of the day we entered the river, we beheld the sacred crocodile. It was a vast scaly monster, basking on the shore. I gazed upon him with wonder and fear. If he be a god, his votaries worship him rather through terror than from love. But to my senses all the minor deities of Egypt are gross and revolting. Yet I must not dare to be impious while in the very land of these gods.

The next day, after sailing for hours between gardens, we drew near the City of On, on the east bank. Our approach to

it was marked by the increased size and grandeur of the palaces and temples, and the life and activity on the shores. Before reaching the city, I caught view of Memphis on the west side of the river, and far beyond towered the apex of one of those mighty pyramids whose age is lost in the oblivion of the past.

Farewell, dear mother. In my next letter I will describe my arrival and debarking at the terrace of the City of the Sun, and my gratifying reception by the Prince Remeses.

Your affectionate son,  
SESOSTRIS.

## LETTER II.

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CITY OF THE SUN.

MY DEAR AND ROYAL MOTHER:

THINK not that the splendors of the Court of "Pharaoh's Daughter," as the Egyptians still love to call their queen, will lead me to forget my own royal home and the dear scenes in which I have passed my life—scenes that memory will ever cherish, as they are associated with the love and care of a mother, such as a prince was never before blessed with by the gods. Think not, my queenly mother, that while I describe with pleasure the magnificence of Queen Amense's realm, I think less of your own kingdom; but, rather, all I behold only causes me to love my native land the more; for the glory of Tyre, my home, is my mother's presence—and my mother is not here! Queen Amense may have the homage of my intellect, but that of my heart is reserved only for thee!

I have prefaced my letter in this manner, dear mother, lest you should jealously read the glowing descriptions I give of what I behold, and may fear that the luxuries and grandeur of Egypt will make me dissatisfied with the lesser splendor of the Court of Phœnicia. Fear not. I shall bring back to thee a son's faithful love, and to my people the loyal affection due to them from their prince.

I closed my letter to you in sight, as I thought, of the City of the Sun. But what I believed to be the capital of the gods, was but the colossal gateway leading from the river to the city, which is half an hour's ride inland. Yet from the Nile to the city there is a continuous avenue of temples, such as earth has never beheld—not even Nineveh or Babylon, in all their glory. For a mile fronting the river extends a row of palaces, which, stupendous as they are, form but wings to a central temple of vaster dimensions. The palaces that guard it, as it were, are adorned with sculptured columns of the most elegant description. They are three hundred in number, covered with gorgeous paintings in the richest tints, and carved with the most finished art. The beautiful capitals of these columns are shaped alternately like a flower-bud, not yet expanded, or like the open flower of the lotus, and the sides formed of imitations, by the wonderful artist, of leaves and flowers indigenous to Egypt. The columns and capitals, thus exquisitely fashioned, are gigantic in size, and of the grandest altitude.

The central temple is a lofty and wonderful edifice of brilliant red sandstone, with sixty columns of marble enriching its façades; these, with the three hundred, representing the three hundred and sixty days of the ancient Egyptian year. The front of this sublime temple is pierced by three colossal gateways, broad enough for four chariots to pass abreast. These gateways are adorned with paintings, in the brightest tints, representing processions of

priests, sacrifices, offering of incense, and all the imposing religious ceremonies appertaining to the worship of the Sun.

Above the centre gateway, between the noble wings of the propyla which flank it, is a representative emblem of Osiris, in the shape of a splendid shield of the sun, a half-sphere of gold, from which extend wings for many yards, each feather glittering with precious stones. Around the globe are entwined two brazen asps emblems of which I have not yet learned the signification.

Imagine, my dear mother, this stupendous and noble temple, with its vast wings facing the river, and reflected upon its sunny surface. Fancy the river itself, flowing laterally through these gateways into an artificial canal, lined with trees, and bordered by lesser temples, which recede in long lines of diminishing columns. Behold oranges swinging in clusters from branches bending over the water, while scarlet pomegranates, figs, and olives fill trees innumerable that shade the terraces; and vines, either gorgeous with flowers of wonderful beauty and form, or pendent with purple grapes, entwine the columns, and depend from the carved abacus of the capitals.

Into this canal my beautiful galley was received, in the sight of thousands of admiring gazers standing upon the steps of the terrace which led down to the entrance, and on which I had landed to pay my homage to the chief captain at the propylon, who, magnificently attired, waited, by the queen's command, to receive me and conduct me to the city.

Returning with me on board my galley, he gave orders for it to be taken in charge by two royal barges, with prows of silver, and golden banners waving above the heads of the rowers, who were Nubian slaves clothed in scarlet tunics. Thus, in state, my dear mother, as became a prince, was I borne along this avenue of palaces and fanes, and fragrant

gardens. The vanishing line of columns was, at short intervals, interrupted by gateways, above which were statues of Osiris and Isis.

I was almost bewildered by the novelty and splendor of these varied scenes, and was thinking that nothing could surpass in magnificence this mighty avenue to a city, when all at once the canal expanded into a circular lake completely inclosed by columns, forming majestic colonnades on all sides, in which were walking and conversing innumerable richly dressed persons, while others were grouped around noble-looking ancient men, listening to their discourses. The chief captain, who was with me in my galley, informed me that these columned halls were the favorite resort of the eminent philosophers and scholars of all lands, who came hither to be taught in the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians. I then looked a little closer, when he was pleased to point out to me several great philosophers, who, called wise men in their own kingdom, yet had come hither to learn at the feet of these masters of the world's wisdom, the wise men of Egypt. As we were rowed past and around this majestic circle of columns, I saw two noble youths from Damascus, who came last year to Tyre, in order to embark for Memphis. I beheld also Prince Melchor of the City of Salem, in Syria, the descendant of the great king Melchisedec, whose wise reign, about three centuries ago, is still remembered with glory and honor to his name. The prince recognized me, and returned my salutation, and leaving the group with which he stood, hastened around the terrace to meet me at the place of debarkation; for this delightful lake, dear mother, terminated the noble canal which united it with the river. Beyond it, the galleys and barges did not go. Instead of water, this mighty avenue to On was now to be continued by land. At the place opposite the inlet rose two lofty obelisks a hundred feet in the air, of incomparable elegance

and beauty. They were dedicated to Osiris and Isis. Elevated upon pedestals of porphyry, they formed the graceful entrance to a semicircular flight of marble steps which led from the lake to a broad terrace interlaid with parti-colored marbles, in every variety of device which taste could conceive, or art execute. Landing upon these steps, I ascended to the terrace, and was there met and embraced by the Prince of Salem. Here the chief captain took leave of me, and immediately there advanced towards me a noble person, wearing a chain of gold about his neck, and clothed in purple silk, richly embroidered, and who carried in his right hand a long silver wand, with the head of an ibis, cut out of a precious stone, upon it. He said that he was an officer of the court of the queen, and had come to conduct me on my way to the city.

"Her majesty," he said, with dignity becoming one who served so mighty a monarch, "has received your letter, royal prince, and has directed her servants to pay you all honor!"

I acknowledged the grace of the queenly Amense in this courteous reception of a stranger, and followed him across the terrace, which I perceived was encircled by statues of all the divinities of the earth; and I was gratified to see that Io, and Hercules, and the favored deity of Phœnicia, Athyris, had conspicuous pedestals allotted to their sacred images, near the Theban god Amun.

Indeed, dear mother, this fact, and the manner of my reception, shows that the present dynasty has graciously forgotten the conquest of Egypt by the warlike hosts of Phœnicia. But when we recollect that the first Amosis of the present house of Pharaohs had for his queen the beautiful Ephtha, daughter of the last Phœnician Pharaoh, taking her captive when he expelled the father from the throne of Memphis, we need not be surprised at the favor shown us by the noble Queen Amense, for, fourth only in descent from



the fair Phœnician, who was of our own blood, she is our cousin by just hereditary lineage.

When I had traversed the "Hall of the Gods," we came to a lofty two-leaved gate of brass, which stood between two sculptured propyla of Libyan stone. At a wave of the wand of my escorter, they flew wide open, and revealed the most magnificent and awe-inspiring spectacle that it was possible to conceive the world could present.

Before me was revealed an avenue, more than a mile in length to the eye, leading straight to the City of the Sun, which rose, temple rising beyond temple, shining like gold in the sunbeams, a mountain of architecture, fashioned as if by the hands of gods rather than of men. In the midst stood, elevated above all surrounding edifices, the great temple of Osiris itself, encircled by a belt of twelve glittering obelisks, representing the twelve months. In the centre of this wonderful girdle, upon the apex of a pyramid rising within the walls of the temple, two hundred feet high, blazed that sacred gold shield of the sun—the shield of Osiris—the fame of which has filled the world. It was like the sun itself for glory and splendor! Oh, how can I describe all this! My pen refuses to find language to record what I wish to write.

But I will be brief, lest I overpower you with gorgeousness, and blind you with glory. Verily, the Egyptians seem resolved to rob the heavens of their celestial architecture, and set up a rival heaven on earth!

From the open gateway of brass I beheld the city thus described, with its temple, obelisks, pyramid, and countless palaces, while the whole was encircled by a green belt of gardens, which shut it in from the desert, like a setting of Indian diamonds in a bed of Assyrian emeralds.

The avenue itself was paved with red-colored Syene stones from the isles of the Cataracts, and on each side was

a gigantic row of sphinxes, reposing on broad, elevated dromoi. Some of these represented lions, leopards, and other beasts of the African and Nubian deserts. Some of them had the head of a ram, with the body of a lion, the fore-paws extended upon the terrace, the vast body resting upon the hind-paws, all presenting aspects of majestic repose. There were one hundred of these stone effigies, in a double row twenty feet apart, facing the avenue, and fastening upon the passer-by their stony eyes in immovable watchfulness. This avenue I walked up, preceded by the queen's officer, and escorted by a retinue, which fell in behind me.

Having passed this row of crio-sphinxes we ascended three broad steps, on each side of which towered a lofty pylon, elaborately adorned with costly paintings of colossal size, representing sacred scenes. Another dromo bordered with fourscore andro-sphinxes, having alternate faces of Osiris and Isis, the one stamped with majesty, the other with beauty, now began, and passing this solemn and awful range of gigantic faces we came to another ascent of marble steps, flanked by obelisks: four lofty pylones, and three spacious courts were at the end of the dromos of sphinxes, also a vast arena inclosed by palaces. Crossing this noble square, we came to two colossi of granite, representing Cheops and Nilus, their shields covered with hieroglyphics wrought with the highest degree of perfection, each cartouch recording their titles and deeds.

At this point there met me a superbly caparisoned Arabian charger, held by two pages; while a young noble, bearing upon his breast the insignia of a prince of the queen's palace, addressed me, and invited me to mount the beautiful and fiery animal.

I obeyed, leaping into the saddle with delight at once more being upon horseback. Scarcely had I pressed the bit

with the gilded bridle, ere a score of horsemen, in splendid armor, issued from the propylon on my left, in two columns, and, inclosing me between them, escorted me through several magnificent courts, in which I caught glimpses of obelisks, monoliths of kings, pylones sixty feet in height with pyramidal wings, giving entrance to courts each more magnificent than the last.

At length I saw before me the great and splendid pylon which gives admission to the city. In front of it, raised upon a throne of crimson stone, stood, with his ibis head fifty feet in the air, a monolith statue of Thoth. In his outstretched right hand he held a pair of scales, and in his left a tablet.

At this gate, the city is entered in its central point. Two obelisks, ninety feet in height, towered on each side of the entrance. Here I was received by a venerable noble, who was mounted upon a snow-white horse, and attended by a brilliant retinue, all superbly mounted. This personage extended to me the same hospitable and courteous welcome from his queen, which had been presented to me from the others. He rode by my side, and we took our way at a rapid trot along an avenue of alternate obelisks and sphinxes, until we passed through a pylon which opened into the streets of the city. The splendor around bewildered me. Palaces, with gorgeous façades and triple stories of colonnades, composed street after street, while fountains and statues and propyla, temples, monoliths, andro-sphinxes and crio-sphinxes presented, as I rode along through this superb "City of the Sun," an endless spectacle of architectural grandeur and marble magnificence. The streets were thronged with handsomely attired citizens, either in the pursuit of pleasure or business, while priestly processions, festival parties crowned with flowers and attended by musicians, and bodies of horse, were met by us. Gilded chariots, palanquins, and vehicles of rare and graceful forms, were numerous. The whole city wore an air

of pleasure and life, and impressed me with the idea that the Egyptians are not only master-builders in architecture, but know how to enjoy the splendid cities they erect with such costly care.

My senses sated with luxury, I was not unwilling to alight at the entrance of a beautiful palace, which the venerable horseman said the queen had placed at my service. Upon its portico I was met by my private secretary, Acherres, who, in his joy at beholding me again, forgot for a moment my rank, and embraced me with tears of delight; for, in this foreign land, he saw in me alone the link which bound him to his native country.

I have now been two days in this palace, wherein is furnished me, by the queen, the attendance of slaves; and every luxury of Egypt is at my command. As I said to you, dear mother, in my first letter, I have yet only seen the Queen of Egypt at a distance, as she was ascending the steps of her palace, but to-morrow I am formally to be presented to her, for on that day of the week alone she receives princes and ambassadors. She had returned four days before to Memphis, from Philæ, with a great retinue of the lords and officers of her realm, and yesterday, crossing the Nile in her barge of state, she entered this sacred city, which she visits for three days every month to perform in the great temple the sacred rites of her gorgeous religion. Of this worship I will soon write you more fully. It is an error, however, to suppose that these enlightened Egyptians worship the sun, or any other objects, as such, of mere matter. Their fundamental doctrine is the unity of the deity, whose attributes are represented under positive and material forms. The common people perhaps never go beyond these forms, and their minds never are admitted to a knowledge of the truth of the mysteries; but the priests, and the high in rank, look upon the sun, and moon, and animals, and the fecund Nile, only as so many attributes of

a one infinite deity. The sun—believed to possess much of the divine influence in its vivifying power and its various other effects—is regarded as one of the grandest agents of the one deity. The moon is another direct manifestation of the invisible author, and as the regulator of time, say their sacred books, is figured in painting and sculpture as the ibis-headed Thoth, and the deity who records, as time flies, the actions of men's lives. Osiris, if I understand their mythology, is this supreme god (symbolized here by the sun), who is also the judge of the souls of the dead, rewarding or punishing hereafter the creatures he has created, according to their lives. But when I learn more fully their system of religion, I will explain it to you, dear mother.

Although I have not seen, to speak with her, the august lady who reigns over Egypt, I have been visited by her son, the lord Prince Remeses. I have already written of him. He is in his thirty-fourth year, and the noblest appearing man my eyes ever beheld. Upon his brow the gods have set the seal and impress of command. I will narrate the manner of our first intercourse.

I was standing by the window of the stately apartment, which overlooks one of the squares of the city, interested in watching the toils of several hundred men, coarsely attired in blue aprons or loin-cloths, and gray breeches reaching only to the knee, the upper part of their bodies being naked, who were at work constructing a wall which was to inclose a new lake before the temple of Apis, in the midst of the square; for On is a city of alternate lakes (all of great beauty and adorned with trees), temples, squares, and palaces, interspersed with dromos of sphinxes connecting court after court, through lofty pylones; while obelisks, statues, and fountains fill up the interspaces.

My window not only commanded a view of these laborers with their heavy burdens of bricks, borne on their shoulders

to the top of the wall they were building, but also, beyond the wall and distant temples, a glimpse of the yellow expanse of the desert. How mighty, and grand, and solemn it looked in its loneliness and ocean-like vastness! A faint dark line that I at length perceived in motion, was, doubtless, a caravan coming from the haven of the Red Sea, where the galleys from Farther Ind land their precious freights of untold wealth. This caravan seeks the port of On, six miles below on the Nile, whence sail ships, laden with the treasures of the caravan, to all parts of the known earth. Sesostris, Thothmes, Menes, all planned a canal from the Nile to this sea; but the camels are the only ships, to this day, that cross this desert waste. Again my eyes rested upon the laborers, seeing that they were sorely pressed by cruel taskmasters, who, with long rods, urged them to their ceaseless toil. I perceived, then, that they were men with Syrian features, arched eagle noses, long black beards, and narrow but fine eyes, which seemed to have a strange expression of tears in them. There were among them noble and manly men, handsome youths, though pale with toil, and bent forms of aged men. I marvelled to see so fine a race thus in bondage, as slaves under taskmasters, for in the day of the Phœnician Pharaohs, there were no such bondmen in the land of Egypt. From their remarkable likeness to some natives of Mesopotamia I had seen in Tyre, I judged that they must be captives of that ancient Orient people, taken in the wars of Amunoph.

While I was regarding them, and especially an interesting youth, whose dark eyes, as he staggered under a heavy burden of bricks, were turned up to me as if seeking sympathy, Acherres entered and said:

"My lord Sesostris, the mighty Prince Remeses is alighting from his chariot upon the steps of your palace!"