

OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

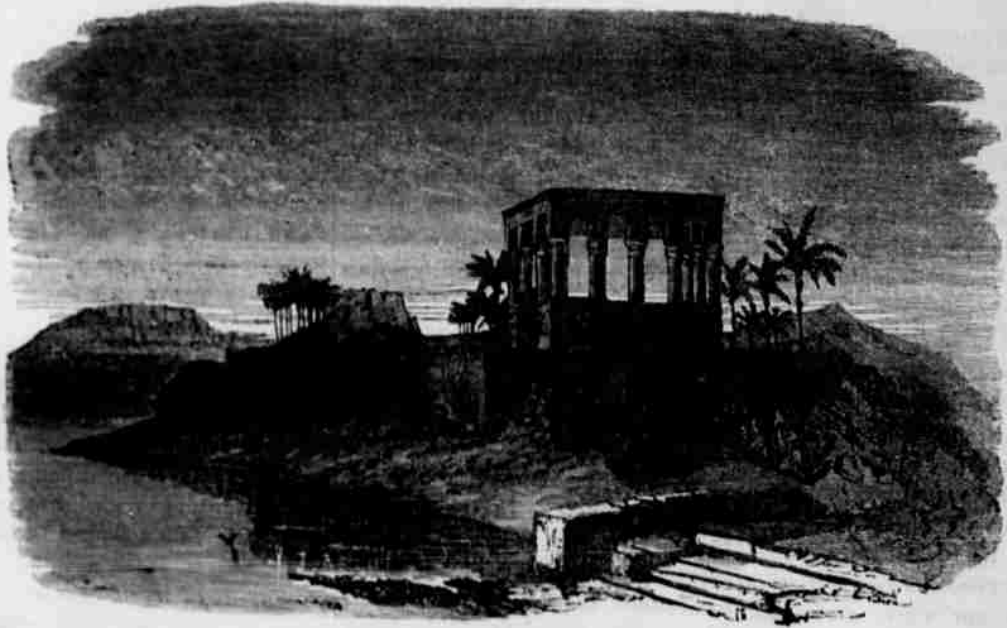
HELIOPOLIS, "CITY OF THE SUN,"
Egypt, Jan. 25, 1879.

EDITOR WEST SHORE: We trust it is a pardonable vanity that prompts us to date this communication at the site of one of the oldest cities in the world. Away back in the dim annals of time, almost thirty-six centuries ago, this city, then known as *On*, flourished in all the magnificence of Egypt's primitive glory. Famous, alike, in sacred and classical history, though its imposing temples have long since been mingled with the dust of the earth, its name is embalmed forever in the archaeology of the future.

In the simplicity of the world's early

It was situated on the east side of the river Nile, about five miles above Grand Cairo. Nearly two thousand years ago, when visited by Strabo, the place of the city was marked only by a heap of magnificent ruins. Nothing remains now, however, to suggest its former grandeur but great dikes and mounds, from which may be dug fragments of marble, granite, bricks and pottery; a portion of a sphinx, and a single obelisk, which remains standing. This obelisk reaches about sixty feet above the ground, is six feet square at the base, and covered on its four sides with the hieroglyphics common to such remains. This monolith was hewn out of a block of red granite, and, according

interest. From Cairo to the site of ancient Thebes, on the right bank of the Nile, and to a still greater distance on the left bank of that river, all such portion of the country as is covered by the annual inundations, is a land thickly strewn with crumbling monuments, pyramids, sphinxes, columns and temples; the smouldering debris of the world's glory, now long since passed into the blackness of oblivion. Pharaoh's Bed, a correct sketch of which is hereby annexed, is an isolated point of rare interest to the tourist abroad or the antiquarian at home. This country is full of the most impossible traditions and legends, which, while they may afford lodgment for some few grains



PHARAOH'S BED, NILE RIVER, EGYPT.

literature, Moses tells us that, "Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On." Genesis xli., 45.

So here we are, upon the very soil trodden by Joseph and his brethren, in the once goodly land of Goshen, assigned by Pharaoh to Jacob and his sons.

Centuries later, this city was known as Aven, and so called by Ezekiel; Jeremiah calls it *Beth-shemesh*, the common Hebrew name, while in classical Greek it is known as Heliopolis. All these names were given to it, at one time and another, on account of its being the principal seat of the worship of the sun among the Egyptians.

to a hasty calculation made on the spot, weighs not less than one hundred and twenty-five tons. How this beautiful shaft was raised to its present position, is not the smallest curiosity which attaches to it. Indeed, the highest excellence of modern engineering skill would be sadly taxed to discover a practicable method of lowering it in safety to a prone condition, saying nothing about the work of quarrying, hewing, engraving, polishing, and finally raising it to its present nicely adjusted perpendicular position upon a foundation that has maintained its stability for a period of four thousand years.

But we must pass to other objects of

of truth, they are, in the main, but so many tissues of the strangest and wildest superstition. The mass of ruins collectively styled "Pharaoh's Bed," is manifestly of later date than anything which is really contemporaneous with the hierarchy of ancient Egypt.

But it were useless to particularize. The region we are now examining is especially rich in broken vases and time-worn inscriptions. Within a scope of territory whose radius would be but a few hours' travel, enough valuable material might be collected to stock a hundred British museums. For nearly a week, we have been strolling over the fallow ground of departed greatness. Cautiously and timidly we have