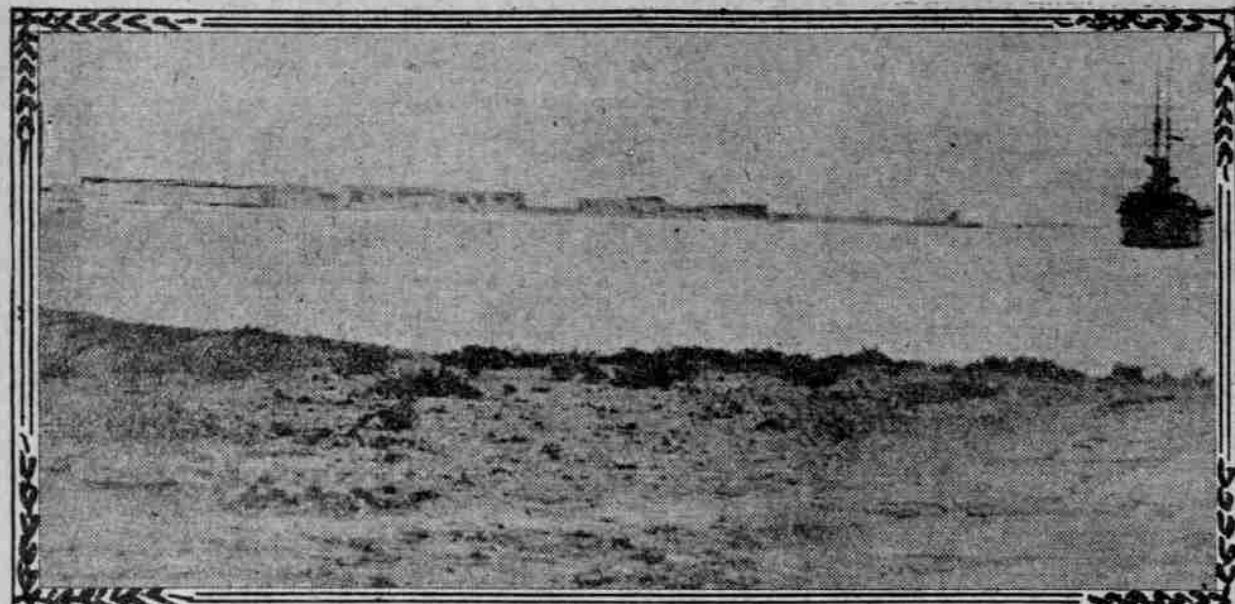


RAILROADING AROUND THE RED SEA



PORT SOUDAN, ON THE RED SEA, WITH THE NEW ENGLISH BUILDINGS, IN THE BACKGROUND

Great Changes Going On Along the Coasts of Africa and Arabia



GIRLS OF KOSIER



THEY LIVE IN TENTS MADE OF MATS



MOHAMMEDAN PILGRIMS AT PRAYER

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

I am on a German steamer of 5000 tons, sailing down the Red Sea. We took ship three days ago at Port Said, and were 18 hours going through the Suez Canal. We tarried a while at Suez, and we are now off Port Soudan, where the new railroad across the Nubian desert begins. We are just opposite Jeddah, where, according to the Mohammedans, Mother Eve was buried, and where the pilgrims start out over the desert to Mecca. With the ship's glass one can almost see the place where the greatest grandmother of all mankind lies. She rests outside the wall in a tomb 400 feet long, and a mosque rises over her dust. You have heard the Mohammedan story of how Adam fell. Eve gave him the apple, and he ate it, and as a punishment both he and she were cast out of the Garden of Eden. As they dropped a strong west wind was blowing, and this wuffed the fairy form of Eve to Arabia; while Adam, with his heavier weight fell down in Ceylon. There is a string of coral keys running from Ceylon to Hindoostan, which is still known as Adam's bridge, and it was over them that he started out on his long hunt for Eve. It took him 300 years to find her, and the meeting was somewhere near Mecca. What became of Adam's bones we do not know, but those of Eve are supposed to lie at Jeddah.

Odd Features of the Red Sea.

Jeddah is just about half way down the Red Sea. It took us 36 hours to come here, and we shall be fully that long in steaming to the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, where we enter the Indian Ocean. The Red Sea is mighty small on the map. It looks like a scratch between Asia and Africa, but the scratch is actually about 300 miles wide in many places, and so deep that the most of the Blue Ridge Mountains could be dropped down into it, and only their higher peaks would reach the surface. The Red Sea is so long that if it began at Ireland, and extended westward across the Atlantic, it would go half way to Canada. If it could be lifted up and laid down upon the United States with Suez at Philadelphia, Bab-el-Mandeb would be a hundred miles or so beyond Omaha, Neb., and all the way between would be a sea canal as wide as from New York to Washington, or wide enough to accommodate all the navies of the world abreast, and leave a hundred miles or more to spare.

A Rival for the Suez Canal.

This mighty waterway narrows almost to a point at each end. Where it leaves the Indian Ocean it is no wider than the English Channel at Dover, and it is lost at the north in the Suez Canal. Starting at Bab-el-Mandeb, the coasts broaden out and then run almost straight to the upper end, where they fork into two gulfs and include the lower part of the Sinai Peninsula. These two gulfs are those of Suez and Akabah. The Gulf of Suez is 25 miles long, and it has been joined to the Mediterranean by the Suez Canal. The Gulf of Akabah is 110 miles long, and capitalists are now talking of making a canal from it to the Mediterranean. The Akabah Canal would be a considerable distance east of the Suez Canal, but it would practically parallel it. It would run through Turkish territory, and for this reason it can be built without infringing on the Suez Canal concession, which relates to Egypt alone. I am told that a new canal would pay well. That of Suez is already overworked, and there is enough business for two. As to the Red Sea itself, it has deep

water throughout. Along the main channel there is a full half mile of salt sand under the ships, and in some places it is more than a mile and a half deep. The average depth of the Gulf of Suez is greater than the height of a 30-story flat, and two Washington monuments, one on top of the other, could be sunken into the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and plenty of water above for the deepest ocean steamer to go over them.

Hot and Sultry.

The Red Sea is red hot. I have steamed many miles along the equator, but this is much hotter. The water here is shut in on both sides by deserts, which furnish no streams to cool it, and the tropical sun beats down from January to December. As a result the surface of the water is often 30 degrees above zero, and it forms a great hot-water plant, steaming the air. The sun's rays are bottled up also by the deserts, which act as second heat radiating plants. The result is that the air is often suffocating and there seems to be only a waving sheet of blue steel between us and the lower regions. Indeed, were it not for the electric fan in my cabin I should be unable to write, and outside upon deck we have double roofs of canvas to temper the rays of the sun. Last night many of the passengers slept outside their cabins on account of the heat. We eat our meals fanned by electricity, and yesterday we had a sand storm, which covered our ship with red dust, and even entered the portholes and got into the beds. That storm came from Arabia, and it may have swallowed some of the pilgrims on their way to Mecca.

The air here is so salty that one can almost eat eggs without seasoning. The water contains so much salt that if 100 there of it are boiled down four pounds of salt will be found in the bottom of the kettle. The evaporation is so great that were it not for the inflow of the Indian Ocean the sea would, within less than a century, go into the air and leave in its place one immense block of salt. Indeed, these waters are more salty than those of the ocean, and they are saltier than the Mediterranean and most other salt seas.

Suez in 1907.

I had expected to find the Red Sea coast more thickly populated. There are no cities of any size and very few villages. Even Suez has only about 15,000 people, and of them not more than 300 are Europeans. The town has large docks, but its trade is small, and it has had nothing like the growth which men thought would follow the completion of the canal. There is direct railroad connection with Cairo, and passengers on their way home from India stop off there and join their ships at Alexandria. There are no other steamers from that port.

Kosier and Its Mines.

Have you ever heard of the town of Kosier? It is a Red Sea port that at one time had a great trade. It lies on the west coast some distance south of Suez. It was formerly the site of a caravan route to the Nile, and the early Christians crossed over that way and took boats for the Sinai Peninsula to reach the mountains where Moses received the commandments.

Today Kosier is a stepping place for Egyptian pilgrims on their way to Jeddah. It used to be much more important in that respect than now. It had many inns and hotel tents outside. It was well supplied with dancing girls and the other surroundings of a true pilgrim center. Then the Suez Canal came and killed it. The port is now nothing. Its big houses have fallen to ruins and it has become a

village of one-story huts. There are emerald mines near it, however, and the desert region about shows evidences of having been once worked for gold.

Port Soudan.

The two chief ports on the west coast of the Red Sea are Port Soudan and Suakim. They were nothing a few years ago, but they promise to grow into cities since the completion of the Red Sea road. There has always been something of a town at Suakim, and the original intention was to use that place as the terminus of the railway. The English surveyors, however, found a much better protected port at Soudan, and they have extended the railroad to that point. The town, which was absolutely nothing two years ago, has now several thousand people, and it grows like one of the mushroom settlements of the Canadian West. The British government is erecting great docks and harbor buildings. It has put up lighthouses and built a postoffice quarters for the government officials and schools. Many lots are being sold and residences are going up. The settlers are chiefly Europeans, the most of whom come from Italy and Greece.

The harbor of Port Soudan is shaped like a leaf. It is 200 feet deep and well protected from the sea outside. There are now steamers twice a week from there to Suez and Aden. The ships start at Suez, go to Port Soudan and then south around the Red Sea to Aden. Upon return, calling at some of the ports on the east coast. The ships are of the Egyptian Khedival line. They are said to be comfortable.

At present one of the great needs of that port is a hotel. There are no accommodations for travelers, and some of the steamship companies will not sell tickets to Khartoum via the Red Sea on this account.

It takes 25 hours to go by rail from Port Soudan to Khartoum. Sleeping-cars will be put on the railroad this year, and there will probably be considerable travel as soon as the proper hotel accommodations are furnished at the port.

Already many freight steamers are calling at the port, and in a short time the bulk of the freight for Central Africa and the Upper Nile will go that way.

Italian Africa.

I have been making some inquiries about the Italian possessions on the west coast of the Red Sea. They have a colony known as Eritrea, which begins about 150 miles south of Suakim and runs down almost to the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. It is not wide, and it terminates a little back of the coast where the Abyssinian hills begin. It is only a few years since the Italians tried to include in Eritrea a large part of Abyssinia and failed, owing to the bravery of King Menelik. The land they have now is of small value. There are only a few tracts that can be irrigated and the exports are nothing. The strip is inhabited by nomads, who raise camels, oxen, sheep and goats. The pasture is scanty and the sheepherds move about from place to place with their stock. Some of the tribes live in tents made of matting and their wants are simple to an extreme.

Massawa.

The chief Italian port is Massawa. It is a little town situated on a coral island and joined to the mainland by a causeway. It used to be much more important in that respect than now. It had many inns and hotel tents outside. It was well supplied with dancing girls and the other surroundings of a true pilgrim center. Then the Suez Canal came and killed it. The port is now nothing. Its big houses have fallen to ruins and it has become a

to the capital of Abyssinia and that they are trying to increase their trade with that country. They are shipping considerable salt, which, strange to say, is so relished by the Abyssinians that it brings more than sugar and takes much the same place among them as candy and tobacco with us. The average Abyssinian carries a stick of rock salt with him and takes a snack at it between whistles. If he meets a friend he asks him to take a lick of his salt stick and his friend brings out his own individual stick and they take lick after lick until it is with snuff in the days of our forefathers, when every one offered his friends a pinch of his choice macaboy.

The Port of Mecca.

I regret that I shall not be able to stop at Jeddah, the port of Mecca, to which I have already referred. It is one of the most interesting places on the Red Sea and 100,000 or more pilgrims pass through it every year. While at Omdurman, a few weeks ago, I saw something like 100 Mohammedans who were going by the new railroad across the Nubian Desert to Port Soudan, where they expected to take ship for Jeddah. Some of them had been 30 years on the way and their religious enthusiasm had not waned. They started out upon camels from the borders of Timbuktu and had been forced to sell their camels for food. After that they had walked from oasis to oasis, working for money to carry them onward. In that party there were many that the English government officials had to divide them up into batches and send on a train load or so at a time. The road across them several hundred miles of camel riding and walking and it will probably be a great pilgrimage route in the future.

At present the pilgrims come to Jeddah from that part of North Africa and from the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. They also come from India and Southern Arabia and Jeddah takes her toll from each of them. The people live by fleecing the devotees. The town is full of hotels and it is noted for its discomforts. It has a bad water supply and after each big rain there is an epidemic of fever. All who land in Jeddah go on foot from there to Mecca. The distance is 65 miles and a guide is required.

The New Mecca Railroad.

The British are now talking of building a railroad from Jeddah to Mecca. If they do, it will probably pay well, for the travel is enormous. Twenty-five years ago there were more than 600 Mohammedans who came annually by sea to make their way over the sands to Mecca and Medina. There are probably half again as many more today, and the railroads will no reduce the cost of the trip that the number of worshippers will be greatly increased. Indeed, the day may come when some Mohammedan tourist agent will be selling to pilgrims from all parts of the Mohammedan world round-trip tickets to the birthplace of the prophet, including admission to the Kaaba and also to Medina, where Mohammed died. The Sultan is already building a line southward from Damascus to Mecca, 580 miles of the road being already completed, and it is expected that it will reach Medina in 1909 and Mecca early in 1910. There is now a line from Beirut to Damascus, and one will be able to start in at that port in the West Mediterranean and go to Damascus, Jerusalem and Mecca without change of cars. The Mecca line is being built by Turkish soldiers, under the supervision of a German civil engineer, and the cost is being in part defrayed by the voluntary contributions

of Mohammedans in all parts of the world.

When these railroads are completed there may be a chance for Christians to visit the holy city. All who have been there in the past have had to go in disguise, and the man who would attempt it today takes his life in his hands. The railroad will be officered by Mohammedans, and it is doubtful whether they will take Christians as passengers. They will have to cater to the pilgrims, as it is from them that their traffic must come.

In the meantime, without wishing to act as did the fox who called the grapes sour, I do not believe there is much to see in Mecca, after all. The town lies in a hot, sandy valley, watered for the most of the year by a few brackish wells and some cisterns.

The best water comes in from Ararat, through a little aqueduct, which is sold at high prices by a water trust at the head of which is the Governor of the city.

Mecca, all told, has only about 50,000 inhabitants. It fills the valley and runs up the sides of the hills. The houses are of dark stone, built in one, two and three stories. They stand close to the streets. There are no pavements; it is often dusty and it takes all the holiness of the surroundings to make life agreeable.

The Kaaba.

The most important place in Mecca is the sacred mosque, and the most important thing in the mosque is the Kaaba, a cube-shaped stone building which lies in its center. In the south-

east corner of this building at about five feet from the ground is the black meteorite which the Mohammedans say was once a part of the gates of Paradise. When Adam was cast out, this stone fell with him, and it dropped down near Mecca. At that time it was of a beautiful white color, but it is now turned to jet, having been blackened by the kisses of sinners. Every pilgrim who comes to Mecca presses his lips to it again and again, imagining that as he does so his sins go out of him into the stone, and his soul becomes as pure as it was when he was a baby. There are several hundred thousand pilgrims who perform this kissing act every season, so that the holy stone of the Kaaba gets its millions of kisses every year. What a load of sin it must carry!

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Hailo, signor, I ain't see you
For many many days,
I wonder moocha wat you do
All these weeks you was away,
Dat you are gon' from home,
I chouse you went out waz signor—
Eh? No? You was en Rome?
Ah, yes, yes, you was en Rome?
What for you musta feel
To see all these so granda land,
Ah, yes, yes, you was en Rome?
You musta worka longa while
For save da mon' to go,
Eh? Dat en stocks es mak' your pie!
Excuse, signor, I did not know,
I wesch dat dere was soocha tresp
For Dagoman like me,
Eh? You was en Rome?
For home een Italy—
Eh? Wat es dat? You say dese men
For mean as dat dey tresp
For com' an' make mont an' den
To run back home waz en?
I am surprised waz you, signor,
For hear you talk like dat,
Da mon' we eat by workin' for
We do wesch as we please,
For save da mon' to go,
For dese mon' dey mak'—
Excuse, signor, but you see! den
Dey pay for eat wesch harda toll,
Wesch crops dat apprens from da soil
An' dey pay you for eat dat,
Wesch what dat mak' you bread so good,
Wesch grape dat mak' you wines,
An' waz dey pay eat wesch dere blood
On railroads, een da mines!
Waz dey pay you wesch for 'waz you mak'
Een dese stocks deat?
No, waz good tresp for all you tak',
No, waz signor—but steel,
You say dese men no gotta right
To do da trespas dey do.
Excuse me for eat excite,
I would shak' hands wesch you,
Een Chrees mastins, so let us be
Good! Merista, mink, dere blood
Shak' hands! Eat een a joy to me
For see you home again.

in London there is one plegman to every 2900 persons.

The Genealogy of the Taft Family

Its History Compiled by the Mother of the Secretary of War.

MRS. LOUISA M. TAFT, mother of the Secretary of War, who died at her home in Millbury, Mass., on December 7, at the age of 80, spent the last years of her life compiling the genealogy of the Taft family and of her own family, the Torreys, from genealogical data collected by her husband, Judge Alphonso Taft, during his lifetime. The history, together with eulogies of her husband, father and mother and references to the Secretary of War which show her pride in him, has been recently published in a genealogical history of Worcester County, Massachusetts.

The first ancestor of Secretary Taft revealed by the late Judge Taft's researches was Robert Taft, a housewright, who went from the then province of Braintree and settled at Menton, Mass., in 1628. He had five sons, one of whom, Joseph, born in 1680, married Elizabeth Emerson, the granddaughter of the first minister of Menton.

Joseph's second son was Captain Peter Taft, born in 1715. Captain Peter's third son was Aaron, born in 1740. He was fitted for Princeton, but had to leave college before he had finished, although he had already established a reputation as a scholar.

He settled at Uxbridge, Mass., but removed to Townsend, Vt., where he died in 1808. He married Rhoda Rawson, great-granddaughter of Edward Rawson, secretary of the Massachusetts Bay Colony from 1690 to 1696.

Peter Rawson, the third son of Aaron, born in 1788, married Sylvia Howard in 1810. He taught school and was admitted to the bar. He became Judge of the Common Pleas, Judge of the Probate Court, Judge of the County Court of Windham County, was one of the county commissioners and was for many years a member of the Legislature.

He removed to Cincinnati in 1841, where he died in 1887, leaving one son, Alphonso. Alphonso Taft, father of the Secretary of War, was born in Townsend, Vt., and was graduated from Yale in 1832. He taught for two years in an academy in Ellington, Conn., and then became tutor at Yale.

He was admitted to the bar in 1838 and went to Cincinnati the next year. In 1857 he argued before the United States Supreme Court the claim of the city for the bequest of Charles McMicken, which secured the nucleus of the endowment fund for the University of Cincinnati.

Mrs. Taft wrote concerning her husband's reputation while he was Judge of the Superior Court:

"No young man was ever turned away because his case was considered too small for the Judge's patience; no experienced lawyer ever felt his case too large or the questions involved too intricate for the Judge's capacity and learning. His most important case was the 'Bible in the Public Schools.'"

"The Catholics and Jews, who formed a large proportion of the citizens of Cincinnati, complained on the introduction of religious instruction into the public

schools as violating the spirit of the Constitution. The school board stopped the reading of the Bible. The court was appealed to on the ground that it had no power.

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Hailo, signor, I ain't see you
For many many days,
I wonder moocha wat you do
All these weeks you was away,
Dat you are gon' from home,
I chouse you went out waz signor—
Eh? No? You was en Rome?
Ah, yes, yes, you was en Rome?
What for you musta feel
To see all these so granda land,
Ah, yes, yes, you was en Rome?
You musta worka longa while
For save da mon' to go,
Eh? Dat en stocks es mak' your pie!
Excuse, signor, I did not know,
I wesch dat dere was soocha tresp
For Dagoman like me,
Eh? You was en Rome?
For home een Italy—
Eh? Wat es dat? You say dese men
For mean as dat dey tresp
For com' an' make mont an' den
To run back home waz en?
I am surprised waz you, signor,
For hear you talk like dat,
Da mon' we eat by workin' for
We do wesch as we please,
For save da mon' to go,
For dese mon' dey mak'—
Excuse, signor, but you see! den
Dey pay for eat wesch harda toll,
Wesch crops dat apprens from da soil
An' dey pay you for eat dat,
Wesch what dat mak' you bread so good,
Wesch grape dat mak' you wines,
An' waz dey pay eat wesch dere blood
On railroads, een da mines!
Waz dey pay you wesch for 'waz you mak'
Een dese stocks deat?
No, waz good tresp for all you tak',
No, waz signor—but steel,
You say dese men no gotta right
To do da trespas dey do.
Excuse me for eat excite,
I would shak' hands wesch you,
Een Chrees mastins, so let us be
Good! Merista, mink, dere blood
Shak' hands! Eat een a joy to me
For see you home again.

In London there is one plegman to every 2900 persons.