

LUXOR  
AS A HEALTH RESORT

BY  
W. E. NICKOLLS DUNN,  
AND  
GEO. VIGERS WORTHINGTON







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VIEW OF LUXOR FROM AN AEROPLANE.



# LUXOR AS A HEALTH RESORT

BY

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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*We have received so many appreciative letters from those members of the profession who have read our little book on Luxor, that we have decided to publish a second edition. At the same time we have taken the opportunity to add a small map showing the relative positions of the principal health resorts, to replace some of the photographs, and to make a few alterations in the text. The hint for the elderly tourist, as opposed to the invalid, on page 19, has been added at the express desire of our own personal friends, whom we always advise carefully on arrival, and of some of our tourist patients who have suffered from the want of such advice.*

*W. E. N. D.*

*G. V. W.*

*April, 1914.*



PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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*Invalids from all parts of the world have, for years past, been recommended to winter in Egypt by their medical men. A few, whose doctors have themselves had personal experience of the country, are correctly told when to go and where to stay, the majority are less fortunate. Of the latter, we find that those who ask are often told to winter in Cairo, perhaps the only name in Egypt familiar to their advisers. There would be little harm in this if it were made clear that a medical man of standing in Cairo should be consulted on arrival.*

*Visitors for the most part do not understand the necessity, or are loath to do so.*

*Cairo, attractive in many ways with much of interest for the tourist, is not a health resort, and not a place in which invalids should make a stay of any length.*

*Comparatively little is known by the profession in general, and less by the public, of the conditions in Egypt, of its advantages and drawbacks, of its virtues and dangers.*

*It is with the idea of giving a short and clear account, which may be a useful guide to the profession and public alike, that the writers have ventured to set down these few practical notes, gleaned from several years' experience of Upper Egypt.*

W. E. NICKOLLS DUNN,

London.

G. VIGERS WORTHINGTON,

Llandrindod Wells.

June, 1913.





## LUXOR AS A HEALTH RESORT.

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AS a place of the most fascinating interest from a historical point of view, Luxor needs no description; it is known the whole world over. From the point of view of a health resort, however, it has a history which demands investigation.

In the eighties and nineties it was well known, and was the ultimate goal of many who sought to escape the rigours of the Continental and English winters.

During these years it acquired a most unenviable reputation as a hotbed of typhoid fever, and to this day, in some parts of England at any rate, visitors are solemnly warned by their friends against the dangers of a stay in Luxor.

We can assure the profession that neither of us has ever seen a case of typhoid fever originate in Luxor, simply owing to the care which is now bestowed upon the water supply and drainage of the hotels.

After the conquest of the Sudan by Lord Kitchener came the growth of Assouan with two absolutely first-class hotels, and the fame of its desert climate. Luxor, on the

contrary, had no modern hotel, and consequently gradually sank out of sight as a rendezvous for those in search of health.

Eight years ago, however, the Winter Palace, a magnificent hotel fitted with all the luxuries of the age, was built at Luxor. With it has come, slowly at first, but now rapidly, the re-establishment of Luxor in its proper place as a health resort of the first importance.

It is impossible to over-state the value to a visitor, be he in pursuit of pleasure or health, of such an hotel.

#### THE WINTER PALACE HOTEL—

Is a splendid modern building situated on the east bank of the Nile, facing chiefly north-west and south-east. The north-west front looks on to the river, the Theban plain and, beyond the plain, the Theban hills with their glorious and ever changing lights.

The south-east front looks on to a garden of some ten acres, the cultivated plain, and the hills bounding the Arabian desert. The temple of Luxor is about one hundred yards from the hotel; the temple of Karnac, which stands on one thousand acres of land, a drive of fifteen minutes. From the hotel terrace can be seen across the river, the Colossi, the Rameseum, the temples of Hatasoo and Medinat Abu, the hill behind which lie the tombs of the Kings, and the sites of a host of other treasures including the temple of Gurnah, the tombs of the Queens, and the tombs of the Nobles.

The hotel is well supplied with suites, with private bathrooms attached: the rooms are all lofty, large and spotlessly clean.



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TEMPLE OF KARNAC FROM AN AEROPLANE.





The kitchens, a feature of the hotel, are all above ground, staffed by Europeans, and are beyond criticism. The water supply comes from an artesian well in the garden, sunk through the rock by the Government experts, and no other water enters the hotel with the following exception :—

It has been found that the Nile water is preferable for making tea and coffee, consequently a pipe conveys the water to the coffee kitchen where it passes through a Berkefeld filter and then enters directly into a boiler, from which it is drawn. It can only be obtained after it has been boiled.

The drainage is an up-to-date system, carried out at great cost.

In the garden of the hotel there are some six acres of vegetables and fruit, grown under the supervision of a European head gardener. Visitors are warned, and properly so, by their doctors at home against eating salad, and drinking, or even brushing their teeth in, the water provided in the hotels *en route*.

Such details are trifling to those who pass as tourists at express speed, staying three days here and three days there, but they are irksome in the extreme to those who contemplate a stay of three or more months, especially if they have come for the sake of their health.

Here, however, in this hotel, the water comes from an artesian well, and the salad, grown in the garden, is washed in this water, and can be enjoyed by all. The luxury of a safe water supply, and a profusion of fresh vegetables, can only be realized properly by those who have sojourned in the East. There is no occasion to advise people to use Evian water for the cleansing of their teeth—they could drink the water in the bathrooms with impunity, if so inclined.

## THE OTHER HOTELS—

In addition to the Winter Palace, the other hotels in Luxor are—the Luxor Hotel, the Hotel du Nil, the Savoy, the Pension de Famille, and the Grand. Visitors, who contemplate spending some time at Luxor, are advised to write to the Manager of the hotel desired and ask the price of the accommodation which they require; they should secure rooms which enjoy the morning sun, and should state when they intend to arrive and for how long a stay.

WHEN AND HOW INVALIDS ARE SENT TO  
UPPER EGYPT—

There are two ways of sending invalids, the wrong way and the right, unfortunately the former is the one often chosen.

Let us take the case of a patient sent from his home too late, *i.e.*, January, and trace his possible journey.

He has a cold trip from the Continent, America, or England to his place of embarkation, a cold, rough sea voyage, during which his vitality is lowered by *mal de mer*, and finally lands at Port Said or Alexandria with a severe chill; he has packed up his heavy clothes and travels up by night to Cairo, suffering acutely from the lowered temperature, especially of the desert route from Port Said. Having reached his hotel in Cairo he finds that all the sunny rooms are occupied, and he shivers still more. Next day he books for Luxor and certain warmth, and arriving full of chill, finds once more that the sunny rooms have all been taken.

He is now thoroughly miserable, calls in a doctor, anathematises the climate of Egypt, and vows that if Provi-



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dence will only give him one more chance he will never set foot in the accursed country again. As soon as he can get about he departs in haste and sets out for the Riviera, where the refrigerating process is renewed, and he finally reaches his home in a far worse state than when he left it. Testimony to the accuracy of this sketch was graphically accorded to one of us in February last by a distinguished citizen of St. Louis, U.S.A. He was complaining bitterly of his journey, and was invited to read, in a copy of this pamphlet, the wrong way to come. After reading the paragraph he informed his friends that it described every moment of his life since he had left St. Louis.

THE RIGHT WAY to send an invalid is to send him from home in October, and to use Luxor and Assouan in combination, for, as will be seen later, they differ as to conditions and climate in some important respects.

The doctor should despatch his patient so that he arrives in Cairo at the end of October. He will then have had in all probability a good voyage and will land in good condition, but should he have caught cold on the way he will find Cairo warm and genial, and will soon throw off his chill.

The patient should then proceed to Luxor and establish himself there; he should bring with him a letter from his physician and should present himself to the doctor immediately on arrival.

The latter will tell him how much exercise he may take, warn him against the peculiarities and possible dangers of the place, and advise the management of the hotel which aspect is the most suitable for him.

He will thus often avoid the mortification of having to spend a fortnight in bed, and of losing much valuable time

while treating himself from the case of drugs with which he has often been supplied at home. This case of drugs usually contains quinine, which the patient swallows in large quantities to cure his supposed attack of malaria. Fortunately *malaria is unknown in Upper Egypt*, so that the sufferer merely increases his difficulty by thoroughly deranging his stomach.

The invalid having settled down will see how he gets along; should he progress satisfactorily he will be wise to leave well alone, and stay for the winter.

Should he be uncertain after a fortnight or three weeks as to whether the climate is suiting, he can proceed south about the middle of December to Assouan; here, at this time of the year, he has abundant choice of suitable rooms. Now, if he finds himself better in Assouan, he will naturally stay there, but, should he sleep badly or not do well in other ways, he knows Luxor, and can drop back there, having first engaged the rooms he knows are essential to his comfort.

The climate at Luxor in the month of November and the first half of December is perfect; there is an entire absence of cold wind, and the weather is warm, with a very gradual fall in the thermometer.

The patient coming as advised above thus has a month or six weeks, during which time his health probably rapidly improves, and he is prepared for the colder spell of late December and January.

The principal reasons for using Luxor and Assouan in combination are, firstly, that no individual climate suits everyone. Secondly, change of surroundings will often act most beneficially in preventing a patient from becoming depressed.

Lastly, the traveller to Assouan must pass through Luxor on his way.

Every year increasing numbers of the people who have spent the winter in Assouan drop north to Luxor about the end of the first week in March and stay a fortnight or so. Some of these say that they infinitely prefer Luxor to Assouan; feel much better there, and wish that they had spent more time in the place as it is so much more interesting. Others say that they do not feel so well in Luxor, much prefer the climate of Assouan, and the greater charm of the river there. The climate of the two places differs in several respects, though it agrees in the fact that there is no rainfall, and that it is a winter of perpetual sunshine.

Assouan is drier than Luxor.

Luxor is more sheltered from wind than Assouan.

Herein lie to a great extent the reasons for the different expressions of opinion. Some people prefer and derive benefit from the intensely dry air of Assouan. Others are rendered irritable, nervous, and sleepless by it.

Some prefer the breezes of Assouan and call Luxor stuffy in comparison. Others, especially ladies, seek the shelter of Luxor and dislike the winds of Assouan. Consequently, the wise individual will take advantage of their geographical position and try both.

#### A HINT FOR THE ELDERLY TOURIST AS OPPOSED TO THE INVALID.

Very properly, following the maxim that prevention is better than cure, intelligent people nowadays present them-

selves at regular intervals to their dental surgeon. How few ever dream of using the physician in this sensible way! Carried away by the sunshine, the exhilarating atmosphere, and the extraordinary interest of the antiquities many of the elderly tourists take frequent, long, and tiring excursions and quickly reduce themselves to a state of exhaustion, with, in some cases, disastrous results.

The steadying influence of a preliminary consultation, with a physician well versed in local conditions, would obviate all this.

#### CLOTHES.

The greatest assets of the climate of Upper Egypt, *i.e.*, the brilliant hot sun and the cool, dry, bracing air, are apt to be its greatest drawbacks, if not realised and properly studied. Invalids are tempted to take too much exercise. English people especially forget that at home the numerous wet days often enforce rest from physical exercise; they are so accustomed to take eager advantage of fine weather that they run about day after day, from morning till night, until they suddenly find themselves completely tired out. The nights are always cool and even cold in midwinter. This, of course, is a great boon, and many people find that they sleep better in Luxor than they have done anywhere for years. At the same time, this very cool dry air must be regarded with caution.

It means that a shade temperature which would be quite hot in England and would necessitate light clothes calls for much warmer garments in Upper Egypt.

For men the woollen waistcoat *with long sleeves* is an invaluable article of wear, and no one should come without it.





A HALT OPPOSITE THE TEMPLE OF HATASOO.



It is extremely light and delightfully warm. It can be worn over the ordinary waistcoat early in the morning and again at sunset. In the middle of the day it can be left off and easily carried if the owner be out on an excursion.

One of the writers regards it as his greatest friend and protector.

Ladies have a similar article in the woollen golfing jacket.

Apart from this both sexes should bring with them their warmest clothes, whether furs, suits, or underclothes.

Children especially should have thick stockings and combinations.

Warm pyjamas and nightdresses are also required for the cold nights of midwinter.

Too much attention cannot be paid to these details ; they make all the difference between comfort and discomfort.

A sunny room and warm clothes spell safety. A cold room and thin clothes, the opposite.

Of course, during November, again in March, and sometimes in February, light clothing will be needed.

#### THE NILE TRIP.

It may be as well here to mention a word or two about the Nile trip from Cairo to Assouan. Both the writers know it well, having spent many happy days as doctors to the Cook's tourist steamers.

This delightful way of going South is not for invalids. There are, of course, exceptions, and one of us has attended a lady, a bad asthmatic, who is always well on the river; and another asthmatic found his cure on a dahabieh, returning for seven winters, at the end of which time he was quite well. But, as a rule, the boat life for many reasons is unsuitable for invalids, and they should avoid it.

The short river trip from Luxor to Assouan, however, which only takes about a day and a half, is often the best way for an invalid to travel; when he embarks he is in a warm climate, 450 miles due south of Cairo, and he avoids what is apt to be a hot, dusty and trying railway journey.

#### CLIMATE.

The mean average shade temperature of Luxor for the months November to March over several years, taken from Canney's "Meteorology of Egypt," is as follows:—

	Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max. Range.
November ... ..	83·8	57·6	70·7	26·2
December ... ..	75·7	49·2	62·7	26·5
January ... ..	73·6	45·7	59·7	27·9
February ... ..	78	48·7	63·3	29·3
March ... ..	85	54·9	69·9	29·9

Canney gives the temperature as highest at 3 p.m., and lowest between midnight and 7 a.m. The comparative mean average relative humidity for four months, December to March, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., he quotes as follows:—

Luxor ...	36·3	Mena House ...	51·7
Assouan ...	30·5	Helouan ...	42·7



NATIVE GYASSAS IN A BREEZE.



and states in regard to relative humidity that the atmosphere of Upper Egypt is drier than any other known resort.

The following figures are those of the winter 1912-13:—

	Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max. Range.
November ... ..	81·4	55·3	68·3	26·1
December ... ..	73·2	47·7	60·4	25·5
January ... ..	68·7	43·7	56·2	25·0
February ... ..	70·9	45·2	58	25·7
March ... ..	77·6	48·4	63	29·2

It is almost impossible for those who have spent their lives in England or on the Continent to realise what the winter in Upper Egypt is. There is, as a rule, no rainfall whatever in either Luxor or Assouan, and the sun shines every day and all day throughout the year. In some winters, as in the one just over, one or two showers may take place. The Nile flows north through a valley which at Luxor is some seven or eight miles in width; beyond this, east and west, lies the desert.

At Assouan there is, practically speaking, no cultivation, and the river itself is bounded on either bank by the desert.

## GEOGRAPHICAL.

It may not be out of place to give here the names and relative positions of the principal health resorts of Egypt.

The three health resorts—Helouan, Heliopolis, and Mena House—are situated just outside Cairo.

Luxor is some four hundred and fifty miles due south of Cairo.

An excellent sleeping-car express leaves Cairo every evening during the season, and arrives at Luxor in time for breakfast the following morning, the journey occupying about thirteen hours.

Assouan lies south of Luxor, about another one hundred and thirty miles.

The railway line from Luxor to Assouan is a narrow gauge one, and the journey which takes some five hours, is apt to be a very dusty and trying one for invalids, especially for those suffering from any affection of the air passages.

The latter, particularly, would do well to spend a night or two at Luxor, and proceed to Assouan by one of the many comfortable steamers of Thos. Cook & Son, or the Hamburg-Anglo-American Nile Steamship Company.

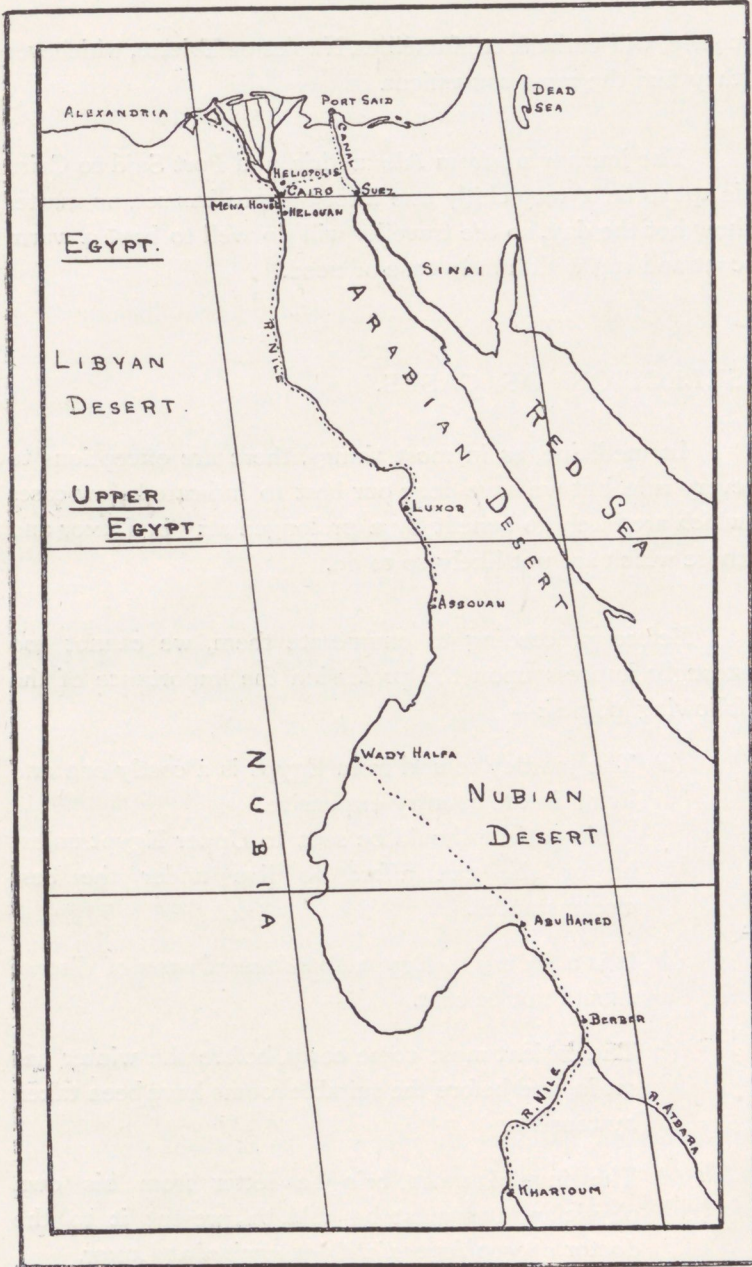
The city of Cairo is three hours' railway journey from Alexandria and about four hours from Port Said.

For Americans the best way to reach Egypt is by the steamship lines running from New York to Naples and Alexandria.

Those invalids from England who leave in October and who are *absolutely* good sailors may venture to take the long sea route.

As a rule, however, it is much wiser for them to go overland to Marseilles, or, if railway travelling be well supported, Naples or Trieste. Visitors from the Continent, of





course, will embark at Marseilles, Naples or Trieste, whichever they find the most convenient.

The journey up from Alexandria and Port Said to Cairo is apt to be a very chilly one after the sun has set, no matter how hot the day, so the traveller will do well to have a warm coat and rug with him in case of need.

### SELECTION OF CASES.

In medicine, as in most things, there are exceptions to every rule, but we have done our best to indicate below cases which are likely to benefit by a prolonged stay in Luxor and those which are not likely so to do.

Before proceeding to enumerate them, we cannot too strongly impress upon the profession the importance of the following points:—

- (a) The journey to and from Egypt is a costly one and living in the country expensive.  
No patient should be sent to Upper Egypt unless he or she can afford to live under the best circumstances.
- (b) It is a far cry to Egypt, so *advanced cases* of disease should not be sent.
- (c) The patient must come early, before the winter has set in, and before the suitable rooms have been taken by tourists.
- (d) The invalid must bring a letter from his own physician, and must be told to present it to the doctor chosen *immediately on arrival* at Luxor.

As a rule our advice is not sought until the invalid is exhausted from sight seeing, or laid up with some acute complaint. If given the chance we can, by our knowledge of local conditions, keep the patient from adding fresh troubles to the one he already has and thus enable him to derive full benefit from his winter in Luxor.

#### I. TUBERCULOSIS OF THE LUNG.

*Those cases in which the disease is arrested* will, of course, spend a very healthy, open air winter in Upper Egypt, but must beware of taking too much exercise.

*Patients in whom the disease is active* should not be sent as a rule. The journey is a long and trying one, the climate often disagrees, especially in those cases with hæmoptysis, and food in Egypt is not so nourishing on the whole as in the countries from which the patients come. Moreover, we think that these cases require *constant* medical supervision, whereas, in our experience, the doctor is only called after the patient has had hæmoptysis, or a serious rise of temperature.

In sanatoria, patients are watched daily by expert physicians with a view to preventing any relapse, hence the success of these institutions ; in a hotel patients only call the doctor after a set back *has occurred*.

#### 2. VERY OLD PEOPLE.

Should not be sent without serious thought. If they have been accustomed to travel, all well, but otherwise the constant moving from train to ship, ship to hotel and the rapid changes of climate *en route* try them highly. Their margin of reserve is naturally a slender one.

## 3. HEART DISEASE.

Early cases do very well in Egypt if carefully watched ; it is very easy to change the climate for the patient by simply sending him from Luxor north to Helouan, Mena or Heliopolis, and *vice versa*.

In our opinion they should not go further south than Luxor.

## 4. HIGH TENSION.

These cases do very well.

The warmth dilates the smaller vessels and lowers the general blood pressure, thus relieving the often overburdened heart. It must be remembered that the change from a humid climate, like England for instance, to the intense dryness of Upper Egypt is very great, and the patients must be correspondingly cautious until their organs have become accustomed to their altered surroundings. They should on no account take the Nile trip and must beware of over exercise and fatigue.

## 5. EARLY NEPHRITIS.

These cases do extremely well. The skin acting freely relieves the kidneys, as also does the loss of water through respiration.

## 6. INSOMNIA.

These patients as a rule do very well, and some who find they suffer in Assouan sleep well in Luxor.

## 7. PLEURISY.

A splendid winter to harden up in after the attack is over.

## 8. GLYCOSURIA.

Usually do well, the daily variation of temperature taking place at known times enables the patient to guard against chill.

## 9. ANÆMIC GIRLS.

With amenorrhœa or menorrhagia and those tired out from social gaieties do well, return home bronzed by the sun, and are able again to enjoy life and exercise.

## 10. THOSE IN NEED OF REST FROM EXCESS OF WORK.

To American business men, for instance, the change of scene is complete, the life a healthy, open-air one, and early hours are kept, as there is nothing to tempt the individual to stay up late.

These patients should remember that travelling is hard work.

## 11. WINTER COUGH, CHRONIC BRONCHITIS AND EMPHYSEMA.

People past middle age, who are troubled more and more every winter with these complaints, avoid them altogether or derive much benefit, and have far less cough and discomfort *if they come early* and spend their winter in Upper Egypt.

## 12. ASTHMA.

It is quite impossible to foretell how the climate will suit individual cases. Idiopathic or spasmodic cases, which are affected by cold and damp, do well.

Those who are free from attacks at the seaside, and in a damp atmosphere, will usually be irritated by the dry desert air and should try the river.

They should, however, if on the river, keep south of Luxor, after early in December until March, and should take no boat *without stoves* or some other form of heating apparatus to protect them against the cold nights.

13. SCIATICA AND NEURITIS—

Do extremely well ; they require to clothe themselves very warmly,

Sun baths are usually very helpful.

14. FOR DELICATE OVERGROWN BOYS AND GIRLS—

It is a splendid winter.

They should buy a pony in Cairo and have it sent up. The riding is excellent and is the best exercise in the world for such patients.

15. CHRONIC NASAL AND PHARYNGEAL CATARRH—

Of the hypertrophic variety do very well.

16. NERVE BREAKDOWN,

These cases live a quiet open-air life of warmth and sunshine, and usually recover quickly.

17. CHRONIC RHEUMATISM AND FIBROSITIS, GOUT AND GOUTINESS

Are particularly suitable cases to be sent to Egypt, and derive great benefit from the warmth and sunshine ; they should, however, be warned that they must be watchful, lest carelessness bring on an acute attack. In these cases sun baths, as a rule, will add greatly to the value of their stay.

## 18. RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS.

For this condition a sojourn in Egypt is recommended almost as a climatic specific; and the majority of cases according to the writer's experience, are greatly benefitted. This is not by any means so with all. One of us has of late years made observations on the effects of climate on a considerable number of sufferers from this disease, and has formed the opinion that certain cases should not be sent to Upper Egypt, or, at any rate, only for the colder months.

It is, we think, the universal experience, amongst those who treat many of these cases that the condition is improved by a dry climate and for the most part a *warm* and dry climate. There are, however, in the writer's experience, a certain number who do not improve in a warm climate, even though dry, but do much better in such a climate as the Engadine or other high and dry Swiss resort.

It is most important to discriminate between those who are likely to benefit from a winter in Upper Egypt and those who are not.

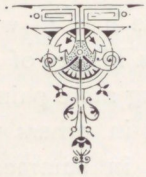
In the first place, the history will be most useful. In some cases there will be a history of great dislike to cold, of getting worse, and of having more pain in winter, of improving in summer and sunshine; in others there will be a history of getting rapidly worse in summer, or of always being worse in warm weather, and of improvement in the cooler weather.

The former class of case will almost certainly improve very considerably in Upper Egypt, and especially if a proper routine of treatment be prescribed, reliance not being placed on climate alone.

The latter class of case, those who dislike heat and warm weather, will probably not do well except in the coldest months, but will benefit much more from a winter in Switzerland.

In cases of the former class it will generally be found that there is considerable deformity and destruction of the joints and affection of the bones themselves, as shown by X-ray examination.

In cases of the latter class X-ray examination will, for the most part, show no apparent disease of the cartilages, and the ends of the bones will appear to be in normal condition. The disease seems to be limited to the ligaments and synovial membranes.







THE TEMPLE OF KARNAC FROM THE SACRED LAKE.











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