

the Sheikh was there now to help get his share, I suppose -  
The crew took a fancy too, to take more bread, instead of getting  
it at Beersheva, so we were to stay all day - After breakfast we  
all set off, the boatmen too, & go in grand procession to the  
temple, "which is recent," as we say now-a-days, being of the  
time of the Ptolemies, about 200 years before Christ! It was market  
day & the streets were full. The shops in the bazaar busy, the square  
filled with people squatted, their wares in front, some visitable  
melancholy cads, on the tray of the little duffar peddler! A money  
changer rattling his copper coin, you hear spinning & peep into a  
corner house, & see a horse turning the stones, spinning wheat -  
Petitide an old man sits on straw mats, sifting the grain with a  
coarse sieve - As usual a crowd to follow us, our sailor in his  
dark gown & white turban & yellow slippers, with a long staff taller  
or than he is, turned at turns to drive them off - The temple  
lay in the middle of houses on a quiet street, & has only been closed  
out within a few years. Only the capitals & a small way down of the  
columns being above the present level of the ground - These is only  
the portico & the front wall of what seems to have been an older  
building, over which the new temple has built - But the columns  
are three beautiful Egyptian columns with the graceful spreading  
capitals, & some, palm leaves, others more complicated. The  
shafts, the walls, the ceilings, perfectly covered with carvings &  
hieroglyphics - It was very dark, & we were bewildered at the  
immense amount of labor on these buildings where every

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Beersheva, Jan. 12th. 67

My dear Luc,

The day we arrived at Tiberias Jan. 10th, was  
really the only disagreeable day we have had for weather. It  
was very dusty, for there was a tempest of wind, & many clouds,  
an unusual light, my eyes had been a little uneasy from the glare  
& dust of the ride to Beersheva, & then the dust in the air, which  
affected us even while in the middle of the river from the wind,  
& as I was not entirely rested, I did not go to harness when the  
rest all took donkeys in the Aft. I had the pleasure of reading  
all my letters, & finishing my writing - The consul was to be  
visited to get letters from him to the Sheikh of the Cataract, but  
word was brought he was dining in an English boat, so Charles  
put it by until 6p.; but just after dinner his son came down  
to call - He looked very like what we should call a stimulator at  
home, had on a red fez, large full dressed of all black, the trousers  
silk cloth or fashionable, & a grey sack coat. This combination  
of Eastern & Western costume is anything but effective! He was  
polite & pleasant, told us something about Lady Duff Gordon, &  
was served by Sapienza with coffee. He was asked to write a letter  
for us to the Sheikh, & clasped his hands to call a waiter who was  
sent out to his servant on the bank to bring in writing materials. The  
inkstand was only a large glass one, the pen a reed cut in pen shape  
which comes, he says, from Syria - He took a large sheet of folio cap



papers, & wrote from right to left, holding the paper in his hand -  
The Arabic writing is wonderfully condensed & takes very little  
room - He wrote for the ~~Shirah~~ Shirah the names in Arabic.  
The next morn'g before breakfast I went ashore with Dr. Gray to  
see some of the ruins of Susee, which lie close to the bank -  
A small boy presented himself as guide, "Mohammed Ali," Dr.  
Gray's donkey boy of the day before - He led us up over heaps of dirt  
to the front of a pyramid more than half buried, an immense  
statue in front, only the head sticking out - Then round again,  
past three shabby houses & heaps of rubbish (meaning old pottery &  
a dust & small fragments of all sort of things contrived, dust predominant  
thing) to a gate & through a dirty yard into a sort of hole, passing  
through which we found ourselves in the chamber of an old temple  
that had been quite cleared out within - But the effect is so much  
injured by the shabby dirt about & climbing down into these places,  
that I could not get any sense of grandeur. It must have been so  
different when one approached on a level & they rose up so  
proudly! - I think too the effect must be finer when the sand  
of the desert covers them up, & not this dirty refuse of unburned  
brick, mud, straw, pottery &c. in the middle of an Arab village.  
We would like to see them proudly alone - Looking up  
to the lofty ceiling, one could see rafters of palm trunks, showing a  
house not built in the top! The columns were the lotus stalks  
about the columns forming smaller at the base, & a very curious  
effect. We clambered through & saw one or two other halls, some

columns very different; the capitals only just above the earth,  
+ one open square where were the tops of two Roman columns  
of red granite, polished, the capitals white, + fragments of  
brilliant colours painted on the wall. - But I must confess that  
for me the time to see temples is not before breakfast, + that  
has rather overclouded Supper for me - He sailed at once, +  
only had the morn'g; for, for some inexplicable reason, that  
no one could understand we stopped about lunch at a town  
where were some famous sugar factories - They pointed the banks  
+ some sweet byeplore. But my eyes felt sun-light too much  
I ventured out until about sundown, when I saw the crowds  
lying ~~on~~ <sup>in</sup> the street, the loads of sugar cane arriving on  
two pack's steamers, the donkeys + men carrying it up, the usual  
noise a-bottle, + farther on quite a nice house with a wonder-  
ful garden for these regions, a priest tues a grape vine + rose-  
bushes! Some of our party had some rose-buds given them - The  
next morn'g. we sailed for Lene + got there about 10 1/2 in the  
Eg. - But it was one of our pleasantest days. To be sure there  
were some clouds + even a few drops of rain, but we tracked  
part of the time + got pleasant walks, + the mountains were  
beautiful, + the greens rich at times, + many crops growing -  
Arma (room-corn,) lupins, horse beans, young wheat, sugar-cane,  
and even some wild flowers; for Egypt is not the land of  
flowers. - At Lene we must see the foreman of the train, for he  
makes the arrangements for crossing the Cataract, + one of



helping to support & strengthen the sand - These were a whole  
little unchin standing facing at us - about 2 years, I should think,  
in a little straight capote, the peaked hood drawn over his ears,  
& little red slippers with turned-up, pointed toes & ankle ties!  
He passed the guarnie of Silsiki where the river narrows, in the  
night, threw up against the bank under the palms, as built  
up by the star-light, towards morn'g. It wait for the Hindu, &  
see of agreement. The valley is covered, often only a little strip  
of green on each side, the stone changed to darker colors, the  
hills of the Libyan & Arabian deserts came down close upon  
us, on the Libyan side the yellow sand had sifted through  
some valleys, contracting curiously with the frequency sand  
at the brink - The palms were stately, peaceful & beautiful  
as ever - The current ran fast, the wind blew strong,  
rounding the sand points & run up to Assouan has  
careful work - He were here before 12, & before he could  
land a motley group were on the shore to sell ostrich feathers  
& ostrich eggs, Arabian rings & bracelets, spears & daggers, cer-  
tains & baskets - And new, queer figures, men from Soudan,  
was covering on their woolly heads - dingy white robes - He  
had a walk this aft. & a beautiful view of Elephantine island  
opposite, & up & down the river. Then back thro' the bazaar where  
red coffee cups tempted us, & we saw plenty of little girls with  
roux-rings, women with blue under lips, latticed also blue on the  
cheek, & some, oh! so ugly! Ever yours, J. H.

past is covered, & my mind was going back, that was  
the idea, monument? or historical records? Or praise of the  
deities & the builder of the temple? Told it ever be different  
I am very much struck with the faces of the food-  
goddess, the king & queens - They are really beautiful,  
very much more so than I had expected; & refined,  
intellectual face that surprises me - Quite a higher type,  
as it seems to me, than the Greek - That has more the  
flesh & blood beauty in their faces - And these have are upon  
that is god-like - But I am afraid Charles must be  
shocked at our innocent way of looking at sculpture  
& hieroglyphics; many devices are so strange, of course  
generally quite incomprehensible. And droll comparisons  
will suggest themselves. Mr. Rosellini call the combined  
crown of Upper & Lower Egypt, "a champagne bottle in a  
sitz back," & it is so perfect one can't but adopt it!  
He had service when we came back, & read one of  
Mr. Beecher's sermons that Mr. Howland had, a very  
good one - Then the gentlemen went to call on the  
governor. He gave them letters to the Gov. of Assouan &  
the Sheikh of the Cataract - And they were much amused  
at his audience & way of hearing petitions. He had two  
Copts as scribes, whom Charles said were perfect types of  
old Egyptians - There were 4 English dahabecks also  
at line, & Dr. Gray is getting up quite a little practice. An



Egyptian gentlemen, hearing he was "Dr." sent to see him, & the  
causes of all these troubles have needed some prescriptions. One  
thing is that Ramadan comes very severely on those who  
keep it - They neither eat, smoke or drink from before ~~sun-~~  
rise until after sunset, & often a hard days work. And  
as they are great smokers, imagine the deprivation! Many  
of the sailors do not keep it, but the natives generally do.  
Sunday of the Howlands came in & we had some sac-  
cred music - We set up quite a choir -

We were off by 7 o'clock Monday morning. - After we stop  
at any place we generally start with an additional pas-  
senger for a few days, an unhappy sheep in our little boat  
behind; & it is funny when our boat comes near the How-  
lands how the solitary passengers bleat to each other  
their disapprobation of travelling by water. - This time we  
have two, & so they are much happier. - We made a very  
fine run yesterday 70 miles in 24 hours, & the scenery was  
immensely varied. - The mountains more broken, & more var-  
ied in their distance from the river, so that there was  
light & shadow <sup>strongly marked</sup>, especially as there were clouds. - Indeed we  
have seen more clouds than "no rain" in Egypt would lead us  
to expect. - Sunday it was forecast all day, we should have  
said at home, a bad N.E. storm threatening. - And yesterday  
we had little sprinkles & thunder & lightning. - It has been colder  
these last few days though we are going south, mornings & nights

especially. - Still the air is very soft, & the sun is hot. - But  
one wears more wraps than they did a week ago. -  
In the aft. we stopped before a larger building where  
was a steam engine, & a range of quite nice houses, & a long  
village street. - Sapiaja wanted charcoal. - We all jumped  
ashore for a walk. - We found the building was a very large  
steam pump, & a real canal of water running behind,  
& evidently a large quantity of land under cultivation.  
Sugarcane especially, crops just coming in, some  
just out. - Some fine bulls & cows, the beautiful native  
breed which has a touch of Alderney apparently, & buffalo  
too, the ugliest animal I think I ever saw. - So awkwardly  
shaped, thin, long hair, & awkwardly staring at you  
with outstretched head. - Very different from the Camels  
which are better looking than I expected. - Their long  
neck is certainly graceful, & some the eye soft & patient.  
And they have a curiously inquisitive way of slowly turn-  
ing the head & looking at you steadily, first with one eye  
then the other. - There is great difference in them, some  
so shabby & forlorn looking, others really stately. - When  
they are cross I certainly never saw anything more  
vicious than the open mouth showing the teeth, & their  
front is horrid! - At the end of the village street was a  
tavern, evidently for baking the very coarse earthenware  
pots they use so much in building walls, & red brick ware.



Gray, Jane Loring. 1869. "Gray, Jane Jan. 12, 1869 [to Susan M. Jackson]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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