



From a Sketch by Dr. Klunzinger

KOSEIR,

LOOKING OVER THE MARKET PLACE.

Drawn by Percival Stetson.

512.45.c.85.1

UPPER EGYPT:

~~Xp. 6. 90~~

ITS PEOPLE AND ITS PRODUCTS.

A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT

OF THE

MANNERS, CUSTOMS, SUPERSTITIONS, AND OCCUPATIONS OF
THE PEOPLE OF THE NILE VALLEY, THE DESERT, AND THE RED SEA COAST,
WITH SKETCHES OF THE NATURAL HISTORY AND GEOLOGY.

BY

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WITH A PREFATORY NOTICE

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rhubarb, scammony, and gamboge, the native colocynth being less frequently employed and considered dangerous. As already mentioned, the Bedouins fill the rind of the last-mentioned in the evening with milk, which they drink in the morning. Bleeding with the lancet is common, as well as cupping by means of the razor and the horn, setons made of the chick-pea, the actual cautery, to cure a headache for instance (perhaps performed by a hot nail), boiling oil for fresh wounds, the seeds of the fenugreek for ulcers, the warm steam-bath in rheumatism, syphilis, and skin diseases; the use of the leech is less common, and the native leech (*Bdella nilotica*) causes painful wounds. When there is a pain on the left side blood must be taken from the left arm. Veins are also opened in the hand, the foot, and even the nose.

The majority of the medicines, however, are grossly empirical, and they contain the most absurd ingredients. Animal matters, some of which formerly flourished also in our *materia medica*, are very common, such as a goat's bile, dogs' and monkeys' dung, black-beetles, pearls, the bones of dogs and fishes, lizards, mummies, and the opercula of univalve shells, and all these either raw or boiled, baked or burned as incense. Many vegetable matters from all countries, and often with very unintelligible names, are also held in high repute for their curative properties. We give a few recipes: Burned dogs' bones, along with copperas and ox-gall, are good for piles, if the mixture is applied with a little saliva. Another specific for the same disease consists of black-beetles baked in oil, the hard covers, the head, and the intestines being then removed, and again softened in oil over a gentle fire. These black-beetles are looked upon as a universal panacea. Thus the soft white substance found in the inside of these insects, the flesh indeed, is rubbed on the eyes, and puts away spots on the cornea that are not yet hardened. It is good also against night-blindness. Similarly prepared scarabæi (*Ateuchus sacer*) inserted in the ear along with a little cotton, and blown out a day or two after by the pressure of the air of expiration expelled with closed mouth and nose, are considered an excellent remedy for difficulty of hearing. The following

is a recipe to enable women to become fat: Take some black-beetles, burn them and grind them down, add beef fat, sesame oil and *mufetta*, that is a mixture of all the various wares sold by grocers, boil the whole together, and drink a cupful of the liquor every day. Earwigs are driven away by sprinkling onion juice (a very plausible remedy). A good preventive against abortion is for the woman to carry at the small of her back a small scorpion and a little piece of amber tied up together in a little bag; pearls or red coral may also be used instead. Women that do not wish to become pregnant must take fasting three mouthfuls of the powder of burned porcelain shells (*Cypræa*). When a hair of the eyelids grows inwards, it is pulled out with a pair of tweezers, and the spot is rubbed with a fly, the head of which has been pulled off, or with St. John's-bread powder made into a paste with oil. "No hairs will afterwards grow there." Eczema of the head or other parts is put away by aloes dissolved in vinegar, and well rubbed in. Ginger, preserved or unpreserved, is used as an aphrodisiac, as well as ambergris (a fatty waxy-like substance found in the intestines and bladder of the sperm whale, and sometimes floating on the sea) and honey, or cinnamon and carrot or radish seed boiled with honey, also the gall of a raven, and burned *Tridacna* shells with honey. To cure a scorpion's sting a piece of garlic is rubbed on the place, or the dirt from the ear of an ass; another common cure is to lay on the wound a polished gem, as jasper, ruby, or turquoise, or the operculum of a *Trochus* shell, or some remarkable coin, these things being said to adhere to the spot which has been stung. Others maintain that they are caused to adhere by rubbing with an ass's hoof. These gems have a high repute for their curative properties generally, and are often sold at high prices. The different varieties are credited each with special effects, and have as many names; thus the jaspers with red spots, and marblings that look like spots and streaks of blood, stanch blood. The bezoar-stone (a concretion found in the stomach of various animals, ruminants in particular) serves as an antidote to all poisons, that of serpents included. The bezoar-stones from

apes are in most repute. A cup made of rhinoceros horn also counteracts the effects of any poison that may happen to be drunk.

THE ANIMALS IN POPULAR BELIEF.

The frequent employment of animal substances as medicaments or talismans arises to a great extent from the belief in a metamorphosis, not allied to the Indian or Pythagorean transmigration of souls, which is quite foreign to Mohammedanism, but caused by magic. Many common stories of this kind may pass for myths or fables among the people themselves, but many are firmly believed by the majority.

While in the scientific circles of our more civilized countries man is held to be an ape modified by natural selection and time, among the Egyptians of the present day the ape is a metamorphosed man. The baboon, it is generally maintained and believed, was a wicked fellow who stole the Prophet's red shoes, and hid them behind him under his coat. The prophet noticed it, however, and uttered this curse over him: "Thief, may your form become a caricature of that of man, and may your buttocks, above which my shoes are hanging, be coloured red like them for all time coming, in memory of your evil deed." For the Moslems in general, the world properly begins only with the Prophet, and no one thinks whether the baboon existed previously, though it is frequently figured on the Egyptian monuments. To keep an ape in the house "is not good," it brings ill luck. Ape's dung, however, is a valuable ingredient in many medicines.

The hyena is generally regarded as a vile enchanter, transformed by the anger of God; and for this very reason its hair, teeth, skin, and flesh possess miraculous powers. The animal having been slaughtered according to the rules of the Koran (such a slaughtered animal is always a rarity, however), the flesh is sold in the market, and goes off rapidly, and at a good price; the ulema, who are at the head of religion, are the chief lovers of it. It imparts strength, especially masculine strength. Lying on a hyena's skin drives away pains in the back. The teeth also are highly esteemed, and are used as

amulets for young and old. The tufts of hair from the mane are particularly prized, and whoever has a skin requires to guard it well from the covetous multitude, for the possession of this hair secures love and faithfulness on the part of a husband or wife, as well as the favour of the great.

The cunning of the fox has caused thousands of wonderful stories to pass current regarding him, but these are not believed, being regarded as fables. In the stories Master Reynard generally plays the rôle of a kadi. One story may be given as a specimen:—A man is carrying a basket of fowls to market. A fox who is anxious to get at the fowls lays himself down on the road and pretends to be dead. The man with the fowls is surprised, but passes on. Somewhat farther on the man finds a second fox lying dead, and farther on again a third. "Now," thinks the man, "three fox skins are worth the trouble of taking with me to sell," so he sets down his basket and goes back to pick up the foxes. Of course he finds nothing, and when he gets back to his basket the fowls have disappeared.

Like the hyenas, other animals also, especially injurious animals, are looked upon as transformed villains—serpents, scorpions, and the large pinching ants (*Myrmica*) for instance. The serpent charmer makes a business of enticing out serpents concealed somewhere in houses, and summons them in the name of some of the patriarchs, as Adam, Enoch (Edris), Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, and even David and Christ, but he does not fail to bring along with him a basket containing serpents. Scorpions are brought to a standstill with the cry *homâr*, that is ass, so as to let themselves be killed. People may have themselves rendered proof against the poison of scorpions and serpents through the initiated, but after this they must never kill one. An Abyssinian slave once brought us a scorpion in his hand, and on being told to do so dropped it into spirits himself. After some days the same slave was stung by a scorpion and wanted to get spirits of sal ammoniac. He had broken the conditions laid down.

Another sort of transformation is that which produced the flat fishes. Moses was once cooking a fish, and when it had