

NARRATIVE

OF THE

OPERATIONS

AND

RECENT DISCOVERIES

WITHIN THE

PYRAMIDS, TEMPLES, TOMBS, AND EXCAVATIONS,

IN

EGYPT AND NUBIA;

AND OF A

**JOURNEY TO THE COAST OF THE RED SEA, IN SEARCH
OF THE ANCIENT BERENICE;**

AND ANOTHER TO

THE OASIS OF JUPITER AMMON.

BY G. BELZONI.

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took with me a young Scotchman, who had been brought into Egypt at the time of the last English invasion of that country: he was taken prisoner, and some years after entered into the service of the Bashaw of Egypt, and assumed the name of Osman. He became acquainted with Sheik Burekhardt; and, in consequence of his honesty and attachment to him, the Sheik rewarded him in his will. He was the only and the last person who closed the eyes of that lamented traveller, and I had much conversation with him on the subject.

On my arrival at Assouan, I found that the said Lebulo had suggested to the Aga of Assouan, and to the natives of the island of Philoe, not to let the English party, who were coming up, carry away the obelisk. The Aga remonstrated with him, that the obelisk had been taken possession of by me three years before, and a guard had been paid for it on that account. In consequence of this refusal, Mr. Lebulo proceeded to the island of Philoe; and having heard from all the natives that I had taken possession so long before, he adopted the method of a trick to seduce those simple people: he pretended he could read the hieroglyphics on the obelisk, and said it was written, that the obelisk belonged to Mr. Drouetti's ancestors;

not effect the passage through for this season. This last observation concerned me more than all the rest of his discourse; for it was entirely on the possibility of effecting the passage down the cataract this year that depended the success of exporting the obelisk. Next day the party arrived at Assouan, and I went to the island of Philoe to take a view of the bank where I was to embark the obelisk, and have it conveyed to the cataract where it was to be launched. On my arrival there, an old Sheik immediately presented to me the following note:

“Le chargé d'affaire de Mr. Drouetti prie Messieurs les Voyageurs Européens de respecter le porteur du présent billet gardant l'obelisque, qui est dans l'île de Philoe, appartenant à Mr. Drouetti.

“LEBULO.”

“Philoe, le 22 Sep^{bre}. 1818.”

The people of the island then informed me of the means which Mr. Lebullo had taken to persuade them to testify that the obelisk belonged to his party. By the date of the note I perceived that this was done only eight days before; and as we had been fifteen days on our

watch, worth one hundred and fifty piastres (fifteen dollars), in the name of Mr. Bankes; the Sheiks of the Moraida, and other places round, were to be gained to our side, that they might provide men to work. This was done, of course, by way of giving a trifle more than to the rest of the labourers, and promising more if they behaved well. I had some little difficulty to procure a few sticks, or small poles, at Assouan, as there is no wood in those places except what they procure from Cairo, merely to repair their boats. I had also some difficulty at first in removing the said obelisk from its original station; but once put on its way, it soon came to the water-side. The pedestal was rather more troublesome; owing to its square form, it was almost buried under the rubbish; and as we had no tackle whatsoever, and very little wood, it retarded the work one or two days longer. At this time the Aga of Assouan came to the island, and presented a letter he had received from Mr. Drouetti himself, sealed with his own seal, which the Aga knew well, ordering the Aga not to permit any one to take away the obelisk. The letter was translated by the Scotch Osman, from whom we had no doubt of the correctness of its contents. The consul begged the Aga to send back his com-

their commander, Mr. Drouetti, were lodged in some mud houses among the ruins of Carnak. The boat with the obelisk, which I had just brought down and put up at Luxor, was rather too close under their noses, as they expressed themselves; and it irritated them to such a degree, that they premeditated the mode of revenge by, as they said, only abusing and insulting Belzoni; but this could not have been done without some danger of retaliation, and perhaps with interest equivalent to the merit of the operation. The only way this was to be done was by taking the advantage of a pretext, and by raising some differences against me in some way or other; the plan was well laid. The first piece of ground I had to examine among these ruins was occupied by the labourers of Mr. Drouetti; consequently, it was expected that I should take notice of it, that some altercation would ensue, and then would be the time to satiate their revenge. Previous to my arrival at the above ground, I was warned by an Arab not to go where the other Europeans were; but I took no notice of what he said, as sometimes those people make much out of nothing. I continued my route till I arrived on the above ground, and the first thing I saw was a number of men working on a spot too well

While this was going on, I observed another band of Arabs running towards us. When they came nearer, I saw Mr. Drouetti himself among them, and close to him a servant of his, armed with pistols. On his arrival before me, Mr. Drouetti demanded, in a tone not inferior to that of his disciples, what reason or authority I had to stop his people from working. I told him that I knew nothing of what he meant, and that I found myself extremely ill used by his own people, and that he must answer for their conduct. In an authoritative tone he desired I should dismount, which I refused to do. At this moment a pistol was fired behind me, but I could not tell by whom. I was determined to bear much, sooner than come to blows with such people, who did not blush to assail me all in a mass; but when I heard the pistol fired behind my back, I thought it was high time to sell my life as dear as I could. I dismounted, but then the kind Mr. Drouetti assured me that I was not in danger while he was there; and Mr. Lebulo, who had before acted the part of a ruffian, now contrived to play that of a neutral gentleman. By this time many other Arabs of the village of Carnak had reached this place, and seeing me thus surrounded, would any one suppose it! for the honour of Christendom and

of the two Arabs from Gournou, who followed me as a driver, recognised the said Arab, who all this time was close to Mr. Drouetti, who had called to him in vain, and who, though he had seen him a few minutes before, did not recognise him again. Being before me, I stared in the man's face, and ordered him to repeat what he had said of me to Mr. Drouetti. He replied, that he did not say to Mr. Drouetti that I stopped the men from working, but that my servant did, though I was totally confident of the contrary, as he was not two yards from me when we passed that way. It was useless for me to contest that point, as I saw it was brought forward merely to cover the true cause for which they attacked me, which was shown by their first words to me about the obelisk. I insisted that Mr. Drouetti should come where the men were at work, that I might point out to him that his people were the aggressors, by encroaching on our lot of ground, of which he was forcibly convinced. As we went on, the assailant Rossignano continued at a distance behind me. The stranger arrived where I was, and proved to be the person alluded to before, by whom I had to send the four statues to Europe. On his arrival, I informed him of what had passed; but Mr. Drouetti told him

Beban el Malook, and immediately commenced my preparations to depart for Europe, as I could not live any longer in a country where I had become the object of revenge, of a set of people who could take the basest means to accomplish their purpose; and notwithstanding the advantages I might have derived in the continuation of my researches, the conditions of which with the consul were now more advantageous to me than any I had hitherto obtained, I was so totally disgusted, that I took the above resolution accordingly.

I had written the particulars of what had happened to the consul, adding, that by the time he received my letter I should be on my way to Alexandria, as I was determined to proceed to Europe by the first opportunity. As to any redress, I did not ask for it, as I could not expect to have any in that country; and as the boat with the obelisk was not set off, I availed myself of the opportunity of descending the Nile in it.

Having finished all the models, drawings, &c. of the tomb, and put on board all that I had accumulated on my own account, I began the operation of taking the sarcophagus out of the tombs. I must lament the unfortunate fate of some of the figures within this place. It will be re-

and on the 15th we returned to Benisouef, where I embarked for Cairo.

The hurt I received from the fall in the Elloah did not get better; it continued to pain me much, and the part became black, and swelled. I found the consul, Mr. Salt, had returned from Upper Egypt. The plague was very violent in Cairo at that time; but as I had business to transact with the consul, I went at night to the consulate, and having arranged my affairs with him, I returned to Rosetta, where I arrived on the 23d, in hopes to end the business of the attack in Carnak, as soon as I could, and set off for Europe. But I was totally mistaken, for the intrigue displayed in this affair is almost beyond the possibility of explaining. Mr. Drouetti, in defence of the two assailants, Lebulo and Rosignano, his compatriots, and in his service, said that Mr. Salt was the accuser; that in the account I sent to Mr. Salt I had declared that I did not seek for redress: and, in fact, I did not, as I was well aware of the intrigues which would have been displayed by my adversary; but as the affair had been brought forward, I made a formal declaration against the two assailants, Lebulo and Rosignano. Mr. Drouetti, availing himself of the influence he had with the new consul, Mr. Russel, made up a tissue

tunity offered to him than the present, as he was to be judge in the above cause. He answered to our consuls, that if I wished to proceed, I must deposit immediately 1200 dollars, as a security to defray the expenses which would be incurred in the examination of this affair; that he must go up to Thebes accompanied with Lowjars, clerks, stewards, witnesses, boats, barges, canjars, &c. and all this at my expense, while I might only hope for redress. I was more than tired, and as I knew the people we had to deal with, and to what point they could carry their intrigues, I had no hopes of redress.

Be assured, my gentle reader, that in this simple sketch of this affair, you can but form a very small idea of what passed, for I cannot at present enter too far into the explanation of it. I shall only state how it ended.

The two assailants, Lebulo and the renegado Rosignano, Piedmontese, were obliged to come to Alexandria, to take their trials; and when they arrived, were so sure of getting off in some way or other, that they not only confirmed my deposition, but boasted of what they had done. Now to the conclusion. Their protector, Mr. Drouetti, knew very well how he should get out when the affair came to the extremity. I

self, and show an open inveteracy against an individual, merely because he was fortunate in

self, and show an open inveteracy against an individual, merely because he was fortunate in his undertakings. I must acknowledge, that it must have been provoking to a man like Drouetti, who did not search antiquity from the love of these relics, but merely for interest, and whose views were directed chiefly to the British and French Museums, to see a stranger accumulate in three years a greater and far superior collection than he had done in fifteen; and, as in consequence of this, his hopes on the British Museum were lost, he could not restrain his passion. The conclusion of all this affair was, that after a nine months' struggle to bring the two assailants to a trial, the French consul put an end to it in a few words, by only saying, that the two persons accused were not French subjects, but Piedmontese; and that if we wanted redress, we must go to Turin for it. Thus I received redress for that shameful outrage; but I was not surprised, as I fully expected it would end in such a manner. I should not intrude such a narrative on the patience of my reader were it not that, even at Paris, I found the persecution of Mr. Drouetti had not ceased. On my arrival in that capital, I found his son-in-law busied with the public prints, who, only on the assurance of his assertion,

demanded an interview with him before the consul, and a number of other people, to have an explanation of the various wrongs he had done to me; but all to no purpose. I insisted, and at last it was arranged by Mr. Drouetti, that an interview should take place with only the British vice-consul, the French consul, him, and myself. This was not what I wanted; as I thought I might have the chance to expose his conduct publicly; but he took care not to consent that a public meeting should ever take place. Unfortunately, on my first landing in that country, I became under an obligation to him and another person, particularly by having had an apartment in his occaley for three weeks, during the time of the plague; and through the said obligation it was supposed and expected I should sacrifice my principles, which has been another cause of so much hatred against me. When I requested him to explain before the two consuls what cause I had given him to induce him to evince such animosity against me, I believe he was not on his guard at that moment; for the first word he expressed related to my wrong proceeding in taking the obelisk from the island of Philoe. I could scarcely believe that a man, who held a situation once as a consul, should forget him-

west to east towards the Nile. We went on as soon as we had refreshed ourselves with salt pudding and salt water; for as we were disappointed there, our next resource was the Nile, or at least some of its canals. We travelled till midnight, and arrived within twelve miles of that river. We suffered much from thirst this night: though we were so near the water, my mouth had formed a crust of salt within it, so that I could scarcely articulate a word, and for several hours I felt what it was to be truly thirsty. We were almost all in great distress. At last one of the drivers told us to stop, for there was sweet water near us. At the sound of these words, we were all agreeably surprised; but I could not conceive where the water could be, as we were in a flat plain, covered with small pebbles and stones. He had kept a small skin of water concealed in a sack all the way from the Elloah, as he said he expected this would happen. I do not know that in all my life I have tasted any thing more sweet and pleasant than that water, though it had been closed up in a skin for several days. At last, on the morning of the 14th, before the sun, we arrived in the valley of the Nile, at the Bahr Yousef: on the evening of the same day we reached Sedmin, the place where I engaged my guide;

that we had only had a few words, and that was all. The stranger observed to him, that he saw those people take up arms, while he was in their house or habitation, and run out, and remembered Mr. Drouetti himself said, he must run after them, for fear they should do some mischief, and that they did wrong to act so. To which Mr. Drouetti replied, that he could not help what these people did; to which observation the stranger replied, that he should not keep them in his service. Mr. Drouetti made a long lamentation on the taking away the obelisk. I reminded him that he must have known it was taken possession of long before any of his agents reached the island of Philoe; and that he did wrong to send his agents to that place to prevent my taking it, after he knew we had set off for that purpose. He said, this was owing to Mr. Bankes not calling on him previous to his departure for that place, and conversing with him on the subject. The fact is, that Mr. Bankes did not think proper to put himself under an unnecessary obligation to Mr. Drouetti. I then informed Mr. Drouetti, that I had resisted many and various sorts of attacks by his agents, but I did not expect they would come to such a pitch, and that it was high time for me to quit the country; so I returned to

civilization, those wild Arabs, as we call them, were disgusted at the conduct of Europeans, and interfered in my behalf. They surrounded the renegade Rossignano, whose conduct they thought most outrageous and base, not for an European, but even for the worst of Arabs. What ideas must have been formed in the minds of those people of the civilization of Europe, by the conduct of such villains! I was now informed that an European stranger was in the place of residence of Mr. Drouetti. I sent an Arab to beg he would come where we were, as I thought I might have a witness to what might afterwards take place, though the affray was almost over. Mr. Drouetti, who was now very mild, said, that he never had given any order to his people to work on any grounds belonging to us; that I should have made application to him, and he would have put them right; but that I should not stop the people from their work. I repeated that I did not know what he meant, and that all this was a combination of traps put together by his agents. He said that an Arab came to his lodging, and informed him that I ordered the people away from their work. I persisted that the Arab should be brought before me, but he was not to be found; he was called every where, but did not answer. One

with sticks, continued their clamorous imprecations against me, and the brave Rossignano still keeping the gun pointed at my breast, said, that it was time that I should pay for all I had done to them. The courageous Lebulo said, with all the emphasis of an enraged man, that he was to have one-third of the profit derived from the selling of that obelisk, when in Europe, according to a promise from Mr. Drouetti, had I not stolen it from the island of Philoe. My situation was not pleasant, surrounded by a band of ruffians like those, and I have no doubt that if I had attempted to dismount, the cowards would have despatched me on the ground, and said that they did it in defence of their lives, as I had been the aggressor. I thought the best way was to keep on my donkey, and look at the villians with contempt. Lebulo said, that another of their party had been drowned at Girgeh, on board of the English boat, and that they had no redress for it, meaning, I suppose, the poor man that fell overboard at Girgeh, on his passage to Cairo. I told Lebulo to let me proceed on my way, and that if I had done any thing wrong, I should be ready to account for it; but all was to no purpose. Their rage had blinded them out of their senses.

known to be of our lot according to the arrangement. I then perceived what these gentlemen wanted; so I took no notice, and actually passed on without stopping to look at them. None of the Europeans were there, and my servant observing to me, that that ground was of our share, I told him not to meddle himself about it, and we passed on. The above working ground was close to the small lakes, and these gentlemen were living in the window of the great propylæon, which is at least a good quarter of a mile distant from the above ground. We passed quietly before them, and continued on our way straight to the north side of the ruins as far as their extremity, another quarter of a mile from where they were. I remained some time there in examining some grounds, and on my return towards the great propylæon where we had to pass on our return to Luxor, we met an Arab running towards us, crying, from having received a severe beating from our opponents, merely because he served, and was faithful to us, as far as an Arab can be. This would have been another motive to create some altercation, but it had no effect; I took no notice of it, and was going on straight to Luxor. I was at about three hundred yards from the great propylæon, when I saw a group of people running towards

arranged that I should give him an order on the British consul in Alexandria, to receive the aforesaid statues, which were lodged in the charge of the British agent in Rosetta. It happened that, at the same time, this man became acquainted with the people of our opposite party, and, as he must come in in the following account, I shall call him the "*stranger*."

On the eve of Christmas, the boat with the obelisk on board arrived, and stopped at Luxor, waiting for a few small articles to be loaded, and then to proceed to Rosetta.

It will be recollected that, previous to our last departure for the cataract, I entered into an arrangement with Mr. Salt, settling where I was to excavate on several spots among the ruins of Carnak. On St. Stephen's day I passed the Nile to that place, with the intention of examining the spots of ground which were allotted to our party, according to the arrangement made by Messrs. Salt and Drouetti. At Luxor I was mounted on a very high donkey, the only mode of travelling short journeys in those countries, as horses are scarce, and it is too inconvenient to mount a camel for a small distance. I was followed by my Greek servant and two Arab drivers. I was unarmed; my servant had two pistols as usual. Our opponents, with

voyage from Thebes to Assouan, they had time to do all this underhand work at their leisure.

On my return to Assouan I acquainted the consul and Mr. Bankes of what passed, and suggested to them, that the only mode of proceeding was to have an interview with the Aga himself, and from him to hear who was the first to take possession of the obelisk. Accordingly the Aga was requested to come on board, and, in the presence of the consul, he declared, that I was the first person of all who took possession of the obelisk. Accordingly I set the men to work. I procured a boat for that purpose, which by chance was in Assouan. The greatest difficulty was to persuade the Reis, or captain of the shallal, to undertake to launch the boat down the cataract with the obelisk on board. The water was very low at that time; and what was more against the undertaking of the operation was, that the opposite party had applied to him two months before, when the water was much higher, and he refused on the score that it was not high enough. However, the promise of a good present, and half of the money in his hands, mollified the captain, and he promised that he would accomplish the undertaking. To the Aga I made a present of a

consequently he had a right to it. The people believed him, and he gave them some trifling presents, and brought them to the Cady, or justice, to hear their testimony that the obelisk was the property of Mr. Drouetti. The Cady received a present, and wrote a sort of certificate, on the evidence of these people. Having done all this, Mr. Lebulu wrote a note, which he left with one of the Sheiks in the island to give it to us when we arrived, and set off immediately, as he thought his face could not be impudent enough to meet us.

On my arrival at Assouan, I heard of the difficulties this agent had thrown in our way; but I remonstrated with the Aga, that he must recollect that it was well understood, that I took possession of that obelisk ever since my first voyage, and that the money I paid for a guard was given to him by the medium of one of the Bashaw's Janizaries, who was ready to testify the case, and that he, the Aga himself, made a contract to receive three hundred piastres (thirty dollars) on the removal of the obelisk. He acknowledged all this, and said, that the other party would have taken the obelisk away several times, but they could not succeed; and that lately they tried again, but the water of the cataract was too low, so that they could

itself would form as good a barrier as any that could be constructed on the Nile. There is a stone on the west side of the said mountain, which is supposed to be that to which the chain was attached; but, for my part, I could not see any marks where this chain was fixed, nor does the stone seem to have been suited to such purposes; and I am rather inclined to think, that the name of the Chained Mountains is derived from the position of the mountain itself: it runs in a chain from east to west, and stretches over the Nile at each side, so that it forms the narrowest passage in that river, from the cataract to the sea; from which circumstance it is possible that the ancients had given it that name, for I do not believe their commerce was so flourishing as to oblige them to put an iron chain across the Nile, to stop the boats at night, at a time when iron was reckoned a most valuable article, and was employed for better purposes.

We reached Ombos on the next day; and as the party had to stop there one day longer, I was anxious to reach Assouan, as I expected no good from the early journey of Lebulo, the agent of Mr. Drouetti. Accordingly, I set off for that place in a cangiar, which had come to meet us, to take the consul up to Nubia. I