An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids

Anthony Trollope



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AN UNPROTECTED FEMALE AT THE PYRAMIDS

In the happy days when we were young, no description conveyed to us so complete an idea of mysterious reality as that of an Oriental city. We knew it was actually there, but had such vague notions of its ways and looks! Let any one remember his early impressions as to Bagdad or Grand Cairo, and then say if this was not so. It was probably taken from the “Arabian Nights,” and the picture produced was one of strange, fantastic, luxurious houses; of women who were either very young and very beautiful, or else very old and very cunning; but in either state exercising much more influence in life than women in the East do now; of good-natured, capricious, though sometimes tyrannical monarchs; and of life full of quaint mysteries, quite unintelligible in every phasis, and on that account the more picturesque.

And perhaps Grand Cairo has thus filled us with more wonder even than Bagdad. We have been in a certain manner at home at Bagdad, but have only visited Grand Cairo occasionally. I know no place which was to me, in early years, so delightfully mysterious as Grand Cairo.

But the route to India and Australia has changed all this. Men from all countries going to the East, now pass through Cairo, and its streets and costumes are no longer strange to us. It has become also a resort for invalids, or rather for those who fear that they may become invalids if they remain in a cold climate during the winter months. And thus at

Cairo there is always to be found a considerable population of French, Americans, and of English. Oriental life is brought home to us, dreadfully diluted by western customs, and the delights of the "Arabian Nights" are shorn of half their value. When we have seen a thing it is never so magnificent to us as when it was half unknown.

It is not much that we deign to learn from these Orientals,—we who glory in our civilisation. We do not copy their silence or their abstemiousness, nor that invariable mindfulness of his own personal dignity which always adheres to a Turk or to an Arab. We chatter as much at Cairo as elsewhere, and eat as much and drink as much, and dress ourselves generally in the same old ugly costume. But we do usually take upon ourselves to wear red caps, and we do ride on donkeys.

Nor are the visitors from the West to Cairo by any means confined to the male sex. Ladies are to be seen in the streets quite regardless of the Mahommedan custom which presumes a veil to be necessary for an appearance in public; and, to tell the truth, the Mahommedans in general do not appear to be much shocked by their effrontery.

A quarter of the town has in this way become inhabited by men wearing coats and waistcoats, and by women who are without veils; but the English tongue in Egypt finds its centre at Shepheard's Hotel. It is here that people congregate who are looking out for parties to visit with them the Upper Nile, and who are generally all smiles and courtesy; and here also are to be found they who have just returned from this journey, and who are often in a frame of mind towards their companions that is much less amiable. From hence, during the winter, a cortége proceeds almost daily to the pyramids, or to Memphis, or to the petrified forest, or to the City of the Sun. And then, again, four or five times a month the house is filled with young aspirants going out to India, male and female, full of valour and bloom; or with others coming home, no longer young, no longer aspiring, but laden with children and grievances.

The party with whom we are at present concerned is not about to proceed further than the Pyramids, and we shall be able to go with them and return in one and the same day.

It consisted chiefly of an English family, Mr. and Mrs. Damer, their daughter, and two young sons;—of these chiefly, because they were the nucleus to which the others had attached themselves as adherents; they had originated the journey, and in the whole management of it Mr. Damer regarded himself as the master.

The adherents were, firstly, M. Delabordeau, a Frenchman, now resident in Cairo, who had given out that he was in some way concerned in the canal about to be made between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. In discussion on this subject he had become acquainted with Mr. Damer; and although the latter gentleman, true to English interests, perpetually declared that the canal would never be made, and thus irritated M. Delabordeau not a little—nevertheless, some measure of friendship had grown up between them.

There was also an American gentleman, Mr. Jefferson Ingram, who was comprising all countries and all nations in one grand tour, as American gentlemen so often do. He was young and good-looking, and had made himself especially agreeable to Mr. Damer, who had declared, more than once, that Mr. Ingram was by far the most rational American he had ever met. Mr. Ingram would listen to Mr. Damer by the half-hour as to the virtue of the British Constitution, and had even sat by almost with patience when Mr. Damer had expressed a doubt as to the good working of the United States' scheme of policy,—which, in an American, was most wonderful. But some of the sojourners at Shepheard's had observed that Mr. Ingram was in the habit of talking with Miss Damer almost as much as with her father, and argued from that, that fond as the young man was of politics, he did sometimes turn his mind to other things also.

And then there was Miss Dawkins. Now Miss Dawkins was an important person, both as to herself and as to her line of life, and she must be described. She was, in the first place, an unprotected female of about thirty years of age. As this is becoming an established profession, setting itself up as it were in opposition to the old world idea that women, like green peas, cannot come to perfection without supporting-sticks, it will be understood at once what were Miss Dawkins's sentiments. She considered—or at any rate so expressed herself—that peas could grow very well without sticks, and could not only grow thus unsupported, but could also make their way about the world without any incumbrance of sticks whatsoever. She did not intend, she said, to rival Ida Pfeiffer, seeing that she was attached in a moderate way to bed and board, and was attached to society in a manner almost more than moderate; but she had no idea of being prevented from seeing anything she wished to see because she had neither father, nor husband, nor brother available for the purpose of escort. She was a human creature, with arms and legs, she said; and she intended to use them. And this was all very well; but nevertheless she had a strong inclination to use the arms and legs of other people when she could make them serviceable.

In person Miss Dawkins was not without attraction. I should exaggerate if I were to say that she was beautiful and elegant; but she was good looking, and not usually ill mannered. She was tall, and gifted with features rather sharp and with eyes very bright. Her hair was of the darkest shade of brown, and was always worn in bandeaux, very neatly. She appeared generally in black, though other circumstances did not lead one to suppose that she was in mourning; and then, no other travelling costume is so convenient! She always wore a dark broad-brimmed straw hat, as to the ribbons on which she was rather particular. She was very neat about her gloves and boots; and though it cannot be said that her dress was got up without reference to expense, there can be no doubt that it was not effected without considerable outlay,—and more considerable thought.

Miss Dawkins—Sabrina Dawkins was her name, but she seldom had friends about her intimate enough to use the word Sabrina—was certainly a clever young woman. She could talk on most subjects, if not well, at least well enough to amuse. If she had not read much, she never showed any lamentable deficiency; she was good-humoured, as a rule, and could on occasions be very soft and winning. People who had known her long would sometimes say that she was selfish; but with new acquaintance she was forbearing and self-denying.

With what income Miss Dawkins was blessed no one seemed to know. She lived like a gentlewoman, as far as outward appearance went, and never seemed to be in want; but some people would say that she knew very well how many sides there were to a shilling, and some enemy had once declared that she was an "old soldier." Such was Miss Dawkins.

She also, as well as Mr. Ingram and M. Delabordeau, had laid herself out to find the weak side of Mr. Damer. Mr. Damer, with all his family, was going up the Nile, and it was known that he had room for two in his boat over and above his own family. Miss Dawkins had told him that she had not quite made up her mind to undergo so great a fatigue, but that, nevertheless, she had a longing of the soul to see something of Nubia. To this Mr. Damer had answered nothing but "Oh!" which Miss Dawkins had not found to be encouraging.

But she had not on that account despaired. To a married man there are always two sides, and in this instance there was Mrs. Damer as well as Mr. Damer. When Mr. Damer said "Oh!" Miss Dawkins sighed, and said, "Yes, indeed!" then smiled, and betook herself to Mrs. Damer.

Now Mrs. Damer was soft-hearted, and also somewhat old-fashioned. She did not conceive any violent affection for Miss Dawkins, but she told her daughter that "the single lady by herself was a very nice young woman, and that it was a thousand pities she should have to go about so much alone like."

Miss Damer had turned up her pretty nose, thinking, perhaps, how small was the chance that it ever should be her own lot to be an unprotected female. But Miss Dawkins carried her point at any rate as regarded the expedition to the Pyramids.

Miss Damer, I have said, had a pretty nose. I may also say that she had pretty eyes, mouth, and chin, with other necessary appendages, all pretty. As to the two Master Damers, who were respectively of the ages of fifteen and sixteen, it may be sufficient to say that they were conspicuous for red caps and for the constancy with which they raced their donkeys.

And now the donkeys, and the donkey boys, and the dragomans were all standing at the steps of Shepheard's Hotel. To each donkey there was a donkey-boy, and to each gentleman there was a dragoman, so that a goodly cortége was assembled, and a goodly noise was made. It may here be remarked, perhaps with some little pride, that not half the noise is given in Egypt to persons speaking any other language that is bestowed on those whose vocabulary is English.

This lasted for half an hour. Had the party been French the donkeys would have arrived only fifteen minutes before the appointed time. And then out came Damer père and Damer mère, Damer fille, and Damer fils. Damer mère was leaning on her husband, as was her wont. She was not an unprotected female, and had no desire to make any attempts in that line. Damer fille was attended sedulously by Mr. Ingram, for whose demolishment, however, Mr. Damer still brought up, in a loud voice, the fag ends of certain political arguments which he would fain have poured direct into the ears of his opponent, had not his wife been so persistent in claiming her privileges. M. Delabordeau should have followed with Miss Dawkins, but his French politeness, or else his fear of the unprotected female, taught him to walk on the other side of the mistress of the party.

Miss Dawkins left the house with an eager young Damer yelling on each side of her; but nevertheless, though thus neglected by the gentlemen of the party, she was all smiles and prettiness, and looked so sweetly on Mr. Ingram when that gentleman stayed a moment to help her on to her donkey, that his heart almost misgave him for leaving her as soon as she was in her seat.

And then they were off. In going from the hotel to the Pyramids our party had not to pass through any of the queer old narrow streets of the true Cairo—Cairo the Oriental. They all lay behind them as they went down by the back of the hotel, by the barracks of the Pasha and the College of the Dervishes, to the village of old Cairo and the banks of the Nile.

Here they were kept half an hour while their dragomans made a bargain with the ferryman, a stately reis, or captain of a boat, who declared with much dignity that he could not carry them over for a sum less than six times the amount to which he was justly entitled; while the dragomans, with great energy on behalf of their masters, offered him only five times that sum.

As far as the reis was concerned, the contest might soon have been at an end, for the man was not without a conscience; and would have been content with five times and a half; but then the three dragomans quarrelled among themselves as to which should have the paying of the money, and the affair became very tedious.

“What horrid, odious men!” said Miss Dawkins, appealing to Mr. Damer. “Do you think they will let us go over at all?”

“Well, I suppose they will; people do get over generally, I believe. Abdallah! Abdallah! why don’t you pay the man? That fellow is always striving to save half a piastre for me.”

“I wish he wasn’t quite so particular,” said Mrs. Damer, who was already becoming rather tired; “but I’m sure he’s a very honest man in trying to protect us from being robbed.”

“That he is,” said Miss Dawkins. “What a delightful trait of national character it is to see these men so faithful to their employers.” And then at last they got over the ferry, Mr. Ingram having descended among the combatants, and settled the matter in dispute by threats and shouts, and an uplifted stick.

They crossed the broad Nile exactly at the spot where the nilometer, or river guage, measures from day to day, and from year to year, the increasing or decreasing treasures of the stream, and landed at a village where thousands of eggs are made into chickens by the process of artificial incubation.

Mrs. Damer thought that it was very hard upon the maternal hens—the hens which should have been maternal—that they should be thus robbed of the delights of motherhood.

“So unnatural, you know,” said Miss Dawkins; “so opposed to the fostering principles of creation. Don’t you think so, Mr. Ingram?”

Mr. Ingram said he didn’t know. He was again seating Miss Damer on her donkey, and it must be presumed that he performed this feat clumsily; for Fanny Damer could jump on and off the animal with hardly a finger to help her, when her brother or her father was her escort; but now, under the hands of Mr. Ingram, this work of mounting was one which required considerable time and care. All which Miss Dawkins observed with precision.

“It’s all very well talking,” said Mr. Damer, bringing up his donkey nearly alongside that of Mr. Ingram, and ignoring his daughter’s presence, just as he would have done that of his dog; “but you must admit that political power is more equally distributed in England than it is in America.”

“Perhaps it is,” said Mr. Ingram; “equally distributed among, we will say, three dozen families,” and he made a feint as though to hold in his impetuous donkey, using the spur, however, at the same time on the side that was unseen by Mr. Damer. As he did so, Fanny’s donkey became equally impetuous, and the two cantered on in advance of the whole

party. It was quite in vain that Mr. Damer, at the top of his voice, shouted out something about "three dozen corruptible demagogues." Mr. Ingram found it quite impossible to restrain his donkey so as to listen to the sarcasm.

"I do believe papa would talk politics," said Fanny, "if he were at the top of Mont Blanc, or under the Falls of Niagara. I do hate politics, Mr. Ingram."

"I am sorry for that, very," said Mr. Ingram, almost sadly.

"Sorry, why? You don't want me to talk politics, do you?"

"In America we are all politicians, more or less; and, therefore, I suppose you will hate us all."

"Well, I rather think I should," said Fanny; "you would be such bores." But there was something in her eye, as she spoke, which atoned for the harshness of her words.

"A very nice young man is Mr. Ingram; don't you think so?" said Miss Dawkins to Mrs. Damer. Mrs. Damer was going along upon her donkey, not altogether comfortably. She much wished to have her lord and legitimate protector by her side, but he had left her to the care of a dragoman whose English was not intelligible to her, and she was rather cross.

"Indeed, Miss Dawkins, I don't know who are nice and who are not. This nasty donkey stumbles at ever step. There! I know I shall be down directly."

"You need not be at all afraid of that; they are perfectly safe, I believe, always," said Miss Dawkins, rising in her stirrup, and handling her reins quite triumphantly. "A very little practice will make you quite at home."

"I don't know what you mean by a very little practice. I have been here six weeks. Why did you put me on such a bad donkey as this?" and she turned to Abdallah, the dragoman.

“Him berry good donkey, my lady; berry good,—best of all. Call him Jack in Cairo. Him go to Pyramid and back, and mind noting.”

“What does he say, Miss Dawkins?”

“He says that that donkey is one called Jack. If so I’ve had him myself many times, and Jack is a very good donkey.”

“I wish you had him now with all my heart,” said Mrs. Damer. Upon which Miss Dawkins offered to change; but those perils of mounting and dismounting were to Mrs. Damer a great deal too severe to admit of this.

“Seven miles of canal to be carried out into the sea, at a minimum depth of twenty-three feet, and the stone to be fetched from Heaven knows where! All the money in France wouldn’t do it.” This was addressed by Mr. Damer to M. Delabordeau, whom he had caught after the abrupt flight of Mr. Ingram.

“Den we will borrow a leetle from England,” said M. Delabordeau.

“Precious little, I can tell you. Such stock would not hold its price in our markets for twenty-four hours. If it were made, the freights would be too heavy to allow of merchandise passing through. The heavy goods would all go round; and as for passengers and mails, you don’t expect to get them, I suppose, while there is a railroad ready made to their hand?”

“Ye vill carry all your ships through vidout any transportation. Think of that, my friend.”

“Pshaw! You are worse than Ingram. Of all the plans I ever heard of it is the most monstrous, the most impracticable, the most—” But here he was interrupted by the entreaties of his wife, who had, in absolute deed and fact, slipped from her donkey, and was now calling lustily for her husband’s aid. Whereupon Miss Dawkins allied herself to the Frenchman, and listened with an air of strong conviction to those arguments which were so weak in the ears of Mr. Damer. M.

Delabordeau was about to ride across the Great Desert to Jerusalem, and it might perhaps be quite as well to do that with him, as to go up the Nile as far as the second cataract with the Damers.

“And so, M. Delabordeau, you intend really to start for Mount Sinai?”

“Yes, mees; ve intend to make one start on Monday week.”

“And so on to Jerusalem. You are quite right. It would be a thousand pities to be in these countries, and to return without going over such ground as that. I shall certainly go to Jerusalem myself by that route.”

“Vot, mees! you? Would you not find it too much fatigante?”

“I care nothing for fatigue, if I like the party I am with,—nothing at all, literally. You will hardly understand me, perhaps, M. Delabordeau; but I do not see any reason why I, as a young woman, should not make any journey that is practicable for a young man.”

“Ah! dat is great resolution for you, mees.”

“I mean as far as fatigue is concerned. You are a Frenchman, and belong to the nation that is at the head of all human civilisation—”

M. Delabordeau took off his hat and bowed low, to the peak of his donkey saddle. He dearly loved to hear his country praised, as Miss Dawkins was aware.

“And I am sure you must agree with me,” continued Miss Dawkins, “that the time is gone by for women to consider themselves helpless animals, or to be so considered by others.”

“Mees Dawkins vould never be considered, not in any times at all, to be one helpless animal,” said M. Delabordeau civilly.

“I do not, at any rate, intend to be so regarded,” said she. “It suits me to travel alone; not that I am averse to society; quite the contrary; if I meet pleasant people I am always ready to join them. But it suits me to travel

without any permanent party, and I do not see why false shame should prevent my seeing the world as thoroughly as though I belonged to the other sex. Why should it, M. Delabordeau?"

M. Delabordeau declared that he did not see any reason why it should.

"I am passionately anxious to stand upon Mount Sinai," continued Miss Dawkins; "to press with my feet the earliest spot in sacred history, of the identity of which we are certain; to feel within me the awe-inspiring thrill of that thrice sacred hour!"

The Frenchman looked as though he did not quite understand her, but he said that it would be magnifique.

"You have already made up your party I suppose, M. Delabordeau?"

M. Delabordeau gave the names of two Frenchmen and one Englishman who were going with him.

"Upon my word it is a great temptation to join you," said Miss Dawkins, "only for that horrid Englishman."

"Vat, Mr. Stanley?"

"Oh, I don't mean any disrespect to Mr. Stanley. The horridness I speak of does not attach to him personally, but to his stiff, respectable, ungainly, well-behaved, irrational, and uncivilised country. You see I am not very patriotic."

"Not quite so much as my friend, Mr. Damer."

"Ha! ha! ha! an excellent creature, isn't he? And so they all are, dear creatures. But then they are so backward. They are most anxious that I should join them up the Nile, but—," and then Miss Dawkins shrugged her shoulders gracefully, and, as she flattered herself, like a Frenchwoman. After that they rode on in silence for a few moments.

“Yes, I must see Mount Sinai,” said Miss Dawkins, and then sighed deeply. M. Delabordeau, notwithstanding that his country does stand at the head of all human civilisation, was not courteous enough to declare that if Miss Dawkins would join his party across the desert, nothing would be wanting to make his beatitude in this world perfect.

Their road from the village of the chicken-hatching ovens lay up along the left bank of the Nile, through an immense grove of lofty palm-trees, looking out from among which our visitors could ever and anon see the heads of the two great Pyramids;—that is, such of them could see it as felt any solicitude in the matter.

It is astonishing how such things lose their great charm as men find themselves in their close neighbourhood. To one living in New York or London, how ecstatic is the interest inspired by these huge structures. One feels that no price would be too high to pay for seeing them as long as time and distance, and the world’s inexorable task-work, forbid such a visit. How intense would be the delight of climbing over the wondrous handiwork of those wondrous architects so long since dead; how thrilling the awe with which one would penetrate down into their interior caves—those caves in which lay buried the bones of ancient kings, whose very names seem to have come to us almost from another world!

But all these feelings become strangely dim, their acute edges wonderfully worn, as the subjects which inspired them are brought near to us. “Ah! so those are the Pyramids, are they?” says the traveller, when the first glimpse of them is shown to him from the window of a railway carriage. “Dear me; they don’t look so very high, do they? For Heaven’s sake put the blind down, or we shall be destroyed by the dust.” And then the ecstasy and keen delight of the Pyramids has vanished for ever.

Our friends, therefore, who for weeks past had seen from a distance, though they had not yet visited them, did not seem to have any strong feeling on the subject as they trotted through the grove of palm-trees.

Mr. Damer had not yet escaped from his wife, who was still fretful from the result of her little accident.

“It was all the chattering of that Miss Dawkins,” said Mrs. Damer. “She would not let me attend to what I was doing.”

“Miss Dawkins is an ass,” said her husband.

“It is a pity she has no one to look after her,” said Mrs. Damer. M. Delabordeau was still listening to Miss Dawkins’s raptures about Mount Sinai. “I wonder whether she has got any money,” said M. Delabordeau to himself. “It can’t be much,” he went on thinking, “or she would not be left in this way by herself.” And the result of his thoughts was that Miss Dawkins, if undertaken, might probably become more plague than profit. As to Miss Dawkins herself, though she was ecstatic about Mount Sinai—which was not present—she seemed to have forgotten the poor Pyramids, which were then before her nose.

The two lads were riding races along the dusty path, much to the disgust of their donkey-boys. Their time for enjoyment was to come. There were hampers to be opened; and then the absolute climbing of the Pyramids would actually be a delight to them.

As for Miss Damer and Mr. Ingram, it was clear that they had forgotten palm-trees, Pyramids, the Nile, and all Egypt. They had escaped to a much fairer paradise.

“Could I bear to live among Republicans?” said Fanny, repeating the last words of her American lover, and looking down from her donkey to the ground as she did so. “I hardly know what Republicans are, Mr. Ingram.”

“Let me teach you,” said he.

“You do talk such nonsense. I declare there is that Miss Dawkins looking at us as though she had twenty eyes. Could you not teach her, Mr. Ingram?”

And so they emerged from the palm-tree grove, through a village crowded with dirty, straggling Arab children, on to the cultivated plain, beyond which the Pyramids stood, now full before them; the two large Pyramids, a smaller one, and the huge sphynx's head all in a group together.

"Fanny," said Bob Damer, riding up to her, "mamma wants you; so toddle back."

"Mamma wants me! What can she want me for now?" said Fanny, with a look of anything but filial duty in her face.

"To protect her from Miss Dawkins, I think. She wants you to ride at her side, so that Dawkins mayn't get at her. Now, Mr. Ingram, I'll bet you half-a-crown I'm at the top of the big Pyramid before you."

Poor Fanny! She obeyed, however; doubtless feeling that it would not do as yet to show too plainly that she preferred Mr. Ingram to her mother. She arrested her donkey, therefore, till Mrs. Damer overtook her; and Mr. Ingram, as he paused for a moment with her while she did so, fell into the hands of Miss Dawkins.

"I cannot think, Fanny, how you get on so quick," said Mrs. Damer. "I'm always last; but then my donkey is such a very nasty one. Look there, now; he's always trying to get me off."

"We shall soon be at the Pyramids now, mamma."

"How on earth I am ever to get back again I cannot think. I am so tired now that I can hardly sit."

"You'll be better, mamma, when you get your luncheon and a glass of wine."

"How on earth we are to eat and drink with those nasty Arab people around us, I can't conceive. They tell me we shall be eaten up by them. But, Fanny, what has Mr. Ingram been saying to you all the day?"

“What has he been saying, mamma? Oh! I don’t know;—a hundred things, I dare say. But he has not been talking to me all the time.”

“I think he has, Fanny, nearly, since we crossed the river. Oh, dear! oh, dear! this animal does hurt me so! Every time he moves he flings his head about, and that gives me such a bump.” And then Fanny commiserated her mother’s sufferings, and in her commiseration contrived to elude any further questionings as to Mr. Ingram’s conversation.

“Majestic piles, are they not?” said Miss Dawkins, who, having changed her companion, allowed her mind to revert from Mount Sinai to the Pyramids. They were now riding through cultivated ground, with the vast extent of the sands of Libya before them. The two Pyramids were standing on the margin of the sand, with the head of the recumbent sphynx plainly visible between them. But no idea can be formed of the size of this immense figure till it is visited much more closely. The body is covered with sand, and the head and neck alone stand above the surface of the ground. They were still two miles distant, and the sphynx as yet was but an obscure mount between the two vast Pyramids.

“Immense piles!” said Miss Dawkins, repeating her own words.

“Yes, they are large,” said Mr. Ingram, who did not choose to indulge in enthusiasm in the presence of Miss Dawkins.

“Enormous! What a grand idea!—eh, Mr. Ingram? The human race does not create such things as those nowadays!”

“No, indeed,” he answered; “but perhaps we create better things.”

“Better! You do not mean to say, Mr. Ingram, that you are an utilitarian. I do, in truth, hope better things of you than that. Yes! steam mills are better, no doubt, and mechanics’ institutes and penny newspapers. But is nothing to be valued but what is useful?” And Miss Dawkins, in the height of her enthusiasm, switched her donkey severely over the shoulder.

“I might, perhaps, have said also that we create more beautiful things,” said Mr. Ingram.

“But we cannot create older things.”

“No, certainly; we cannot do that.”

“Nor can we imbue what we do create with the grand associations which environ those piles with so intense an interest. Think of the mighty dead, Mr. Ingram, and of their great homes when living. Think of the hands which it took to raise those huge blocks—”

“And of the lives which it cost.”

“Doubtless. The tyranny and invincible power of the royal architects add to the grandeur of the idea. One would not wish to have back the kings of Egypt.”

“Well, no; they would be neither useful nor beautiful.”

“Perhaps not; and I do not wish to be picturesque at the expense of my fellow-creatures.”

“I doubt, even, whether they would be picturesque.”

“You know what I mean, Mr. Ingram. But the associations of such names, and the presence of the stupendous works with which they are connected, fill the soul with awe. Such, at least, is the effect with mine.”

“I fear that my tendencies, Miss Dawkins, are more realistic than your own.”

“You belong to a young country, Mr. Ingram, and are naturally prone to think of material life. The necessity of living looms large before you.”

“Very large, indeed, Miss Dawkins.”

“Whereas with us, with some of us at least, the material aspect has given place to one in which poetry and enthusiasm prevail. To such among us the associations of past times are very dear. Cheops, to me, is more than

Napoleon Bonaparte."

"That is more than most of your countrymen can say, at any rate, just at present."

"I am a woman," continued Miss Dawkins.

Mr. Ingram took off his hat in acknowledgment both of the announcement and of the fact.

"And to us it is not given—not given as yet—to share in the great deeds of the present. The envy of your sex has driven us from the paths which lead to honour. But the deeds of the past are as much ours as yours."

"Oh, quite as much."

"'Tis to your country that we look for enfranchisement from this thraldom. Yes, Mr. Ingram, the women of America have that strength of mind which has been wanting to those of Europe. In the United States woman will at last learn to exercise her proper mission."

Mr. Ingram expressed a sincere wish that such might be the case; and then wondering at the ingenuity with which Miss Dawkins had travelled round from Cheops and his Pyramid to the rights of women in America, he contrived to fall back, under the pretence of asking after the ailments of Mrs. Damer.

And now at last they were on the sand, in the absolute desert, making their way up to the very foot of the most northern of the two Pyramids. They were by this time surrounded by a crowd of Arab guides, or Arabs professing to be guides, who had already ascertained that Mr. Damer was the chief of the party, and were accordingly driving him almost to madness by the offers of their services, and their assurance that he could not possibly see the outside or the inside of either structure, or even remain alive upon the ground, unless he at once accepted their offers made at their own prices.

“Get away, will you?” said he. “I don’t want any of you, and I won’t have you! If you take hold of me I’ll shoot you!” This was said to one specially energetic Arab, who, in his efforts to secure his prey, had caught hold of Mr. Damer by the leg.

“Yes, yes, I say! Englishmen always take me;—me—me, and then no break him leg. Yes—yes—yes;—I go. Master, say yes. Only one leetle ten shillings!”

“Abdallah!” shouted Mr. Damer, “why don’t you take this man away? Why don’t you make him understand that if all the Pyramids depended on it, I would not give him sixpence!”

And then Abdallah, thus invoked, came up, and explained to the man in Arabic that he would gain his object more surely if he would behave himself a little more quietly; a hint which the man took for one minute, and for one minute only.

And then poor Mrs. Damer replied to an application for backsheish by the gift of a sixpence. Unfortunate woman! The word backsheish means, I believe, a gift; but it has come in Egypt to signify money, and is eternally dinned into the ears of strangers by Arab suppliants. Mrs. Damer ought to have known better, as, during the last six weeks she had never shown her face out of Shepheard’s Hotel without being pestered for backsheish; but she was tired and weak, and foolishly thought to rid herself of the man who was annoying her.

No sooner had the coin dropped from her hand into that of the Arab, than she was surrounded by a cluster of beggars, who loudly made their petitions as though they would, each of them, individually be injured if treated with less liberality than that first comer. They took hold of her donkey, her bridle, her saddle, her legs, and at last her arms and hands, screaming for backsheish in voices that were neither sweet nor mild.

In her dismay she did give away sundry small coins—all, probably, that she had about her; but this only made the matter worse. Money was going, and each man, by sufficient energy, might hope to get some of it.

They were very energetic, and so frightened the poor lady that she would certainly have fallen, had she not been kept on her seat by the pressure around her.

“Oh, dear! oh, dear! get away,” she cried. “I haven’t got any more; indeed I haven’t. Go away, I tell you! Mr. Damer! oh, Mr. Damer!” and then, in the excess of her agony, she uttered one loud, long, and continuous shriek.

Up came Mr. Damer; up came Abdallah; up came M. Delabordeau; up came Mr. Ingram, and at last she was rescued. “You shouldn’t go away and leave me to the mercy of these nasty people. As to that Abdallah, he is of no use to anybody.”

“Why you bodder de good lady, you dem blackguard?” said Abdallah, raising his stick, as though he were going to lay them all low with a blow. “Now you get noting, you tief!”

The Arabs for a moment retired to a little distance, like flies driven from a sugar-bowl; but it was easy to see that, like the flies, they would return at the first vacant moment.

And now they had reached the very foot of the Pyramids and proceeded to dismount from their donkeys. Their intention was first to ascend to the top, then to come down to their banquet, and after that to penetrate into the interior. And all this would seem to be easy of performance. The Pyramid is undoubtedly high, but it is so constructed as to admit of climbing without difficulty. A lady mounting it would undoubtedly need some assistance, but any man possessed of moderate activity would require no aid at all.

But our friends were at once imbued with the tremendous nature of the task before them. A sheikh of the Arabs came forth, who communicated with them through Abdallah. The work could be done, no doubt, he said; but a great many men would be wanted to assist. Each lady must have four Arabs, and each gentlemen three; and then, seeing that the

work would be peculiarly severe on this special day, each of these numerous Arabs must be remunerated by some very large number of piastres.

Mr. Damer, who was by no means a close man in his money dealings, opened his eyes with surprise, and mildly expostulated; M. Delabordeau, who was rather a close man in his reckonings, immediately buttoned up his breeches pocket and declared that he should decline to mount the Pyramid at all at that price; and then Mr. Ingram descended to the combat.

The protestations of the men were fearful. They declared, with loud voices, eager actions, and manifold English oaths, that an attempt was being made to rob them. They had a right to demand the sums which they were charging, and it was a shame that English gentlemen should come and take the bread out of their mouths. And so they screeched, gesticulated, and swore, and frightened poor Mrs. Damer almost into fits.

But at last it was settled and away they started, the sheikh declaring that the bargain had been made at so low a rate as to leave him not one piastre for himself. Each man had an Arab on each side of him, and Miss Dawkins and Miss Damer had each, in addition, one behind. Mrs. Damer was so frightened as altogether to have lost all ambition to ascend. She sat below on a fragment of stone, with the three dragomans standing around her as guards; but even with the three dragomans the attacks on her were so frequent, and as she declared afterwards she was so bewildered, that she never had time to remember that she had come there from England to see the Pyramids, and that she was now immediately under them.

The boys, utterly ignoring their guides, scrambled up quicker than the Arabs could follow them. Mr. Damer started off at a pace which soon brought him to the end of his tether, and from that point was dragged up by the sheer strength of his assistants; thereby accomplishing the wishes of the men, who induce their victims to start as rapidly as possible, in

order that they may soon find themselves helpless from want of wind. Mr. Ingram endeavoured to attach himself to Fanny, and she would have been nothing loth to have him at her right hand instead of the hideous brown, shrieking, one-eyed Arab who took hold of her. But it was soon found that any such arrangement was impossible. Each guide felt that if he lost his own peculiar hold he would lose his prey, and held on, therefore, with invincible tenacity. Miss Dawkins looked, too, as though she had thought to be attended to by some Christian cavalier, but no Christian cavalier was forthcoming. M. Delabordeau was the wisest, for he took the matter quietly, did as he was bid, and allowed the guides nearly to carry him to the top of the edifice.

"Ha! so this is the top of the Pyramid, is it?" said Mr. Damer, bringing out his words one by one, being terribly out of breath. "Very wonderful, very wonderful, indeed!"

"It is wonderful," said Miss Dawkins, whose breath had not failed her in the least, "very wonderful, indeed! Only think, Mr. Damer, you might travel on for days and days, till days became months, through those interminable sands, and yet you would never come to the end of them. Is it not quite stupendous?"

"Ah, yes, quite,—puff, puff"—said Mr. Damer striving to regain his breath.

Mr. Damer was now at her disposal; weak and worn with toil and travel, out of breath, and with half his manhood gone; if ever she might prevail over him so as to procure from his mouth an assent to that Nile proposition, it would be now. And after all, that Nile proposition was the best one now before her. She did not quite like the idea of starting off across the Great Desert without any lady, and was not sure that she was prepared to be fallen in love with by M. Delabordeau, even if there should ultimately be any readiness on the part of that gentleman to perform the rôle of lover. With Mr. Ingram the matter was different, nor was she so diffident of her own charms as to think it altogether impossible that she might succeed, in the teeth of that little chit, Fanny

Damer. That Mr. Ingram would join the party up the Nile she had very little doubt; and then there would be one place left for her. She would thus, at any rate, become commingled with a most respectable family, who might be of material service to her.

Thus actuated she commenced an earnest attack upon Mr. Damer.

“Stupendous!” she said again, for she was fond of repeating favourite words. “What a wondrous race must have been those Egyptian kings of old!”

“I dare say they were,” said Mr. Damer, wiping his brow as he sat upon a large loose stone, a fragment lying on the flat top of the Pyramid, one of those stones with which the complete apex was once made, or was once about to be made.

“A magnificent race! so gigantic in their conceptions! Their ideas altogether overwhelm us poor, insignificant, latter-day mortals. They built these vast Pyramids; but for us, it is task enough to climb to their top.”

“Quite enough,” ejaculated Mr. Damer.

But Mr. Damer would not always remain weak and out of breath, and it was absolutely necessary for Miss Dawkins to hurry away from Cheops and his tomb, to Thebes and Karnac.

“After seeing this it is impossible for any one with a spark of imagination to leave Egypt without going farther a-field.”

Mr. Damer merely wiped his brow and grunted. This Miss Dawkins took as a signal of weakness, and went on with her task perseveringly.

“For myself, I have resolved to go up, at any rate, as far as Asouan and the first cataract. I had thought of acceding to the wishes of a party who are going across the Great Desert by Mount Sinai to Jerusalem; but the

kindness of yourself and Mrs. Damer is so great, and the prospect of joining in your boat is so pleasurable, that I have made up my mind to accept your very kind offer."

This, it will be acknowledged, was bold on the part of Miss Dawkins; but what will not audacity effect? To use the slang of modern language, cheek carries everything nowadays. And whatever may have been Miss Dawkins's deficiencies, in this virtue she was not deficient.

"I have made up my mind to accept your very kind offer," she said, shining on Mr. Damer with her blandest smile.

What was a stout, breathless, perspiring, middle-aged gentleman to do under such circumstances? Mr. Damer was a man who, in most matters, had his own way. That his wife should have given such an invitation without consulting him, was, he knew, quite impossible. She would as soon have thought of asking all those Arab guides to accompany them. Nor was it to be thought of that he should allow himself to be kidnapped into such an arrangement by the impudence of any Miss Dawkins. But there was, he felt, a difficulty in answering such a proposition from a young lady with a direct negative, especially while he was so scant of breath. So he wiped his brow again, and looked at her.

"But I can only agree to this on one understanding," continued Miss Dawkins, "and that is, that I am allowed to defray my own full share of the expense of the journey."

Upon hearing this Mr. Damer thought that he saw his way out of the wood. "Wherever I go, Miss Dawkins, I am always the paymaster myself," and this he contrived to say with some sternness, palpitating though he still was; and the sternness which was deficient in his voice he endeavoured to put into his countenance.

But he did not know Miss Dawkins. "Oh, Mr. Damer," she said, and as she spoke her smile became almost blander than it was before; "oh, Mr. Damer, I could not think of suffering you to be so liberal; I could not,

indeed. But I shall be quite content that you should pay everything, and let me settle with you in one sum afterwards."

Mr. Damer's breath was now rather more under his own command. "I am afraid, Miss Dawkins," he said, "that Mrs. Damer's weak state of health will not admit of such an arrangement."

"What, about the paying?"

"Not only as to that, but we are a family party, Miss Dawkins; and great as would be the benefit of your society to all of us, in Mrs. Damer's present state of health, I am afraid—in short, you would not find it agreeable.—And therefore—" this he added, seeing that she was still about to persevere—"I fear that we must forego the advantage you offer."

And then, looking into his face, Miss Dawkins did perceive that even her audacity would not prevail.

"Oh, very well," she said, and moving from the stone on which she had been sitting, she walked off, carrying her head very high, to a corner of the Pyramid from which she could look forth alone towards the sands of Libya.

In the mean time another little overture was being made on the top of the same Pyramid,—an overture which was not received quite in the same spirit. While Mr. Damer was recovering his breath for the sake of answering Miss Dawkins, Miss Damer had walked to the further corner of the square platform on which they were placed, and there sat herself down with her face turned towards Cairo. Perhaps it was not singular that Mr. Ingram should have followed her.

This would have been very well if a dozen Arabs had not also followed them. But as this was the case, Mr. Ingram had to play his game under some difficulty. He had no sooner seated himself beside her than they came and stood directly in front of the seat, shutting out the view, and by no means improving the fragrance of the air around them.

“And this, then, Miss Damer, will be our last excursion together,” he said, in his tenderest, softest tone.

“De good Englishman will gib de poor Arab one little backsheish,” said an Arab, putting out his hand and shaking Mr. Ingram’s shoulder.

“Yes, yes, yes; him gib backsheish,” said another.

“Him berry good man,” said a third, putting up his filthy hand, and touching Mr. Ingram’s face.

“And young lady berry good, too; she give backsheish to poor Arab.”

“Yes,” said a fourth, preparing to take a similar liberty with Miss Damer.

This was too much for Mr. Ingram. He had already used very positive language in his endeavour to assure his tormentors that they would not get a piastre from him. But this only changed their soft persuasions into threats. Upon hearing which, and upon seeing what the man attempted to do in his endeavour to get money from Miss Damer, he raised his stick, and struck first one and then the other as violently as he could upon their heads.

Any ordinary civilised men would have been stunned by such blows, for they fell on the bare foreheads of the Arabs; but the objects of the American’s wrath merely skulked away; and the others, convinced by the only arguments which they understood, followed in pursuit of victims who might be less pugnacious.

It is hard for a man to be at once tender and pugnacious—to be sentimental, while he is putting forth his physical strength with all the violence in his power. It is difficult, also, for him to be gentle instantly after having been in a rage. So he changed his tactics at the moment, and came to the point at once in a manner befitting his present state of mind.

“Those vile wretches have put me in such a heat,” he said, “that I hardly know what I am saying. But the fact is this, Miss Damer, I cannot leave Cairo without knowing—. You understand what I mean, Miss Damer.”

“Indeed I do not, Mr. Ingram; except that I am afraid you mean nonsense.”

“Yes, you do; you know that I love you. I am sure you must know it. At any rate you know it now.”

“Mr. Ingram, you should not talk in such a way.”

“Why should I not? But the truth is, Fanny, I can talk in no other way. I do love you dearly. Can you love me well enough to go and be my wife in a country far away from your own?”

Before she left the top of the Pyramid Fanny Damer had said that she would try.

Mr. Ingram was now a proud and happy man, and seemed to think the steps of the Pyramid too small for his elastic energy. But Fanny feared that her troubles were to come. There was papa—that terrible bugbear on all such occasions. What would papa say? She was sure her papa would not allow her to marry and go so far away from her own family and country. For herself, she liked the Americans—always had liked them; so she said;—would desire nothing better than to live among them. But papa! And Fanny sighed as she felt that all the recognised miseries of a young lady in love were about to fall upon her.

Nevertheless, at her lover’s instance, she promised, and declared, in twenty different loving phrases, that nothing on earth should ever make her false to her love or to her lover.

“Fanny, where are you? Why are you not ready to come down?” shouted Mr. Damer, not in the best of tempers. He felt that he had almost been unkind to an unprotected female, and his heart misgave him. And yet it would have misgiven him more had he allowed himself to be entrapped by Miss Dawkins.

“I am quite ready, papa,” said Fanny, running up to him—for it may be understood that there is quite room enough for a young lady to run on the top of the Pyramid.

“I am sure I don’t know where you have been all the time,” said Mr. Damer; “and where are those two boys?”

Fanny pointed to the top of the other Pyramid, and there they were, conspicuous with their red caps.

“And M. Delabordeau?”

“Oh! he has gone down, I think;—no, he is there with Miss Dawkins.” And in truth Miss Dawkins was leaning on his arm most affectionately, as she stooped over and looked down upon the ruins below her.

“And where is that fellow, Ingram?” said Mr. Damer, looking about him. “He is always out of the way when he’s wanted.”

To this Fanny said nothing. Why should she? She was not Mr. Ingram’s keeper.

And then they all descended, each again with his proper number of Arabs to hurry and embarrass him; and they found Mr. Damer at the bottom, like a piece of sugar covered with flies. She was heard to declare afterwards that she would not go to the Pyramids again, not if they were to be given to her for herself, as ornaments for her garden.

The picnic lunch among the big stones at the foot of the Pyramid was not a very gay affair. Miss Dawkins talked more than any one else, being determined to show that she bore her defeat gallantly. Her conversation, however, was chiefly addressed to M. Delabordeau, and he seemed to think more of his cold chicken and ham than he did of her wit and attention.

Fanny hardly spoke a word. There was her father before her and she could not eat, much less talk, as she thought of all that she would have to go through. What would he say to the idea of having an American for a

son-in-law?

Nor was Mr. Ingram very lively. A young man when he has been just accepted, never is so. His happiness under the present circumstances was, no doubt, intense, but it was of a silent nature.

And then the interior of the building had to be visited. To tell the truth none of the party would have cared to perform this feat had it not been for the honour of the thing. To have come from Paris, New York, or London, to the Pyramids, and then not to have visited the very tomb of Cheops, would have shown on the part of all of them an indifference to subjects of interest which would have been altogether fatal to their character as travellers. And so a party for the interior was made up.

Miss Damer when she saw the aperture through which it was expected that she should descend, at once declared for staying with her mother. Miss Dawkins, however, was enthusiastic for the journey. "Persons with so very little command over their nerves might really as well stay at home," she said to Mr. Ingram, who glowered at her dreadfully for expressing such an opinion about his Fanny.

This entrance into the Pyramids is a terrible task, which should be undertaken by no lady. Those who perform it have to creep down, and then to be dragged up, through infinite dirt, foul smells, and bad air; and when they have done it, they see nothing. But they do earn the gratification of saying that they have been inside a Pyramid.

"Well, I've done that once," said Mr. Damer, coming out, "and I do not think that any one will catch me doing it again. I never was in such a filthy place in my life."

"Oh, Fanny! I am so glad you did not go; I am sure it is not fit for ladies," said poor Mrs. Damer, forgetful of her friend Miss Dawkins.

"I should have been ashamed of myself," said Miss Dawkins, bristling up, and throwing back her head as she stood, "if I had allowed any consideration to have prevented my visiting such a spot. If it be not

improper for men to go there, how can it be improper for women?"

"I did not say improper, my dear," said Mrs. Damer, apologetically.

"And as for the fatigue, what can a woman be worth who is afraid to encounter as much as I have now gone through for the sake of visiting the last resting-place of such a king as Cheops?" And Miss Dawkins, as she pronounced the last words, looked round her with disdain upon poor Fanny Damer.

"But I meant the dirt," said Mrs. Damer.

"Dirt!" ejaculated Miss Dawkins, and then walked away. Why should she now submit her high tone of feeling to the Damers, or why care longer for their good opinion? Therefore she scattered contempt around her as she ejaculated the last word, "dirt."

And then the return home! "I know I shall never get there," said Mrs. Damer, looking piteously up into her husband's face.

"Nonsense, my dear; nonsense; you must get there." Mrs. Damer groaned, and acknowledged in her heart that she must,—either dead or alive.

"And, Jefferson," said Fanny, whispering—for there had been a moment since their descent in which she had been instructed to call him by his Christian name—"never mind talking to me going home. I will ride by mamma. Do you go with papa and put him in good humour; and it he says anything about the lords and the bishops, don't you contradict him, you know."

What will not a man do for love? Mr. Ingram promised.

And in this way they started; the two boys led the van; then came Mr. Damer and Mr. Ingram, unusually and unpatriotically acquiescent as to England's aristocratic propensities; then Miss Dawkins riding, alas! alone; after her, M. Delabordeau, also alone,—the ungallant

Frenchman! And the rear was brought up by Mrs. Damer and her daughter, flanked on each side by a dragoman, with a third dragoman behind them.

And in this order they went back to Cairo, riding their donkeys, and crossing the ferry solemnly, and, for the most part, silently. Mr. Ingram did talk, as he had an important object in view,—that of putting Mr. Damer into a good humour.

In this he succeeded so well that by the time they had remounted, after crossing the Nile, Mr. Damer opened his heart to his companion on the subject that was troubling him, and told him all about Miss Dawkins.

"I don't see why we should have a companion that we don't like for eight or ten weeks, merely because it seems rude to refuse a lady."

"Indeed, I agree with you," said Mr. Ingram; "I should call it weak-minded to give way in such a case."

"My daughter does not like her at all," continued Mr. Damer.

"Nor would she be a nice companion for Miss Damer; not according to my way of thinking," said Mr. Ingram.

"And as to my having asked her, or Mrs. Damer having asked her! Why, God bless my soul, it is pure invention on the woman's part!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Mr. Ingram; "I must say she plays her game well; but then she is an old soldier, and has the benefit of experience." What would Miss Dawkins have said had she known that Mr. Ingram called her an old soldier?

"I don't like the kind of thing at all," said Mr. Damer, who was very serious upon the subject. "You see the position in which I am placed. I am forced to be very rude, or—"

"I don't call it rude at all."

“Disobliging, then; or else I must have all my comfort invaded and pleasure destroyed by, by, by—” And Mr. Damer paused, being at a loss for an appropriate name for Miss Dawkins.

“By an unprotected female,” suggested Mr. Ingram.

“Yes, just so. I am as fond of pleasant company as anybody; but then I like to choose it myself.”

“So do I,” said Mr. Ingram, thinking of his own choice.

“Now, Ingram, if you would join us, we should be delighted.”

“Upon my word, sir, the offer is too flattering,” said Ingram, hesitatingly; for he felt that he could not undertake such a journey until Mr. Damer knew on what terms he stood with Fanny.

“You are a terrible democrat,” said Mr. Damer, laughing; “but then, on that matter, you know, we could agree to differ.”

“Exactly so,” said Mr. Ingram, who had not collected his thoughts or made up his mind as to what he had better say and do, on the spur of the moment.

“Well, what do you say to it?” said Mr. Damer, encouragingly. But Ingram paused before he answered.

“For Heaven’s sake, my dear fellow, don’t have the slightest hesitation in refusing, if you don’t like the plan.”

“The fact is, Mr. Damer, I should like it too well.”

“Like it too well?”

“Yes, sir, and I may as well tell you now as later. I had intended this evening to have asked for your permission to address your daughter.”

“God bless my soul!” said Mr. Damer, looking as though a totally new idea had now been opened to him.

“And under these circumstances, I will now wait and see whether or no you will renew your offer.”

“God bless my soul!” said Mr. Damer, again. It often does strike an old gentleman as very odd that any man should fall in love with his daughter, whom he has not ceased to look upon as a child. The case is generally quite different with mothers. They seem to think that every young man must fall in love with their girls.

“And have you said anything to Fanny about this?” asked Mr. Damer.

“Yes, sir, I have her permission to speak to you.”

“God bless my soul!” said Mr. Damer; and by this time they had arrived at Shepheard’s Hotel.

“Oh, mamma,” said Fanny, as soon as she found herself alone with her mother that evening, “I have something that I must tell you.”

“Oh, Fanny, don’t tell me anything to-night, for I am a great deal too tired to listen.”

“But oh, mamma, pray;—you must listen to this; indeed you must.” And Fanny knelt down at her mother’s knee, and looked beseechingly up into her face.

“What is it, Fanny? You know that all my bones are sore, and I am so tired that I am almost dead.”

“Mamma, Mr. Ingram has—”

“Has what, my dear? has he done anything wrong?”

“No, mamma: but he has;—he has proposed to me.” And Fanny, bursting into tears, hid her face in her mother’s lap.

And thus the story was told on both sides of the house. On the next day, as a matter of course, all the difficulties and dangers of such a marriage as that which was now projected were insisted on by both father and mother. It was improper; it would cause a severing of the family not to

be thought of; it would be an alliance of a dangerous nature, and not at all calculated to insure happiness; and, in short, it was impossible. On that day, therefore, they all went to bed very unhappy. But on the next day, as was also a matter of course, seeing that there were no pecuniary difficulties, the mother and father were talked over, and Mr. Ingram was accepted as a son-in-law. It need hardly be said that the offer of a place in Mr. Damer's boat was again made, and that on this occasion it was accepted without hesitation.

There was an American Protestant clergyman resident in Cairo, with whom, among other persons, Miss Dawkins had become acquainted. Upon this gentleman or upon his wife Miss Dawkins called a few days after the journey to the Pyramid, and finding him in his study, thus performed her duty to her neighbour,—

"You know your countryman Mr. Ingram, I think?" said she.

"Oh, yes; very intimately."

"If you have any regard for him, Mr. Burton," such was the gentleman's name, "I think you should put him on his guard."

"On his guard against what?" said Mr. Burton with a serious air, for there was something serious in the threat of impending misfortune as conveyed by Miss Dawkins.

"Why," said she, "those Damers, I fear, are dangerous people."

"Do you mean that they will borrow money of him?"

"Oh, no; not that, exactly; but they are clearly setting their cap at him."

"Setting their cap at him?"

"Yes; there is a daughter, you know; a little chit of a thing; and I fear Mr. Ingram may be caught before he knows where he is. It would be such a pity, you know. He is going up the river with them, I hear. That, in his place, is very foolish. They asked me, but I positively refused."

Mr. Burton remarked that “In such a matter as that Mr. Ingram would be perfectly able to take care of himself.”

“Well, perhaps so; but seeing what was going on, I thought it my duty to tell you.” And so Miss Dawkins took her leave.

Mr. Ingram did go up the Nile with the Damers, as did an old friend of the Damers who arrived from England. And a very pleasant trip they had of it. And, as far as the present historian knows, the two lovers were shortly afterwards married in England.

Poor Miss Dawkins was left in Cairo for some time on her beam ends. But she was one of those who are not easily vanquished. After an interval of ten days she made acquaintance with an Irish family—having utterly failed in moving the hard heart of M. Delabordeau—and with these she proceeded to Constantinople. They consisted of two brothers and a sister, and were, therefore, very convenient for matrimonial purposes. But nevertheless, when I last heard of Miss Dawkins, she was still an unprotected female.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN UNPROTECTED FEMALE AT THE PYRAMIDS ***

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