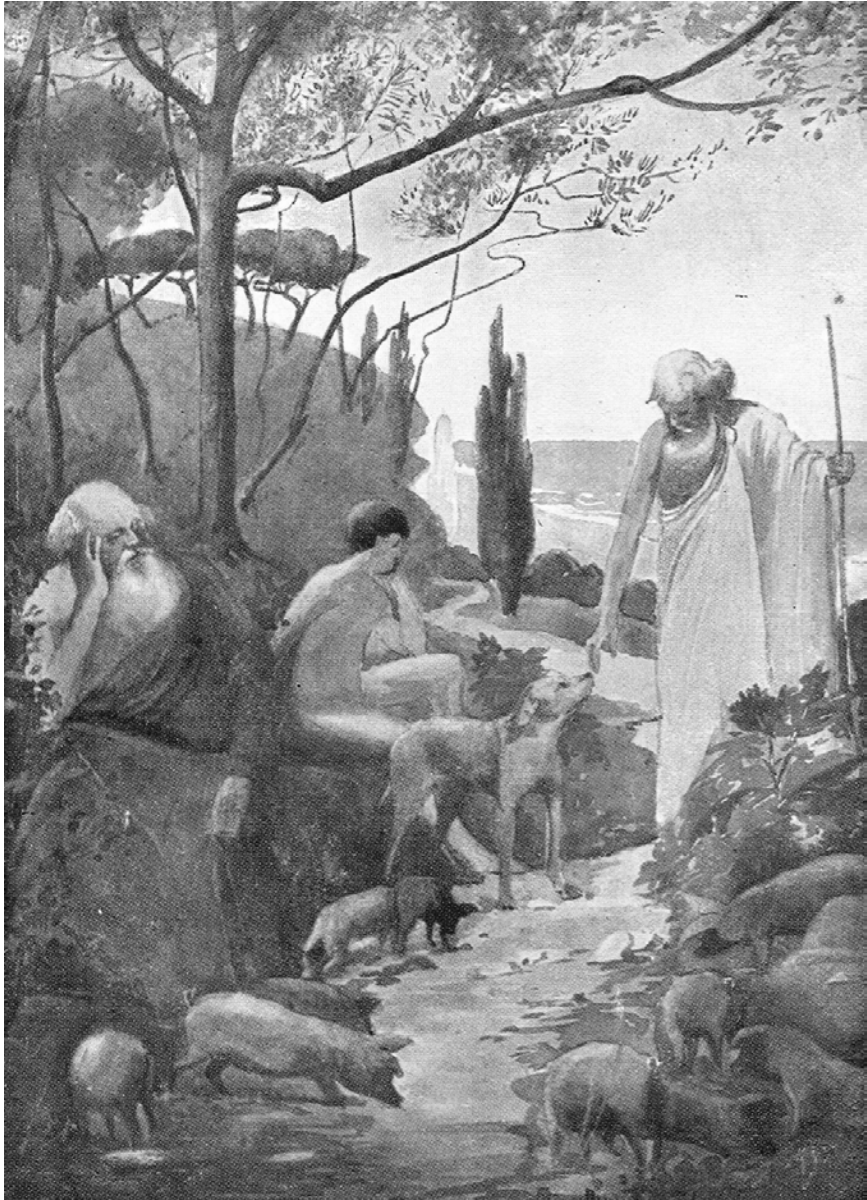


THE STORY OF THE WORLD

BOOK I.

**ON THE SHORES OF THE
GREAT SEA**

*FROM THE DAYS OF ABRAHAM TO
THE BIRTH OF CHRIST*



THE RETURN OF ULYSSES

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

BY

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CHAPTER 1

THE HOME OF ABRAHAM

“In the faith of little children, we went on our ways.”
—KIPLING.

IT is strange to think of a very old world, when men knew nothing of the great salt sea that washed their shores, and nothing of the wonderful lands, that lay beyond. Each day the sun rose and set as it does to-day, but they did not know the reason why: the rivers flowed through the land, but they did not know whence they came, or whither they went.

These men of old, knew one great fact. They knew that they must live in a land, where there was plenty of water. How else could their sheep and oxen stay their thirst? how else should they and their children get food and drink? and how should the grain grow to save the land from famine?

So wherever a man settled down with his family in the old days, he chose some place near a river or spring. Perhaps others would wander over the land till they came to the same river, and there they would settle too, until there would be quite a little colony of families all attracted to the same spot

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

by the fact that fresh, clean water, was flowing through the land.

And so it was that, long ago, the old stories tell us of a group of men, women, and children, who came and settled around a great river, called the Euphrates, away in the far East. It was one of the four rivers that watered the garden of Eden—a very beautiful and fertile spot.

This little group of settlers—known as the Chaldeans—grew corn in their rich country and became very prosperous, while other men were wandering about the trackless land with no fixed abode or calling.

These Chaldeans taught themselves many things. They made bricks and built houses to live in, they looked at the deep blue sky over their heads and learnt about the sun; they wandered about by night and learnt about the moon and the stars, they divided their time into seven days and called the days after seven stars, they taught themselves arithmetic and geometry. Of course they had no paper and pens to write with, but they scratched simple pictures on stones and tablets. For instance, a little drawing of one nail meant the figure I., two nails meant II., three nails in a row meant III., and so on.

Even to-day men go out to this old country, which has long since ceased to take any part in the world's history, and they find the old stones and tablets scratched by the Chaldeans, and learn more about these industrious people.

THE HOME OF ABRAHAM

The Chaldeans knew a great deal, but they knew nothing beyond their own country, for how should they? There were no carts, no trains, no bridges over the rivers, no ships, in those early days. Travelling was very slow and difficult. On the backs of camels or asses the journeys must be made, under the burning sun and over the trackless desert land: food must be carted, and even water; for how could they tell where rivers ran in those unknown, unexplored regions?

But the day was at hand when one man with his whole family should travel from this land beyond the Euphrates, travel away from the busy life of the Chaldean cities into a new and unknown country.

That man was known as Abraham.

He was a great man in the far East; he was well read in the stars, and had learnt much about the rising and setting of the sun and moon. Why he was called to leave his native land is not known. "Get thee out of thine own country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."

These were Abraham's orders.

And one day he rose up, and taking his old father Terah, his wife Sarai, and his fatherless young nephew Lot, with camels and asses bearing all his possessions, he left Chaldea.

The little party journeyed for a day, perhaps more, until they came to the frontier fortress of their own country, and here the old father Terah died

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before ever he had crossed that river that bounded the land of his birth.

And Abraham started off again to travel into the unknown land. The great river Euphrates rolled its vast volume of waters between him and the country to which his steps were bent. Two days' journey would bring him to the high chalk cliffs, from which he could overlook the wide western desert. Broad and strong lay the great stream below. He crossed it, probably near the same point where it is still forded. He crossed it and became known as the Hebrew—the man who had crossed the river flood—the man who came from beyond the Euphrates.

CHAPTER 2

INTO AFRICA

“And Abraham went down into Egypt to sojourn there.”
—GEN. xii. 10.

THE land of Canaan was now before him. It was a low-lying country, now marked on modern maps as Syria,—the old highway between the tract of land known as Asia and that known now as Africa. Its coast was washed by the blue sea, known to men of old time as the Great Sea, on the waters of which no one had as yet ventured to trust themselves.

As pilgrims travel now in the East, so would Abraham have travelled then through this land of Canaan, with his wife and young Lot. With all his possessions heaped high on the backs of camels and asses, with his slaves running along by his side, with his flocks of sheep and goats moving under the towering forms of the camels, he would start slowly into the new country. Abraham himself, in a scarlet robe, as chief of the tribe, would guide the march, settling where the nightly tent should be pitched, and arranging pasture and water for the flocks and herds. On and on, under the fiercely blazing sun, the long

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

caravan would slowly travel, ever journeying southwards.

He was the first explorer of a new land of whom there is a full account.

But while he yet journeyed, there came on one of those droughts to which the land of Canaan was always subject, when day after day the sky was blue and cloudless, when no rains fell to water the thirsty land, and Abraham went on still farther south till he reached Africa.

Now, while the great colony on the banks of the river Euphrates was growing and thriving away in Asia, another colony was growing along the banks of the Nile—the greatest river in Africa. Here family after family had come, attracted by the fertile land watered by the Nile, in just the same way as the Chaldeans had settled by the Euphrates. And this country was known as Egypt—the gift of the Nile.

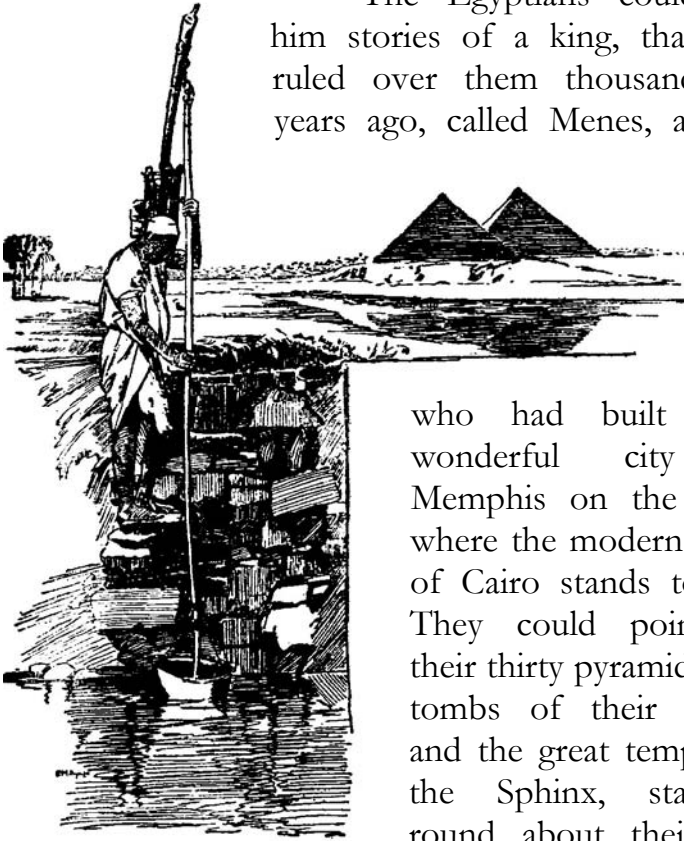
So out of the shadowland of early history we get these two settlements—the Chaldeans on the Euphrates in Asia and the Egyptians on the Nile in Africa. They were hundreds of miles apart, and though men may have journeyed from one to the other before, yet Abraham is the first traveller of whom we have any record.

It must have been with feelings of awe that he approached the land of Egypt. He might be denied the corn he had come hither to obtain, he might be slain, unknown dangers and difficulties might lie before him. He must have been surprised at what he

INTO AFRICA

found in Egypt, after all. He found a very old settlement, as old as—perhaps older than—that from which he had come.

The Egyptians could tell him stories of a king, that had ruled over them thousands of years ago, called Menes, a king



who had built their wonderful city of Memphis on the Nile, where the modern town of Cairo stands to-day. They could point to their thirty pyramids, the tombs of their kings, and the great temple of the Sphinx, standing round about their old

city, even as some of them stand round about Cairo to-day.

They could tell Abraham the story of how those pyramids were built; of the immense granite blocks which were brought five hundred miles; of the great causeway, which took ten years to construct, along which these blocks could be carried; of the twenty years it took to build one pyramid, and

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

the thousands and thousands of men employed in the work.

And under these massive structures the old Eastern kings slept their last sleep; while to-day we still wonder at the industry and patience of the ancient Egyptians.

“Soldiers,” said the great Napoleon, as he led the French army through the heart of Egypt some hundred years ago—“Soldiers, forty centuries look down upon you, from the top of the pyramids.”

Indeed, later on, when roads cut up the countries of the earth, and ships sailed on the seas, these old pyramids of Egypt were ranked among the Seven Wonders of the World.

This strange land to which Abraham had come was a land of plenty; there was corn growing along the fertile valley, for the mighty Nile depended not on local rains to water the earth. And the great king, or Pharaoh, as he was called, treated Abraham well. It is said that the Chaldean explorer taught the Egyptians astronomy; he certainly did well in the strange land, and when he left, Pharaoh gave him sheep and oxen, men-servants and maid-servants, and Abraham was a very rich man.

CHAPTER 3

AN OLD TRADE-ROUTE

“Then there passed by . . . merchantmen.”
—GEN. xxxvii. 28.

IT was a much larger caravan which passed out of Egypt, when the time came at last for Abraham to go back to Canaan; there were more flocks and herds, sheep and cattle, camels and asses. They returned by the same way they came, till they reached one of their old camping-grounds near Bethel.

But Abraham and Lot were no longer wandering explorers, in search of pasture for their flocks. They were rich men now, with numerous attendants, and the pasture that was enough to feed all, in the old days, was no longer enough for both. And there was some quarrelling between the herdmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle.

Together, the two men stood on a piece of rising ground, from which they could look over the surrounding country.

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

“Is not the whole land before thee?” said the older man, who had already made up his mind as to the future. “Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.”

And Lot, knowing the value of the river Jordan which flowed through the midst of the land, chose its fertile plain, which was well watered everywhere, like the land of Egypt, from which he had just come. So he took his servants, his cattle, and his sheep, and there he made his new home.

Abraham lived in Canaan, right away from Lot; but he did not forget the little colony that had settled in the plains of Jordan—like a branch from the old root,—and when Lot was in difficulties with his foes, Abraham was the first to go to his help.

It was the same in those old days as it is now; the mother country helps her colonies, when they are in trouble.

After a time Abraham’s descendants possessed the whole land of Canaan, which reached from his old home beyond the river Euphrates to the river Nile in Egypt. But the love of the old country was still strong within him; and when it was time to choose a wife for his son Isaac, it was to the land beyond the Euphrates that he turned.

Thence came Rebekah, who became the grandmother of Joseph, the story of whose life in Egypt is at once so pathetic and interesting.

AN OLD TRADE-ROUTE

As time went on, there was more and more traffic between the two settlements in Asia and Africa, through the land of Canaan. More than one route was discovered by which the long lines of camels and caravans could pass with safety from the one country to the other. And why should they want to go from one land to the other? For purposes of trade.

If one settlement could make and produce what another settlement could not, it was natural that an exchange should take place. And so it came to pass that long lines of camels were constantly journeying across Canaan bearing spices, balm, and myrrh into Egypt, and taking back with them silk and ivory from that country. It was to one of these parties of merchantmen, that Joseph was sold—merchants, on their way down into Egypt.

The story of Joseph is familiar to every child. They know how he was loved by his father Jacob, and how he lived with his parents in the land of Canaan, inherited from his grandfather Abraham. How his elder brothers had gone south to pasture their flocks, like the Arabs of the present day, wherever the wild country was unowned. How by-and-by Jacob, growing uneasy about his elder sons, sent Joseph,—then a boy of seventeen,—clad in his coat of many colours, to see how they were getting on. How the elder brothers hated Joseph because he was his father's favourite, and how, when they saw him coming, they whispered among themselves, "Come now, therefore, and let us slay him."

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

Finally, they sold him to the party of merchants passing with their camels, laden with spices, for Egypt. So the boy Joseph, now robbed of his coat of many colours, was carried off to Egypt, and there sold to one Potiphar, a courtier of the great Pharaoh of the country.

And while Joseph was serving in Egypt his old father was weeping for him away in Canaan.

“All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted.”

Little did Jacob think, as he mourned for Joseph as dead, that some day he too should travel down to Egypt, where he should find his son again, “governor over all the land.”

CHAPTER 4

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

“Governor over all the land of Egypt.”
—GEN. xlv. 26.

THERE had been changes in Egypt since the days of Abraham. The long line of native kings had come to an end, and some new rulers or Pharaohs had arisen, known as “Shepherd kings.” It was during the reign of one of these shepherd kings that Joseph was sold into Egypt. There had been a great deal of fighting, too, in the country, and now the tract of land belonging to the Egyptians was much larger than of old, and a wonderful new city called Thebes had been built on the Nile, some distance above Memphis.

Now these Pharaohs ruling over Egypt were held to be very great men, and they were treated with great pomp and dignity. The old tablets and monuments tell us, in their quaint picture stories, how splendid were the courts of these kings, and how all men bowed down to them. They tell us stories of the king’s household: of his many servants, the royal barbers and perfumers, shoemakers, tailors;

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

of those who presided over the royal linen, of the laundresses who washed it in the river Nile. They tell us of the troops of musicians, singers, dancers, cooks, butlers, bakers, and magicians.

The Egyptians of old drew pictures showing how the Pharaohs received taxes from the people, not in money, for they did not use money in those days, but in fruit, oxen, or grain. And there were buildings connected with the royal palace at Memphis: there was the storehouse for grain, the storehouse for fruit, and the white storehouse, where stuffs and jewels are kept.

So the Pharaohs were very rich and powerful, and they did as they pleased with their kingdoms. Joseph would have heard all about the ruler of Egypt from his master, but being a slave himself he would have had no chance of seeing him.

Now, since he had been in Egypt, Joseph had shown himself very clever at explaining dreams, and this fact came to the ears of the great Pharaoh, who was puzzling sorely over a strange dream he had lately had.

So he sent for the young Hebrew servant, and Joseph stood before Pharaoh.

“I have dreamed a dream,” said the great king, “and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.”

It must have been a great moment for the young stranger from Canaan as he listened to

JOSEPH IN EGYPT



Joseph before Pharaoh

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

Pharaoh's dream, but his fame had not gone abroad in vain. He understood the dream, and he said to Pharaoh:

"Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous."

Then, unbidden, Joseph went on to tell the king what had better be done to save the land.

"Let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. . . And let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. . . That the land perish not through the famine."

The words of the young stranger showed great foresight, at which the king must have marvelled. Surely such wisdom was no common thing.

"Can we find such a one as this is?" he said to his servants round him. Then turning to Joseph he said:

"Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

the throne will I be greater than thou. . . See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.”

And so, while his father mourned for him as dead in the land of Canaan, Joseph was governor over all the land of Egypt—second only to the king. Instead of the little coat of many colours, he now wore the white robe of state, the king’s own ring was on his finger, the king’s own gold chain was about his neck. He rode in the royal chariot, and before him the Egyptians ran shouting, as they do in the streets of Cairo to-day when any great person is driving through the crowded masses of men and beasts.

It was thirteen years since he had left his home, a shepherd boy in Canaan. Now he travelled all over the country, seeing that the grain was stored up in every large city of Egypt. And so the seven years of plenty passed by and the granaries of Egypt were full to overflowing.

The story of the Nile overflow, by which years of plenty and famine were decided, is a world-famed story, dating from the very dawn of history to the present day.

Let it be told yet once again.

CHAPTER 5

THE STORY OF THE NILE FLOOD

“The higher Nilus swells
The more it promises: as it ebbs, the seedsman
Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain
And shortly comes to harvest.”

—SHAKSPERE.

LET it be told once again—the story of how this great river, sometimes so shallow and sluggish that a child might safely walk across, becomes a mighty rushing sea pouring itself into the ocean, with a force that no man can stem.

The source of the Nile was as great a mystery to the men of old as was the reason of its yearly flood. So, as they could not find out where this great river rose, they said it must rise in Paradise, that it must flow through burning regions, pass through a sea, and finally make its way through Egypt.

The annual flood they explained to themselves by saying that it was caused by Isis, the Egyptian goddess, mourning for her brother Osiris. Every year, toward the middle of June, she let fall a

THE STORY OF THE NILE FLOOD

tear for the great Nile-god, and at once the river swelled and descended upon earth. This quaint old story has lasted down through all the ages, and to this very day the people in Egypt say that a drop from heaven falls during the night of the 18th of June and brings about the rise of the Nile. That night is known as the "night of the drop."

During the months of April, May, and June the river Nile falls and falls. The fields on either side are parched and dry; the air is full of dust. The trees are leafless, the plains are cracked; man and beast alike languish. And all day long the fiery sun, undimmed by the lightest cloud, marches on its pitiless way through a sky of the deepest blue. As the season advances, anxiety becomes intense.

"Will the river rise well this year?" ask the bronze-faced men one of another. "Is it not late already?"

A year of plenty or a year of famine used to hang on this mysterious rise. At last, the day dawns when news comes flashing along the river-banks: "The Nile is rising a little, away up near its source." Slowly—very slowly at first, and then with ever-increasing speed—the water creeps up its banks. Gradually the current quickens and the water becomes a deepened colour. It has now become a rushing mighty stream against which no man could swim, as it swirls and roars along to the sea.

And yet not a drop of rain has fallen, no cloud has crossed the sky, no storm has broken over the land. It is to tropical rains some two thousand miles

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

away that this tumult of waters is due. By September the country is a huge lake, the whole land is a land of rivers, as it once was a land of dust. Men's spirits rise with the rising waters, the animals rejoice in this first necessity of life, brown-skinned men and boys plunge with delight into the life-giving stream. All are happy and content. For it will be a year of plenty for Egypt.

As September wears on, the river begins to fall. Its work is done. Before long it is flowing between its banks as usual, winding through the long hot land to the Great Sea—the "Very Green," as the men of Egypt called it.

We know a great deal about the sources of the Nile now, though it was many centuries before the discoveries were made. At Khartum—known to history for Gordon's famous defence and death—the great river divides into two branches, one called the Blue Nile, the other known as the White Nile.

It was in 1770 that a Scotch explorer named James Bruce reached the source-lakes of the Blue Nile, high up on the plains which crowned the mountains of Abyssinia. He told such wonderful stories on his return home of all he had seen and heard that people did not believe him. But now we know all he said was perfectly true. It was not till 1858 that two Englishmen discovered the source of the White Nile in Lake Victoria.

But it happened years ago that the tropical rains sometimes failed; the rise of the Nile was very poor, the dry earth remained parched and cracked,

THE STORY OF THE NILE FLOOD

and famine was the result. So it was a very important matter to the old kings of Egypt whether the Nile rose well or not.

To-day famine is impossible, owing to the dykes, canals, and dams which have been arranged to hold the water should the Nile fail to rise well.

CHAPTER 6

IN A STRANGE LAND

“My sons, and ye the children of my sons,
Jacob your father goes upon his way.”
—CLOUGH.

FOR the first seven years after Joseph had been made governor of Egypt, the Nile rose well, and every fifth part of the country's produce was stored up in the granaries of Egypt, and “in all the land of Egypt there was bread.” The bad years came. The Nile did not rise, the corn did not grow, and the famished people cried to Pharaoh for bread.

“Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do,” was Pharaoh's answer to all the clamouring people. And Joseph opened the storehouses of grain and sold to the Egyptians.

Not only was there famine in Egypt, but the famine was “over all the face of the earth.” This included the land of Canaan, where Joseph's father and brothers still lived. There came a day, as the famine grew worse and worse, when Jacob called his sons.

IN A STRANGE LAND

“Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt,” he said to them: “get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.”

The ten brothers started off for Egypt to buy corn. They found that the governor was selling the corn in person. He was the great man of the land, and they bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. They little thought that this man to whom every one bowed down was their young brother Joseph, but Joseph recognised his brothers at once. The sight of their familiar faces moved him strangely, and he turned from them in tears. He behaved generously towards them, but he did not tell them who he was. And when they had filled their sacks with corn they went home.

But the famine went on, and again they came, bringing Benjamin, the youngest son, with them this time. They brought Joseph presents too—honey and spices, nuts and almonds. Again they bowed low before him.

“Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?” were Joseph’s eager words when he saw them again. Yet again he turned from them in tears, which they could not understand.

At last he told them who he was—told them simply, weeping and alone, “I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.”

Then he informed them that he was lord of Pharaoh’s house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

“And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.”

So the brothers journeyed back into Canaan, laden with good things from Egypt, to tell their father the good news.

“It is enough,” said the old man; “Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.”

And Jacob left his old home, and he took his sons and his grandsons, and all their wives and children, his cattle and all his goods. It must have been a long line of camels and asses, together with the waggons that Pharaoh had sent from Egypt, that crossed the burning desert, to go down into Egypt. And Joseph drove out in his chariot to meet his father, and he fell on his neck and wept a good while.”

Joseph brought his father into the presence of the great Pharaoh, and the king treated the old man well, giving him a portion of land to dwell in Goshen between Memphis and the Great Sea, at the delta of the Nile. It was one of the best pieces of land in Egypt, and there Jacob settled down with his sons and his grandsons, their wives and children, to live in peace and plenty.

Now Jacob was already old when he came down into the land of Egypt. And when the time came for him to die, his one yearning was to get back to his old home. He could not rest in the land of the pyramids. The Egyptians were kind, but they

IN A STRANGE LAND



“Thou shalt carry me out of Egypt.”

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

were not his own kin; he felt he must lie in the land of his fathers.

“Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt,” he pleaded with Joseph: “but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place.”

So Jacob died, and the Egyptians mourned for him, as if he had been one of themselves; after which his whole family carried him home to the land of his birth. It was a very great company that bore him to Canaan; the camels and asses of the house of Jacob, mingling strangely with the chariots and horses of the Egyptians.

So they buried him in the land of Canaan, as he had desired them, and then Joseph and all his brethren returned to their new home in Egypt.

CHAPTER 7

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

“Unto a land flowing with milk and honey.”
—EXODUS iii. 8.

THE children of Jacob, or Israel, lived long in the land of Egypt, on the plot of land given to them by Pharaoh. Fifty-four years after his father, Joseph died. Like Jacob, he yearned to be buried in the land of his fathers, but for the present this was impossible. The years rolled on, and king after king reigned and died in Egypt, until the memory of Joseph was forgotten.

Meanwhile the children of Israel were rejoicing in the good pasture-land watered by the Nile, the land of Goshen as it was called, between Memphis and the Great Sea, and their families increased, till they had become quite a large colony in the land of Egypt. But in course of time there arose a Pharaoh, who no longer cared to have all Joseph's descendants settled in the land; this great colony of foreigners would be a danger in case of war.

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

So he set taskmasters over them and oppressed them. He took them away from their quiet shepherd lives, to "service in the field," such as we still see along the banks of the Nile. There to-day the peasants work under the burning sun, drawing up buckets of water, from the level of the river, to pour on the fields above. The children of Israel were made to build the high brick walls, too, which surrounded the old cities of the land of Goshen; they were treated as slaves, and beaten by the Egyptians in authority over them, until we seem to hear their bitter cries, for deliverance from this bondage.

At last, as more and more children were born to the children of Israel, Pharaoh ordered that all the sons born to these strangers should henceforth be thrown into the Nile.

But a son was born, soon after this order, to a great grandson of Jacob's, and he was so beautiful, that his mother hid him in the house, for three months. Then, fearing for his life, she put him in a little boat or basket made of reeds, and laid him away among the rushes, by the river-side.

The story of Moses is well known, and every child has heard how the royal princess, one of Pharaoh's daughters, came down with her maidens, to bathe in the river. How she found the little basket and the crying child within, and how she had not the heart to let the baby drown. How he was nursed by his own mother, brought up in the house of the Egyptian princess, and named Moses: "Because," said the princess, "I drew him out of the water."

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

Now, though Moses was brought up as an Egyptian child, he was yet an Israelite at heart; when he grew old enough he resented seeing his own people badly treated, and even beaten, in the land of their adoption. And this was the man chosen to lead his own people from the land of Egypt, back to their own land—the land given to their forefathers Abraham and Jacob—the land of Canaan.

The story of their start for home is very picturesque. One can see the shepherd tribes of Goshen snatching their last hasty meal; their feet, usually bare, now shod for their long journey; men, women, and children with staffs in their hands, their long Eastern garments girt up round their waists, for walking over the sandy desert.

It was night too; probably one of those glorious African nights, with stars shining out brightly, even as they shine to-day over stretches of veldt, while the moon lit up the country round.

“Get you forth from among my people; also take your flocks and herds, as ye have said, and be gone,” were the words wrung at last from the reluctant Pharaoh, who had so long refused to let them go.

So in that quiet starlit night, the children of Israel, like a huge army, with their camels and asses, stole forth from Egypt, on their way back to their fatherland.

Very soon the green pasture-land of the Nile was left behind; the scorching desert track lay before.

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Encamped by the shores of the Red Sea, suddenly a cry of alarm would run through the vast multitude, as across the ridges of the desert hills came the terrible Egyptian chariots pursuing after them. In the midst of their terror the sun sank down, and darkness fell over the waters of the Red Sea, which cut them off from the land of Canaan. The story of their crossing over is too well known to repeat. When morning broke over the hills of Arabia, they stood in safety on the farther shore, but the chariots and horsemen of Egypt had perished in the waters.

CHAPTER 8

BACK TO THE FATHERLAND

“Shout, Israel. Let the joyful cry
Pour forth the notes of victory,
High let it swell across the sea,
For Jacob’s weary tribes are free.”
—RUSKIN (aged thirteen)

FOR two hundred and fifteen years the Israelites had lived in Egypt. Now they had passed from Africa, into Asia. Not one of them could remember Jacob now, or his long journey down into Egypt. Behind—right across the waters—lay the strange land of their exile, the land of Egypt with its life-giving river, its pyramids, its stone statues, its tyrant kings. Behind, lay the endless stir and life of the busy Egyptians, with their trained armies marching through their walled cities, their vast processions with drums and cymbals, the rumble of their horses and chariots.

Before them lay mile after mile of burning desert land, through the deep silence of which, they must march, day after day, week after week, month after month. Now and then they might rest by some spring of water to refresh themselves and their little ones, their camels and their asses. But onward and

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ever onward they pressed towards the land of Canaan.

For months they wandered thus, now deeper and deeper into the mountains, struggling over rugged passes, till they reached the desolate range of the hills of Sinai. From these heights their leader Moses brought to them the code of laws, by which they were to live, the code of laws by which we live to-day—the Ten Commandments.

After a long stay in the desert land of Sinai, the six hundred thousand exiles set forth once more on their weary march north, to Canaan. It must have been a great day, when they first caught sight of the river Jordan, across which lay their new country, even though across that river their leader Moses was not to lead them.

The story of his death is perhaps one of the saddest in history. Encamping his people in the plain below, he went up into a high mountain from which he could see the land he was never to reach. Beneath him lay the black tents of the Israelites, behind him the weary waste of hot sand and the bitter waters; while away across the river Jordan he could see the land of Canaan stretching away to the sea—the good land “flowing with milk and honey,” the land for which he had gladly borne toils and dangers, for which he, too, had hungered and thirsted.

It was his last view. From that mountain-top he came down no more. In that strange land he died, and another man was chosen to lead on the people.

BACK TO THE FATHERLAND



“Moses went up into a high mountain, from which he could see the land he was never to reach.”

Joshua was a simple, straightforward, undaunted soldier—“strong and of a good courage.” He turned neither to the right hand nor to the left hand. At the head of the hosts of Israel he went right forward from Jordan to Jericho, from Jericho to Ai, onwards and onwards, till his work was done, and the children of Israel had conquered the Promised Land.

It stretched from the river Euphrates, from the banks of which Abraham had wandered so long ago, right away to the river of Egypt,—the Nile, while its shores were washed by the Great Sea, the value of which, as yet, they knew not.

ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT SEA

It was the highway between the two great rivals of the Old World; the only road by which they could approach each other, by which alone, the Chaldeans could get to Egypt, and the Egyptians to Chaldea, lay along the broad flat strip of coast belonging to Canaan.

What a land this was to possess! After the weary march of forty years, through the lonely desert, after the daily struggle for existence, after the hunger, the thirst, the anxiety, and long, delayed hope, the new fatherland must have been very welcome. Very welcome the shade of palm-tree and olives, of vineyards and fruit-trees, welcome the hills and ravines, the gushing spring and green plains. There were cattle, sheep, and goats on the hillsides; there were waving cornfields in the sunny plains; there were flowers blooming in the early summer when they first arrived, and bees swarming round their combs in rock and wood.

No wonder, then, the way-worn travellers should love to dwell on the words that had cheered them through the weariness of the way; to them it was indeed "a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands."

CHAPTER 9

THE FIRST MERCHANT FLEET

“They that go down to the sea in ships,
that do business in great waters.”

—PSALM cvii. 23.

Now, it has been said that the waters of the Great Sea, washed the shores of the land of Canaan, into which, the Israelites had just entered. Let us see what this Great Sea is, and how the people who lived on the coast of Canaan, found out, how to sail on its calm surface. Seeing branches of trees and leaves floating down the river, they first got the idea of floating down themselves on a log.

Then followed the notion of guiding themselves by means of a pole or paddle. Sometimes the log was hollowed out, sometimes covered by an inflated skin. By-and-by a number of logs, placed together, suggested the idea of a raft, for carrying a number of persons or animals across a river. These were the rude beginnings of shipbuilding, in the olden days. They soon added the idea of oars for propelling the rafts, using them in the same way, that a duck uses its legs to swim.

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Then they found that sometimes the wind helped them, so they made sails—that is to say, they spread sheets of linen to catch the wind, and blow the ship forwards. They were ever thinking of something fresh, until at last they gathered up enough courage to trust themselves on the sea itself.

The Egyptians first tried the Red Sea, which washes the east coast of Africa. It was a narrow arm of the sea, more like a very broad river, save that it was salt, and there were no large waves.

While the Israelites were yet groaning under their bondage in the land of Egypt, there reigned a queen called Hatasu, or “Queen of the South and North,” as she was more often called. She caused a great fleet to be built on the shores of the Red Sea. Each ship was built with oars and sails, each capable of holding sixty passengers. Of these, thirty were the rowers, who were to plough the waves and bring the ships to land whether the wind were favourable or not.

The object of the expedition was to trade with another part of East Africa, that could not well be reached by land. There were men-at-arms in each ship, in case hostile tribes hindered them in their trade dealings.

Away started the ships,—five of them,—and favourable winds bore them southwards to the land of Punt, or Somaliland, as we call that tract of country to-day. The voyagers were well received by natives, who were trustful people. The Egyptians soon found the chief of the country. He had a dwarf

THE FIRST MERCHANT FLEET

wife, who was very distressing to behold; but the royal couple proved very friendly; they were charmed with the presents from Egypt, and allowed the new-comers to trade freely.

They had leave to enter the forests, cut down the trees, and carry them to the ships. They dug up thirty-one of these trees, and placed them on the ships' decks, screening them from the sun's rays by an awning. Other things were brought to the beach by the natives, who were ready to exchange gold, silver, ivory, ebony, and other woods for the gifts brought to them from Egypt. Monkeys, dogs, leopard-skins, and slaves, were also put on board, and the Queen of Punt herself insisted on accompanying the ships back to Egypt.

The Egyptians seem to have been much amused by the antics of the monkeys on the voyage home, as they sprang about the sails and rigging of the ships. While the ships returned to the harbour in the Red Sea from which they had sailed, some of the cargo, including the trees, were taken across the desert, shipped on Nile boats, and so carried to Thebes. The day of the return of the expedition was kept as a gala day in the city of Thebes. A large number of the townspeople came out to meet the returning travellers, and the poor little Queen of Punt, did homage to the Queen of Egypt.

The complete success which had attended this first sea-adventure pleased Hatasu immensely, and she celebrated the event by building a new temple at

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Thebes, on the walls of which were painted the chief scenes of the expedition.

Here may be seen, even to-day, the most ancient pictures of sea-going ships that the world contains—pictures of the Queen of Punt and the chiefs, the crews of the ships, the arrival of the expedition at Thebes in twelve large Nile boats, and the grand festival held in honour of the safe return of the fleet.

CHAPTER 10

CONQUERORS OF THE SEA

“My purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset and the baths
Of all the western seas until I die.”

—TENNYSON, *Ulysses*.

Now when the six hundred thousand children of Israel came trooping into the land of Canaan, there were a great many tribes already living there. Amongst others there was a large tribe, known as the Phœnicians, living in the extreme north. They occupied a narrow strip of coast land between the high snow-capped mountains of Lebanon and the Great Sea.

It was simpler for them to trade by sea than to reach the inland country over the mountains of Lebanon—a journey which had to be accomplished on mules. The smiling sea which lay in front of them, invited them to trust themselves to its calm surface. The island of Cyprus was plainly visible across the waters, offering them safe harbours in case of sudden storms.

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So the Phœnicians learnt the value of the sea, and by reason of this, they rose to fame and played a large part in the history of the world. It must have required some courage to sail even on the tideless waters of the Great Sea, in those early days, for, as we have already seen, the ships were very untrustworthy. They were not like the magnificent steamships, that put to sea in all weathers from every navigable port in these days.

Here is the story of a shipwreck, that took place before Joseph was sold into Egypt, and which shows how terrified the Eastern people were of venturing on the sea.

“I set sail,” says the shipwrecked sailor, “in a vessel one hundred and fifty cubits long and forty wide, with one hundred and fifty of the best sailors of Egypt, whose hearts were more resolute than lions. They had foretold, that the wind would not be contrary, or that there would be none at all; but a squall came on unexpectedly, while we were in the open, and as we approached land the wind freshened and raised waves to the height of eight cubits. As for me, I clung to a beam, but those who were on the vessel perished, without one escaping. A wave cast me on an island, after having spent three days alone with no other companion than my own heart. I slept there in the shade of a thicket, then I set my legs in motion in quest of something for my mouth.”

Now, when the new Israelite tribes began to sweep over the country, the tribes already in the land

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were pushed towards the coast, and the little strip known as Phœnicia became very much overcrowded. This gave a new life to their enterprise.

Up to this time they had sailed from headland to headland along their coast, under the friendly shelter of their tall mountains—sailed in their home-made boats, handling with skill their “sea-horses,” as they called them, when they rode from shore to shore.

Their one idea had been to trade—to exchange the products of their own country for the products of those beyond the seas.

Now their own country was too full, they must go in search of settlement where some of their people could go and live; they must find ports and harbours, points good for trade, where their kinsmen might barter and sell the products of the old country.

The island of Cyprus had long ago attracted the Phœnicians. They could see its clear outline on fine summer evenings in the glow of the western sky; they could sail with ease and safety, keeping land in sight all the way. Thither it was natural that their eyes should turn when in search of a colony.

Beyond Cyprus, too, to the smaller island of Rhodes they ventured, and steering through unknown seas, they discovered Sicily.

Farther and yet farther they ventured.

Cutting down cedars, for which the mountains of Lebanon were famous, they built more

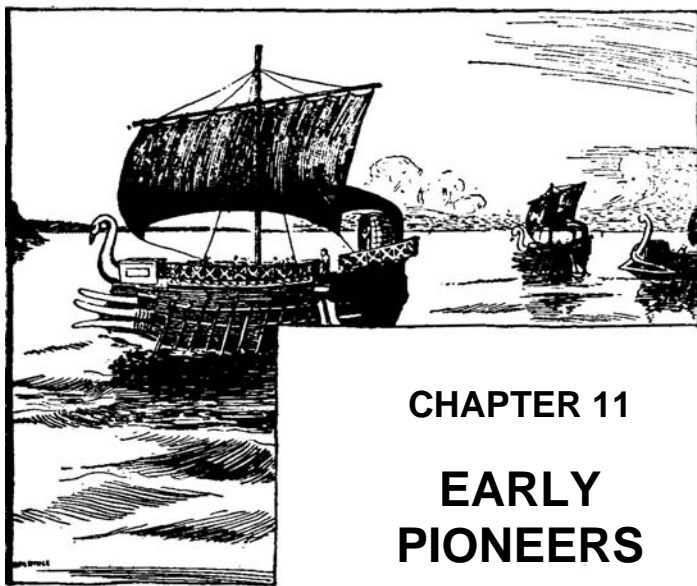
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and more ships, they added a greater number of oars, they made better sails.

Westward, and ever westward, they fought their way—battling with the wind and waves of the Great Sea—right along the coast of North Africa.

They would pass not a single town, they would meet not a single ship, unless it was one of their own. They did not know the currents of the sea, they had no means of knowing the force of the wind, they had no compass to guide them. The sun overhead was their only guide, the stars and the moon by night their only light.

They were indeed a brave people, and their success was richly deserved.



CHAPTER 11

EARLY PIONEERS

“Conquering, holding, daring, venturing, as we go the unknown ways,
Pioneers, O Pioneers!”

—W. WHITMAN.

ALONG the northern coast of Africa they kept, till they reached the spot known to the people of old as the “Pillars of Hercules.” These were lofty rocks which were supposed to mark the limit of the world in this direction. It was, according to their ideas, the farthest point reached by the god Hercules. Beyond this point was the home of the gods, so they said, and heaven and earth met together. If they could please the gods, then the Phœnician sailors might pass this point and discover the truth of their belief; but either the sea was too rough for them or the

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sailors were too timid, for twice they returned home without having passed the Pillars.

Again they tried, and again they failed. At last a third fleet of Phœnician ships was fitted out; and this time they managed to pass through the narrow straits, and to penetrate the mysteries beyond.

There were no gods. The Pillars of Hercules were not the ends of the world. The rocky gates opened a path from the Great Sea, to the boundless waters of the Atlantic Ocean, which were to play such a great part in the history of the New World.

It was on this well-known voyage, that they founded the city of Gades, a port on the coast of Spain. Here they built a beautiful temple to the god Hercules, who had allowed them to pass the narrow straits. This city is our modern Cadiz, the most ancient town in all Europe.

The surrounding country they called Tarshish. Here they found a quantity of silver.

“The ships of Tarshish,” says the prophet Ezekiel, to Phœnicia, “were thy caravans; so wert thou replenished, and very glorious in the midst of the sea.”

So much silver, indeed, did the Phœnicians get at Tarshish, that, in order to carry home as much as they could, they made anchors of silver for their ships, leaving the old iron anchors behind.

“Rivers of the liquid metal, mountains of solid ore, forests and meadows covered with silver: silver,

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silver, silver everywhere, in the land beyond the Pillars of Hercules,” sang the old poets.

There is an old story that says, when the Phœnicians had passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, they took their course along the coast of Africa; but they were carried away far into the ocean by a strong wind. After being driven about many days by the storm, they came to a large island, which was so fertile and possessed such a glorious climate, that they thought it must be a dwelling for the gods, rather than of men.

They called them the “Isles of the Blessed.” To-day we know these islands as the Canary and the Madeira Islands, and they are coaling-stations, for the great steamships which ply between England and South Africa, every week, in all weathers, throughout the year.

There is little doubt, that the old Phœnician ships got as far as the English Channel, in their search for wealth, braving the high seas of the Bay of Biscay to do this. Coasting along the shores of Spain and France, they reached the Scilly Isles off the coast of Cornwall—the Tin Islands, as they called them—in order to carry tin back to Phœnicia.

Thus Phœnicia became the mistress of the Great Sea.

Backwards and forwards, went the Phœnicians, between their own country and foreign lands, collecting wealth, planting colonies, taking possession of whole islands, undisputed. They improved their ships, they grew more and more

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adventurous, until their country, that narrow strip of land shut in between the mountains of Lebanon and the Great Sea, became very rich.

They were conquerors of the sea indeed, merchants of the people of many isles, strong to do and dare, the first Naval Power in the Old World.