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**Travels in the Upper Egyptian  
Deserts**

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BY

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## PREFACE.

Some of the chapters in this book have appeared as articles in 'Blackwood's Magazine.' The various journeys here recorded have been made in the ordinary course of the work of inspection, and have been reported in the usual official manner. These less technical descriptions have been written in leisure hours, and the illustrations here published are selected from a large number of photographs and drawings rapidly made by the wayside. The journey to Wady Hammamât and Kossair was made in the company of three painters, Mr Charles Whymper, Mr Walter Tyndale, and Mr Erskine Nicol, to whom my thanks are due, as also they are to Mr John Wells, with whom I travelled to Gebel Dukhân. I am Indebted to Prof. Sayce and Mr Seymour de Ricci for several notes on the Greek inscriptions at Wady Abad. On some of the journeys I was accompanied by Mahmoud Effendi Rushdy and Mahmoud Effendi Muhammed, Inspectors of the Department of Antiquities, whose assistance was valuable.

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I.  
**THE EASTERN DESERT AND ITS  
INTERESTS.**

I KNOW a young man who declares that after reading a certain explorer's description of a journey across the burning Sahara, he found to his amazement that his nose was covered with freckles. The reader will perhaps remember how, on some rainy day in his childhood, he has sat over the fire and has read sea-stories and dreamed sea-dreams until his lips, he will swear, have tasted salt. Alas, one's little agility in the art of narration is wholly inadequate for the production, at this time of life, of any such phenomena upon the gentle skins of those who chance to read these pages. Were one a master-maker of literature, one might herewith lead the imaginative so straight into the boisterous breezes of Egypt, one might hold them so entranced in the sunlight which streams over the desert, that they would feel, wherever they might be seated, the tingling glow of the sun and the wind upon their cheeks, and would hold their hands to their eyes as a shelter from the glare. The walls of their rooms would fall flat as those of Jericho; and outside they would see the advancing host of the invaders — the sunshine, the north wind, the scudding clouds, the circling eagles, the glistening sand, the blue shadows, and the rampant rocks. And the night closing over the sack of their city, they would see the moonlight, the brilliant stars, the fluttering bats, the solemn owls; and they would hear the wailing of the hyænas and the barking of the dogs in the distant camps. If one only possessed the ability, one might weave such a magic carpet for those who knew how to ride upon it, that, deserting the fallen Jericho of their habitation, they would fly to the land of the invaders which they had seen, and there they would be kept as spell-bound and dazzled by the eyes of the wilderness as ever a child was dazzled by a tale of the sea.

But with this ability lacking it is very doubtful whether the reader will be able to appreciate the writer's meaning; and,