Objects from a Victorian gentleman's cabinet of curiosities: The John Foulkes Jones collection at the Egypt Centre ¹ by Dulcie Engel, with a new translation from the memoirs of John Foulkes Jones by K.Williams

Introduction

John Foulkes Jones (1826-1880) was a Methodist minister from North Wales who travelled to Egypt in 1855 and acquired these objects. An account of his journey was published in 1860. The objects illustrate a range of typical items brought back as curios by Victorian and Edwardian travellers from Egypt and the Holy Land: mummy hair, a stone chip from a statue, a bottle of holy water, mummy bandages, a piece of papyrus... These items would grace a shelf or cabinet back home, to be admired by visitors.

John Foulkes Jones: a life

Jones was born in Machynlleth (Powys, N.W. Wales) on 6th June 1826, the son of John Jones and Lydia Foulkes, and the eldest of eight children. He was educated at the Calvinistic Methodist College in Bala (N. Wales), and trained for the ministry at Edinburgh University from 1844 to 1848. He worked in Methodist missions in North Wales, Liverpool and Chester, and was ordained in 1856. He travelled to Egypt and Palestine in 1855, and published his book on his travels, Egypt in its Biblical Relations and Moral Aspects, in 1860. He married Margaret Jones in 1861, and had five children. He became pastor of Maengwyn Church in Machynlleth in 1863, and died there on 14th April 1880. He was a highly sought after lecturer and respected preacher, whose volume of sermons² was, for some time, one of the most widely read books in Welsh.

A label in the collection (EC1940) refers to 'objects brought back from Egypt by John Foulkes-Jones about 1849'; however the typescript biography translated from Welsh (Owen 1884: 33), now in our possession, states that Jones left Southampton for Alexandria on January 4th 1855 and returned to Liverpool on May 24th 1855. Furthermore, a paper wrapping in the collection (EC1933b), addressed to a Mrs Foulkes Jones in 1914, reads: 'Mummy Hair & c from Egypt brought by your dear father 1855'.

He often gave lectures about his travels, and according to Owen: 'His journey to the East had increased his interest in Egyptology to such an extent that he decided to write a book on Egypt' (p.35). The aim of the book was: 'to show that Egypt ...justifies Moses and that the religion of the Bible is fundamentally different from the best ideas of men' (p.36). Sadly, Owen's original translator decided to omit the chapter (VI) on the Egyptian journey. She writes: 'Though interesting, I have left this out' (p.33). Happily, we can now present the missing translation, and an itinerary of the trip in Appendix 2. Clearly, the main intention of the journey and subsequent book was to write about the Biblical links and stories connected to Egypt, and along the way, Jones gives us an insight into the life of Egyptians in the nineteenth century. It was of course a period when travel to Egypt and the Holy Land was gaining in popularity among the middle classes, (although Thomas Cook did not start his Egyptian tours until 1869), having been a destination for the rich on the Grand Tour for some time. As Rees (1995: 4) points out, the Victorian 'travelling classes possessed, as part of their educational background, an intimate knowledge of the Bible and a familiarity with the Egypt of Biblical history', although this source of knowledge 'was often misleading or false'. Jones' subsequent lectures and book would reach out to an audience eager to hear of Biblical Egypt. And by choosing to publish his book in English rather than in his native Welsh, he was aiming at a wider audience than that for his sermons.

¹ I would like to thank the Egypt Centre Staff who helped me with this project: Wendy Goodridge, Carolyn Graves-Brown, and especially Ken Griffin for the fabulous object photos and provision of extra information; and to Krys Williams for her important contribution of the translation from Welsh.

² Cofiant a Llythyrau, nghyda Phregethau y Parch J. Foulkes-Jones ... Dan olygiaeth J. Owen

^{(1884) (}Translation: <u>Memoir and Letters, with sermons</u> Rev. J. Foulkes-Jones ... Under the editorship of J. Owen). Our typescript biography is clearly a partial translation of this volume.

And what about the tourist trade in Egyptian antiquities? In his book, Jones makes just one reference to this. He describes the 'rapacity of Arabs' and the 'curiosity of travellers' which stoke the trade in relics:

'while I was examining here a fine old mummy, one of the men came running with his hatchet and offered to sever the head off for me: he assured me it was very "good", and he could let me have it "cheap"... these savages think themselves at liberty to practise any indignity upon the bodies of the ancient Egyptians...Many of those relics have come over to England; and here they are now, honoured with a glass-case in some museum of antiquities, or stuck up on some gentleman's mantel-piece, to be fingered by callers and friends!' (p. 209-210)

Ironically, Foulkes Jones himself acquired exactly such relics for display in his own cabinet, and his collection is now in a museum of antiquities, the Egypt Centre.

The trade in slightly gruesome relics continued for many years. For example, in 1872, J.J. Heaton of Bolton purchased a wrapped human hand and: 'extracted a few teeth from a skull as souvenirs'.³ That hand is now in Bolton Museum, to serve as a reminder.

Acquisition of the collection

Here, Wendy Goodridge, the assistant curator, describes receiving the Foulkes Jones donation:

'John Taylor, an assistant keeper at the British Museum, brought us a bag of objects that the Rev John Foulkes Jones, a 19^{th} -century collector, had amassed while in Egypt. When I unwrapped the packages – still in newspaper dating back to the beginning of the 20^{th} century – I discovered a mummy's hair and a bottle of holy water... A mummified finger rolled across the desk stopping right next to my uneaten apple' (2016)

A descendant of Jones (possibly a great granddaughter), Mrs Erica Godman, first contacted the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum about her ancestor's collection in 2012. She had come across it while sorting through the possessions of her late father, John Foulkes Edwards. At the British Museum, John Taylor examined and listed the artefacts, and in January 2013, he wrote to Carolyn Graves-Brown, curator of the Egypt Centre (EC), regarding a home for the collection. Both the owner and the EC were happy with this suggestion, and ownership was transferred to us. The objects arrived at the EC in May 2013. The typescript biography was sent to the EC separately in the same month.

The 24 items plus associated wrappings were catalogued and conserved in suitable containers. They remained in store until April 2017, when the author was lucky enough to curate a selection for display in the House of Life: 'When a small display case was no longer being used at the museum the first idea to spring to mind was to offer it to the volunteers to come up with a display theme, research their chosen objects and write the supporting information. The first theme to be chosen, curated by volunteer Dulcie Engel, is 'Objects from a Victorian gentleman's cabinet of curiosities.' The objects selected for this display illustrate a range of typical items brought back as curios by Victorian and Edwardian travellers from Egypt and the Holy Land, who seem to have had few scruples with regards to the preservation of archaeological sites and ancient artefacts, or indeed the authenticity of their purchases!' (Egypt Centre, 2017)

The one restriction on the display was ethical: the Egypt Centre chooses not to display human remains, so the mummified hand, the mandible and skull fragment remain in storage.

At a later stage (February 2018), the objects had to be moved from the small case, as its position by the gallery door and shutters led to too much vibration, causing many of the small, fragile objects to move. The collection now resides on a shelf in the 'Fakes and Forgeries' case, which, as we will see, is quite appropriate!

In the case we display 14 items, including labels and a copy of a wrapping sample:

³ Ouotation from Bolton Museum case label.

EC1917 19-20th Dynasty coarse redware shabti

EC1918c Example of newspaper wrapping used to protect the objects: page from <u>The Manchester Guardian</u>, 6th May 1915 (reduced photocopy used in gallery for display purposes)

EC1920 Metal cone & EC1920a Label, 'Summit of Cheops' 4

EC 1923 Section of brown hair, signs of braiding/plaiting

EC1923b Blue paper label, 'Mummy hair'

EC1924 Fake papyrus roll (?), with traces of cursive hieroglyphs

EC1925 Stone Chip, labelled 'Vocal statue of Memnon' 5

EC 1928 Scraps of linen mummy wrappings

EC1934 Small coarse redware vessel containing organic materials

EC1936 Glass bottle, labelled 'Water from the pool of Siloam'6

EC1937 Limestone fragment, inscribed 'Tomb of Memnon' (see footnote 6)

EC1938 Piece of ancient bread

EC1939 Label, '2 jars and fruit, also mummy bread' (linked to EC1934 and EC1938)

EC1940 Label, 'Right compartment= objects brought back from Egypt by John Foulkes-Jones about 1849'

A fully annotated list of all items in the collection appears in Appendix 1.

Notable Objects: Fakes, human remains and religious items

Taken together, Jones' collection is a very modest one, consisting of relatively small objects, probably quite inexpensive, and easy to transport home. Three themes strike me while considering this collection.

Firstly, many of the items are definitely, or probably fakes. The most blatant example is EC1920, a small metal cone labelled 'Summit of Cheops'. It is in fact quite surprising to think that anyone would be taken in by this item, given the size (60 by 45 mm), and material, if not the very rough shape and condition. It is even more surprising when we know he actually ascended that very pyramid: 'With the help of three Arabs, he climbed to the top of Cheops – the largest pyramid – and received from these amiable brothers the familiar treatment given to those who have the privilege, under the same circumstances, of submitting themselves to their tender mercies'. Which possibly included a good price for the tip of the summit?

EC1924, the papyrus roll with writing on, is almost definitely fake as the 'roll' is in fact a bundle of dried plant stems to which tiny fragments of papyrus have been attached. It is possible that the bits of papyrus are

⁴ Cheops is the Hellenised form of the name Khufu, the 4th Dynasty pharaoh who commissioned the Great Pyramid at Giza. Pyramids were made of durable limestone blocks, including the capstone, or pyramidion. Some capstones were made of polished black granite, and possibly gold. This is clearly a fake made for tourists.

⁵ The Colossi of Memnon are two giant statues of Amenhotep III (18th Dynasty), located in the Theban Necropolis. They are made of quartzite sandstone. The north statue is reputed to 'sing', due to earthquake damage in 27BCE. Memnon was a Trojan War hero slain by Achilles; the sounds from the north statue were reputed to be his cry, hence the name. These two associated items may well be fakes.

⁶ Situated in Jerusalem, on the slope of the City of David, outside the Old City Walls to the southeast. Modern name: Silwan. According to the New Testament, it is where Jesus healed the blind man (John 9: 1-11).

⁷ Chapter VI, Owen 1884. See Appendix 2.

ancient, as Ken Griffin has identified the presence of some cursive hieroglyphs on the papyrus fragments. And EC 1936, the bottle of holy water, may well have been acquired in Jerusalem, but the source of the liquid is anyone's guess! EC1923, the mummy hair, also raises questions of authenticity; without testing, it is impossible to date the hair any further back than when it was acquired in1855: to the best of our knowledge, Jones does not actually record how and where he acquired the items he brought back. We may also question how genuine the redware items are (EC1917 shabti, EC 1934, 1935 redware vessels). And it is hard to date the food and plant remains, let alone the various pieces of stone, be they inscribed with their source (EC1925,1937) or not, although we may imagine Jones picking up chips of stone while visiting the Colossi and the tomb of Memnon . Indeed, he admits taking a stone from a crack in a rock in or near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem: 'A piece of stone was in the crack, and he said in one of his lectures, "it was not possible for me not to take it and *I was compelled* to take it, and I took it home with me to remember the great day of the crucifixion in Jerusalem".8

Fakes and forgeries tell us about the ingenuity and greed of humans who mainly lived after the original craftspeople; and of the economy of the early tourist trade in places like Egypt, where the contrast between rich travellers and destitute locals has only partly improved.

Secondly, we must address the issue of human (and animal) remains. It is more likely that these items, which show signs of having undergone mummification, are in fact genuine. The trade in mummies and mummy parts is well documented...and of course Jones actually comments on this (as quoted earlier). Despite his recorded indignation and any moral qualms he may have felt as a minister of the cloth, Jones brought back both human (EC1918, 1919, 1921) and animal remains (EC1922, 1922 a, b). The human skull and mandible are even inscribed: EC1919, the skull, is labelled 'Tombs of the Pharaohs at Thebes'; and EC1921, the mandible, is labelled by hand in pencil 'Thebes'. Were these picked up by Jones or bought from a dealer, and then labelled by Jones? We will never know. Was the fact that the human remains belonged to pre-Christian 'pagans' an acceptable excuse for collection? Jones probably knew about the mummy trade (see below): maybe buying for collection was more 'ethical' than grinding them up into fertiliser?

Thirdly, there is a religious theme running through the collection. And here I refer to items linked to Christianity, rather than ancient Egyptian artefacts...and to items that seem to have been acquired in the Holy Land, in particular Jerusalem. What is now Israel and the Palestinian Territories, as well as Egypt, were all part of the Ottoman Empire at this period, and travellers often combined visits to these areas. Although Jones' book discusses Egypt and the Bible, the 'Biblical' items are from the Jerusalem area: EC1936, the glass bottle of liquid labelled 'Water from the pool of Siloam'; EC1929 the small wooden cross, probably associated with label EC1916a, inscribed 'Little Cross made from olive brought from the Garden of Gethsemane by the late Revd. J Foulkes Jones', and possibly EC1916, a small piece of petrified wood wrapped together with the aforementioned label. We are also told that he visited the Jordan River and 'took a portion of the waters of the Jordan home with him and baptised his first-born in it'.9

Conclusion

The items in Jones' collection are of little monetary or archaeological value; they are however an excellent illustration of changing attitudes towards the legacy of ancient Egypt, and the ethics of collecting and exhibiting ancient artefacts. This is an evolving issue. Only recently, the Egyptian authorities have asked for ownership and export documents following the announcement that the Museum of Scotland was to display a casing stone from the Great Pyramid at Giza; of which they have also questioned the authenticity (Michaelson & Brooks, 2019).

Many early travellers either bought from unscrupulous traders or took artefacts for themselves without permission (or indeed provenance), but in quite a few cases, these were fakes made for the tourist trade. This was not the worst of crimes against antiquities: we all know how mummies were exported for unrolling

⁸Chapter VI, pp.115-6, Owen 1884. This could be EC1932: a brown crystalline stone. See Appendix 2.

⁹ Chapter VI, p.112, Owen 1884.See Appendix 2.

parties, or to be ground up for use as fertiliser, paint or medicine. Thankfully things have changed, yet it is important not to forget this history. And while Egypt may well have a moral right to many items in collections all over the world (just as the Maori or the Easter Islanders, to name two other vocal groups re repatriation of artefacts), there is surely an argument to say that these objects are the heritage of the world, and museums allow everyone a chance to appreciate culture and history, not just rich travellers.

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Appendix1: Full list of items in collection

24 objects (or groups of objects) and 2 labels have their own primary catalogue number (EC1916-EC1940); there are further labels and paper wrappings with associated numbers (EC 19xx a ,b ,c ...). The numbers in brackets (FJ 1-8b) are the numbers used for the preliminary accessioning, based on John Taylor's list of objects. It refers to objects grouped or wrapped together, hence the listings for newspapers, etc. The numbering stops at 8, so does not cover EC1933 onwards. It is to be noted that some items may have no connection to those brought back from Jones' travels to the Near East (such as EC1920b, c); and some labels may have been placed with the 'wrong' object (such as EC1916a, probably associated with EC1929 rather than EC1916).

EC 1916 (FJ1) Piece of petrified wood, height 53mm, width 33mm

EC1916a (FJ1a) Label, 'Little Cross made from olive brought from the Garden of Gethsemane by the late Revd. J Foulkes Jones'. More likely to be associated with EC1929

EC1916b (FJ1b) Piece of paper with poem by Margaret Sangster (wrapping)

EC1917 (FJ2) 19-20th Dynasty (if genuine) coarse redware shabti, tripartite wig, collar, arms crossed, no implements visible, flounced 'sleeves' and kilt with frontal apron, lower legs and feet broken off. Height 141 mm, max. width 65mm

EC1917b (FJ2a) The Montgomeryshire Express and Times, 14th March 1953(wrapping)

EC1918 (FJ3) Mummified human hand, unwrapped and coated with darkened shiny resin (?), patches of gold leaf on skin; thumb and middle finger intact, ends of other fingers broken off; one detached fingertip surviving, broken at first knuckle (FJ3a). Length 157 mm, width 55mm

(FJ3a) Mummified fingertip from hand

EC1918a (FJ3b) Label, 'Mummy Hand brought from Egypt by the late Revd. J Foulkes Jones'

EC1918c (FJ3c) The Manchester Guardian, 6th May 1915,p.3-4, inscribed 'Mummy's hand: Ladies' (wrapping)

EC1919 (FJ4) Fragment of human skull with skin attached, length 120mm, height 110 mm. Handwritten label on underside of skull: 'Tombs of the Pharaohs at Thebes'

EC1919b (FJ4a) The Spectator 16th November 1929, p. 718-719 (wrapping)

EC1920(FJ5) Small metal cone with triangular base, length 60mm, width 45mm. Traces of yellow paint, and a faint red line around base

EC1920a (FJ5a) Handwritten label, 'Summit of Cheops, brought by the late Revd. J Foulkes Jones'

EC1920e(FJ5b) The Spectator, 16th November 1929, p.709-10 (wrapping)

EC1920b (FJ5c) Handwritten label, 'Wishing you a happy Christmas with love from M. Davis'

EC1920c (FJ5d) Envelope addressed by hand to Mrs Edwards, Aberystwyth, N. Wales

EC1921 (FJ6) Front part of lower mandible (human), with skin attached, labelled by hand in pencil 'Thebes'. Width 70mm, length 45mm. Wrapped along with EC 1922...

EC1921b (FJ6h) The Engineer 4th November 1921 (wrapping)

EC1921b (FJ6i) The Engineer 22nd April 1921 (wrapping)

EC1922 (FJ6a) Collection of miscellaneous animal bones. Largest one length 155mm, width 33mm

EC1922a (FJ6a) Mummified remains of animal paw with claws: canine? Width 70mm, length 33mm.

EC1922b Four small paw fragments with claw

EC 1923(FJ6b) Section of brown hair, signs of braiding/plaiting. Longest hair length 120mm

EC1923b (FJ6j) Folded sheet of blue paper labelled 'Mummy hair' (wrapping)

EC1924 (FJ6c) Fake papyrus roll (?): Four fragments of dried plant stems to which small fragments of papyrus have been attached. Traces of black ink cursive hieroglyphs. Largest fragment length 49mm, width 28mm

EC1925 (FJ6d) Stone chip, with attached handwritten label, 'Vocal statue of Memnon'. Length 36mm, width 18mm. Wrapped along with EC1926

EC1926 (FJ6d) Stone fragment, evidence of crystallisation, with attached handwritten label 'PH'. Length 49mm, width 25mm. Wrapped along with EC1925

EC1927 (FJ6e) Roll of linen bandage (possibly mummy wrapping). Pale colour, with slight darker discolouration. Length (not unrolled) 45mm, width 30mm, height 25mm. Possibly associated with EC1928

EC 1928 (FJ6e) Scraps of linen mummy wrappings, mid-brown in colour, discoloured and fraying at edges. Length of pile116mm, width 80mm. Possibly associated with EC1927

EC1929 (FJ6f) Small wooden cross, one end sharpened to a point. Length 106mm, width 58mm. Probably associated with label EC1916a

EC1930 (FJ6g) Miscellaneous plant remains, including thorns, flower buds, seeds. Large plant stalk (possibly millet). Largest piece length 197mm, width 40mm

EC 1931 (FJ7) Small limestone fragment with Roman letters 'P' carved on one side, roughly scratched 'T' on another face, and 'O' on third surface. Length 57mm, width 39 mm, height 28 mm

EC1931b (FJ7b) Ogle and Moodie Quarterly Review April 1939 (wrapping)

EC1932 (FJ8) Piece of brown crystalline stone. Length 55m, width 38mm, height 45mm

EC1932b (FJ8a) The Merseyside Congregationalist April 1946, p19/20. 'Miss Edwards' pencilled on page 20 (wrapping)

EC1932b (FJ8b) The Merseyside Congregationalist April 1946,p21/22 (wrapping)

EC1933 Garment (?) made of strips of leather, cowrie shells and coloured beads. Length 240mm, width (folded) 225mm

EC1933b Brown paper wrapping with printed label of Frisby, Dyke & Co, 53-66 Lord St, Liverpool, addressed to Mrs Foulkes Jones, Hill Side, Rock Lane West, Rock Ferry, and inscribed 'Salesman no.30, check no 33.To pay, M.G.' Dated 28th January 1914, with ink handwritten text, 'Mummy Hair & c from Egypt brought by your dear father 1855'

EC1934 Small coarse redware vessel containing organic remains. Height 59mm, diameter 41mm

EC1934b 2 typed sheets headed 'Draft report of the Commission on Housing for the Aged. (Presented to the Executive of the Aberystwyth Religion and Life Council)' (wrapping)

EC1934c The Spectator 16th November 1929, p.725-6 (wrapping)

EC1935 Small coarse redware vessel containing organic remains, chipped rim and body. Height 75mm, diameter 41mm

EC1935bThe Montgomeryshire Express and Times, 14th March 1953 (wrapping)

EC1936 Small glass bottle with cork stopper containing cloudy yellow liquid. Label attached, handwritten in ink 'Water from the pool of Siloam'; second label handwritten in pencil attached below, 'Brought by the late Revd. J Foulkes Jones'. Height 130mm, diameter 48mm

EC1936b The Montgomeryshire Express and Times, 14th March 1953 (wrapping), p.5-6/p.19-20 on reverse

EC1937 Limestone fragment, inscribed by hand 'Tomb of Memnon' on two sides. Length 88mm, width 50 mm

EC1937b The Montgomeryshire Express and Times, 14th March 1953 (wrapping), in two torn pieces

EC1938 (FJ7a) Two pieces of organic material, possibly ancient bread. Largest piece length 27mm, width 25mm, height 20mm (wrapped in EC1931b with EC1931)

EC1939 Handwritten label, 'Two jars and fruit, also Mummy Bread, brought from Egypt by the late Revd. J Foulkes Jones'. Probably associated with EC 1934,1935,1938. Length 88mm, width 57mm

EC1940 Detached handwritten brown paper luggage label with white ribbon, 'Right compartment = objects brought back from Egypt by John Ffoulkes-Jones (sic) about 1849'. On reverse: 'Dr J Ffoulkes (sic) Edwards/Parcel P (Cefn Zincs) [?]/16 Feb 49[?]'. Length 118mm, width 60mm

Appendix 2: Reconstruction of John Foulkes-Jones' itinerary, 1855; followed by full translation of relevant chapter from his Memoirs

January 4th 1855 Leaves Southampton on the SS Tagus with his travelling companion, Mr R. Davies

January 22nd Arrives in Alexandria

January 25th Arrives in Cairo via train and steamer

January 30th Leaves port of Bulaq to sail up the Nile

6th February Minya

24th February Reaches First Cataract

Visits Philae and Granite quarry at Aswan

26th February Leaves Aswan

27th February Kom Ombo and Gebel Silsila sandstone quarry

28th February Edfu, El Kab

1st March Esna, and on to Thebes (Luxor)

Visits Luxor sites including Karnak

5th March Dendera

13th March Memphis

14th March Arrives back in Cairo

Visits Cairo sites, including Giza pyramids

Mr Davies is taken ill, and eventually returns to Britain

13th April Leaves Alexandria for Jaffa

16th -30th April Visits Jerusalem and other Christian sites in Palestine

3rd May Leaves Jaffa by steamship

24th May 1855 Arrives back in Liverpool

<u>Chapter VI, Memoir and Letters, with sermons by Rev. J. Foulkes-Jones ... Under the editorship of J. Owen, 1884. Translated by Krys Williams, 2019</u>

SEASON OF WORK: - JOURNEY TO EGYPT AND CANAAN

Thursday, January 4th, 1855, the steamship Tagus set off from Southampton for Alexandria, and among the throng of passengers on board were two Welsh gentlemen – Mr R. Davies and Mr. Foulkes-Jones. On the ninth, when off the Cape of St Vincent, Portugal, one of those with whom we are concerned set himself once again to his old task of keeping his relatives at home notified of his history and affairs and transferred copious notes from his diary into letters. Early in the morning of Saturday the 6th, they were in the middle of the Bay of Biscay, that unruly member of the great body of the Atlantic, who causes many to remember him long after they have bid him farewell, and this person was no exception to the rule:

"Upon awaking this morning, the vessel rolled a good deal; and I heard the water splashing outside — the great Altantic [sic] beating against my head. It was in the dead of night, and quite dark, and no footstep in the cabin. I was awed by the thought that I was floating on the bosom of a sea whose waters had never been fathomed, and with so thin a partition between me and the vast depth beneath. Again it rolled and again it splashed, but that verse came to my mind — 'But it will not come near you'. I felt my exceeding ingratitude and my great unworthiness, but I ventured, notwithstanding, to lift up my eyes to a Father who is ever present and ever near, and with that sweet verse for my pillow, I again closed my eyes and slept." ¹⁰

"Sunday morning, 7th January - Here I am on the first Sunday at sea and the sun has never before brought to me such a non-sabbatical Sabbath morn. If we were not sure that it was Saturday yesterday, I do not think that I would know from anything I see around me that today is 'the Lord's Day'. The only thing that reminded us of this sacred day was the work of the trumpeter in summoning us to our breakfast by playing the 'Morning Hymn' together with his work in calling us to luncheon at midday by playing the 'Spanish *Chant*'. ¹¹ But it grieves me to say that I have noticed only very little, if anything at all, that would lead me to think that 'This is the day that the Lord has made'12. Now I am seated on my own in the saloon with God and my little Welsh Bible. Above my head I heard the sound of frequent walking of a Sabbath-breaker and my mind was newly struck by a well-known Welsh verse, and may the solemn and sacred truth contained within it always remain imprinted on my mind – 'Come out from them and be separate.' I could not but ask myself, Is this really Sunday? - one of those quiet and happy days, on which I would usually preach the beautiful and glorious gospel in the Welsh language to my fellow countrymen in Wales. There, I assume I would see the Sabbath as a day of holy rest, as a fragment of time snatched from the world, and bearing on its sacred brow a seal and impression of deity. But, oh, so different it is today on board the *Tagus*! Today is but like yesterday – the same guffaws, the same gait. Oh, as it is, the day has been defiled by ill-timed jocularity and often for a godless deed. Many breaths have been formed into oaths and profanities, by a rending of the air, cursing of the tranquil and beautiful firmament, and even piercing heaven and making God full of anger. Great God, save us and forgive us."

"As a result of the spectacle I was forced to witness today, I am bound to declare my deep sense of the preciousness and sacredness of the Sabbath. Oh, we are not able to exchange this day for a Sabbath in the midst of the hills of Wales. I am greatly troubled by the notion that I will soon be journeying in regions where little or no attention is paid to the Sabbath. Oh, hasten the day when each day is a Sabbath, every sound is praise and every breath a prayer; when every ship crossing the Bay of Biscay will be a floating church to the Supreme God. Oh blessed day, when songs of praise and thanksgiving are heard from the top of every mast and when the proud crest of every wave is an altar to send to heaven offerings of praise and prayer * * * * *

 $^{^{10}}$ This paragraph is in English in the original text apart from the Biblical quotation from Psalm 91:7 in italics, which appears in Welsh and is italicised in the original text

¹¹ The words *luncheon* and *Spanish Chant* are in English in the original text

¹² Psalm 118:24

¹³ 2 Corinthians 6:17

I cannot end this letter without acknowledging the Lord's goodness in His protection of my companion and me. Let us never forget His kindness: let us be truly thankful and keep ourselves constantly sensible of the divine goodness."

When moored off Alexandria, he writes an account of the last part of the voyage and starts his letter in the same tone and with the same ending as the previous one: -

"Off Alexandria, January 20th, 1855.

My Dear Parents,

We are now almost at the end of our voyage and have been highly favoured in every respect. When we get to Alexandria, we shall have been eighteen days at sea, and except on three or four, the weather has been beautifully fine. Let me never forget this signal instance of the Divine goodness: 0, that I could be made more sensible of it and more grateful to my Heavenly Father for the kind protection which has been exercised towards me in preserving me from so many dangers both seen and unseen, and that in the face of such great unworthiness and great ingratitude."¹⁴

On the 10th, they moored in the Straits of Gibraltar, off the town, and the travellers disembarked to feel their feet under them for a few hours. They rush through the town "like a flock of wild birds let out of the *cage*" 15, and climb its famous rock, which he calls "Penyrallt Gibraltar" (the allusion will be understood by residents of Machynlleth). 16 Then they visit the public gardens and his observations about these give us a truly poetical touch:-

"After having left the rock we visited the public orange groves of the place. These delightful gardens which are so tastefully laid out and which abound in vistas of trees and beds of flowers of the sweetest fragrance and the richest verdure, lie at the base of the steep and rugged rock. I could not help observing the contrast — to see these beautiful and tender flowers looking so strong and secure under the protection and shelter of the rugged but venerable rock, and it again looking down upon these tender creatures from its precipitous heights, lending to them shade and shelter from a scorching sun, as if they were its young and delicate offspring." 17

They reached Malta on the 16th, where they disembarked once again and he bought supplies for the Nile and the desert. Of course, Paul's Bay drew his attention, a place that is described as the scene of the shipwreck in Acts 27. But it was necessary to hasten on to Alexandria and moreover he was in a climate and latitude where he had the opportunity to prove in substance that which he had read many times concerning "a night at sea".

"I had heard more than once about "a night at sea" but had never ever before seen such a spectacle: The firmament was deep azure in hue; the moon bright silver and unusually large and clear; innumerable pure and radiant starry eyes were merrily twinkling on the face of the night; and indeed they appeared to be so close that we were almost tempted to think that they were watching us from the blue sky with approving eyes by winking in a friendly manner at us on our unfrequented path. And that is where we were, a precious cargo of a hundred souls, shut in the great heart of the Tagus, which shook like a small ague on the bosom of the ocean. I felt it worth spending many days at sea in order to enjoy such a night. But there is such consolation in thinking that there is One higher than these lofty skies, and that there is a throne far beyond

¹⁴ The text of this letter is in English in the original text.

¹⁵ The word cage is in English in the original text. I have not been able to find the source of the quotation after searching in English and in Welsh. Perhaps he is quoting from one of his own letters.

¹⁶ "Close to Machynlleth there is a steep hill called Penrallt, the summit commands some very extensive and fine views in various directions." Charlotte Jane Skinner, Sketch book of Charlotte Jane Skinner, done in the summer of 1808, National Library of Wales, 14537C, p. 48. (= Pen yr Allt-fawr (316 m) in the Pumlumon range).

¹⁷ This passage is in English in the original text.

the blue firmament and one sitting on it clothed in the form of mankind, before Whom the lowest of the earth and the most fearful at sea are always welcome to approach in worship and supplication."

They disembarked in Alexandria on the 22nd after a voyage of eighteen days. Only ruins remained of the old Alexandria that had been so famous in ages past. He says of it: –

"This famous city was built by Alexander the Great after he conquered Egypt and took possession of the land for the Greeks. It was intended to be the capital of his empire, and was such for some centuries, the chief port of Egypt and the leading centre of trade in the world. Under the patronage of the Ptolemies, Alexandria became famous for its genius and learning, its religion and morality. Here Jewish rabbis and Christian teachers sat side by side with Greek poets and philosophers. Here was the huge library of the East – a library that was as much a wonder as the pyramids of Giza, a library that would also have been an ornament of and credit to the nineteenth century. It was a terrible pity that the rapaciousness of the destroyer took advantage of the library of the Ptolemies. Otherwise, all the literature and sculptures would be in our possession; the *hieroglyphics* of Egypt would be as intelligible to us as the *classics* of Greece and Rome"*

[* His article "Taith i'r Dwyrain", Y Traethodydd 1857]¹⁹

The present Alexandria was built close to the site of the old city, on an artificial isthmus that connects the old island of Pharos with the African continent. Mehemet Ali did his best to give the city a European character, but, after all, it is just a "mongrel between Europe and Africa: the donkeys, camels, *bazaars* and *mosques*²⁰ are African; the hotels, shops, windmills and warehouses are European" *

[* His Book "Egypt &c." Page 2]²¹

There were only very few ancient remains to draw his attention in the vicinity of Alexandria apart from the *Column of Pompey* and *Cleopatra's Needles*, and by now the two needles have been transferred, one to London and the other to New York. He paid a visit to them all and although he was a Welshman, he took an English liberty to impose a tax on them. He also received permission to go through the mansion of the Pasha and on seeing the library and its shelves empty among such wonderfully furnished rooms, opined that His Excellency was not a great reader.

We are strongly tempted to loiter further in Alexandria with the material we have in his letters and writings, and this will be easy to understand when we say that we are writing in mid-July 1882; but we must remember that our work is not to write the history of Egypt or its people or things, but only as far as this would be to the reader's advantage in order to know the traveller better; thus let us move on after giving a brief excerpt from one of his last letters from Egypt, which struck us powerfully on a second reading, the guns of Britain having belched forth destruction on the city's defences, and while the flames of her combustion were rising to the heights of the sky²²: –

"Sad indeed has been the doom of Egypt. Its annals for thousands of years have been written in blood, and a history of Egypt would be a history of the most dreadful campaigns ever enacted. Now on every hand we discover marks of ancient dynasties overthrown, magnificent temples demolished, and *proud cities levelled*

¹⁸ Both italicised words appear in English in the original text.

¹⁹ This reference is a footnote in the original text. The title of the article means Journey to the East. Y Traethodydd (The Essayist) is the name of the journal that published it.

²⁰ Both italicised words appear in English in the original text.

²¹ This reference is a footnote in the original text.

²² Bombardment of Alexandria by the British Mediterranean Fleet, 11–13 July 1882

with the dust.²³ The mausoleums of many of its kings have been broken into, and many of its mummied dead have been undergone a premature resurrection of dishonour and shame."²⁴

After spending two days in Alexandria, they set off by train towards Cairo, a journey of about 130 miles. They caught a glimpse of the Nile before arriving at Cafferlish²⁵, where they left the carriages to board a steamer, completing the journey to Cairo on *the River of Egypt*.

They reached the capital of Egypt on the 25th and it is easy to understand that he was full of exuberance from the effects of feeling that he was now truly in the East. Alexandria, as we have seen, was a kind of mixture, but in Cairo there was the "costume and dialect of the inhabitants, the appearance of the houses, the form of the streets, the towers and temples, in a word, the whole architecture of an oriental city"* In the same way, the customs and ceremonies of the East were present in the guesthouse. "A black-skinned *youth* from Nubia is your *chambermaid*²⁶, who meets you at the top of the stairs, kissing

[* Remember this was said over a quarter of a century ago.] ²⁷

his hand and saying *Salamat Chowagee*; and when you want something, instead of ringing a bell, you clap your hands and immediately a black bare-legged slave in a blue cloak, white turban and red shoes of Morocco leather comes forward to serve you." Today you see a funeral and hear "mourning and weeping and loud wailing".²⁸ Tomorrow you come across a wedding procession and understand the phrase "to go out and meet the groom".²⁹ And Rebecca comes again to the well to fill her pot and Rachel tends her father's flock and the camels lie down "beside the well towards evening time";³⁰ all is as it was thousands of years ago. "I do not suppose that the Arabs have changed in any way, apart from their religion, since the time when Hagar and her little son Ishmael were banished with bread and a skin of water to wander in the desert.³¹

But above all, he finds himself in Cairo in the centre of a country sanctified by an inspired history. To the north is the land of Goshen; to the west the ruins of Memphis, the seat of Pharaoh's government in the time of the patriarchs; to the east are the ruins of On (Heliopolis), where Joseph found his life-partner and the place where Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he believes on good grounds that it was in this region that the air was burdened with the groans of the children of Israel, when the Egyptians made "their lives bitter through hard service in clay and in bricks". Here there is enough space for vivid imagination to play. He summons the old patriarchs from their graves and makes them replay the exciting *drama* of their lives. He saw Moses alive in front of him, a boy going to school in On and, having become great, standing before Pharaoh as a messenger on behalf of his God. A throng of travellers with their camels and animals are no different to old Abraham and his family and stock wandering the land. A look at the

²³ Possibly an allusion to the *Sacred Biography* by the Scottish minister Henry Hunter (1741-1802), who speaks in it of "proud cities levelled to the earth"

²⁴ This paragraph is in English in the original text, with mausoleums being mistyped as mansoleums.

²⁵ There is no other reference to Cafferlish available via Google search. An examination of Google Maps makes Kafr-al-Zayat the only possibility. "In 1851 the then Khedive of Egypt, Abbas I, anxious to encourage traffic by this important overland route, entered into negotiations with Robert Stephenson for the construction of a railway from Alexandria to Cairo. This was the first railway on the African continent, and the first section begun in 1852, was opened to Kafr-el-Zayat in 1854; a further section throughout to Cairo was opened two years later." (from http://mikes.railhistory.railfan.net/r050.html)

²⁶ This word is in English in the original text.

²⁷ Footnote in the original text.

²⁸ Allusion to Mark 5:38 from the story of raising of Jairus' daughter

²⁹ Matthew 25:6

³⁰ Genesis 24:11

³¹ Genesis 21:14

³² Exodus 1:14

granaries, called "Joseph's Granaries"³³ by the Arabs, convinces him that there is an abundance of "grain in Egypt" and in this place Joseph in his power and magnificence appears before him. See the ten brothers, who are easy enough to handle by now, standing as supplicants before the "governor of the whole land of Egypt". Then he sees the governor go past in his carriage to meet his elderly father in the land of Goshen: leading the old man by the hand to the royal palace and introducing him to Pharaoh and the nobles of the court. There the lowly but saintly old patriarch raises his eyes to the "Lord God of Bethel" and bestows his blessing on the king of Egypt. But he remembers who it was who caused the "boy with the coat of many colours" succeed and quite naturally his reflections turn into a prayer:

"It is a comfort to think that the God of Joseph is alive again in the land where once lay the embalmed body of the patriarch. May He, who blessed Joseph and caused him to succeed in such a remarkable way, bless us too and cause us to succeed in our journey in the land of Egypt."

But reflections must be set aside despite their sweetness, because the great journey of the Nile is before him, without which he cannot visit those immense ruins that remain a wonder of the ages; so he and his friend hire a boat together with the necessary crew onboard – ten in number – and from now on this boat will be their home by day and night for many days.

He stayed in Cairo for six days and then they set off from Bulaq, Cairo's port on the Nile, sailing upstream on the 30th. On the first day, they passed Rhoda Island and thought it was "somewhere along this way the Pharaoh's daughter found the little Hebrew in his basket of reeds ... We searched a lot for the "reeds" from which the basket was made and for the "rushes also by the river". But naturalists tell us that they are no longer to be found – they are *extinct*.³⁴ And is this indeed surprising? No little Moses is being born any more in the land of Egypt; there is no need to hide a small Hebrew in the rushes from Pharaoh's anger any more. Pharaoh has perished and the rushes have come to an end, and abundance has also come to an end, the words of the prophet – "Every reed and rush is broken; and the papyrus by the river has withered and is broken and shall be no more"* (Isaiah 19: 6,7)

[* His article "Taith i'r Dwyrain", Y Traethodydd 1857] 35

Today also, they caught a glimpse of the eternal pyramids, which stand about twelve miles to the west of Cairo. The reached Minya in Middle Egypt on Tuesday, 6th of February and he wrote home from there. The Pasha had two sugar factories in Minya and he was cheered greatly when he understood that the two engineers supervising the work were English. He found the men to be pleasant and kind; but he was longing for his relatives and friends, and above all for his religious rights:

"Although my travels are just beginning, I often long to chat with my relatives and my dear friends; but what grieves me the most is being deprived of a religious service. We had this in Cairo, because there was an English Church there and an Evangelical minister, but nothing like that is to be had on the Nile. In these circumstances, there is nothing for me and my friend to do but sit in the cabin, shut the door, read our Welsh Bibles and sing the hymns of Williams Pantycelyn."

Onwards, past Asyut, the capital of Upper Egypt, to Thebes, "the oldest and (formerly) most populated city in the whole land of Egypt", up to the *First Cataract*, where their journey ended. By then, they had travelled the whole land of Egypt, from the sea to the "border of Ethiopia", and in the twenty-five days since leaving Cairo had measured the Nile over nearly six hundred miles. They had disembarked frequently and it would be sufficiently pleasant for us to linger en route and follow the travellers in their visits to villages along the river in order to study the inhabitants and their customs; or in their hunting forays with guns to shoot birds in order to supply the dinner table, especially since they sometimes risked aiming at some *crocodile* (we did not understand that the hawks are somewhat worse), but abstention was needed, as we wished to loiter a little while following them back.

³³ This term is in English in the original text

³⁴ Extinct appears in English in the original text.

³⁵ Footnote in the original text.

He did not have sufficient leisure to visit the chief ancient wonders of the land while going upstream, as the men were taking the best advantage of the north winds, which were thriving at this time or year, in order to sail against the current. It is true that he did call by some splendid old ruins, but this was only a snippet of waiting time. Now, at the end of the trip, before setting off downstream, the banquet was about to begin and to continue, with rests between the *courses* almost until it was time to bid farewell to the land of Egypt. "*It was now*" he recounted, "our temple revels began." He began with the island and temple of Philae, where legend says the God Osiris was buried. Then he paid a visit to the granite quarry at Aswan – the Syene of the Prophet Ezekiel. We have his thoughts among the giant stones of Aswan in one of his letters, which reflect faithfully one or two of the journeys of his mind:

"After reaching the Cataracts, we visited the granite quarry of what was Syene and is now Aswan on the borders of Nubia. This is the place where many ancient Egyptians laboured hard in the heat of the sun to prepare the immense columns of granite to adorn the temples of their gods. There was not a single species of plant growing on the rocks but the whole quarry had a clean and fresh aspect. The remains of the chisels and the holes of the augers remain in the stone till today and look as new as on the day they were made. We saw great stone towers and the finished work of the carvers upon them, as if waiting for the wagon to transport them to some Egyptian temple. An unfinished obelisk caught my attention in particular; it had been carefully cut and chiselled and its surface had been organised into sections ready for the artisans to work sculptural designs on it. I measured it and found it to be fifty yards, with a proportionate width – a single column of pure granite. While you are staring at this immense column and looking around the quarry and seeing it all looking so new and fresh, you can scarcely help asking 'But where are the workers?'. There is the fortifying column and you are astonished why the men do not come to carve the mystical symbols on its face. It is midday and maybe they have only gone away to have a bit of lunch and you are inclined to linger and wait a little bit more; but all is in vain - they do not come. And as you reluctantly leave, gazing longingly at the last work on the magnificent remains, you remember the words of the Prophet - 'The pride of her power shall fall: they will fall within her by the sword, from the tower of Syene, says the Lord God.'37 No, that midday meal will never end: the workers have gone and will not return again: nevermore will the strike of the mallet nor the ring of the chisel be heard in ancient quarries of Syene."

Monday, 26th February, they turned their faces again towards Cairo and this is how they felt on setting off: - "We left Assouon with our hearts full of the glories of Philae, and yet burning more than ever to see the still grander ruins that were awaiting us down the river." The next day they were in Kom Ombo, where there are ruins of the temple of the gods Sobek and Haroeris. The symbol of Sobek was the *crocodile* and this fact awoke his compassion:

"While admiring the taste and the skill of the ancient Egyptians in erecting such magnificent buildings, you are no less able to feel compassion for them in their ignorance and superstition, in their making such loathsome use of their splendid temples – consecrating them to a snake or crocodile. After the work to erect the heavy columns with their delicate carvings and their decorative capitals, what is to be seen being brought along the magnificent aisle formed by them to its sanctuary in the temple, but an unsightly beast clothed in gold and flowers and perfumed with incense, and the crowd following with songs of praise. It is strange that the intellectual superiority and skill that enabled them to build these temples did not also enable them to feel the foolishness and shame of consecrating them to an animal incapable of reason; and indeed we will never leave their temples without mixed feelings of admiration and grief."

On the same day, he visited the sandstone quarry of Gebel Silsila where the materials for the temples of Thebes were obtained. The next day, he was in Edfu, a place where there were comparatively late ruins, for the temple belongs to the Ptolemaic era. A few miles below Edfu were the ruins of El Kab, formerly Eiletheias, where what with the temples and the tombs there was enough to satisfy the most voracious appetite for wonders. The next day they were in Esna, examining a temple, the structure of which dated

³⁶ Italicised phrases in English in the original text.

³⁷ Ezekiel 30:6

³⁸ This sentence is in English in the original text.

from the time of the Caesars and which was consecrated to the god Neph – the god of the floods. But let us not follow him in his interesting notes about the majestic ruins, because it is necessary to hurry on to famous Thebes – *No* of the prophecies: a city full of importance, as was thought in the days of the patriarchs; its wonders awoke the inspiration of Homer, "perhaps the most remarkable place in the whole world."

"Many long and learned tomes have been written about the wonders of Thebes and we could think that it was some poetic enthusiasm that made men ready to praise this famous place so much; but the truth is that it is impossible to do justice to the immortal Thebes It is considered to be about twenty miles from both sides of the river from the mountains of Africa to the mountains of Arabia. But its place is no longer known to it; on the whole, what remains of it today are its notable temples. Here are Karnak and Luxor, Memnonium and Medinet Habu Of all the Theban temples, the most magnificent is Karnak; it is true that it is a heap of ruins, but there is some immortality in its destruction; it courts are palaces of marble and it posts are like the eternal cedars The truth is that there is no language or phrase that could describe this sight; our feeling here was that we were standing in the midst of a forest of columns, which were the work of some type of terrible giants, and we were merely wretched dwarves beside them. There was no breathing here; we were at times almost terrified by the sight of such a presence – almost losing ourselves in the face of greatness that would overpower us to the ground."*

[* His article "Taith i'r Dwyrain", Y Traethodydd 1857] ³⁹

We advise the reader to get hold of a description of Karnak temple from somewhere if he wishes help to sense this. We have vivid pictures of this at hand that belong to our traveller, but instead of dissecting them, it will be more to our purpose to pay a visit to Luxor, another of the Theban temples. It is true that Luxor, while being so splendid, must yield to the immensity and magnificence of Karnak; but since he, being overwhelmed by longing for the Welsh pulpit, went to Luxor one Sunday night to conduct a religious service on his own, we are obliged to follow him there and the reader can come with us to the service. We have the story in a letter he wrote shortly after leaving Thebes:

"There is no need to say that I am really enjoying myself, and I think, indeed am sure, that I continue to benefit from my trip. What grieves me is my separation from relatives and dear and kind friends; and also that I am unable to worship the God of my fathers in his sanctuary. I long for the Welsh pulpit every Sabbath and sigh for the chance once again to announce the good news of Salvation to my compatriots in the Welsh language. I pray that while I am deprived of every opportunity to preach, I will not lose the *spirit* of preaching. Although I am in a foreign land, with deluded followers of Mahomet all around me, I often find more than ordinary pleasure in communion with God in the solitude of my cabin. Last Sabbath I was in Thebes, the ruins of which are the most famous in the whole world; beside the river stood ruins of a magnificent pagan temple. I had explored it before, but after being in the cabin all day, a fit of longing for the Welsh pulpit came over me; and then, in the evening breeze, I went to the temple, taking my Bible and Hymn Book with me. Having gone on to the sanctuary, I climbed to the vaulted *shrine*40, where three thousand years ago the god of the idolatrous Egyptians was set with pomp and great jubilation; here, surrounded by symbols of idolatry, I took out the Hymn Book and read the verses:

'Thousands will come to perish From the old land of Assyria soon, etc'

'All the kingdoms will be spent And the idol shattered to the ground, etc.'41

and sang them to an old Welsh tune. When I came to the line:

'Dwellers of Egypt and Ethiopia,'

³⁹ Footnote in the original text.

⁴⁰ This word is in English in the original text

⁴¹ From a hymn by Peter Jones (Pedr Fardd) 1775-1845: Daw miloedd ar ddarfod am danynt...

I dared to pray (although I was in a pagan temple) that this prophecy be soon fulfilled; and imagined that I was longing for the day when the "Dwellers of Egypt" would stream under the banner of the gospel, and when every pagan temple would, instead of being defiled by graven images of the idols, show on their faces the writing 'Holiness unto the Lord'⁴²."

He sat here meditating for a long time and hoped that he had not sullied the temple; he felt, instead, that he had been so fortunate to consecrate it for the first time ever, by using it in a manner that was a thousand times more worthy than that of the old worshippers. At the same time, it would have been good for his heart to exchange the magnificent pulpit where he sat for a homely old pulpit in the midst of the land of the hills.

Although our traveller had been in Karnak and Luxor, he was very far from exhausting the masterpieces of Thebes. He had yet to cross to the Libyan side of the river – the *West end of Thebes*. Here the whole plan from Gurna to Medinet Habu is covered by temples and Sphinxes: here are porticoes, portals, courts, sanctuaries, royal palaces and heaps of jumbled rubble in a continent of ruins: here also is Biban Melook – *the royal death valley* 44 – where there are avenues and halls carved out of the heart of the rocks to form the tombs of the old kings of Egypt the *Theban Pharaohs*. But by now they are plundered graves. There is the *sarcophagus* – the huge stone chest weighing eight hundred tons – where the *mummy* of the Pharaoh became empty; for has not the prophet proclaimed – "All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch" 45?

It is somewhat of a sacrifice for us not to go with him to the midst of the wonders of the west bank, because he has written exhaustively, didactically and of course interestingly about them; but we see that we must be content with the short composition above.

They left Thebes on the 5th of March and next day visited Dendera, where there was a temple belonging chiefly to the Roman period. On the ceiling of this temple was the Zodiac, carved in a most skilful and excellent manner, and the previously cited article gives the history of the dispute that took place about a hundred years ago between some French unbelievers and defenders of Christianity concerning this zodiac and the chronology of the Bible. They had now travelled over half the way back and wanted to complete the last part of the journey without delay. While the boat hurries on through the day and night in the direction of Memphis and Cairo, let us give a few general excerpts from his letters, which we hope will be interesting to the reader while serving our purpose.

Here to start, two *photographs* of the land of Egypt:

"Egypt is properly a valley of the Nile. In general, the river is about a mile wide, with extended banks on each side covered with fertile vegetation. The boundaries of the verdure denote the limits of the annual flooding of the river. Adjacent to the verdure there is a strip of sandy desert and then a high row of limestone rocks without any life or growth of any sort. Sometimes, when visiting old ruins, I would have to climb these stubborn mountains, but the view from the top would be magnificent. The land extended away from you like a green *oasis* that had been planted in a desert of sand, with the Nile creeping through its rich heart like a silver snake."

And the location has changed from the mountain to the river itself:

"The Nile is generally a perfect spangle of soft and gentle lustre; and enclosed as we are on both sides by rich vegetation, and the Arabian and African sands, which are generally tinged with a deep golden brown, you feel as if you were gliding down a vast shining mirror, set in a frame of emerald and gold."46

⁴² Jeremiah 2:3

⁴³ The italicised phrase appears in English in the original text.

⁴⁴ This term appears in English in the original text

⁴⁵ Isaiah 14: 18-19

⁴⁶ This sentence is in English in the original text

There was a great faith among the residents in their ability to cure their disorders:

"When we were up the Nile, the patients would sometimes come to us for healing. We would try to assert to them that we did not have medical talent but they would not accept a refusal – like the two blind men in the gospel they would "cry out" I remember an old man, covered in sores, who came up to me at the Nubian border, greeting me, 'Chowage bono' – Good teacher! please heal me. He would not accept a refusal; it was clear that he believed strongly in my ability to heal him. Indeed, he said, in fact like the former leper – 'If you are willing, you can make me clean!' I had never seen a more pitiful looking creature: he was almost naked; and there was only a single rag around him, covered in years of filth. I felt ashamed of myself; but truly was barely able to stand near him. How different was the Saviour! If he were close to this poor creature, he would, as with the leper, 'stretch out his hand and touch him, saying, 'I am willing, be clean.'"

The Mahometan religion comes under his whip. After discussing the wretched plight of women in the land, he says:

"And here is Mahometism! – the worst religion perhaps of all false religions.

For how much longer yet will this monstrous system of iniquity, which deceives and destroys its pitiful subjects, be tolerated. The Arabs consider themselves to be a good and very religious people, because they pray three times a day. I have watched them, praying, turning, with compassion and abhorrence: they will never pray in their houses. How different to what the Saviour tells us – 'and you, when you pray, go into your room and close your door'.⁴⁹ But, on the contrary, the *mussulman* always prays in the open air, and without exception searches for the most conspicuous place to do this, in order to be 'seen by men.' If the Saviour were here, I fear he would often say to a self-righteous Arab – 'Woe to you, who for a pretence make long prayers, for that you will receive greater condemnation'."⁵⁰

He was constantly reminded of these words

- "for thus it is written by the prophet:" -

"It is painfully interesting to study the prophets on the banks of the ancient river, and sad to read Egypt's awful doom in the sombre light of these melancholy ruins, and to see with what minuteness the Divine purposes have been accomplished in the present wretched condition of its population." ⁵¹

"While journeying through the land of Egypt, it is sad to see how literally the prophecies against it have been fulfilled. It was prophesied about it that it will be a 'lowly kingdom': 'the pride of her power shall fall': it will be – 'desolate among desolate lands:' 'the land will be sold into the hands of evil men', and 'there will no longer a prince from the land of Egypt'⁵² Thus, yes thus precisely has it been Through all these ages, in the midst of all the changes and all the revolutions, a tyrant and foreigner was on the throne of Egypt. The sceptre has waned and it is a 'lowly kingdom', yes 'the lowest of kingdoms."

On Wednesday, 13th, he visited Memphis – the Noph of the prophecies, and the very morning after they reached Cairo, having been on the river for six weeks, and he had the treat of seeing and reading a stack of letters that was waiting for him in the hotel, and he, as a faithful correspondent, sets to the task of answering them. It is very typical of him that the first thing in his first answer, after acknowledging the goodness of the Lord and declaring his longing for the chance to serve him, is to think of and feel for others:

Cairo, March 14th, 1855.

⁴⁷ Matthew 9:27

⁴⁸ Matthew 8:2

⁴⁹ Matthew 6:6

⁵⁰ Matthew 23:14

⁵¹ This sentence is in English in the original text

⁵² Variously citing from Ezekiel 29 and 30

My Dear Parents,

I have just been shedding tears of joy and thankfulness over all your letters. Never was a letter from home to me more welcome. We returned this morning from our boat, and are now in the British Hotel. I feel that I have the greatest need to be thankful to my Heavenly Father for having watched over us in all our journeyings so tenderly. 'No evil has befallen us.'53 His angels have watched over us, night and day and have kept us in all our ways. But O, how ungrateful have I been: let me ever be kept mindful of my own exceeding unworthiness, and of the Lord's care and goodness. Now, *cartre'* [home] is dearer to me than ever. What grieves me much is that I have no Christian privileges and that I cannot perform my usual Sabbath exercises. Every Sunday, my heart longs for the Welsh pulpit, and for an opportunity to stand before a congregation of my fellow-country-men, with the large pulpit-Bible before me, and holding forth the word of life.' These are disadvantage which I must submit to here; but I pray that, whatever may occupy my attention, or awaken my admiration — I pray that nothing I may see may cool my love to the Saviour, or damp my zeal for his cause."54

"It appears that many changes have taken place in Machynlleth since I departed. I greatly sympathise with J.M. Jones, the poor man, and his spouse in their bereavement. It is scarcely six months since I was present at the funeral of their little daughter. Little did I think that the one who cried at the early grave of his poor sister would follow her so soon into the same grave. It is a strange thing that our short life here is only like a sort of preface to a long night, darkness of the grave. Its vaunted pleasures are barely worth possessing. The anticipation of them is sweet, but their realisation is bitter and false. May we withdraw from this world and seek a share in the one, where there is 'an abundance of joy' and 'mirth for eternity'."

I rejoiced much to hear the account of ______. I was not prepared for this and it was a surprise that pleased me much. The Lord is very kind and gracious: unlike many an earthly master, who turns away servants in their old age, when they have become useless and incapable, the Lord receives the returning sinner at the eleventh hour. I hope _____ will be enabled to continue steadfast, and to give himself wholly and unreservedly to the Lord."

During his second stay in Cairo, he visited the tombs of the Caliphs and the ruins of On (Heliopolis) and the pyramids. With the help of three Arabs, he climbed to the top of Cheops – the largest pyramid – and received from these amiable brothers the familiar treatment given to those who have the privilege, under the same circumstances, of submitting themselves to their tender mercies.⁵⁵ This time, he stayed in Cairo much longer than he had intended and he is able to give the reason for this:

"We are still in Cairo and have been delayed here longer than we intended. Thus has Egypt become a 'house of bondage' not only to the ancient Jew, but also to the modern Welshmen. This detention has been owing to a little accident which befell my friend Mr. D., and he felt unwilling to resume the journey and to undergo the inconvenience and discomforts of foreign travels without quite recovering from its effects."

His diary shows how he spent his time during those days: reading works on Palestine in preparation for his journey through the land: reading with Mr. D. at the hotel: writing letters to his many friends, etc., etc. By this time, there no need to say that he was a prodigious *correspondent*⁵⁶; as a rule, his letters are equal in length to half a dozen – yes, occasionally equal in length to a dozen – of the correspondence that passes from one friend to another. And while we are talking about this, we will cite from his book to show that we have not been mistaking in our heading, and that it was not *holiday time* for him in the land of Egypt:

"We hurried from the burial chambers of El Kab past dusty pools and great rocky masses that appeared to be boulders belonging to some mountain stream. I was soon back at the boat, with my writing desk and

⁵³ A reference to Psalm 91:10

⁵⁴ This section is all in English in the original text, apart from the Welsh word for home.

⁵⁵ Perhaps these amiable brothers also procured for him the "tip of the Great Pyramid" that is now on display in the fakes cabinet of the Egypt Centre!

⁵⁶ This term appears in English in the original text

making notes of what we had seen in the tomb of this man. We always make a point of this; indeed, no can travel in the East to great purpose without it; and it is not a small thing to do this in Egypt. Temples and tombs follow each other at such speed that it is scarcely possible to keep up with them. When the effects of one visit begin to wear off, you start on another; and when you begin to write, you have so much to say that you do not know how to come to an end. I sat for a long time today, but did not tire at all, and rose from my desk full of zeal for new adventures" – (*Page* 166).

After a further delay, Mr Davies, who was not getting better, decided to break off the journey where he was and returned home. Mr Foulkes-Jones offered to go with him, but his friend did not want him on any account to sacrifice Palestine for his sake. The result was that, to their distress, the two travellers were forced to part after their long and happy journeying together; one turned his face towards Britain and the other made for the Promised Land. Before the latter sets off, let us give a summary, in a letter from Cairo, of his feelings concerning his voyage in the land of Egypt:

"On my departure, I am bound to view my voyage here as a true epoch in my insignificant career. I visited places, about which I previously thought I could never know except as historical matters; and I have gazed upon such scenes that I would have only read about and would have listed the descriptions of them in the same class as the legends of the 'Arabian Nights' and such like. ... But above all, let me never forget how specially we were blessed and favoured in every way. No share of trials or tribulations came to us without us having, on the other hand, all the blessings and consolation for which we could wish. Let me never be guilty of losing sight of this. Doubtlessly the lively memories of the great wonders of Egypt will remain in my mind forever, but what about it, let me cultivate an even livelier feeling and be more familiar with even greater wonders – the wonders of divine goodness. The Lord has been my keeper day and night. If I am saved to return to the land of my birth, let this be a constant aim and joy of my life in future – to love Him more and serve Him better. I cannot fail to feel now that I am in possession of a new reason for thanksgiving and praise, because I will be able to use words that not many can say – I will be able to say, as Israel did, literally on my knees – 'The God, who brought me out of the land of Egypt'."

And here is his farewell to the land of Egypt:

"We are now leaving Egypt, perhaps for ever. Farewell to all you temples, and to you pinnacles and eternal pyramids. It is sad to read the fate of Egypt in the sombre light of its old ruins. It has been a famous country: the principal marketplace of the East, and the mother of world scholarship. Egypt could have said – before there was Greece, before there was Rome. I existed. Egypt had grown to its full strength when other empires lay hidden with their shells. But its crown fell, its sceptre waned; the glory has departed and Ichabod is written on all its ruins. Its temples are ruined mounds, its palaces are plundered: the news of its destruction has filled volumes of books and has been written in the chief tongues of the world: the dust of its ruins has fled on the wind throughout the earth, and the bones of its dead have risen from their tombs to give proof of its destruction and to declare its shame. O Wales! – I say this from the heart – O Wales! May the curse of Egypt never descend onto your lovely hills." (*Y Traethodydd*, 1857. *Page* 225).

On Friday, 13th of April, our traveller sailed from Alexandria towards the shores of Palestine. His original intention, on the assumption that he would be accompanied by his friend, was to journey through the desert, at times following the former path of the Israelites; he said that if this plan were carried out he would sing the verse of old Williams with more pleasure than ever:

"Give a column of fire to lead me at night, And give a column of fog during the day."⁵⁷

⁵⁷ These words as cited by Foulkes-Jones in Welsh (Colofn dân rho'r nos i'm harwain / A rho'r golofn niwl y dydd) form part of a hymn, *Arglwydd, arwain trwy'r anialwch* written by William Williams Pantycelyn (1717-1791), which formed the source for the English-language hymn *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*.

After two days he landed at Jaffa (Joppa) – "a city set on a hill, which cannot be hidden" on the same day, the company set off across the country up to Jerusalem. We would expect the first sight of the Holy City to have a deep impact on him, and this proved to be so in a letter dated from Jerusalem:

"I came to Jerusalem from Ramle (previously Arimathea). This is thought to have been the city of the rich Joseph and perhaps the rocky path we took was the one by which he came to Jerusalem on the great day of the crucifixion. To our left was Lud (Lydda) on the plain of Sharon, where Peter was moved to heal Aeneas, directing the eyes of all on that beautiful plain to an object of even greater beauty – the true Rose of Sharon. We consider this day to be the greatest day of the age, because we hope to be in Jerusalem before comes to an end. **** We had been journeying on from many hours and were weary and exhausted; but finally I realised that I was in the mountains that surround Jerusalem. I hurried to the front of the *caravan*60 in order to catch sight of the city in silence and solitude. As we climbed to the top of the high plain about two miles from Jerusalem, its heavy and melancholy walls started to rise before me, and then the whole city came into view with its multiform pinnacles and its flat roofs. The scene was sad and solemn, and I reined in my horse in order to gaze earnestly upon it. Some daughters of Jerusalem passed by at that time but little thought why I had stopped to gaze. My feelings at that moment can never be told. Behold, there is the place where the Saviour died and as I thought of this, I asked myself, "O my soul, did he die for thee?"

He arrived in Jerusalem about four o'clock in the afternoon of 16 April and made the town into a *head-quarters* for trips out to different parts of the country. Among the places he visited were the banks of the Jordan*, which lay "like a blade of crystal among cursed thorns and brambles" and the Dead Sea† "death-bed of Sodom and Gomorrah, lying between the two borders of Moab and Judah; Hebron and the Oak of Abraham; Bethlehem, where "the small children were screaming and fleeing before you for their lives, as if they had not forgotten Herod's massacre". He felt he could linger here forever. Jericho also, a neighbour as dangerous as ever for a man to "fall among thieves" in it; Bethel, where Jacob slept "in his cloak of camel hair, and angels of God watched over him"; Sychar⁶¹, etc. etc. As in Egypt, so also here, he repopulated the country with Biblical characters – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joshua, David, John the Baptist, etc. It is easy to understand that he put his heart into the task. There are some examples of

[* Perhaps it would not be uninteresting to mention that he took a portion of the waters of the Jordan home with him and baptised his first born in it.

† Years later, when the Reverend John Williams of Aberystwyth was travelling through the land, he discovered the name of Mr Foulkes-Jones carved on a stone on the shore of the Dead Sea, and we can easily believe that the sight of the letters so familiar to him in such a place was a surprise and joy to him.]⁶²

this in the article in *Y Traethodydd*, although not in this essay, but they barely leave ajar the gateway into the land of Canaan. Concluding, he said "We have much more to say about the land of Canaan and we may yet have the opportunity to go through it in more detail from Dan to Beersheba". It seems that the opportunity did not arise and he never chanced upon it, although looking through his manuscripts it is not easy to understand why. Like him, we also have to leave the Promised Land abruptly and this is not so much a misfortune for us when we remember that our nation has read and heard so much about it to that point that a great multitude of them feel almost as much at home in it as in their own country. At the same time, since we have provoked the reader into coming with us to the land, it would not be fitting if he were sent away hungry and therefore let us place a dish or two before him, confident that these will be a delicacy such as he loves.⁶³ Let us make use again of his letter from Jerusalem and understand that we will, as far as we can, quote from his letters rather than from the manuscripts of his lectures, since he, like so many of us, is more free to speak of his experience at a small meeting than at a large one:

⁵⁸ Matthew 5:14

⁵⁹ Acts 9:32-35

⁶⁰ Italicised words are in English in the original text.

⁶¹ Samarian town near to the location of Jacob's well (John 4:5-6)

⁶² Footnotes in the original text

⁶³ Genesis 27:14

"One morning I got up early to go to Bethany. I went up the face of the Mount of Olives by the footpath which leads to the village by the Church of the Ascension. It was this way that the Saviour often went. Coming out of the city with its bustle and strife, he would ascend the steep and rocky footpath. The ascent is very steep and difficult, and sometimes, perhaps, he would stop and look round on the city, as I did myself. It is probable that it was somewhere on this path that he saw the city and wept over it. O that I could contemplate the scene with feelings more like those which animated him. Having crossed the brow of the hill, the path descends by a ravine shaded by olive and fig trees. There is something very still and solemn about this mountain-path: the most hallowed associations cluster around it when we think that it once echoed to the Saviour's footsteps, and that amidst these olive trees, or on the gentle slope he may have often been in deep communion with his Father." 64

"Another time, I visited the Garden of Gethsemane – a small plot of land lying on the slope of the Mount of Olives, with eight huge palm trees and, now, enclosed by a wall. Of all the sacred places around Jerusalem, this one is perhaps the most sacred. This is the place to which the Saviour used to withdraw: this is the place where he prayed in mental conflict and sweated drops of blood: from here he beheld the officials descending the steep slopes of Moriah mountain with lanterns and lamps; yet he 'neither resisted nor retreated'.* He gazed at the bitter cup given to him to drink and said – 'Shall I not drink it?'. O, what love – what submissive compassion! I cannot express to you in words the experience I felt in this place. I thought I had never before had such a consoling and reviving view of divine love. We feel at the time that we are able to say with John – 'We love him because he first loved us'.65

* Isaiah 1:566

After singing -

'While remembering his groans in the garden,' etc.,67

I left the Garden for the last time, but will never forget it: it remains forever fragrant in my mind with the sweetest and fondest memories.

And here is a further word on the same subject from one of his lectures:

"On your right, you will see a grove of trees surrounded by a wall: this is the Garden of Gethsemane: we must go there come what way. An old monk, who has withdrawn from the world to live a devotional life in the garden, comes to open the door for us. The garden is a square plot of about half an acre, abundant in vegetables and flowers. It is strange how natural everything looks; you might think that nature has by now forgotten that great evening: the roses look exactly the same as they do in Wales: a butterfly flits to and from sucking honey from the flowers and drinking the dew from the leaves, just like they do in your garden: the birds dart from branch to branch and sing as naturally as in our own land. No, little does nature know about that great evening – 'If it is possible:' 'and he in conflict.' When did He struggle previously? He made the world here: yes, but made it without effort. He made the sun yonder: yes, but it did not cost him any effort. Here in the garden, on our behalf, it took him an effort – 'If it is possible.'"

He visited the garden now and again, and when we consider the fervent piety of this spirit, it is nothing strange that the "sacred spot" acted as a lodestone (*magnet*) to him until he was unable to keep away.

But what about the location of the last great *act* – the crucifixion. Well, the difficulty of determining the place caused him quite a lot of confusion and the superstitious legends he heard from the monks while searching for it were not very favourable to the spirit of devotion. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, every spot

⁶⁴ This passage is in English in the original text.

^{65 1} John 4:19

⁶⁶ This is a footnote in the original text

⁶⁷ "Wrth gofio'i riddfannau'n yr ardd", first line of a Welsh hymn written by Thomas Lewis (1759-1842)

associated with the crucifixion was pointed out with too much detail – the precision caused distrust. But in the midst of his uncertainly, he received a ray of comfort from Old Mother Nature. He saw there a rock that had been split across the vein and believed that this process of Nature was such that neither Nature itself nor art could accomplish it. He says that even he succumbed to the worst of superstition when he saw "that old crack". A piece of stone was in the crack, and he said in one of his lectures, "it was not possible for me not to take it and *I was compelled* to take it, and I took it home with me to remember the great day of the crucifixion in Jerusalem."

He spent about a week in total in Jerusalem and to be sure did not leave a single spot of interest in or around the town without becoming acquainted with it. Sometimes he placed himself in the hands of a guide but took care to continue visiting the same places a second time on his own to profit better from his meditations. But it is fitting to start citing them, it being so difficult to reach the end; and it would be vexatious for us to turn the Promised Land into the Land of Bondage, thus the reader can head for home immediately, taking with him, if he chooses, two short paragraphs of comments about the country in general:

"Less than half the land is cultivated now; and, more than that, the land that is cultivated does not bear half crops; and worse than all that, half of the small crop is stolen from the people by the *Bedouin Arabs*. How thoroughly are the words of the Bible fulfilled: 'Many shepherds,' said the Prophet⁶⁸ – (and the shepherds are the *Bedouins*) – 'Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard; they have trampled my allotment, they have made my pleasant allotment into a desolate wilderness."

"In truth, while travelling the country, it was difficult to believe that you were in the Land of Canaan. I would ask myself – Is this the most excellent land? If this is it, where are the palms – the palms that were in Jericho – and the oaks that were in Basan? Where are the woods that were adorned with olive trees, the trees from which balm flowed, and the rocks that were once flooded with honey? Let the prophet answer – 'A curse has destroyed the land and those who dwelt in it are plundered:'69 'the oil has failed, the harvest of the field has perished, the vine has withered, fig trees have failed, the pomegranates, palms and all the trees of the field have wilted.'70"

The traveller turned his back on Jerusalem for the last time on the last day of April and after three days set off from Jaffa on the journey home. "He was hurrying so as to be in *Liverpool* by Whitsun if possible." But he was almost disappointed in his plan: indeed, at one time he thought that the day had been reached when all the plans of man would come to an end. The steamship was caught in one of the harsh storms of the Mediterranean Sea, and here is the note in his diary referring to the circumstances: -

"15 May – The storm is increasing throughout the day – a terrifying night – it feels as if an earthquake is shaking the heart of the vessel and pulling it to pieces – I have lost all hope of escaping – I think about my friends at home – I try to be calm in the face of my fate."

But the Lord had need of him for many more years and he reached land unharmed. He disembarked in Liverpool on 24 May 1855, after an absence of five months. This was the Thursday before Whitsun: so the first public meetings he had were those of the Presbyterian Church of Wales and after being deprived for so long of the regular service of the tabernacle, the blessings of Whitsun were certainly "as cold waters to a thirsty soul."⁷¹

⁶⁸ Jeremiah 12:10

⁶⁹ Isaiah 24:6

⁷⁰ Joel 1:12

⁷¹ Proverbs 25:25