

A single broad river, unbroken within the limits of Egypt even by a rapid, two flat strips of green plain at its side, two low lines of straight-topped hills beyond them, and a boundless open space where the river divides itself into half a dozen sluggish branches before reaching the sea, constitute Egypt, which is by nature a southern Holland—"weary, stale, flat and unprofitable."

- 2 The monotony is relieved, however, in two ways, and by two causes. Nature herself does something to relieve it. Twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, the sky and the landscape are lit up by hues so bright yet so delicate, that the homely features of the prospect are at once transformed as by magic, and wear an aspect of exquisite beauty. At dawn long streaks of rosy light stretch themselves across the eastern sky, the haze above the western horizon blushes a deep red; a ruddy light diffuses itself around, and makes walls and towers and minarets and cupolas to glow like fire; the long shadows thrown by each tree and building are purple or violet. A glamour is over the scene, which seems transfigured by an enchanter's wand; but the enchanter is Nature, and the wand she wields is composed of sun-rays.

continued