# Red Sea and Egypt

March 29, 1928

Dear Friends:

World-Travel-Letter No. 4

 Today we are sailing down the Red Sea, on water as calm and smooth as can be. Yesterday afternoon at Port Said, on the Mediterranean end of the Suez Canal, mother and I came aboard this ship, the Athos II, a new French liner which has been substituted for the D'Artagnan, on which we had ordered passage. This is a beautiful ship, very large and easy riding, and 1 am sure our voyage over the Indian Ocean is going to be comfortable. Passing thru the Suez Canal it seems strange for a big steamship to be creeping along across the desert, and several others following behind within range of our view. Before coming aboard this ship we had an auto ride of 25 miles along the bank of the canal and we met five large ships during that trip which indicates heavy traffic on the Canal.

 During our stay in Egypt and Palestine we tried to use every possible minute in sight-seeing, so I did not attempt to write any travel letters, but took notes at many places of interest, and now I shall try and make the trip over again, on paper so that you folks may all go along. I have enjoyed the last ten days more than any part of the trip, so far, and I regret that I will not be able to write down all that I have seen. This part of the trip, especially in Palestine, has been hard on Mother because we were going so steadily, but she now has a long period in which

to rest up on this ship.

EGYPT

 Before telling you about Palestine I must say something about Egypt. We landed at the old city of Alexandria on March 20th and traveled by rail to Cairo. Alexandria is now quite an important city of nearly 400,000 people of many races. In addition to the Egyptians there are many Moslems,Greeks,Italians,French,Australians, Germans and English. Since the city was founded by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C., it has had quite a spotted career, when Alexandria was at its prime,along about 48 B.C., it is said to have had one half million population, but by 1800 A.D. it had dwindled down to about 5000, and it has now almost reached its early zenith. There are many things of historic interest connected with Alexandria that are worth reading if you have the time and inclination. Alexander the Great attempted to blend the land of the Pharaohs with his new Greek empire, and his Egyptian governor made Alexandria a center of art and science, founded a great museum and an institute for the promotion of Greek culture. You will remember the Romans intervened in the quarrels between Cleopatra and Ptolemy XIV, and both Caesar and Antony were ensnared by Cleopatra. In later years, from 96 A.D. to about 400 A.D. there were many bloody battles and massacres in Alexandria.

Cairo, the capital of Egypt, dates back to 525 B.C., when Babylonian soldiers founded a town on the east banks of the Nile. Its history all thru the ages is very dark, including a series of cruelties and tyrannies by the different rulers under whom the people suffered. Cairo, as well as all of Egypt, has had quite a checkered career, and especially during the control of the Moslems. Since Egypt has been under the control of the British the country has enjoyed prosperity and advancement in general.

We entered the city of Cairo at night and the first thing scheduled for the next morning was a trip to the Egyptian Museum, where we saw the Egyptian and Greek monuments of antiquity. Heavy stone statues of Egypt's old kings and queens stand in the central hall where they tower high above the heads of the visitors. Their jewels, coffins and mummified bodies which are kept in glass cases,as well as many interesting papyrus documents recording either their feats or deeds or those of their courtiers and others, occupy most of the rooms of the upper floor. Many very old tablets with ancient inscriptions are on display, and new ones are being found and added to the collection from time to time. These things, are very interesting at first, but one soon gets tired of looking at them when you cannot read the inscriptions.

KING “TUT” AND HIS TREASURES

 A few years ago nearly all of you read in the newspapers about the discovery

of the tomb of King Tutankhamen and the rich treasures in the tomb, but it is hard for one to realize the great amount of gold and jewels until you see them in the Museum. The mummy of King Tut was in a coffin made of thick plates of real gold, beautifully decorated both inside and outside. The king, represented as Osiris has his arms crossed on his breast and holds in his hands the sceptre and the flagellum, He wore a necklace consisting of two rows of thin discs, mainly of gold and partly of blue fayence. Around his chest the deities of Upper and Lower Egypt, in the the form of a vulture and a bird with the head of an uraeus, stretch out their wings,which are made of small plaques of gold,precious stone and glass set in cloisons of gold.

It requires a great many glass display cases to contain all the jewelry and other objects found in King Tufa tomb. There are large sceptres of bronze, covered with gold and blue or black, glass; scores of royal collars, some of them with as many as 250 plaques of gold; a solid gold mask which covered the head of King Tub's mummy, fancy daggers plated with gold and inlaid with glass and crystals; dozens of rings and bracelets decorated in every conceivable way, and hundreds of other objects of gold and jewels which have no meaning that I can see. It is almost unbelievable that all this fancy and highly skilled work could have been done over three thousand years ago, but evidently it was and we saw many other objects in the museum much older than that.

After seeing the museum, we went to the Zoo where they have strange African birds and animals,, I was most interested in the giraffe and the Hippo,and especially the latter, which was quite active and very much at home in the water. We visited several Moselm Mosques and various places of interest in Cairo, including the “Old Cairo" district where people, many thousands of them, are living apparently in the same conditions of ignorance and filth that prevailed thousands of years ago. The population of Cairo is estimated at various numbers from six hundred thousand to one million, and after seeing Old Cairo, I can understand why they do not know and never will know how many human beings, such as they are, live in that city. Of course ,the modern part of Cairo is very nice, with up-to-date, buildings, parks and streets, You cannot stop in Old Cairo without being, surrounded by beggars and ragged children who hold out their hands and plead for "backsheesh" (money).

 The following day we enjoyed a delightful trip up the Nile for a short distance in a river steamer. We passed the island where. Pharaoh' s daughter had hep summer palace and where the baby Moses is thought to have been found in the bulrushes. Soon after lunch time we arrived at the site of old Memphis, the supposed headquarters of Pharcah at the time of the persecution and slavery of the Children of Israel. Among the ruins of this old city there are many stone images. The Sakkara, or site of old Memphis is about four miles long, along the west bank of the Nile,and much of it is covered with, large palm trees. Among the ruins are many unimportant images, but there are a few of considerable importance, for instance there is a large alabaster Sphinx, 14 ft. high and weighing 80 tons,which no doubt required many years to make. The image which impressed me the most was the colossal statue of Ramses II, who is believed to have been the Pharaoh who held the Israelites in bondage, The statue-is now lying on. its back but is. in. almost perfect condition after all these centuries of wear and tear of the elements. It is about 26 ft. long, made of dark granite and on the breast inscriptions which are said to mean "King Ramses II”.

On both sides of the Nile there are beautiful green fields and the soil is said to be the richest in the world. At a certain time each year this land, or that part which is not protected by dikes, overflows with water from the Wile, and a new coating of silt is left to enrich the soil. I understand there is practically no rain and the overflow is the only method of suppling moisture for the ground, except where dikes and irrigation ditches have been constructed. We did not have time to take a longer trip to the upper Mile, but I hope to do that some day.

THE GREAT PYRAMIDS

 Of greater interest to me than anything else in Egypt was the great pyramid of Cheops. There are thirty or forty pyramids in the various groups,but this largest one of all is the most awe-inspiring and It is difficult to believe that it could have been built over 4000 years ago, as claimed. When I first saw it, my first impression was to find out just how big it is-, how much stone it contains, 'what it weighs, etc., and than to look into the possible reason as .to why it should have been built at such tremendous cost of labor. It is said that it required one hundred thousand slaves thirty years, working such parts of the year as they could work, to complete this pyramid. Around the lower part of the pyramid the stones are about four feat thick and of various lengths, weighing many tons, and it is a mystery how they were brought from the quarry which is about 15 miles away on the opposite side of tho Nile, the only place whore this kind of stone is found. Four thousand years ago they had no modern derricks or blasting powder, and no large boats on which to transport tho stones across the Nile but somehow, in some way, tho work was done. I asked our native Egyptian guide how ho thought they raised tho groat stones up to

tho higher parts of the pyramid when, there could not enough man got near a big stone to lift it and carry it several hundred feet up the side of the pyramid. He se theory is that workers brought sand from the do sort and kept the pyramid cover or up to the level of the work curing its construction, and when it was completed they carried away the mountain of sand. The groat stones could then be dragged up the hill by a great drove of slaves and put into place, but I still do not sea how they got the stones across the Nile, which is a very large river.

 According to the dimensions given I figure that the stone is this pyramid wights something over five million tons, and every stone seems to have been cut and dressed after being taken from tho quarry. The pyramid is approximately 760 ft.square which would cover about thirteen acres of ground, It comes to a point 465 ft, above the great stone ledge on which it is built (about 450 ft. now, as some of tho top has been removed). This would figure over 90 million cuts of stone or enough to build a stone wall live ft. high and one ft, thick from Los Angeles to Row York,with many tone to spare. Aside from the interesting subjects of the great bulk and weight of the pyramids and how they could have boon built by primitive workmen, tho great question is, why should they have been built?

 It seems to be a popular belief that the pyramids were built as tombs for the early kinds, and that each pyramid-is a huge memento of tho oppression and tyranny of the monarchs of Old Egypt. There is no doubt thatmost of the pyramids were build for tombs of the kings, but the large one built by Cheops, whose name has been found on some of the great stones, was evidently built for a different purpose,for he was not buried inside this monument. His tomb has been identified by Egyptologists as an elaborately-cut sepulchral pit, which is situated about one thousand feet away from the Pyramid. Many theories? have been advocated regarding the possible purpose and origin of tho largest Pyramid, and scientific discoveries made during

the last few years have led men to believe that deep mysteries are locked up within this pyramid which, when fully understood, will reveal and already have revealed divine guidance in its construction.

Scientific mathematical calculations have boon discovered which were not known to exist four thousand years age. Methods of measuring (in cubits) have boon discovered which, when figured in certain proportions to the Pyramid, indicate the size of the earth and the distance to the sun, and the latter corresponds quite closely with the distance estimated by modern astronomers. Those calculations also indicate Solar and Lunar year duration and tho seasonal Equinox. The key is also given to the specific gravity of the earth so that men may figure it out. According to inscriptions and measurements found it has been determined that tho Pyramid was completed in 2140 B.G.9 and according to a certain unit of measure it is 138 units of distance to tho city of Bethlehem where Christ was born, as near as has been measured to this time. Many other mysteries and points of scientific interest are expected to be brought to light which no doubt have boon reserved until this ago for a special purpose. while in Cairo I found some books, recently printed in England, dealing with the newly discovered scientific features of tho great Pyramid and I find thorn intensely interesting, altho I have not had time to road very much in them up to the present. I will copy here a little from the front of one of these books, which I think will be of interest to you:

 “Egypt is the only country whee the perfect pyramid structure is to be found; that is, a stone building having a square base, with, four triangular, sloping sides mooting at a point exactly above the center of tho base. Altho there are over thirty of these monuments, erected in several groups along tho western bank of tho Nile, only one of them is of importance, namely, tho Great Pyramid of Gizoh. It is tho most northern of a group of nine pyramids, built at tho very border of tho Sahara Desert on a low hill of rock, not -far from tho city of Cairo.

 "Because of its antiquity and size, the beauty of its masonry, and exclusiveness

of design both externally and in.torn.ally; but above all because of tho inscrutability of its purpose, this great odifice has boon from the earliest times universally designated the FIRST of tho 'Seven Wonders' of the world. Owing to its structural durability, the Great Pyramid is the only one of these ancient wonders which now exists.

 “While the modern wold can point with justifiable pride to its achievements in the engineering art, the masterly workmanship of tho great pyramid’s erectors of fully forty centuries ago, the skill everywhere displayed throughout its vast bulb, not only in the preparation and meticulous fitting of the tens of thousands of immense stones, but of its whole design, compels thoughtful admiration. And this sole survivor of the Seven Wonders of the ancients, even in the midst of mechanical triumphs of the present epoch, still maintains its unique distinction of being the earth's chief structural marvel. She Rev. Joseph A. Saiss named it 'A Miracle in Stone'; and research proves that the monument justifies this title even more completely than that gifted author could have known. "it is claimed by many students that the architect who designed the Great Pyramid must have been divinely inspired; for it is inconceivable that the numerous Scriptural and scientific truths which are now known to be embodied in the dimensions" and angles of the building could have been common knowledge that early period. By laborious research, and careful accumulation of records taken at interv'als'""during centuries, man has at last ascertained to a near approximation the size of the earth on which he lives, the distance . separating the sun and earth, the duration in days of the solar tropical year, the lunar month, and the number of years in the processional cycle of the equinoxes, along with many other related facts. With man such knowledge is progressive; and what is accepted as truth today may tomorrow require correction as learning and understanding increases.

 "But with God: surely He knows it altogether. If for some wise purpose, therefore, it was His intention to convince His intelligent and enquiring creatures on the earth that He is an un-erring Law-Giver, and that all things are known to Him and are working harmoniously toward a grand consummation, it is not unreasonable to claim that in the Great Pyramid He monumentalized these very truths which our scientists have all along so eagerly sought to unravel. This is our claim.

 "Built nearly five and a half centuries before the Tabernacle Of Moses was erected in the wilderness, and twice as long before the Temple of David and Solomon appeared in Jerusalem (and both of these edifices were designed under Divine inspiration), the (Treat Pyramid has withstood the ravages of all the centuries till now, and will probably continue to stand for many more, testifying to earth's inhabitants the omnipotence of Jehoval Completed two decades before Abraham was born, it held hidden within its measures and angles a prophetic history of the world, not decipherable until history had run its course. In addition it contains, by means of its designs and proportionate dimensions, important scientific facts, which never could be appreciated until precise knowledge of the laws which govern movement in the universe had sufficiently increased, to prepare the mind of man to unlock them.

 "When we piece together the fragmentary historical records of this pyramid building period, preserved to us in the writings of Herodotus and Manetho, it appears that Egypt was at that time invaded by a nation who came from tho. East, and who easily subdued the Egyptians by their power 'without a battle’, and compelled them to clone their idolatrous temples and engage in the work of building the Great Pyramid. When the work was completed the invaders, who were called (Shepherd Kings) vacated Egypt, and, according to Manetho, wont East to

Palestine, where they built the city of Jerusalem. Thy fact that these Shepherd Kings easily subdued the .Egyptians without resorting t^ warfare, and were able to compel them to stop idolatrous worship and exert their energies in constructing the Great Pyramid, Proves that they were endowed with a mentality immeasurably higher than that of the Egyptians.

 "It is believed by some scholars, notably by Professor C.Piaszi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, that the leader of the Shepherd Kings was none other than Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God. Certain statements by Herodotus, r-3ad in conjunction with some historical records in the Bible, support the opinion that the Shepherd Philition, or Philitis, referred to by Herodotus, and Melchisedec were one and the same; and that he was the real architect of the Great Pyramid, being inspired of God. But Cheops, named Khufu by modern Egyptologists, who was the reigning king in Egypt at the time of the extraordinary invasion, was merely enlisted along with his subjects in the actual work of construction.

 "In his valuable bock, The Antiquity of Intellectual Man, Professor C. Piazzi Smyth brings forward a mass of literary material which establishes the priority of the Great Pyramid as a stone building, proving that this monument must have been reared before any other edifice of importance. He also shows that none of the subsequent stone erections can vie with their great forerunner in fineness of workmanship; and points out that this fact demonstrates a sudden uprise in excellency of masonic construction. Professor Smyth comments upon the closeness of the masonry joints of the building, especially in the walls of the interior Queen's Chamber: 'The joints are so close, that the edges of the two surfaces of worked stone, and the filling of cement between, are comprisable often within the thickness of a hair'. The famous Egyptologist,

Professor W.M. Flinders Petrie, adds: 'To merely place such stones in exact contact at the sides would be careful work (because the stones are so large and heavy), but to do so with cement in the joints seems almost impossible’. In another place Professor Petrie again refers to the marvelous skill of the workmen who built the great Pyramid: 'Their skill in cementing joints is hard to understand. How, in the casing of the great Pyramid, they could fill with cement a vertical joint about 5 feet by 7 feet in area, and only averaging one fiftieth part of an inch thick, is a mystery; more especially as the joint could not be thinned by rubbing, owing to its being a vertical joint, and the block weighing about 15 tons. Yet this was the usual work over 15 acres of surface, with tens of thousands of casing stones, none less than a ton in weight.

 "The celebrated architectural authority, Mr. James Fergusson, also, gives his testimony as to the excellency of the workmanship displayed in the Great Pyramid: 'Ho one can possibly examine the interior of the Great Pyramid without being struck with astonishment at the wonderful mechanical skill displayed in its construction. Nothing more perfect has ever been erected since that time’”.

 These books present an exhaustive study of scientific knowledge that has been gleaned from a careful examination of all disclosures up to this time, and they also cite many Scriptural references which are claimed to have a bearing on the subject. Possibly the future will reveal further mysteries as men become able to read them. At any rate it is an interesting study, and when I return home any of my friends who wish to borrow these three books and study the Pyramids, may do do.

I think this will be enough about Egypt, and in the next letter I shall write about Palestine. We left Cairo by train on the night of March 22nd and rode to Kantara, a town on the Suez Canal, where we had to ferry across the Canal, go thru customs with our baggage and take a sleeping car for Palestine. Everyone of you who feel now that you are traveling along with us on this trip, get ready for beautiful sights, as we shall wake up tomorrow morning in the Plain of Sharon, speeding over wide fertile fields that used to be the "Land of the Philistines”.

 Goodnight, everyone.

 GEO. PEPPERDINE