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I. LITERARY.

DAYBREAK ON THE NILE.

PROF. W. W. MOORE.

A green ribbon a thousand miles long, and ten miles wide; striped with a central line of silver; ravelled at the northern end and the threads spread like a half-open fan; this ribbon of verdure stretched directly south from the Mediterranean upon a limitless expanse of scorching, dazzling sand,—that, says Dr. W. B. Wright, was Egypt, the land “in which it seemed always afternoon.” By others the shape of Egypt has been likened to a lily with a crooked stem. At the upper end is a broad blossom, two hundred miles wide, more commonly called the Delta because of its resemblance to the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet; while a button of a bud projects from the stalk, a little below the blossom, on the left-hand side. This bud is the Fayoum, “a natural depression in the hills that shut in the Nile valley on the west, which has been rendered cultivable for many thousands of years by the introduction into it of the Nile water through a canal.” The long and crooked stalk of the lily is the Nile valley, which is a ravine ploughed through the rocky soil in prehistoric times by the great river itself. Well may Rawlinson say that no other country in the world is so strangely shaped, so long compared to its width, so hard to govern from a single centre.

And yet here was established one of the earliest governments known to history. When the curtain goes up on antiquity, it discloses a venerable civilization in the valley of the Nile with political institutions already organized. The fact that

A WINTER LESSON.

WM. S. LACY, D. D.

But yesterday the world was bleak and drear,

The wintry wind, with anguish unavailing,
O'er forests stripped, o'er meadows dun and sere,
Swept by in ceaseless wailing.

The desolate Earth, despoiled of all the gems
Set by the loving hand of Spring and tender,—
Of Summer's rich and changing diadems,—
Of Autumn's regal splendor,—

Sit's a discrown'd queen, with vestments torn,
Aer beauty fled, her happiness departed ;
Sees her sore wretchedness, crouched and forlorn,
And weeps all broken hearted.

And thus night's shadows gather o'er her head,
Bowed in the agony of bitter sorrow ;
No kindly staa its friendly radiance shed,
Nor hope shone for the morrow.

Come, blessed sleep! thou sweet strange mystery,
And give some promise of a new creation :
Lo! the day dawns—the world awakes to see
A glorious transmutation.

Far as the eye can reach, a robe of snow
Enfolds her softly, late so unbefriended,
While kindling in the East, the morning's glow
Makes her attire more splendid.

Field, fell and moorland, knap and craggy scar,
Where yonder gorge the rugged road discloses,
The sacred mounds whose marbles gleam afar,
Where hallowed dust reposes ;

The zigzag fence, the rude unsightly rail,
The straggling furze, the ragged hawthrn hedges,
From whose frail shelter whirrs the frightened quail,
The river's rocky ledges ;

The huge woodpile, the neighboring barn-well drowned,
The distant homestead, desolate and cheerless,
The idle harrow and the patient ground,
Wear Winter's mantle peerless.

The fleecy down sleeps on the sloping croft,
 Drapes the bare rocks, the mountains grim and hoary ;
 The sturdy forest branches bear aloft
 Their feathery plumes of glory.

Ah ! whose the Master Hand that in one night
 Can cause such swift, such silent transformation,
 Changing to beauty, matchless, calm and bright,
 So dreary desolation ?

Hath some kind power selected as His bride
 This sinning earth of all Aeaven's radiant cluster,
 And clothed her in this glistening robe of pride
 Of pure and fadeless lustre ?

Doth incensed Justice thus her cause uphold,
 Her wrong to judge, and her award determine,
 That tenderly her form He doth enfold
 With His own spotless crime ?

Or in the consciousness of innocence
 Hath she arrayed herself in pristine beauty,
 Still plodding, stainless, as her best defence,
 The royal road of duty ?

Not thus, o Earth, thou winnest such reward ;
 Unworthier worshipper ne'er looked to Heaven ;
 Thy mercy-woven garb is from the Lord,
 Thy dower is Christ-given.

O sinning soul ! this lesson is for the : [ness ;
 Through nature's voice, God speaks in wondrous sweet-
 Guilt-stained and vile, Christ's robe of purity
 Hides fully thine unmeetness.