

Egypt of Today Is Great Sunny Peaceful Place

REV. F. C. STIFLER TELLS OF VISIT TO HOLY LAND

"Closeup" Given of Strange Mixture Inhabiting Land Where People Always Lived

This is the fourth article of an intensely interesting series by the Rev. Francis Carr Stifler, pastor of Wilmette Baptist church, telling of his trip to the Holy Land. This story describes Egypt, the place where people have always lived.

By Rev. Francis Carr Stifler

EGYPT is an argument for irrigation. Although the most progressive nations of late history have lived where nature ruled the water supply, there have, since before the dawn of history, been millions of people living continuously in the delta of the Nile, and far up the valley, because, although the rainfall is seldom more than two inches a year, there is always water available from the great river.

Egypt is a place, then, where people have always lived. It is a great sunny peaceful place where 13,000,000 now live. If, as a Yale professor has recently said, the northeastern quarter of the United States is the stormiest part of the inhabited world, Egypt is certainly the calmest. No thunder and lightning, no earthquakes, just sunshine, with clouds occasionally, rain rarely and gentle winds always. Egypt's only fear has been from drought and flood. But since Sir William Willcocks built the great dam at Assuan, not only has the fear of flood been quite removed, but water has been conserved against the day of drought.

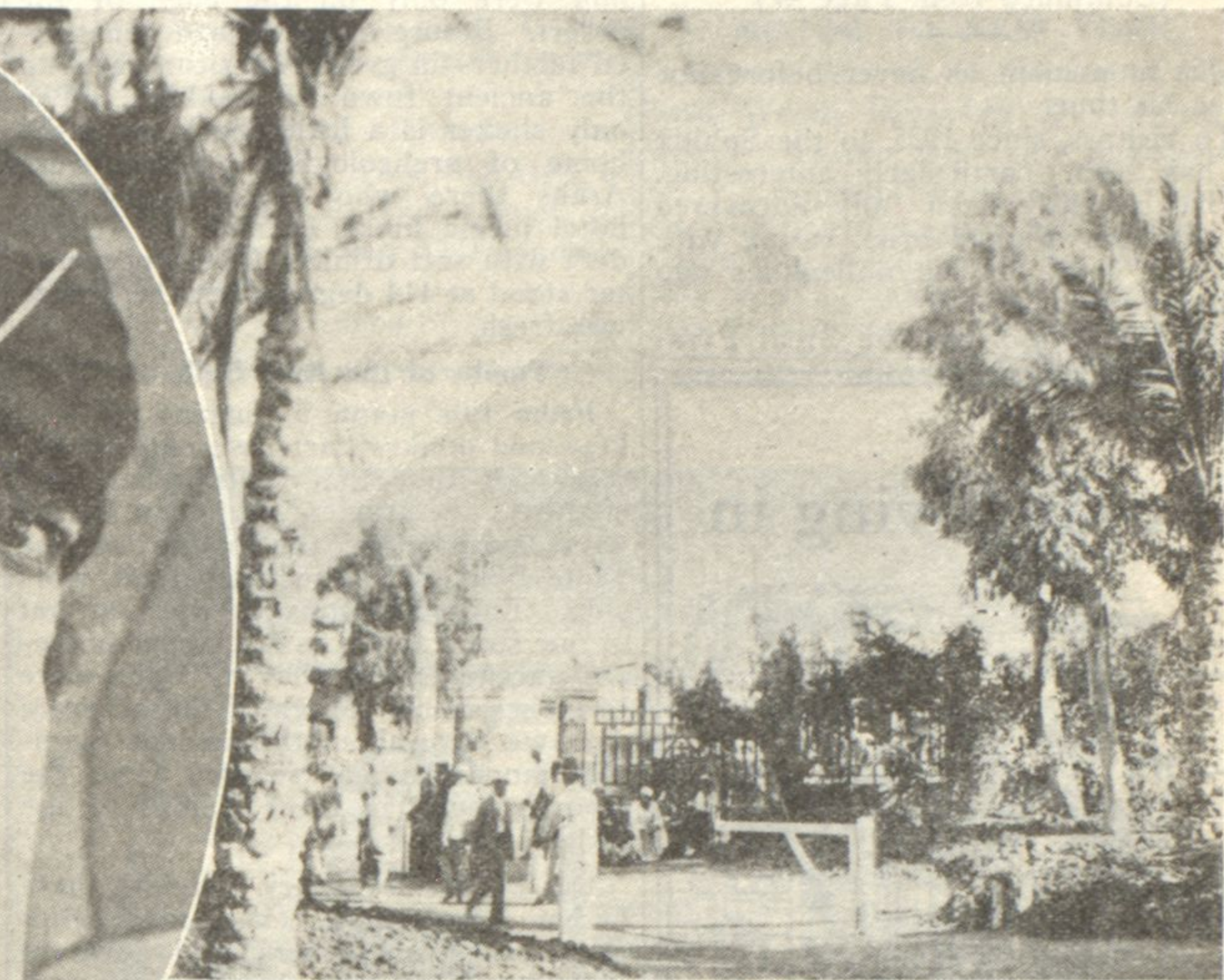
Egypt Land of Strange Mixture

Because people have always lived there, one finds, in Egypt, a strange mixture of the super-ancient, and the ultra-modern. And because the land is relatively small one feels the greater likelihood that he is standing where the ancients stood. Some of us are rather susceptible to the surge of sentiment. There is something solemnizing in the thought, as one looks at the obelisk at Old Heliopolis, that Joseph once gave orders concerning it, and that Moses looked on it. Still more impressive are the thoughts that cluster around the pyramids and the Sphinx. They were ancient antiquities when Moses saw them, and Jesus as a little child must have stretched out his chubby hands in wonder toward them.

There are but two cities of any consequence in Egypt. Alexandria, about as large as Milwaukee, and Cairo, not quite as large as Detroit. My comparisons are in population. In acreage, the cities of the East are surprisingly small for streets are narrow, and houses are crowded. Alexandria is the chief port and commercial center. Cairo is the capital and center of culture. Alexandria is, like most port cities, cosmopolitan. One does not see Egypt till he travels inland.

Two-Thirds Farmers

As we took the train one Monday morning, from Alexandria to Cairo, we saw Egypt much as she has always been. Such crops, such ceaseless labor. There was never a moment when we could not see at least one water wheel in action. An ox or a camel slowly treading ground around his monotonous circle under a man, half-sleeping, lay under a palm tree



THE PICTURES: Cheops' as seen from a distance (upper right)—A modern Egyptian Lady (upper left)—Inhabitants of a Nile village having their afternoon mud bath (below)—Hassanin, guide of the American tourists in Holy Land (right)—"Old Memphis," white camel carrying load of wood (bottom).

near by. In the Delta of the Nile there are three crops a year, every year. We were watching them from our train harvesting the largest crop. There was cotton, rice, maize, millet, sugar-cane, and melons. Two-thirds of those declaring their occupations in the last Egyptian census said they were farmers. And one could easily believe it as he rides across the delta.

Cairo is the world's center for those interested in antiquity and Mohammedan culture. It has good hotels and is a favorite winter resort for Europeans. Almost the first sight that we were shown was an ancient institution that is still alive. It was the Mohammedan University of El Azhar. It was the first place in our travels that we were made to either remove our shoes or put huge sandals on our feet. We did it often afterward, a requirement of all Mohammedan mosques.

What a strange place El Azhar is. Most on an open court, where students old and young were sprawling about, memorizing the Koran, and other sacred books. The books themselves were taken from cases in a museum. The place



was in ill-repair, and badly needed cleaning day. The sleeping quarters were cramped and foul. Yet this is the local center of the educational life of the Moslem world.

What a contrast with the American University, not a mile away, which I visited three days later. A stray tourist with \$50,000 unassigned, had given them an auditorium, the largest in the city. It was about completed when I saw it. Dean Cleland expects that this winter he will entertain most of the student body and many of the professors from El Azhar once or twice a week at his popular lectures on science, philosophy and of comparative religion. This is only one of the many ways in which the student-traveler

sees the broadening and the breakdown of Islam.

One day we spent in the desert. It was July 27th. Hot, but a good breeze and no humidity. Our first stop was the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx. The street car takes you to the scene just beyond the outskirts of Cairo. There the battle begins, the unending Battle of the Nile, between tourists on the one hand, and camel drivers and beggars on the other. Of course we rode up to the Pyramid on camel-back. Egypt is not Egypt without that experience. My camel was named Queen Marie and my driver Moses. Other camels were Yankee Doodle, Almighty Dollar, Calvin Coolidge, Central Park, and Charlie Lindbergh. Other drivers were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, John the Baptist, Isaiah and Jeremiah. The drivers were gifted with eloquent English on one theme, the eternal question of the tip you were to give them. They were also quick to learn your name and would address you by it in every sentence. And besides your driver, you were besieged by boys selling stones, laces, little idols and what not.

The picturesque Egyptian police officer in his white suit, was needed more than once to rescue us from a concerted attack. The great pyramid is wonderful to behold, and wonderful to contemplate. The old king who was wise enough to have himself buried thus above the ground, rather than in a cave somewhere where he would be forgotten, has kept the world acoming

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