

**LETTERS  
FROM THE NILE**

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Letters from the Nile by J. W. Clayton

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**J. W. CLAYTON**

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# LETTERS FROM THE NILE

BY

**J. W. CLAYTON,**

137<sup>B</sup> LIGHT DRAGOONS.

"Du sublime au ridicule il n'y a qu'un pas."

"In pity spare us when we do our best  
To make as much waste paper as the rest."

LONDON:

THOMAS BOSWORTH, 215 REGENT STREET.

1854.

*203. a. 62.*

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## PREFACE.

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THE few pages here offered to the public were not originally intended for such a distinction, as the natural dread of criticism attending the first leap into the world of literature chased away any doubts I may ever have entertained upon the subject; and I contented myself, accordingly, with submitting my letters and sketches, descriptive of a short journey in Egypt, to a friend in England, who, upon my arrival in my own country, earnestly entreated me to allow them to see the light. Trusting,

therefore, to the leniency of those who undertake the task of perusal, I boldly venture to launch them upon the waves of public opinion, trusting that a gale of prosperity may bear them safely to a friendly haven.

J. W. C.

11, PORTMAN SQUARE,

1864.



## LETTERS FROM THE NILE.

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### LETTER I.

I'm gone,—and shivering in the gale  
The bark unfurls her snowy sail ;  
And whistling o'er the bending mast  
Loud sings on high the freshening blast ;  
And I must from this land be gone,  
For I would seek another zone.

MY DEAR ———,

It is a quarter past eight on the morning of the 4th of October, 1853. We (that is, four of us) are in the midst of the fearful bustle generally attendant upon the starting of the tidal train from London Bridge to Paris; the weather is gloomy and dispiriting; huge bowlders of clouds are driven forward by the breath of a howling autumnal wind; but, however, the hopes of a gay and prosperous voyage warm our hearts

with their sunshine. For when did the recklessness of youth ever pause to consider the aspect of outward and commonplace appearances, which did not interfere with any determined or favourite pursuit? So, after having been jostled against the elderly females, dogs, and children, who are always in the way upon these occasions, we seek refuge in our carriage; the window is drawn up, the engine screams, and we are off. In two hours we are on board the steamer, which is waiting for us in Folkestone harbour, groaning, panting, and puffing like a stranded whale that is struggling to get into the open sea; the cords are at length cast off, the usual adieus made,—“ Good bye, Charles, dear; take care of mamma,” and all that sort of thing, and the vessel glides from her moorings.

By the fair goddess who rose from the wave there is something truly joyous, fresh, and exhilarating in the breeze that wafts us on as we bound carelessly over the foaming waters, when the land disappears from our sight; as well as the healthy complexion of the passengers, the different tints and hues of which are curiously varying, and who are endeavouring to appear easy and graceful, and trying hard to look as if they never felt better in their lives. But alas,

Nature is a bad dissembler, and everything must turn up!

It blows great guns and small arms, the deck is afloat, and the steward demands his fare, which, just at the moment you wish to be thrown into the sea, you remember with agony is in the remotest depths of your innermost pockets. The cabin (the atmosphere of which could be easily cut with a tolerably sharp knife) is swarming with individuals, in every stage of alarm and illness; one old woman lies flat on her back, after a large dinner on shore, and naturally indulges in nightmare, and alarms the ship's crew with cries of "*Murder*;" and in the centre of the floor a poor gentleman is suffering under an utter prostration of strength and intellect, with an eau de Cologne bottle thrust into his nose, and everybody walking over him: so, after three hours indulging in this sort of amusement, Boulogne appears in sight, and a horrible confusion ensues, as every one prepares to be the first in the Salle de Douane to get his passport signed.

Here we have an opportunity of noticing the contrast, the country, the people, and their manners and customs, and of those we have left three hours before.