

Suckers," are plant-lice, water-bugs, grasshoppers, and crickets. To the other division belong the butterfly, the moth, the bee, the ant, and the beetle.

The book is charmingly written; even though the author has not woven her descriptions into a connected story, she has so gracefully intertwined the facts presented, that the reader's entire attention is carried along with her. In imagination one follows her into the woods and to the seashore, and sees exactly what she observes.

Her language is simple, pure, clear, and very impressive; a child could easily comprehend what she writes.

"Life and Her Children" is considered by scientists to be perfectly true to nature. The illustrations and explanations are vivid and easily understood.

The author most certainly has accomplished her purpose, that of acquainting the young with the lower forms of life by a simpler and more systematic arrangement than is usually found in scientific works. The reader will, after having carefully studied the book, feel a closer union existing between himself and the lower forms of life.

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## EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

### THE OLDEST UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD.

An item in last month's INDEX about the great Mohammedan University at Cairo, brought back so vividly my visit to that institution in 1889, that I decided to make it the subject of this long-promised contribution.

Our party of six, including two Normalites, was under the guidance of a young Arab, Sulie-man Moosa, whom we commonly called Solomon Moses. For a party of teachers he was the very prince of dragomans, for, while he took us to innumerable interesting and out-of-the-way places, he held rigorously to the educational principle, "Never tell a traveler anything that he can find out for himself." On the occasion of this visit, however, our somewhat luke-warm appreciation of the pedagogical Solomon Moses was greatly increased, for on entering what is considered the very nursery of Moslem fanaticism, even his presence was some protection. English domination in Egypt has made it possible to gain admission to the University, but the smoldering fires of hatred are always ready to burst forth on the slightest provocation.

After driving through numerous narrow and devious ways, none of which could be dignified by the name of street, we approached the Gamiel-Azhar, an ancient mosque, which is the seat of the University. On either side of the way were numerous barbers shaving the heads of students with admirable skill, but we were warned not to stop, nor to observe them too closely, for the least sign of contempt or ridicule on the part of a Christian might arouse a mob. So we made our way as unobtrusively as possible to the main entrance, called the Barber's Gate, and having put on our slippers were allowed to enter.

We found ourselves in a large covert on the pavement of which hundreds of boys were sitting cross-legged with their shoes beside them. Some were seated in circles around a teacher reciting their lessons, but the majority were studying aloud in a queer singsong, rocking their bodies to and fro, as a sort of accompaniment. Above this Babel of voices, we heard the angry cries of a boy, who, kicking and struggling, was being dragged off to punishment. As we made our way carefully through the throng, there was an evident desire on the part of some of the boys to show off by rocking themselves more vigorously, and reciting in a higher, shriller key. But this was more than offset by the dreadful faces which most of the urchins made at us. Amid all these strange surroundings, one thing alone was familiar to the Normalites—it was an old shekh, or professor, in turban and baggy trousers, solemnly correcting a pile of examination papers. We almost expected to see him put a C or a C minus at the top of each paper, as is the custom at our Normal.

The number of students belonging to the University is variously estimated at from ten to fifteen thousand, and probably five thousand were present on the morning of our visit.

On leaving the coast, we entered the great hall of instruction, where the scene resembled that in the outer court, but the students seemed older and more orderly. They were seated on the floor, but it was neatly covered with matting. Here and there, as in the outer court, there was a student lying at full length, fast asleep, but the majority were praying, studying, or reciting. One shekh was lecturing with great animation on the noun, another discoursed on rhetoric, while the president of the University, who is totally blind, commented on a Arabic poem, which a student read to him line by line.

Some of the shekhs are men of great ability,