

and palaces, once so splendid and massive, as to bid defiance to the ravages of time—her plains, and valleys, formerly teeming with abundance, and supporting a numerous population—now stripped of her ancient glories, her fairest regions depopulated, and converted into arid wastes,—her cities overwhelmed, and prostrate in the dust—and the colossal monuments of her kings, and the temples of her gods, half buried beneath the sands of the Desert! The drifting of the sands of the Lybian desert by the westerly winds, observes M. De Luc, has left no lands capable of cultivation on those parts of the western bank of the Nile which are not sheltered by mountains; while in Upper Egypt, whole districts are covered by moveable sands, and here and there may be seen the summits of temples, and the ruins of cities which they have overwhelmed. “Nothing can be more melancholy,” says Denon, “than to walk over villages swallowed up by the sand of the Desert, to trample under foot their roofs and minarets, and to reflect that yonder were cultivated fields, that there grew trees, that here were the dwellings of men, and that all have now vanished. The sands of the Desert were in ancient times remote from Egypt; and the Oases which still appear in the midst of this sterile region, are the remains of fertile soils which formerly extended to the Nile.”\*

\* See an Essay on the Moving Sands of Africa, in Professor Jamieson’s Translation of Cuvier’s Theory of the Earth, p. 375.