

kind assistance of the night, I felt as I looked down on the Canal, that scales fell from my eyes; and though in some ways Port Said was the most uninteresting place in the world, it struck me in some as being one of the most interesting. The Canal before me was as broad as the Thames below London Bridge; its farther bank was black with a mass of shipping; lights glittered, and sometimes an unseen steam-tug whistled. As one after another the bows of the giant steamers met my eye in a line that seemed interminable, the illusion seized me that I was looking at the waters of London. The sense came over me of the huge overwhelming city, the heart of the world's life; and when I lifted my eyes to look for the roofs of Southwark there was nothing but the hollow night and the solitudes of the endless desert.

But there was more in the scene than this. Presently my eye was attracted by a sight which every night-watcher in Port Said knows—a dazzling star, with daggers of pale blue rays, shining low in the south, where the desert and the night were indistinguishable. It was not shining only, but, watching it, one became conscious that it moved. It was an ocean steamer advancing through the Canal by electric light. Nearly every night, and the whole night through, one or another of such lights is to be seen from Port Said dawning or dying on the horizon, and filling the darkness with complicated vague suggestion. In literal truth they are taken on board