

## T H E B E S.

SOME 600 miles above the mouth of the Nile, and situated on its banks, are the remains of what once was the most splendid city in Upper Egypt, a city whose praises have been sung by poets, and whose glories have been described by the earliest classical historians. Now, alas! all that exists to tell of what Thebes once was are its temple-palaces of still unrivalled grandeur, the tombs of its early kings and nobility, and here and there a monument, which marks the site where buildings, long since swept away, once stood.

Thebes was justly constituted the capital of Upper Egypt, and, indeed, it is supposed to have derived its name from a corruption of Apé or Tapé, "the head." The wealth of Central Africa poured into it through Ethiopia, whilst the trade of Arabia and the Indies was directed to it from ports in the Red Sea (which lie only some 100 miles distant from it), arriving in vast caravans across the desert, in preference to finding its way to Lower Egypt through Suez and its neighbourhood. The commerce of these distant climes eventually passed away from it, and an estimate of its importance may be formed from the anxiety to participate in it, which has possessed adjoining countries in all ages. It may be that the early attempts (some successful) to pierce through the Isthmus, and connect the Red Sea with the Mediterranean, were caused by a desire to divert traffic from this great emporium. At all events fate willed that Thebes should ultimately fall in prosperity, and its long siege by Ptolemy Lathyrus gave it a blow from which it never recovered.

The city lay on the eastern and western bank of the river, the former being the most important, the latter being considered more as