

CHAPTER VII.

MAHMOUDIEH CANAL—BATTLE OF ABOUKIR—ATFEH.

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of scourge-driv'n labor, or the one deep cry
Of people perishing—then thinketh, "I have found
New waters, but I die."

Anon.

The blue steel bit, through helmet split,
And red the harness painted ;
The virgins long lamented it,
But the dogs were well contented
With the slaughter of that day.

Scandinavian Rune.

ARRIVED at Alexandria, the traveller is yet far distant from the Nile. The Canopic mouth is long since closed up by the mud of Æthiopia, and the Arab conquerors of Egypt were obliged to form a canal to connect this seaport with the river. Under the Mamelukes, this canal had also become choked up, and her communication with the great vivifying stream thus ceasing, Alexandria languished—while Rosetta, like a vampire, fed on her decay, and notwithstanding her shallow waters, swelled suddenly to importance.

When Mehemet Ali rose to power, his clear intellect at once comprehended the importance of the ancient emporium. Alexandria was then become a mere harbor for pirates—the desert and the sea were gradually encroaching on its boundaries—but the Pasha ordered the desert to bring forth corn, and the sea to retire, and the mandate of this Eastern Canute was no idle word—it acted like an incantation to the old Egyptian spirit of great works. Up rose a stately city, containing 60,000 inhabitants, and as suddenly yawned the canal, which was to connect the