

Lecture No. 2.

As I have described the situation of Egypt, one feature of it that could not fail to impress one is its comparative isolation. On both sides are desert in which it is almost impossible for human life to last very long. To the south, the river flows through more and more barren country until its upper parts are in the jungles of central Africa. The only point at which there is much contact of Egypt with other lands is at the northeast where there is the possibility of entering Egypt from Asia. At this point, the Egyptians had to guard against invasion. From most other directions they had comparatively little to fear. As a result, Egypt was able to develop a native civilization over a period of some thousands of years with comparatively little interference from outside and comparatively little influence from other cultures. It would be hard to duplicate this long period of development without outside interference anywhere else in the world.

Mesopotamia is also a land which is made by a levelling of land by two rivers. The River Euphrates and the River Tigris come down from the mountains to the north of Mesopotamia. The Tigris is the further east of the two rivers. It flows directly south from the mountains. The Euphrates begins on the northern side of the mountains, flows along to the west, curves around the mountains and comes back to the east along the southern border and then turns south. The two rivers flow in a general south-easterly direction almost parallel for some hundreds of miles of each other, then again they separate quite a distance. In modern times, they join into one river about a hundred miles before they enter the Persian Gulf. This hundred miles of territory has been deposited by the rivers during these centuries. In ancient times, the Persian Gulf extended much further northeast and the two rivers did not join together. On the west of Mesopotamia, the country is desert,