

# M O D E R N S A E L - H A G A R



The agricultural way of life in Sa el-Hagar is similar to that of the people who lived here thousands of years ago. Some of the crops grown today are different.

For example in the past there was no cotton, potatoes, rice, bananas or tomatoes. The ancient crops included barley, wheat, onions, grapes, beans, cucumbers and lentils.

There were no water buffaloes or chickens in the past, but there were cattle, sheep, goats, ducks and donkeys.

There were no machines such as water pumps or cars and no electricity for lights or television. Instead people collected water from the canals and rivers, lit their houses with oil lamps and told each other stories and tales.

There would have been a market in ancient Sais, as there is every Tuesday in Sa el-Hagar, but there was no money in the past and people exchanged their goods for what they could get or trade with other people.

## The Village Market by El-Bayati

Sun, emaciated donkey, flies

An old soldier's boots

Passing from hand to hand, and a peasant staring into space:

"At the beginning of the new year my hands, no doubt, will be full of money, and I shall buy these boats."

A crowing rooster fleeing from a cage and a little saint:

"Your nail does not itch as much as your skin. And the road to hell is closer than that to the garden of paradise."

Flies and weary harvesters:

"They sowed, but we did not eat. We humbly sow, and they eat."

The people returning from the city:

"What a blind monster! Its victims are our men, our women and our innocent dreamers."

Mooing cows, vendors of bracelets and perfumes crawling like beetles:

"My dear lark, O Sodom! The herbalist can hardly repair what the tyranny of age has ruined."

Black guns, a plough, a dying-out fire, and a blacksmith, with blood-shot eyes, fighting off sleep:

"Always, birds of a feather flock together, and the sea cannot wash sins, not the tears."

The sun at its zenith, the women grape-sellers gathering the baskets:

"The eyes of my love are but two stars, his bosom spring flowers."

The market now is empty, and so are the little shops, but the flies are still hunted by children

And in the distance the huts are yawning in a forest of date-trees.

## سوق القرية

الشمس ، والحمر الهزيلة ، والذباب

وحذاء جندي قديم

يتداول الأيدي ، وفلاح يحدق في الفراغ :

" في مطلع العام الجديد

يداي تمتلئان حتما بالنقود

وسأشتري هذا الحذاء "

وصياح ديك فر من قفص ، وقديس صغير :

" ما حك جلدك مثل ظفرك " و " الطريق إلى الجحيم

من جنة الفردوس أقرب " والذباب

والحاصدون المتعبون :

" زرعو ، ولم نأكل

ونزرع ، صاغرين ، فيأكلون "

والعائدون من المدينة : يا لها وحشاً ضريراً !

صرعاه موتانا ، وأجساد النساء

والحالمون الطيبون "

وخوار ابقار ، وبائعت الأساور والعطور

كالخنساء تدب : " قبرتي العزيزة ، يا سدوم !

لن يصلح العطار ما قد أفسد الدهر الغشوم "

وبنادق سود ، ومحرث ، ونار

تخبو ، وحداد يراود جفنه الدامي النعاس :

" ابدا ، على أشكائها تقع الطيور

والبحر لا يقوى على غسل الخطايا ، والدموع ،

والشمس في كبد السماء

وبائعات الكرم يجمعن السلال :

" عينا حبيبي كوكبان

وصدره ورد الربيع "

والسوق يقفز ، والجوانيت الصغيرة ، والذباب

يصطاده الأطفال ، والأفق البعيد

وتشاؤب الأكواخ في غاب النخيل