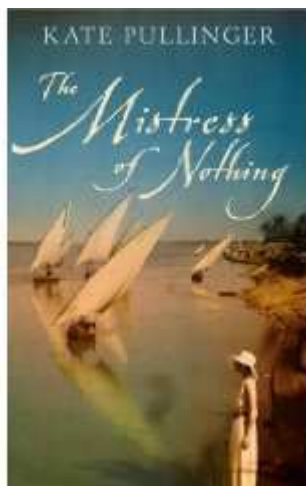


## **The Mistress of Nothing by Kate Pullinger**



The Mistress of Nothing draws its inspiration from the life of Lucie, Lady Duff Gordon, Victorian writer, traveller and highly unconventional intellectual. In 1862, at the age of 40, creeping tuberculosis led Duff Gordon to leave her beloved husband and children in England and travel to Egypt, where it was hoped that the hot, dry climate would speed her recovery. Lucie was able to travel with only one servant, her maid Sally Naldrett. Turning her back on the English community, she settled in Luxor, where she cut her hair, exchanged her corsets for native male dress, and learned to speak and write Arabic. However, when the unmarried Sally becomes pregnant Lucie exhibits none of her habitual broadmindedness. Furious, she demands that Sally leave the household and return, penniless and without references, to England. Pullinger's narrative flows as smoothly as the Nile whose density and odour she seductively evokes. This is an absorbing and gripping tale,