



**WITH KITCHENER  
IN CAIRO . . .**  
Sydney A. Moseley

*White*

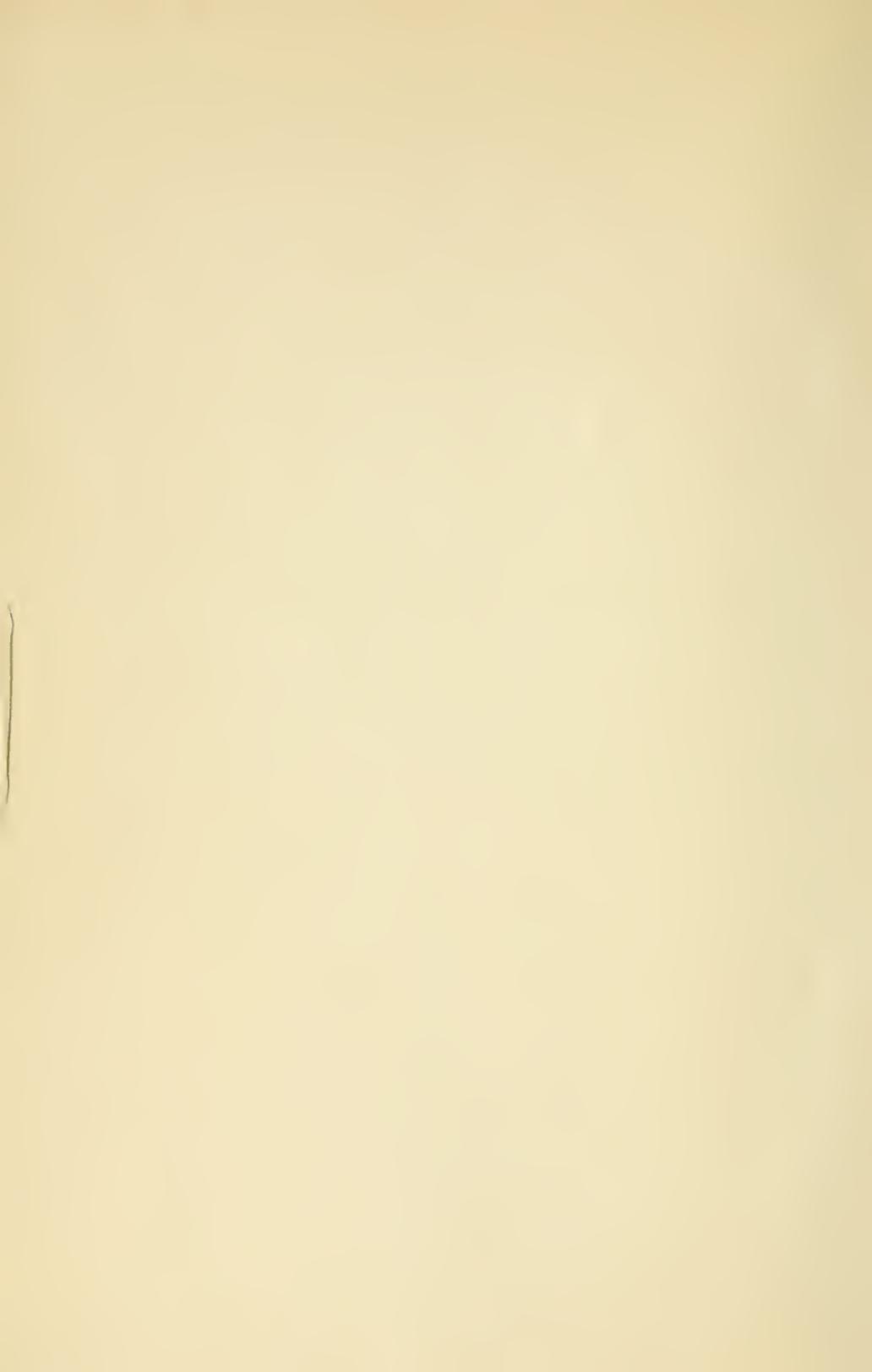


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WITH KITCHENER IN CAIRO



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# WITH KITCHENER IN CAIRO

BY

SYDNEY A. MOSELEY, F.R.G.S.

Author of "The Truth About the Dardanelles"



CASELL AND COMPANY, LTD  
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne  
1917



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Dedicated,

With permission, to

THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF CROMER

G.C.B., O.M., G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., C.I.E.,

The Maker of Modern Egypt



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
AUTHOR'S FOREWORD . . . . .	ix

## Book I

### IN PRAISE OF LORD KITCHENER

CHAPTER

1. CROMER AND KITCHENER . . . . .	3
2. ENGLAND AND EGYPT . . . . .	14
3. KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM . . . . .	20
4. WHAT EGYPT THOUGHT . . . . .	30
5. FIRST ACCOMPLISHMENTS . . . . .	34
6. WATER AND ROADS . . . . .	42
7. "MALESH" . . . . .	47
8. THE FELLAH . . . . .	52
9. EGYPT'S FIRST PARLIAMENT . . . . .	64

## Book II

### SOME STRANGE HAPPENINGS

1. LORD KITCHENER <i>VERSUS</i> THE KHEDIVE . . . . .	71
2. THE UNMASKING OF ABBAS II. . . . .	76
3. A PIQUANT CONTROVERSY . . . . .	84
4. ON BANKS . . . . .	100

CHAPTER	PAGE
5. THE ADAMOVITCH SCANDAL . . . . .	105
6. LORD KITCHENER'S COMMENT . . . . .	120
7. BRITISH AGENT CRITICISED . . . . .	128
8. A SERIOUS PRISON MUTINY . . . . .	142
9. CRIMINAL MEDICAL PRACTICES . . . . .	151
10. THE STOLEN TOMB OF TARI . . . . .	160

### Book III

#### CRITICISMS

1. A CRITICISM FROM INDIA . . . . .	171
2. WHY THE ENGLISHMAN IS DISLIKED . . . . .	177
3. LORD KITCHENER AND THE PRESS . . . . .	181
4. PLAGUE SPOTS OF EGYPT . . . . .	203
5. CORRUPTION . . . . .	210
6. THE NATIONALIST . . . . .	217
7. THE NEW WOMAN . . . . .	222
8. THE NEW SUDAN . . . . .	226
9. PROBLEM OF THE POLITICAL FUTURE . . . . .	229
10. AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK . . . . .	236
11. A FINAL WORD . . . . .	242

## AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THIS book has had many vicissitudes (I trust this is the last of them). Some publications are born to notoriety, some achieve it, and others have it thrust on them.

Mine comes under the last category. I wrote it modest in conception and honest in its purpose. I even wrote *facts*. But naked Truth isn't half so beautiful to look upon as a well-cloaked lie. There is no art in truth as there is in lying. If this book had emulated its predecessors and had been a compilation of eulogies of the powers-that-be in Cairo, my artful endeavours would have been better rewarded. I have been told by well-meaning friends that I am a fool to go "agin" the authorities, and, rightly enough, I have already felt the pinch of their subtle inquisition. But one cannot always be a hypocrite to order.

In the early part of 1914 this book was ready for publication. Indeed, I saw a proof of one or two pages before I shook the sand and dust of Egypt from my shoes. Some time later in England, when I was expecting an early copy of the book, I chanced upon the following paragraph widely published in the Egyptian Press, which, I admit, fairly took my breath away. Under the headings "Extraordinary Statements," "Unprecedented Action," the paragraph read :

“*Al-Shaab* reports that it has learned Mr. Sydney A. Moseley, the English writer, has written a book entitled ‘With Kitchener in Cairo,’ and that he asked one of the high Egyptian officials to write an introduction to it, which he did without reading the book owing to his great confidence in Mr. Moseley. Having learned that the book contained many reflections on the British Agent, the official in question, in order to get out of the difficulty, has gone round telling all those he met that he did not read the book before writing the introduction. Finally, says *Al-Shaab*, a committee of revision was formed in one of the Ministries, which suppressed all reflections and toned down the style of the rest of the book. This rumour probably refers to the book that it was stated Mr. Moseley had in preparation on Lord Kitchener in Egypt.”

That was the only intimation I had received of this high-handed action. This step, initiated by Lord Kitchener and the Egyptian Government, is a complete violation of the elements of British justice. It is, I maintain, absolutely indefensible from any point of view. My friends in Egypt, fairly used to autocratic and strange actions in the past, were incredulous, and those editors whom I told in Fleet Street were “mildly surprised.”

The matter was to have been raised in the House of Commons as well as in the Press, but the darkening clouds of war were gathering, and I did not, of course, proceed further in the matter.

The fortunes—or misfortunes—of war, however, took me back to Egypt from the Dardanelles, and I obtained further details of the brazen manner with which the authorities went to work to suppress criticism of their actions. I was urged—as indeed I have felt was necessary all along—to end this suspense by making the facts public.

I learned, for instance, that it was Lord Kitchener who had taken the trouble of going through the book suggesting omissions and making useful additions. One entire chapter, I understand, was among the matter which was suppressed, and three new complete chapters were added. This I did not mind so much, because the knowledge of the famous British Agent would have been very helpful. What I did object to, however, was that in this collaboration the usual methods were not applied. The Revising Committee did not trouble me with the information of the labours they were undertaking on my behalf. While I was fondly imagining that my unpolished work was being printed by the thousand, they were hard at work "finishing up" the manuscript.

Sir Murdoch Macdonald told me afterwards that all this was due to the foreword that Sir Ismail Sirry Pasha, the very estimable Minister for Public Works, wrote for me. Lord Kitchener had told the Pasha that the publication of his contribution to my work would mean his social and political ruin—and his family's ruin also.

On the strength of this I immediately gave Sir Murdoch authority to cable to Egypt withdrawing the precious preface.

What is strange in this connection is that Lord Kitchener had given Sir Ismail Sirry Pasha express permission to write his contribution. But he did not know that the attitude I was going to take would be one of frankness and independence. The shoals of maudlin adulatory Press notices or preposterous vituperation, published in volume form by men with bees in their bonnets or feathers in their caps, had no

attraction for me, any more than they had for other men in the street. I told Sir Ismail and Sir Murdoch plainly enough that I was going to write openly of Lord Kitchener and the Khedive. And they applauded my aims. "If you simply say what the official classes want you to say, nobody will read the book," they told me.

Well, here is the book—with the exception of minor additions, bringing figures, etc., up to date—unrevised and unexpurgated. Let the reader judge whether the action of the authorities was warranted or not.

As will be seen in the chapter entitled "The Adamovitch Scandal" (p. 105), I had already crossed swords with the all-mighty officials through championing a flagrant case of injustice. Let me say at once, however, that the rôle I played in Egypt was not that of an agitator or of a social reformer. There is abundant evidence of the good which has accrued to the country since England came to the banks of the Nile, and I have no sympathy whatever with Nationalists who do not recognise this supreme fact.

My attitude was simply one which any English journalist would adopt anywhere and at any time he found an evil which needed public ventilation.

There are evils in Egypt which exist not so much as a result of British policy, but because of the crass stupidity and overwhelming conceit—which always go together—of individual officials. These persons, some of whom I mention in the following pages, constitute themselves as modern Egyptian gods and expect idolatry of Ra in the twentieth century. Those who have been inured to the enervating and narrowing

atmosphere of the Land of Paradox accept this well enough. The few bolder, who do not go so far as to worship, take care, nevertheless, not to blame where they are unable to praise.

Coming from London as I did, with the blood of the free English Press coursing through my veins, all this was strange to me; and I did not hesitate to say so. At first my journalistic friends looked on in anxiety; finally some offered help, but it was the clandestine help of an official-ridden people.

The suppression of newspapers and newspaper men in Egypt is nothing new. But the circumstances attending the suppression of my book in times of peace were quite extraordinary.

Sir Murdoch Macdonald, whose tenure at the Public Works Ministry was always marked with courtesy, shrewdness, and industry—but with a consistent subserviency to the British Agent—scarcely acted in accordance with his friendly protestations when he lent his support to this outrageous act. It was hardly an acknowledgment of the support I had given his much-maligned Department, in my capacity as editor of two newspapers. The columns of my daily paper were always open to him and his Department in reply to the stinging attacks of Sir William Willcocks.

The spirit of my oppressors can be gauged when I mention that so long as I remained in Egypt no action was taken, but that such action was taken only and directly after I had left Egypt.

When my liberty was threatened at the time I made the Adamovitch disclosures I had sufficient channels in London, Paris, and New York through which I

could make the fact widely known. When I had left Cairo, that immediate danger was removed.

What has the suppression of this book accomplished? It certainly has given the officials time to breathe and to rake in undeserved honours in the meanwhile. But—

1. Criticism, like murder, will out.

2. I have been able to develop the subject matter of my original work, and to make several important additions.

3. I am able to prove, by recent happenings, the theories I put forward at first.

There is, however, an amusing side to this strange business. Sir Ismail Sirry Pasha, as I have said, wrote a preface to my book. It was, indeed, an unprecedented act for a Minister while in office, but the very friendly public relations that existed between us inclined Sirry Pasha to do this for me.

“I will write it with pleasure,” he said, “but—I must ask Lord Kitchener.”

I knew that would be fatal, and I tried to dissuade him. On that point, however, he was adamant; but he promised to write the preface first and submit it to the British Agent afterwards. Great was my surprise when the Minister telephoned me and told me it was all right!

“But, you know,” he said when I saw him, “I had the deuce of a quarter of an hour with Lord Kitchener. When I said to him ‘Moseley wants me to write a preface to his book,’ he got up in a rage and stamped the floor. ‘What! that man Moseley—that new Wilfred Blunt! You’d write a chapter for him!’ and so on. I was so taken aback until

I found the solution. I managed to blurt out, 'It's the other Moseley I mean—the friend of the Government!' ”

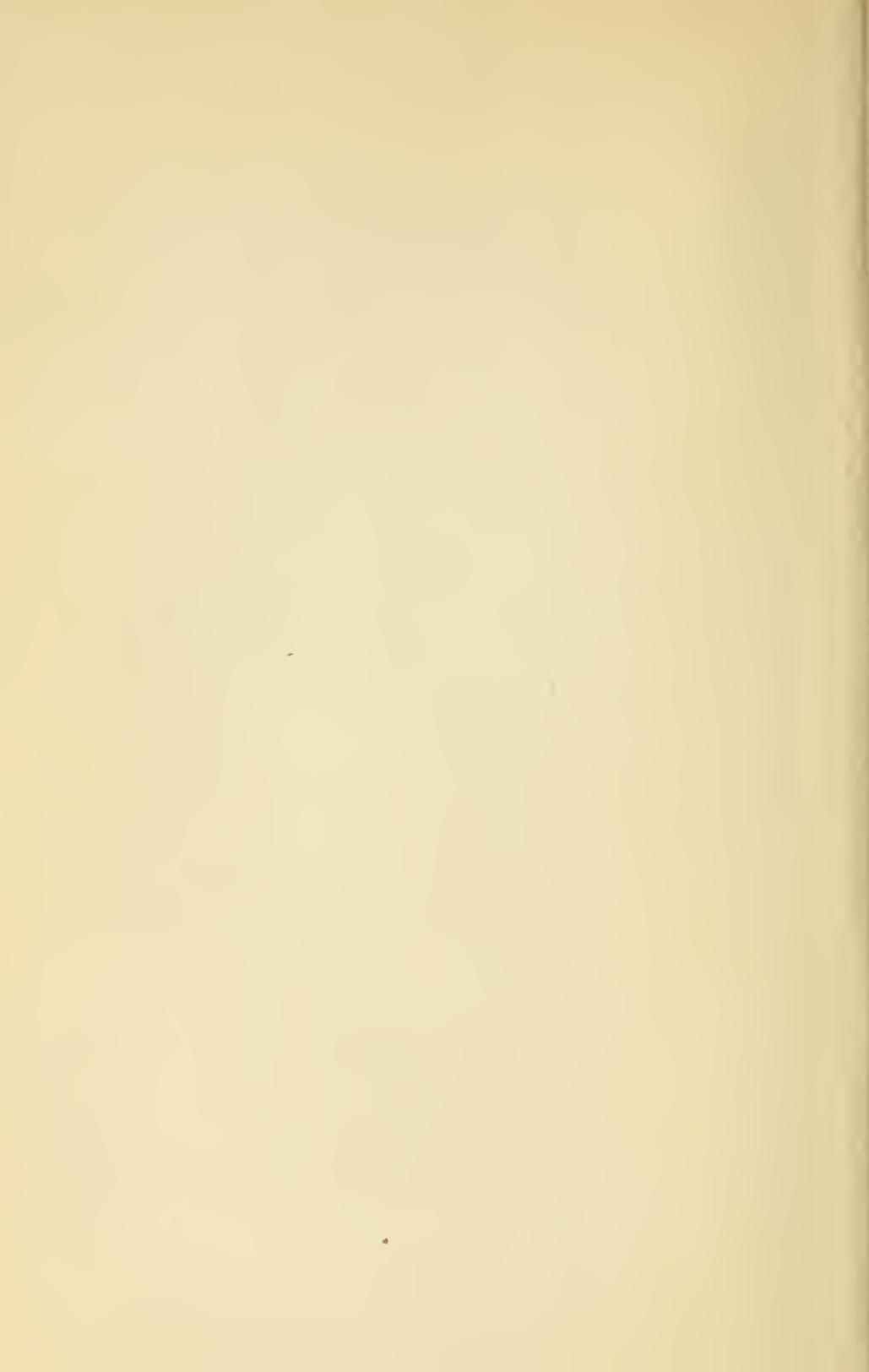
You see, the “other Moseley” was Judge Mosely, an unrelenting critic of the British régime. The acute comparison between our two political records was such that it produced something in the nature of an anti-climax to Lord Kitchener's rage that he was bound not to refuse a request which, had it not been for his impulsive conclusion, he would never have granted.

SYDNEY A. MOSELEY.

PRESS CLUB, LONDON,  
*January, 1917.*



BOOK I  
IN PRAISE OF LORD KITCHENER



# WITH KITCHENER IN CAIRO

## CHAPTER I

### Cromer and Kitchener

LORD CROMER'S name must for ever be associated with uplifted Egypt, yet the advent of Lord Kitchener in Egypt did much to eclipse the fame of the maker of modern Egypt. Long after the splendid edifices built by him have by force of nature crumbled into dust and blown away into oblivion, the short but sharp term of office of Lord Kitchener will form a landmark in Egypt's modern history. And why? The name of Kitchener was ever one to conjure with, and while the people of Egypt were occupied in this fascinating fashion, the man from the West did the work unimpeded, undisturbed.

Lord Cromer had none of the advantage of name. In fact, much of the splendid work which is associated with his name was completed when he was Sir Evelyn Baring. He reaped the fruits of success as Lord Cromer.

Cromer fought the people for the people; Kitchener simply had to live up to ideals preconceived of him by the people—the ideals of high-mindedness and fearlessness.

Lord Cromer plodded steadily, quietly, diplomatically; Lord Kitchener announced his goal, went there

in a motor-car, and knocked anyone down who ventured to thrust himself in the way.

Lord Kitchener did not ask opinions; he gave them. And then they were not opinions; they were generally commands. And rank and file were not expected to question them!

To write of Lord Kitchener in Egypt from an unbiased standpoint will be an accomplishment in itself. This account makes indeed this claim, but more official versions, when they duly appear, will inevitably be distorted with servile flattery or a bitter hatred.

It is a pity that Lord Kitchener himself did not live to write his views of affairs in Egypt, although one never expected him to emulate Lord Cromer in the writing of a classic. In Egypt poets and politicians sang and wrote about the soldier Consul-General. When the politicians told Lord Kitchener what Egypt really wanted, he told them what Egypt did not want. He shut down their newspapers, so the poets had the field; but they sang—or used to sing—to an indifferent auditor, for Lord Kitchener was credited with never having stopped to listen. It was believed, nevertheless, that he was not altogether impervious to these chantings of praise, and that sometimes he was pleased to overhear. The result was that poems multiplied, for surely no British representative anywhere was treated to more idolatry than he. At any rate, his servants—and they were many—threw the coppers to the chanters in the shape of well-expressed praises or little services nobly rendered. Therefore such of the history of the famous British Agent as has been written in the Press has been of

so effusive, so grandiloquent a nature as almost to suggest the shrewd mind of a petty Press agent. The reason for this state of things I have dealt with more fully in another chapter.

As we shall see, then, Lord Kitchener conquered Egypt before he sailed from England, excellent Press notices heralding his advent, as those which gave Lord Cromer testimony when he had completed his labours. This almost unanimous acclamation from a nervous Press must always be remembered as having been the prelude to Lord Kitchener's success as British Agent in Egypt—a success which can well withstand a cold, unemotional analysis.

Much that has been written about Lord Kitchener of Khartoum reveals a complete lack of understanding of the inner man. The late War Minister has been represented as a machine, a stone, a sphinx—a man of blood and iron. The human side of him has altogether been overlooked. Lord Kitchener, like many members of the human race, possessed characteristics that were distant and autocratic. He may have been stern and unyielding, but he also had a broad outlook, a deep and genuine sympathy for the masses, and weaknesses without which he could not have held claim to his sex. Critics of Lord Kitchener were few; for he mesmerised his critics. Therefore most pictures of him were distorted. To many of those whose familiarity with the late War Minister helped to nullify this paralysing influence, he only revealed himself at the heart-to-heart conference which was held just prior to his tragic death. To the great number, however, who remained till the end in ignorance of the actual man, he was portrayed as the fiery

warrior of the Sudan. They ever forgot that it was rather an older man than he of the days of the Mahdi who now reigned at Whitehall; that the Field-Marshal did not slash his way to victory in a military uniform, but wrote his way there in a frock coat and a pair of pince-nez. No doubt, did the necessity arise, he could have doffed his latter-day attire and filled the picture of the dashing hero as in the days of yore; but experience taught Lord Kitchener that "peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." To be sure, he possessed till the last that unquenchable spirit of masterfulness that had gained him his laurels in Egypt, India, and South Africa.

In Cairo no one dared question his commands. It was no longer the case of too many heads leading to inconclusion. When a decision was made the British Agent issued his orders, and woe betide the official—however highly placed—who did not obey them to the letter!

When the sweeping structural changes in Cairo were contemplated, Lord Kitchener made suggestions that caused the breath of his subordinates to come in gasps. They longed to say:

"But it can't be done in the time!" "It's impossible to remove that!" and so on. He simply took one or two heads of the departments concerned with him to the heart of the city. Together they mounted a very high building that overlooked the site in question.

The omnipotent British Agent raised his hand and pointed to a railway station.

"Take that away," he said, and the officials staggered; "and that, and that, and that," continued Lord Kitchener, sweeping away huge edifices with an

airy wave of the hand. "The work must be done by September 15th. . . . Let us go!"

One of the responsible officials said to me afterwards:

"There's no doubt K. wants the dickens of a lot done, but he knows what he wants, and we know we can go ahead without any influential busybodies interfering."

It had almost invariably happened that any big scheme required the consent and co-operation of several departments, and before they could be got to arrive at unanimous activity, much labour, money, and temper were expended. . . . But not in Kitchener's time.

The functions of a British Agent included the not less onerous tasks of entertaining on a large and grand scale. Hitherto the duties had devolved upon the wife of the Agent. During Lord Kitchener's régime the responsibilities were ably carried out by the Hon. Mrs. (now Lady) Byng, wife of the General Officer Commanding the British Forces in Egypt.

Lord Kitchener's garden parties and balls were thronged with many hundreds of visitors, each individuality lost in the great mass, but everyone, nevertheless, regarding himself as a person of increased importance as a result of being the invited guest of the famous soldier.

These were hardly the occasions on which we could get a glimpse of the softer side of the great man. Like every host of importance, he was quickly and diplomatically snatched up by intimates and tactfully hidden by them for the rest of the afternoon. Nevertheless, he often managed to greet you with a handshake and a "How d'you do" before disappearing.

I always wonder from where he sprang to greet me on the first occasion I went to one of his popular garden parties. I had a particular reason for not wishing to see him then. I therefore waited till the coast was quite clear that I might slip in unobserved. I had to cross a lawn in order to reach the throng, and I am positive that nobody was in sight. He certainly took me completely by surprise by suddenly appearing as it were from the earth, towering over me and holding out a friendly but overpowering hand. It was not on these occasions, as I have said, that you came to know the man. This might be better achieved by paying a visit to the British Agency in Kas-el-Doubara.

Of course, with the vision of the historical Kitchener in mind, you, a timid visitor, gave a wide berth to Lord Kitchener's private sanctum. You sent in your card to the attaché, to whom you possessed an invaluable letter of introduction. You were shown into the hall by a gorgeously attired dragoman, or, maybe, into the private dining-room where stood conspicuously on the mantelpiece the silver cup won by Lord Kitchener, then a captain, in the polo tournament at Cairo in the year 1884. From the French windows you looked across a beautifully laid-out garden, and beyond to the broad expanse of the glittering Nile, on which the white sails of the feluccas glided silently up and down stream. Your reverie was interrupted by the unceremonious entrance of a tall, strongly-built man wearing spectacles and smoking a cigar.

"Are you waiting to see me?" he asked, looking over the top of his spectacles and speaking in a tone which invited an answer in the affirmative.

It was not the attaché; it was Lord Kitchener.

Giving the papers on which he had evidently been busy to one of his secretaries, he passed into the garden to see how his carnations were getting on. He would be recalled from an examination of his borders to see the Prime Minister—a daily event—or a deputation of swarthy natives from some far-away district in Upper Egypt, or a Russian Grand Duke who was passing through Cairo on his way south; or, it may be, some British head of a department whom Lord Kitchener wished to see on a matter affecting his administration, or a merchant from Alexandria who came to discuss business affairs, or a Pasha who had half an hour to spare.

There were many deputations in those days. They came from all parts of Egypt, these sheikhs and squires: big deputations with small grievances—all flocked to the man whose reputation for righting wrongs had spread until it reached even the unheard-of spots in the far-away Delta.

Lord Kitchener received them without ceremony. A man-to-man handshake, a few homely words of greeting in Arabic, and they were entirely at ease. Then, under the trees in the garden, he listened to their congratulations and complaints, and sent them away invariably in a good humour, and more than impressed with the good qualities of the great English Pasha. In connection with these deputations the following story, illustrating the thoughtfulness of Lord Kitchener, may be recounted: A certain impoverished village was not getting enough water. The inhabitants were in despair. One bright leader suggested writing to Lord Kitchener. A missive of some sort was indeed sent, and judge of their astonish-

ment and elation when a reply was immediately forthcoming asking the village elders to call and explain their grievances to him. In order to be presentable, these villagers grew anxious about the hopeless task of purchasing new clothes. Lord Kitchener, by some means or other, happened to hear of this, and he at once sent word that on no account should any unnecessary expense be incurred. He would see them exactly as they were.

Lord Kitchener lived laborious days. An early riser, the first part of the morning was devoted to attending to his correspondence. After breakfast, which was over by nine, the British Agent was occupied with callers practically the whole morning. There were often guests to luncheon. In the afternoon he would go for a drive in his car round Gezira, or might pay a visit to the bazaars in his incessant search for the blue china of which he was an assiduous collector. Lord Kitchener prided himself on knowing as much about the value of the ware as the highly artful vendors in the bazaars. Some fine specimens of his collection were conspicuous in the drawing-room at the British Agency. On his return home he again gave himself up to his work, which he pursued until the hour for dinner. As at lunch, there were sometimes guests, and occasionally large dinner parties were given. Lord Kitchener was fond of music, and never played bridge; his evenings were taken up with reading the home and local newspapers. He took a keen interest in home politics.

That was his general routine. Sometimes it was broken by public meetings at which he took the chair, or a charity bazaar where his patronage was indis-

pensable. He never took a holiday; his visits to the provinces were with the sole object of obtaining a practical insight into the working of the administration, and acquiring a closer acquaintance with a study which fascinated him—the conditions of the fellahîn.

It is not generally known that the principles that underlay his measures of economic reforms in Egypt brought him many critics who termed him “the Lloyd George of Egypt.” Two men could scarcely be more unlike than the great Welshman and Lord Kitchener. Yet withal they had this aim in common: the welfare of the masses. The difference was that Lloyd George can feel *with* the masses; Lord Kitchener felt only *for* the masses. He had his Lloyd Georgian ideas for the uplifting of the people, and he dreamed his schemes, building them up before he had the money to pay for them!

In launching his people’s schemes, such as the Five Feddans Law, and the People’s Savings Bank, he had that class who have more interest in, than sympathy with, the fellahîn up in a body against him. But he carried them through against all opposition. In every move of his he planned for the people, and if these schemes adversely affected the capitalist, it made no difference. Here is an instance which is not generally known. When the very low Nile of the 1913 season threatened to affect the Nile tourist traffic, weighty influence was brought to bear on the Government to give a thought to the interests of great business as well as those of the fellahîn.

“He is taking practically all our water away,” complained a tourist agent to me, “but it’s no use our making representations. He’s for the people.”

Doubtless this blow to the Nile traffic would be deplorable, but surely not so great as that which a shortage of water would inflict upon the agriculturists.

Lord Kitchener went about the country speaking intimately to the people upon his dreams for them, and when he announced his schemes to a bewildered conservative public he was hailed as "Lloyd George." The mumblings of half-hearted critics, however, were not always unjustified.

There were those who averred that he did not display that grip of finance which was necessary in one of his positions—this contrary to the declaration which was once made that he would have made a great Chancellor of the Exchequer. He spent many thousands of pounds in laying down gardens in the Opera Square when the money could much better have been spent on pumping works, which afterwards were nearly held up through want of funds. . . .

But we shall come to the critical stage later.

A recent story, reminiscent of the soldier, that has also been private hitherto, I may now relate.

A well-known City man in his dealings with the War Office was able to render valuable assistance to that department during the earlier stages of the war.

One day urgent and insistent telephone calls were made from the War Office to the merchant's office. But he had left town on business for the day.

On his return next morning he immediately called upon the head of the department in question. The tone and bearing of this tactless individual exasperated the merchant, although he was generally a mild-mannered man. The attitude of the head of the department was all the more incomprehensible to the

City merchant, the chief of a big firm, since he was being asked to make a considerable sacrifice to the War Office. This he would have done, as he had, indeed, done in other ways before, but for the rank insolence of this official, who thereby lost many thousands to the War Office. The merchant wrote to Lord Kitchener formally explaining why he had not been able to make the sacrifice. An immediate reply was forthcoming :

“ Lord Kitchener very much regretted, etc. etc., and the pressure of his work made it impossible for him to offer an apology personally. He would be glad, however, if Mr. —— (the City merchant) would call again at the War Office and see the *new* head of the department.”

## CHAPTER II

### England and Egypt

IN order to obtain a general idea of the reasons that brought Lord Kitchener on the scene in Egypt, it is necessary to run over briefly the causes which resulted in England's intervention. As will be seen, Lord Kitchener enters the picture at an early stage.

Financial chaos was the origin of the new history of Egypt. The climax of that phase was reached on April 8th, 1876, when the Khedive suspended payment of his Treasury Bills. Ultimately France, Austria, and Italy each nominated representatives on the Commission of Public Debt which had been promulgated by Khedivial Decree. England, "unwilling to interfere in the internal affairs of Egypt," declined to select a Commissioner. The debt of Egypt was now £91,000,000. Lord Goschen eventually undertook a mission to Egypt with a view to obtaining some modifications which the bondholders considered necessary. He and the French representatives grappled with the problem of financial muddle and bankruptcy. It was decided to appoint two Controllers-General, the one to supervise the revenue and the other the expenditure.

The Khedive, just at this time, asked Lord Goschen to nominate an English Commissioner of the Public Debt, since England had once more declined to accept

this responsibility. Lord Goschen offered the post to Lord Cromer (then Sir Evelyn Baring), who accepted it. The corruption in Egypt at the time was on such a gigantic scale that it was impossible to arrive at a true estimate of the revenue. For instance, the railway receipts were taken at £900,000 a year, but it was found afterwards that, to the extent of £300,000 a year, these receipts were fictitious. "The state of Egypt was deplorable. Estates, representing about one-fifth of the available lands of the country, had passed into the hands of the Khedive; and these estates, instead of being farmed out to the dispossessed proprietors, were administered direct by the Khedive and cultivated to a great extent by forced labour. No single measure contributed more than this to render the existing régime as intolerable to the people of Egypt as it was rapidly becoming to the foreign creditors."

We can pass over even more briefly the affairs that led up to the British occupation, and the clearing up of the hopeless maladministration which had been ravaging the country for centuries.

In 1879 Nubar Pasha, Minister of Public Works, and Sir Rivers Wilson, the Minister of Finance, were assaulted by a crowd of Egyptian officers. The Sultan deposed the Khedive a few months later, and Ismail Pasha departed from Egypt, but left his evil influence behind him. As a climax to the growing disorder, the Egyptian Army on three occasions mutinied.

The leader was Ahmed Arabi, an Egyptian of fellah origin, who was Colonel of the 4th Regiment. The culmination of these military disorders occurred on September 9th, 1881, when Arabi Bey, with 2,500

men and eighteen guns, marched on to Abdin Square and drew up his men outside the Palace. The Khedive immediately sent for Sir Auckland Colvin, who had been appointed Controller in succession to Sir Evelyn Baring, then in London. Sir Auckland advised the Khedive to take the initiative and personally to arrest Arabi Bey, but he replied that the mutineer had the artillery and cavalry with him, and that they might fire. What followed is worth retelling in the words of Sir Auckland :

“ I said to the Khedive : ‘ When Arabi Bey presents himself, tell him to give you his sword and to give them the order to disperse. Then go the round of the square and address each regiment separately and give them the order to disperse.’ Arabi Bey approached on horseback ; the Khedive called out to him to dismount. He did so and came forward on foot with several others and a guard with fixed bayonets and saluted. I said to the Khedive, ‘ Now is your moment.’ But he replied, ‘ We are between four fires.’ I said, ‘ Have courage.’ He took counsel of a native officer on his left and repeated to me, ‘ What can I do ? We are between four fires. We shall be killed.’ ”

Arabi enumerated the terms of his demand, adding that the Army had come there on the part of the Egyptian people to enforce them, and would not return till they were conceded.

“ You hear what he says ? ” said the Khedive to Sir Auckland Colvin, who replied that it was not fitting for the Khedive to discuss questions of that kind with colonels, and suggested to him to retire into the Palace of Abdin, leaving him to speak with the colonels. He did so, and Sir Auckland remained,

explaining to them the gravity of the situation for themselves and urging them to retire the troops while there was yet time. The result of negotiations later was obviously a victory for the mutineers, who compelled the Khedive to dismiss his Ministers, and to select others more to their liking. From that time on the Khedive and the country were under the dictatorship of the mutineer military party. Foreign-aided intervention became increasingly necessary. On May 30th, 1882, the officers of the Army were obtaining by threats signatures to a petition praying for the deposition of the Khedive. Official business, except at the Ministry of War, was at a standstill. The whole country was in a state of panic. A collision between the Moslems and the Christians "might at any moment occur," the British Government was warned. Europeans in Alexandria had been hustled and spat upon in the streets. A sheikh had been crying aloud in the public thoroughfares: "O Moslems! come and help me to kill the Christians!" On June 9th a Greek was warned by an Egyptian to "take care, as the Arabs were going to kill the Christians either that day or the day following."

On June 10th some low-class Moslems went about the streets calling out that "the last day for the Christians was drawing nigh." Next day fifty Europeans were slaughtered in cold blood under circumstances of the utmost brutality. Many others, amongst whom was Sir Charles Cookson, the British Consul, were severely wounded, and narrowly escaped with their lives. Whenever a European appeared in sight the mob cried out, "O Moslems! Kill him! Kill the Christian!" On June 17th 14,000 Christians had

left the country and some 6,000 more were anxiously awaiting the arrival of ships to take them away. On June 26th more murders were committed. On July 3rd we find Arabi Pasha raising batteries at Alexandria with the intention of using them against the British Fleet. The Sultan of Turkey's orders that the construction of these batteries should cease was only obeyed for a time. On July 3rd Admiral Seymour (afterwards Lord Alcester), commanding the British fleet which had arrived at Alexandria, was instructed to prevent the continuance of work on the fortifications. If not immediately discontinued he was to "destroy the earthworks and silence the batteries if they opened fire." The French Government was invited to cooperate; it declined. On July 11th the bombardment of Alexandria began, and within a few hours the fort's batteries were silenced. After setting fire to the town, pillaging it, and murdering several Europeans, the Egyptian garrison retreated to the outskirts of Alexandria.

Confidence was restored to such an extent that, within four days after the landing of the British Marines, Europeans and Egyptians began to return to Alexandria.

After Arabi had issued a proclamation stating that "irreconcilable war existed between the Egyptians and the English," Lord Wolseley smashed the remnants of the rebellion on September 13th at Tel-el-Kebir, the Egyptian army being totally routed, and a small force of English cavalry crossed the desert and reached Cairo unchallenged. Arabi and his friends tamely surrendered.

Yet, despite the meshes of European and Eastern diplomaey through which England had to find her

way, and the fact that France had warily refused to co-operate with England in the military undertakings which became so necessary, it was the intention of England to withdraw her troops when the conditions of the country allowed it. In the meantime the object of Great Britain was "the establishment of an order of things possessing the elements of stability and progress."

A petition signed by 2,600 Europeans residing at Alexandria was presented to Lord Dufferin in favour of a permanent British occupation of Egypt. But the Government of the day, and, indeed, subsequent Governments, shrank from such a course. It went reluctantly to Egypt, and, having been compelled into a position of responsibility, meant to carry it out. After that it would gladly return. In November, 1882, the Earl of Dufferin was instructed to proceed to Egypt, and to advise the British Cabinet as to the measures to be adopted there for the future.

It would require a volume in itself to recount the difficulties which encountered the British reformers at every turn. Cholera wiped out something like 100,000 of the inhabitants; the frightful sanitary condition in the towns and villages is revolting even to write about. No preparations; few hospitals or properly trained doctors.

Boulak, one of the most important roads in Cairo to-day, consisted of mud hovels containing but one room, which whole families inhabited with their donkeys, fowls, and other animals.

Sir Evelyn Baring returned to take up the reins in Cairo in 1883, and found conditions much worse than when he left Egypt three years previously.

## CHAPTER III

### Kitchener of Khartoum

LORD KITCHENER first enters the picture when the trouble in the Sudan came, among other things, to give a set-back to the work of reformation which England had undertaken in Egypt. A devastating epidemic of cholera occurred in the summer of 1883, and a few months later news reached Cairo that General Hicks's army, which had left Duem in September, 1883, had been annihilated in Kordofan. The Egyptian Government had sent this Egyptian army under the English general to reconquer some of the more distant regions in the Sudan, which were being administered by "swaggering bullies," who robbed, plundered, and ill-treated the people with impunity. The British Government, however, expressly dissociated itself from any enterprises in that vast, trackless country.

From the first it stated that it was "not responsible for the affairs of the Sudan." It was therefore not bound to interfere in any disastrous undertakings of the Egyptian Government. Nevertheless, if we accepted responsibility for the state of Egypt, and if this state was threatened, as it was afterwards, by a growing rebel force in the Sudan, which was still an integral part of the Khedive's dominions, how could England shake off her responsibility in that quarter? As Lord

Milner puts it, "to separate the inseparable is unfortunately beyond the power of diplomatic declarations, however precise and emphatic."

It had to abandon this policy of indifference, and instructed its representative in Cairo, Sir Evelyn Baring, to inform the Egyptian Government that the Sudan must be abandoned. It would be, from a financial standpoint, no loss to Egypt, and the cost of conquest was too considerable to waste upon what was practically a worthless province—a "Land of Desolation," as General Baker described it; or "a useless possession, ever was so and ever will be so," as General Gordon wrote; while Colonel Stuart referred to it as "expensive and useless; a huge encumbrance." The Sudan therefore was to be abandoned. It was necessary, however, to send an English officer to withdraw all the garrisons. This was not so easy as it was contemplated. Mohammed Ahmed, known as the Mahdi, had now gathered around him tremendous hordes of Dervishes who regarded him as their prophet. His successes were already sufficient to justify him in the eyes of his fanatic followers, so that the peaceful policy of withdrawing the Egyptian garrisons from the Sudan was an enterprise fraught with considerable danger. General Gordon was sent to report on the military situation and on the measures of effecting the evacuation of the interior of the Sudan. He arrived at Khartoum, but never left it alive. On January 26th, 1885, the Dervishes entered Khartoum, and the gallant soldier was killed. In the Eastern Sudan Baker Pasha had met with crushing defeat at the hands of the Dervishes under Osman Digna, the Emir of the Mahdi. The stories of more

disasters reached Cairo to cheer British officials, until almost the entire Eastern Sudan was held by the Dervishes. This series of disasters aroused public opinion in England, but still the British Government declined to "interfere in the Sudan." When, however, Suakin had become endangered the role of passive onlooker seemed less possible, and eventually it was decided to send a British expedition to Suakin. In the engagements that followed it was clearly shown once more that a small body of well-disciplined British troops could defeat a horde of courageous savages. The news of the fall of Khartoum was not then known, and the Government were yet reluctant to proceed further, although at the same time they wished to do "something" to help General Gordon, who had been cut off in Khartoum. Major Kitchener and Major Rundle were directed to proceed to Berber.

On September 14th, 1884, the Khedive, in a telegram to General Gordon, mentions that "Major Kitchener, one of the officers of my new army, is ordered to confer at Dongola, and we hope he will shortly be able to open communications with you." By the time they got to Assouan it became clear that it would be imprudent to allow them to proceed any farther. Their original orders, therefore, were cancelled, and it was fortunate that this was done, for had they proceeded to Berber they would certainly have been made prisoners. No British expedition was sent to Berber, and part of the garrison of Suakin was withdrawn.

The responsibility for General Gordon and Colonel Stewart, shut in at Khartoum and surrounded by hordes of fearless savages, obliged the Government to dis-

patch, after innumerable delays, a relief expedition which arrived at Wadi Halfa on October 5th, 1884, and the Nile Campaign began—too late.

It was about thirteen years after its abandonment that Khartoum, Dongola, and Berber were reoccupied by the Egyptian troops. In the meantime much water had flowed down the Nile, for we now read that the command of the force to recapture Dongola was left to the "Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, Sir Herbert Kitchener."

"A better choice could not have been made," says Lord Cromer.\* "Young, energetic, ardently and exclusively devoted to his profession; and, as the honourable scars on his face testified, experienced in Sudanese warfare, Sir Herbert Kitchener possessed all the qualities necessary to bring the campaign to a successful issue. Like many other military commanders, the bonds which united him and his subordinates were those of stern discipline on the one side, and on the other the respect due to superior talent and the confidence felt in the resourcefulness of a strong and masterful spirit, rather than the affectionate obedience yielded to the behests of a general chief. When the campaign was over, there were not wanting critics who whispered that Sir Herbert Kitchener's success had been due as much to good luck as to good management.

"The fact, however, is that Sir Herbert Kitchener's main merit was that he left as little as possible to chance. A first-rate military administrator, every detail of the machine with which he had to work received adequate attention. Before any decisive movement

\* In "Modern Egypt."

was made, each portion of the machine was adapted, so far as human foresight could provide, to perform its allotted task.

“Sir Herbert Kitchener also possessed another quality that is rare among soldiers, which was of special value under the circumstances then existing. He did not think that extravagance was the necessary handmaid of efficiency. On the contrary, he was a rigid economist, and, whilst making adequate provision for all essential and necessary expenditure, suppressed with a firm hand any tendency towards waste and extravagance.”

The need of reconquering the Sudan had become clearer as the work of reformation in Egypt proceeded. Although it was felt by competent authorities that the offensive strength of the Dervishes had been grossly exaggerated, and that there was little to fear of the boast that Mahdism would triumph within the walls of Egypt in the near future, the presence of a hostile force in the Nile valley was embarrassing.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), speaking in the House of Commons on February 5th, 1897, stated that :

“Egypt could never be held to be permanently secure so long as a hostile Power was in occupation of the Nile valley up to Khartoum. . . . The duty of giving a final blow to the baleful power of the Khalifa devolved on England.”

“On the first day of the year 1898,” says Lord Cromer, “the Sirdar sent me an historic telegram which virtually sealed the fate of the Sudan.

“‘General Hunter,’ it said, ‘reports confirming news of a Dervish advance. I think that British

troops should be sent to Abu Hamed, and that reinforcements should be sent to Egypt in case of necessity. The fight for the Sudan would appear to be likely to take place at Berber.'”

Four British battalions were at once sent up the Nile. The Cairo garrison was increased. Manifestly the curtain had gone up on the last scene in the drama which had commenced with the destruction of General Hicks's army fifteen years previously.

The brilliant campaign which followed revealed the extraordinarily accurate forecast of events of Sir Herbert Kitchener. On September 2nd, 1898, he recaptured Khartoum, and the British and Egyptian flags were hoisted side by side on the walls of the ruined Palace of Khartoum close to the spot where General Gordon fell. The Khalifa was smashed. Gordon had been avenged.

\* \* \* \* \*

One more obstacle to reform had been removed. In the meantime the progress of Egypt was beginning to make pace. The repairs to the barrage were completed; the total abolition of the *corvée* for dredging purposes was accomplished; a reduction of the Salt Tax and the abolition of the Professional Tax took place the same year. Stability was being established, the Egyptian Army reorganised, a modern system of sanitation instituted. The vital problem of drainage and irrigation was partially solved; the best engineers were employed, and the money was “found from somewhere.”

The signature of the contract for the construction of the Nile reservoirs was affixed in 1898. Post Office savings banks were established in 1900, navigation

dues on the Nile abolished, and then the greatest embarrassment to reform was removed by the Anglo-French Agreement in 1904, which gave England virtually a free hand in Egypt. More taxes were abolished, debts paid off, railways opened, monopolies vanquished, and efficient workers drawn into the Civil Service. To summarise these reforms would in itself take considerably more space than the scope of this part of the book allows.

By the year 1907, when Lord Cromer's invaluable services to Egypt came to a close, the country of bankruptcy and anarchy was well on the road towards peace and prosperity, a condition unknown before in the course of a somewhat varied history. . . .

Sir Eldon Gorst succeeded Lord Cromer, and he emphasised the change by a cordial relationship with the Khedive. The progress of the country was maintained during Sir Eldon's régime, but a group of relentless agitators took advantage of the very tolerant and sympathetic attitude of the new British Agent and raised sufficient disturbance to attract public attention to the darker side of affairs in Egypt. The regrettable ill-health of Sir Eldon Gorst gave the field to the malcontents, and they trumpeted all the louder. But only for a while.

Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum returned to London in 1910. He had finished his work in India, in Australia, and New Zealand. For twenty-eight years he had worked ungrudgingly and untiringly. From that time in 1882, when he dashed over to Egypt from Cyprus, where he was engaged in the useful though rather humdrum occupation of surveying, work had been thrust on him, work ever growing more arduous

and more responsible. Now that he came back to England at the age of sixty, the Press voiced public opinion in hoping he would enjoy a holiday. It was felt that the famous soldier, who had served his country with such tireless devotion, deserved a little rest. So Lord Kitchener laid aside his sword, unpacked his blue china, and established himself in the heart of Kent. There he rested.

It did not take long, however, before a section of the Press voiced loudly the necessity of giving him the opportunity of serving the Empire again. It was at this time that among a crop of rumours concerning him there was one which credited Lord Kitchener with being in the running for the Viceroyalty of India. Events falsified this interesting prediction, although the gossips sought to justify themselves by the allegation that the appointment was not made through Lord Morley's threat to resign in such an eventuality.

These rumours, however, added an incentive to the discussion of Lord Kitchener's future, but the controversy was soon waged purely on party lines. His resignation from the Inspector-Generalship of the Forces in the Mediterranean and Overseas, before he had even taken up his duties, was pronounced by some to have considerable significance, while his appointment as member of the Committee of Imperial Defence drew forth a further storm of criticism and comment.

With the approach of the winter of 1910 he decided to take a trip to Egypt. In the previous spring the Nationalist agitation had grown to an extent which attracted the attention of the world. People now

whispered that Lord Kitchener's visit had some ulterior political reason. They followed his movements in Egypt closely for a time until excitement nearer home drew this attention elsewhere. Lord Kitchener meanwhile passed the time quietly in the valley of the Nile, the scene of stirring events many years back.

He was, however, not forgotten by his faithful band of followers. His return to Egypt formed the basis of another public agitation on his behalf, but the result of this persistent and spirited campaign for a high public appointment for their idol was in the nature of an anti-climax. Lord Kitchener accepted a directorship on the board of the South Eastern and Chatham Railway. Then fell the barbs of caustic criticism.

But a startling rumour called a halt in the comedy. Sir Eldon Gorst's health, which had been failing during his tenure in Egypt, gave way altogether.

In April, 1911, he left Egypt in a critical state. As he sank, the name of Kitchener occurred to all minds as the one possible successor.

Lord Kitchener must have viewed the coming situation with curiously mixed feelings. The almost tragic end of Sir Eldon Gorst, who had been assailed with criticism as few men are assailed, the consciousness of the innumerable difficulties he would have to face—all this had to be weighed before he came to a decision. What must have weighed heaviest was the feeling that after all, to him, it was in a measure going over the old work again. Yet if India was his ultimate ambition, was not Egypt, after all, the gateway to it? There was, as we know, his own personal predilection for the country in which he had worked so long, and,

perhaps, an exercise of a little personal influence on the part of King George.

However that may be, Lord Kitchener expressed his readiness to go once more on England's behalf to Egypt. He was offered and accepted the position of His Majesty's Agent-General and Minister Plenipotentiary in Egypt, and on September 20th, 1911, Lord Kitchener of Khartoum left England for Cairo.

## CHAPTER IV

### What Egypt Thought

IN England there was relief that Lord Kitchener, after all, was going to do work imperially more important than that of reorganising the South Eastern and Chatham Railway. There were many, and probably not a few prominent statesmen among the number, who sincerely regretted that Lord Kitchener was not to be employed in work at home for which his experience qualified him. But even these felt that if he were not to be so engaged, Egypt, which had loomed much too large in the public eye for the past few years, was the most suitable place in which the abilities of Lord Kitchener could be utilised.

But whatever it meant to Britain, it meant much more to Egypt. Britain's prestige might be bound up with that much-troubled land, but for Egypt the attitude of Britain was all in all; it stood for internal tranquillity, for prosperity and peace. Thus, when the news of the appointment became known, it was quite natural that the thoughts and conversation of Egyptians should for a time centre on this one topic alone. Throughout the length of the land men spoke of Lord Kitchener. To most he was a personality inspiring fear.

The foreign local Press, which speaks for the Euro-

pean communities in Egypt, communities whose interests are largely financial, was delighted at the prospect of a firm rule and general security, while those papers which spoke for moderate opinions were seemingly apprehensive. The Copts, on the other hand, who had been carrying on a vigorous campaign against their alleged grievance under the late régime, affected to be heartily pleased ; but, again, the extreme Nationalists were furious at the appointment.

Above all was the speculation as to whether there would be a continuation of the friendliness that had marked the relations between the Khedive and the British Agency during Sir Eldon Gorst's tenure, or whether things might drop back to the position they had been in during the latter years of Lord Cromer's régime, when there was a certain coolness between the Palace and the British Agency. Incidents in the distant past, when Lord Kitchener was Sirdar, had been recalled to show how improbable it was that there could be any cordiality between the new British Agent and the Khedive. It is extraordinarily difficult to get at the real opinions of Egyptians ; but whether, on the whole, they would have preferred to have an *entente* in high quarters or the reverse, they all professed to be highly satisfied at Lord Kitchener's determination to continue in the line of conduct that Sir Eldon Gorst had initiated. The first thing Lord Kitchener had done on stepping ashore, after driving to the British Consulate and receiving the visits of the Ministers, had been to pay an informal call on the Khedive at the Palace of Ras-el-Tin. This prelude to the official reception later in the day was interpreted in the way that Lord Kitchener perhaps meant it to be. It

suggested clearly that no trifling incidents in the years now long past were to influence his policy as British Agent in Egypt.

The native Press, however, was obviously impressed with the remarkable warmth of the reception given to Lord Kitchener. This unparalleled interest shown in his coming can only be set down to the reputation and prestige he had gained on the banks of the Nile. There could, indeed, be no plainer proof of the old saying that nothing strikes the Oriental imagination so much as success in war. There had been considerable excitement in Alexandria when Lord Kitchener drove to and from the Palace in the Khedivial state coach. When he arrived in Cairo the Station Square was thronged with people. The British community was naturally well represented, and there were a few troops, amongst them, very fittingly, a squadron of the 21st Lancers, who had made the famous charge at Omdurman. But that the Cairenes should have assembled in the numbers they did, showed not only that the people recognised the importance of the occasion in the arrival of a new British Agent; it showed, too, that the personality of Lord Kitchener had increased the dignity attaching to the position of British Agent. As he drove through the streets in the early darkness he was cheered as never a British Agent had been before. It is unusual for an Egyptian crowd to cheer; the silence with which the Khedive was generally received in the streets of the capital used to surprise those who were unaware of this peculiarity. There was no possible misinterpretation of the welcome Lord Kitchener was given that evening. The great warrior had

come. Big events were to happen. Through his wonderful influence miracles would be performed. Yet who could have been aware how soon his influence over the country was to be put to the test? That afternoon Italy had sent an ultimatum to Turkey, and it was only a question of hours before the war between the two countries was to break out. The thrill that went through Egypt, the wave of sentiment for the Crescent in its war with the Cross, might well have produced grave disorders had a lesser man been at the helm. Egypt, indeed, felt the Italian action as an outrage, but under Lord Kitchener's firm guidance there was no disorder except for one or two paltry affrays in Alexandria, a town which throughout history has always been notorious for its turbulence.

That day, September 23rd, 1911, proved to be still more eventful. For the Italian-Turkish war was the beginning of a fresh outbreak of the Near Eastern Question, which caused the discrediting of the Young Turkish rule in Turkey, and rendered still more tenuous the slender ties that bound Egypt to the Ottoman Empire.

## CHAPTER V

### First Accomplishments

HE had been sent to "watch over the prosperity of Egypt."

The enthusiasm with which Lord Kitchener's arrival was announced suggested a happy augury. But the reception of his first important speech—that made to the Khedive—gave him a foretaste of the sensitiveness which he would have to meet all through his term of office from some quarters.

"I am particularly pleased," he had said, "with the prospect of being called upon to maintain the deep sympathy which animated my predecessor in his relations with your Highness, and I hope that this sympathy, added to a friendship to Egypt of long date, will facilitate for me the task I have at heart, namely, watching over to the best of my power, and with the approval of your Highness, the prosperity of Egypt."

There were those who at once voiced their objection to the declaration that he had come to "watch over the prosperity of Egypt!" This was departing from established usage, they said. The official Arabic translation of the French original, moreover, rather emphasised the point. Critics said that the British Agent-General, who was technically in the same position as the representative of any other of the Powers, should

not have put the matter so bluntly. It was taken to indicate the inauguration of a firmer policy and the more direct intervention of the British Agent in the direction of the country's affairs. The Egyptian Press discussed the matter in all its aspects, and one and all anticipated the piquancy that from that day characterised the relationship between the British Agent and the Khedive.

The British daily Press, however, helped to give Lord Kitchener a good send off by the remarkable unanimity with which it greeted the new régime.

*The Times* spoke truly when it remarked that there was nothing which enhanced the authority of a ruler in the East more than military fame. Going on to refer to the notorious waning of our authority in Egypt before the previous summer, that journal continued :

“The reproach which Mr. Roosevelt coupled with the high tribute he paid to our rule there, in his speech at the Guildhall, was not undeserved.

“The so-called Nationalists seem to have persuaded themselves that not even the murder of the Prime Minister would induce us to quell the criminal agitation. The purpose of much of that agitation is, as Sir Edward Grey bluntly stated in the House of Commons, to bring our occupation of Egypt to an end by making our task there an impossible task.”

Yet even *The Times* had nothing but a hopeful conjecture to make in regard to the aptitude of the great soldier for his new post. Whether he possessed all the gifts of a great civil ruler remained to be seen. He had not yet filled any great civil office, but both in the Sudan and South Africa he displayed in a very eminent degree the qualities of an efficient organiser and

administrator, and he conducted delicate diplomatic negotiations with marked firmness and tact.

It is interesting to read what the few sceptics had to say:

“Lord Kitchener,” said one journal, “has many great gifts, but we cannot help feeling that the post is not one which should be held by a soldier. The military experience and high qualities of command possessed by Lord Kitchener eminently fit him for military work, but it cannot be said that they are the qualities required by our Agent-General in Cairo. We may be reminded that Lord Cromer was a soldier, but he was only so in name.”

It is necessary here to clear up the many misconceptions which existed at the time and may be lurking still, that Lord Kitchener's appointment was made with unusual conditions. Sir Edward Grey, in reply to a question on this point in the House of Commons, denied the fact in the most emphatic terms.

“There are,” he said, “no conditions at all. The public appointment was offered and accepted unconditionally in the usual way. But, of course, before Lord Kitchener goes to Egypt the policy to be followed in Egypt, and the questions that have to be dealt with by us in Egypt, will be the subject of discussion between him and His Majesty's Government. The appointment thus offered was accepted without conditions.”

But it was generally accepted that Lord Kitchener would be allowed more scope than his predecessor. Sir Eldon Gorst was unfortunate in having a “bad” Press: this because he refrained—and probably wrongly refrained—from any attempts to influence it, and in not receiving the full support of the British officials in the country, who resented the tentative efforts he made

to appoint Egyptians to posts under the Government when suitable men could be found. When in the grip of illness and wrung by adverse criticism, Sir Eldon Gorst, in his last report, admitted his policy had been a failure, but we cannot accept his words. They were the cry of pain of a dying man. There was one statesman at the time who saw things in their true light. Sir Edward Grey wrote to Sir Eldon Gorst when he was on his deathbed such a letter as more than compensated for all he had suffered. The then Foreign Secretary, at least, knew that Sir Eldon had not failed.

But Lord Kitchener arrived to set the seal on his success. He knew the Egyptians and their language. He had been the best part of twenty years in the country when it was being moulded by the master hand of Lord Cromer. He had Lord Cromer's strength; he had more than Lord Cromer's prestige. He possessed the advantages of both of his predecessors. He was one from whom revolutionary changes must be expected.

But what changes?

Lord Kitchener, as we have seen, began his plans for Egypt's welfare on board the steamer which carried him to Egypt in October, 1911. He began to put those plans into execution soon after his arrival. His earliest, and not the least notable, success was in bringing to an end the dangerous religious feud which existed between Moslems and Copts. These outbursts, the growth of centuries, grew to a climax in the early part of 1911. It had been a bitter complaint with the Copts that the allocation of religious endowments was unfair. This Lord Kitchener was able to settle, pacifying Copt and convincing Moslem. Moreover, he was able,

by the appointment of a Copt on the Council of Ministers, to remove what had been a further grievance of the Copts. By some it is said that this enterprising and intelligent race always manages to find a grievance to air; at any rate these two grievances Lord Kitchener considered to be legitimate, and so they were removed.

The publication of his first annual report was made not many months after his appointment, and coincided with the historic meeting of the British Agent, the Prime Minister, and the First Lord of the Admiralty at Malta. The optimism of the report, backed by the apparent change in the spirit of the country soon after his arrival, gave a very good impression. The value of a bright report was acknowledged by Lord Kitchener. Sir Eldon Gorst had breathed pessimism into his, and the spirit caught the people in forming their judgment of him. British Consuls-General in Egypt write their own testimonials annually, and can only be judged for the most part according to their own judgment. So that, after all, it depends upon the bump of self-esteem how an Agent shall judge his work and let the public judge him.

The report began with a general introduction, in which Lord Kitchener praised the restraint of the Egyptian people, despite the excitement caused by the Balkan War and the warm and widespread sympathy for the Mohammedan combatants. He added:

“ I am glad to be able to report that political feeling in other respects has lately been much calmer, and that the consideration of practical reforms for the good of the country has apparently become more interesting to the majority of the people than discussions on abstruse political questions which are unlikely to lead to any useful result ”

Of the political factions he wrote :

“ Whatever the value of a party system may be in Western political life, it is evident that its application to an intensely democratic community, the essential basis of whose social system is the brotherhood of man, combined with respect for learning and the experience of age, is an unnatural proceeding, fraught with inevitable division and weakness.

“ The development and elevation of the character of a people depends mainly on the growth of self-control and the power to dominate natural impulses, as well as on the practice of unobtrusive self-reliance and perseverance, combined with reasoned determination. None of these elements of advance are assisted in any way by party strife. Calm and well-considered interest in political affairs is good for both the governed and those who rule, but fictitious interest, generally based on misrepresentation and maintained by party funds and party tactics, does nothing to elevate or develop the intelligent character of an Oriental race.”

Agriculture was dealt with at length.

“ Owing to the fertilising Nile flood, the land, though in some places water-logged, remains as good as it ever was, ready again to return abundant results to careful cultivation. Certain defects have, however, temporarily reduced the productive qualities of the soil. Not only the urgent necessity for drainage works . . . but the want of cattle for ploughing in the Delta have been much felt. There has been a decrease of 250,000 animals through disease during the last seven years, although the cultivated area increased by a similar number of feddans. Other factors which have reduced the yield are the too frequent rotations of cotton crops, and the want of space allowed between the plants. When these shortcomings have been successfully rectified we may confidently look forward to the return per feddan being as good as it was in years gone by.”

Lord Kitchener devoted much space to the fellah. Discussing the question of his indebtedness, Lord

Kitchener considered the remedies to be the spread of education, the extension of savings banks to the villages, and the establishment of "cotton markets through the country, where means for accurate weighing under Government control will be provided, and where the price of cotton will be daily posted," so as to prevent the fellah being defrauded by the small merchants to whom he sells his cotton.

We shall see how many of these suggestions materialised.

On the very important question of education the new British Agent remarked :

"There is no doubt that illiteracy places the fellah at a serious personal disadvantage in his mutual relationships in life, and impedes at every step the economic and social development of the country. When the conditions of life were still simple, illiteracy was not, perhaps, felt as a serious drawback. Modern changes have, however, brought the agriculturist, trader, and workman increasingly into contact with the more highly educated sections of the community, thus making larger demands on their intelligence and capacity, and placing them amongst surroundings in which their illiteracy is an ever-growing disability. Valuable elements of national advancement can be obtained from even a little learning, an addition to the discipline which the character and intellect undergo thereby. One of the worst features of the elementary education hitherto supplied has been that it was restricted so largely to the cultivation of memory. An instruction that is merely 'bookish' leaves some of the most useful faculties of the mind undeveloped. Manual exercises train the eye to accuracy in observation, the hand to skill in execution, and the mind to a sense of the importance of truthfulness in work. They cultivate habits of diligence, neatness, and attention to detail, and quicken the general intelligence. What seems most required for progress in this direction is to evolve the best

type of rural school. . . . Before leaving the question of education, I should like to draw attention to two interesting developments in the educational policy of this country. One is the commencement of a system of commercial education. Many positions in civil life, both honourable and lucrative, have hitherto been practically closed to Egyptians educated in their own country by their lack of knowledge in this respect.

“The other, which, though decided upon in principle, has not yet been actually put into force, is the institution of a proper system of Civil Service examinations for entrance into the Government service. It is hoped that this reform will both raise the intellectual standard of the officials and remove any suspicion of favouritism which, however unjustly, may have existed.”

A little disappointment was expressed by those who anticipated some definite statement concerning the modification of the Capitulations. He merely contented himself with remarking that

“some alleviation of the tutelage in which the country is still held may be the outcome of a protest made by Egypt at the last International Sanitary Congress, which was well received by the experts assembled in Paris.”

Concluding a clearly written report, Lord Kitchener referred to the desirability of integral reform of the mixed justice, and that little advance could be made till that became possible.

## CHAPTER VI

### Water and Roads

ONE of Kitchener's early achievements, true not far-reaching in its effects, but one which revealed the practical reformer at work, was his mapping out and laying down of many important roads in Egypt. A country without roads is like a motor-car with a punctured tyre; you can get along—in a manner. When Kitchener became British Agent the capital was linked up with the provinces by rail and water only. The need for roads up to that time never appears to have been recognised. So sudden was the change, however, that people were hardly aware of it. To this day they still use the *arabieyh* (carriage). You hardly ever see a European walk in Egypt. If you ask why, it is still said that there are no roads. Such people are behind the times; certainly behind the Kitchener period. If they will only look they will find roads. But if they say there are no pavements—well, we cannot tell them nay. The native is quite content to walk in the road the "Lord" made for him, and before he will make demands for well-laid-out pavements he will first have obtained all the water he requires in bad season as well as in good season; he will want more schools so that his son may not eke out an old-fashioned existence in the fields pulling cotton and sowing seeds. The

need for pavements is not voiced by the natives, and, after all, the discontent of the European is no criterion. His only grumble can relate to the fall of stocks or the quality of his wine. The fellah's demands, as they are at present, would satisfy the most conservative of reformers, for the sum total of them in the conception of the modern revolutionist would not bring him an inch nearer the millennium as conceived by a moderate reformer in Europe. And yet to the fellah plentiful water might bring that perfect state of bliss. It might. Who knows but when the present movement towards educating him has borne its fruits it will be found to include the seeds of discontent? The road to progress is indeed by way of education, but that other alley of awakened dissatisfaction has to be passed. And what a long alley it is!

Well, Lord Kitchener gave Egypt roads, and if he shelved the question of pavements it is equitable under present conditions. That is not so important a question as that of irrigation. We must give Egypt her mainstay of life—water. Years ago, when the question of heightening the Assouan Dam had been broached, and consent to remove the serious plight of part of the country where there was a shortage of water was given, a number of narrow-minded archæologists protested. "If you raise the Assouan Dam to 118 metres you will—flood Philæ!" they declared.

This boomerang was flung into the camp of those short-sighted politicians, diplomats, and engineers who had worried the Government for consent to heighten the dam, who had sweated in reckoning out in pounds and in milliards of cubits of water how many more feddans would be under cultivation and how many

thousands of families would be saved. These smug mathematicians arrived at the figure to the cubit and feddan, and had left out of their reckoning the momentous question of Philæ! What did these feddans or irrigated lands matter when this ancient structure was endangered? What was the immaterial question of saving a few thousand unimportant fellahîn when Philæ was to be flooded? True this historic relic was by no measure the only monument of archæological interest which Egypt possessed, and that many of the ancient temples had, in the course of years, found their way by instalments into the collections in the European homes of these æsthetic millionaires. True, too, the need for water as the staff of life could not be expected to be impressed upon those who lived in Piccadilly, in the Bois de Boulogne, or in Fifth Avenue, and only came to Egypt for the season.

Nevertheless, the influence these cranks or business men were able to bring to bear upon the authorities was sufficient to induce the Government to reconsider their scheme of progress, and so they compromised by decreasing the height of the original estimate, thus endangering the health and livelihood of the fellahîn who lived on the outskirts of the country. On this matter I shall have more to say.

The effect of this chicken-hearted policy was seen in the summer of 1913, when the Nile and the fortunes of the fellah were at their lowest.

But those who were the cause of their ruin came over in the winter, taking protection from the sun under their white helmets, and drank whisky and soda on the balconies of their hotels, and they took train or *daha-beeyah* to Upper Egypt, and in the moonlight whimpered

over the fate of poor Philæ. Then they wiped away their tears and went to dinner.

The fanaticism of the Mahdites was comprehensible and repressible; the selfish fanaticism of these worshippers of stone is incomprehensible and irrepressible! Irrepressible! When the archæologists vetoed one of Egypt's vital necessities Lord Kitchener was many miles from Kas-el-Doubara. Despite the stories of his weakness for curios and relics, I am certain that Philæ would have been flooded, and with it those busybodies who interfered in Egyptian local affairs, if he had been at the helm. Ardent collector as Lord Kitchener was, he could never have betrayed the country for such a fad.

But the errors of yesterday may be repaired to-day although the ravages created by them can never be wiped out, and the sins must be placed against those responsible for them.

The inauguration ceremony in connection with the half-raised Assouan Dam took place in December, 1913, before a distinguished company, which included the Khedive, Lord Kitchener, and the Ministers. I had the privilege of being one of the invited guests.

Everyone present was struck with the tremendous undertaking which had been so successfully carried out.

"It's a pity those archæologists prevented our raising the dam in the first instance to its requisite height," said one of the men responsible for the work to me, as we left the dam.

"It's a pity you did not have sufficiently strong men to ignore them," I could only reply, the absolute folly of the whole thing shaming me.

Water and roads continued to dominate the time and attention of Lord Kitchener for the ensuing year. We find him travelling backwards and forwards, to and from the Delta, examining minutely the improvements which were either necessary or which were being effected, and we read of his energies in organising a special department to deal with the maintenance of the high roads throughout the country. Hitherto this work had been left in the hands of the inspectors of irrigation circles, who were mainly preoccupied with the distribution of water. It was not to be expected, therefore, that the progress of matters outside their own department should have been facilitated. But Lord Kitchener organised this special department under the Minister of Public Works and made it responsible for looking after all the main roads in Egypt.

Roadmaking in Egypt, therefore, can be said actually to have begun through Lord Kitchener's energies. Prior to his arrival there were but a few miles of roads. Wheeled traffic practically did not exist. The advent of the motor-car found Egypt altogether unable to take advantage of the innovation. The new order of things began with the Cairo-Helwan project. These two centres were, by Lord Kitchener's industry, joined up by a road.

The next project was the Cairo-Alexandria road, a distance of some 125 miles. To detail other new roads is unnecessary, but it may be said that when the present projects are completed the Land of the Nile will undoubtedly attract motorists from all parts of the world, for it will have a network of roads over the most charming scenery of the world.

## CHAPTER VII

### “ Malesh ”

THE English imagination has, for some reason or other, seized upon the word “ Kismet ” as epitomising the characteristics of the man of the East. As a matter of fact, one rarely even hears the word in the East. You use it oftener in London. I asked several Egyptians if they were familiar with the word, before I found that it was part of a phrase which is used sometimes as an expression of sympathy after unhappy occurrences. But the word which really dominates life in the East is “ Malesh.” Only travellers to the East will know it, for they have heard it often enough. It is the keynote of social and political life. It has fastened on Egypt as no word ever did. Around it her history has been woven. Through it her destiny will be fulfilled. “ Malesh ” cannot be explained by any equivalent English word. It denotes indifference to order and disorder, an unwillingness to exert oneself, a disinclination to “ create unpleasantness ” by righting wrong, a desire for mutual closing of the eyes to mischief.

“ Maleshism,” to coin a term, permeates Egyptian atmosphere until it affects new-comers. The Egyptian becomes acquainted with the spirit and word from the cradle; the new-comer from the hour he arrives. But

you may be sure "Malesh" is not used when one's personal interest is sacrificed. Supposing your cab-driver is not satisfied with the fee, an Egyptian looking on will say to him "Malesh," and only after a half-hearted attempt at remonstrance the cabby will finish his mutterings and drive away. Men never fight in Egypt. They only quarrel. Sometimes you hear a din which, in England, would signify nothing less than a street riot. Before you become acquainted with its empty significance in Egypt you run and look, simply to behold two Egyptians shouting at each other and waving their arms in a terrifying manner. Then an onlooker says, in a deprecating manner, "Malesh," and the waving grows feebler, the tones diminuendo, and after a few more "Maleshes" each of the disputants departs in peace.

Since England went to Egypt the beauty of the word is becoming endangered. Once upon a time if a tram-driver ran over a man he said "Malesh," and drove on. But now *procès-verbaux* are held (often while the injured man is dying), and all sorts of inconvenient fuss is made. One is thankful, however, that this is not always the case. If you commit mere trivial indiscretions, such as theft, knocking a man down by a bicycle, riding without a light, forgetting to pay your fare (to companies' servants), annoying a policeman—in effect, becoming a public nuisance—simply say "Malesh" to all concerned. They will repeat "Malesh" with a smile, and off you go to have further fun, still armed with the never-failing password. There is no doubt, however, that, while plenty of humour can be extracted from it, the word "Malesh" is Egypt's national curse.

Abolish the word and the evil will go with it. It would take centuries before a new word—a synonym—could worm its way into the life and blood of the Egyptian people as this one has. To-day you see the effects of its evil magic everywhere. If it signifies an acquiescence in abuse in the ordinary individual, to what influential proportion might a multiplication of instances reach in the public service? Supposing a minor public official becomes cognisant of a leakage which might, with a little trouble, be stopped, that man—at any rate, if he is the older type of Egyptian—will “malesh” it, and the leakage will go on for years. It must be a European of exceptional will-power who can overthrow at once this mischievous influence which has weighed down generations. In one of the low Niles—the lowest on record—cases of “stealing water” were numerous. Ingenious devices were resorted to which would enable farmers to hide pipes that had been secretly connected between the river and the farm. Of course, a keen examination was made by the higher officials, who are not so much tainted with the spirit of “Maleshism.” But in many instances minor officials had to be employed. I asked one of these, after the crisis was over, if he had found any of these selfish transgressors. “Many,” he said. “What did you do with them?” I asked. He looked at me and smiled. “Oh, malesh!” he said.

Lord Milner, in his strikingly successful book, relates an incident where a recalcitrant native Minister was advised by the British Consul-General in Cairo on a certain matter, but the Minister was not prepared to carry out the suggestion. He flew into a passion, declared he would never consent, and threatened

resignation. Finally, the patience of the British Consul-General gave out, and he sent word to the Minister that this was a question about which the British Government would stand no trifling. The bearer of the message expected an explosion, but not a bit of it. "*Eh bien,*" said the imperious old gentleman, with a shrug of his shoulders; "*si c'est un ordre, je n'ai plus rien à dire.*" And the thing was done. As Lord Milner suggests, it would have been much easier, so much easier, to push through our work of reform if we had seen our way to adopt from the first a more uniformly decided tone.

"The masterful hand of a Resident," was Lord Dufferin's dictum, "would soon have bent everything to his will."

No one could complain that this "masterful" hand was missing during Lord Kitchener's régime. How the native accepted all this can be seen in the following testimony from a native newspaper, *Al-Bassir* :

"If a man like Lord Kitchener existed in every country the dead would return to life, the poor would be rich, science and freedom would spread, and everybody would be happy.

"A man is not he who excels in diplomacy, science, or administration, but he who knows how to use knowledge, who follows the right path, and arrives at his project without stumbling.

"Men are in want of three things: wealth, science, and freedom. But wealth will not last if science does not direct it, science will not be of much good if wealth does not help to perfect and spread it, and both of these are of no use to man unless his hand is let free and his mind given free scope to enable him to go further and produce more.

"When Lord Kitchener came to Egypt he found it

in great need of a man to help it. He found the country tottering in its walk like a blind man, and both science and freedom in the country were not used in the right manner. His first achievement, therefore, was to bridle freedom and to place science on a sure foundation. He then turned his attention to general, not individual, wealth.”

Malesh !

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Fellah

THE song of the fellah, sung properly, is more poignant than "The Song of the Shirt." But it is never sung in tune. People credit him with views, gratitude, and memory. He possesses neither. Yet, withal, he accomplished something which more brilliant folk than he failed to do—he captured the imagination of Lord Kitchener. "Lord Kitchener, F.F." (the Fellah's Friend), is no exaggerated honour to bestow. One of the best-known English writers, whose general outlook is very different from that of the late British Agent, told me that Lord Kitchener wore a mask when he interviewed him.

"But when I mentioned the fellahîn," he added, "his face lighted up wondrously!"

I believe it. The hope of the fellahîn not only found reflection in Lord Kitchener's face, but in his work in Egypt. It is often asked, "What was there in the fellah that won for him the great protection of the British Agent?" It was undoubtedly his childish acquiescence in the tyranny of those who had exploited him in the past. His utter helplessness had squeezed sympathy from a heart of iron; his unconsciousness of his value won for him a champion who hitherto had himself done all the winning.

Lord Kitchener's interest in the fellah was no passing phase; it was a genuine love for the worker in the blue *galabieh*. Coupled with this sentiment was the practical mind which realised that the fellah is the backbone of the country. No less than 30 per cent. of the direct revenue is derived from the land tax, which is levied according to the fertility of the cultivated land. Of 5,457,984 feddans representing the area taxed in 1914, 4,763,088 feddans were owned by 1,555,503 natives.

Yet the fellah has been described as a spendthrift! In no country in the world—not even excepting India—is paternal government, and, consequently, paternal legislation, more necessary than in Egypt. The indebtedness of the fellah—a subject on which Lord Cromer animadverted at considerable length in many of his reports—is proverbial, but up to 1912 little or nothing had been done effectually to relieve him of the millstone which his thriftlessness, his natural gullibility, and the peculiarly unfortunate circumstances under which his forbears lived, had combined to hang round his neck.

It was because of these known faults that Lord Kitchener introduced legislation which protected the fellah from usurers and encouraged him to save. It is true as well as surprising that “from one cotton season to the other the cultivator has remained in the debt of the man who supplies him with cotton seed, furnishes him with agricultural implements and cattle for tilling his holding, purchases his cotton and other crops, and advances him money for wedding and other ceremonies, obtaining at each deal—which has been forced on the fellah by the conditions imposed in the preceding

transaction—a securer hold on him and his possessions. Many have been the instances where a fellah has had to be sold up, not for the amount of his original debt—that had always been long since settled—but for the interest and legal and other expenses that have accrued on the renewals, and has degenerated from employer-landowner to a hired labourer on what was very often formerly his own estate.”

When the Agricultural Bank was established in 1902 it was hoped that the doom of the usurer was nigh. But the fellah, who shrank from the public formality which transactions with the bank entailed, still went to the old pernicious source, which had this advantage—that it settled loans speedily and privately.

Lord Kitchener’s new scheme was directed towards removing these drawbacks. He therefore instituted what is known as “the village savings bank.” In each of the villages the local tax-collector was empowered to accept deposits of one piastre ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.) and upwards. He could also honour withdrawals. The experiment was justified, for in the first year the deposits increased by over £E100,000, while the number of depositors was more than doubled. Another move against the usurer was the introduction of a Usury Law, which forbade the lending of money at more than 9 per cent. interest. Hitherto it had not been unusual for loans to be contracted at 50 and even 60 per cent.

Not knowing how to read or write, the fellah was cheated by others besides sharp money-lenders. In weighing cotton he had been cheated so often that a protective measure had to be found for him. Government *halakas* were introduced—a system of cotton

compounds, where is installed an official weighing machine, which is under the supervision of the new Weights and Measures Service. There the fellahîn can have their cotton weighed free of charge.

The protection of the small-holder was Lord Kitchener's next move, and the result gave rise to the much criticised Five Feddan Law. Nearly 1,400,000 feddans were owned by 1,292,398 natives in holdings of less than five feddans, out of the 4,752,017 feddans owned by 1,433,423 natives. The new law protected the small-holder from distraint on his agricultural property, dwellings, and outbuildings.\*

In view of the fact that this law would be treating existing creditors somewhat arbitrarily, seeing that it was depriving them of the right to touch the land on the security of which they had quite legally lent their capital, it was arranged that all creditors, whether substituted or original, should have all their rights reserved to them, provided the documents in support of their claims had been registered at the courts before the date on which the law came into force. It was also agreed that all such creditors might, without losing any of their rights, grant renewals or extensions of time to their debtors, provided that the date of the last maturity expired within five years of the coming into effect of the law. As soon as it was known these concessions to existing creditors had been sanctioned, there ensued a tremendous rush to register loan deeds,

\* "The agricultural holdings of farmers who do not own more than five feddans of land cannot be seized for debt. This exemption from seizure includes the dwelling-house of such farmers and their dependencies, as well as two draught animals, and the agricultural implements necessary for the cultivation of the said land."—(Art. 2 of Five Feddan Law.)

and the mixed tribunals were so congested that special registration offices had to be opened in the native courts. Subsequent investigation elicited the curious fact that a large number of these loan-deeds were not for loans already granted, but that they were for loans to be granted in the near future. And, further, these deeds were not presented by creditors-to-be, but by prospective borrowers, who were anxious to make certain that they would be able to procure money in the immediate future.

“ Much criticism has been levelled at Lord Kitchener and his advisers,” said the Cairo correspondent of the *Times*, “ but, apart from the usurers, one finds that there is little active resentment at the introduction of this measure. Most people are ready to admit the excellent intentions of the British Agent, and the fears, which some have experienced at the outset, that this law would have disastrous effects on the country, have now been allayed, first by the news that a system of agricultural credit is, at the present moment, being seriously studied by the Egyptian Government, and secondly by the ready manner in which amendments have been made in the law to meet either the representations of serious members of the community or to facilitate the administration of this law.”

While these reforms were being carried out the extremists were still urging the claims of education. But there were others who submitted that you could only educate the fellah to the reality of his plight, and that since improvement was being gradually effected without his consciousness of what he was undergoing, it would be foolish to rouse him. If contentment be a goal—if progress, although a remedy of immediate dis-

content, be a seed of greater discontent, what is its use? Why pucker the brow of even the lowliest, whose countenances, one and all, reveal an entire absence of "that worried look" which haunts us everywhere in Europe?

It is a problem for more advanced nations. Is education worth the painful enlightenment that follows? The unhappiest class in Egypt is not the fellahîn, or the army of *boabs*; it is the student who is "beginning to see things."

Discontent, however, is avowed to be healthy, and Egypt must pass through that phase. A roused fellah seems an incongruity; but if it must come at last, the improvement effected in the meantime by Lord Kitchener will have saved him much torment.

In regard to the actual state of educational progress some stride, indeed, has been made, as witness the increase in the figures in the Public Instruction Budget—from £E81,000 to £E551,000 in twenty years. In Ismail's time £E29,000 a year was spent on education. A few years after the British occupation it had swollen to £E81,000 a year. It was £E305,000 in 1906; £E374,000 in 1907; £E450,000 in 1908. Nevertheless, the rate of illiteracy is still extremely high, and careful legislation is very necessary. The situation was succinctly described by the *Egyptian Gazette*, which declared that "the future of Egypt in a large measure depends upon the way in which the Government deals with the child life of the land."

In many ways the problem of education, etc., of the children in England is simplified by the fact that very young children cannot earn money easily. Legislation has made child-labour in England impossible, while

at the same time it has made child-education compulsory. In Egypt conditions of life are very different: a child from the age of six or seven is an asset in the family, and has a real money-value to its parents. The fellah will lead his gamoose to the waterwheel, harness it on, and leave a small child of seven with a long whip to make the animal work. All day long the little chap sits and plays around that waterwheel, while his father is working away in another part of the field. In the *berseem* season a small girl of seven or eight will be seen leading a gamoose or two from the house to the field for food. She will tie up an animal in the field with sufficient rope to ensure its having a good feed, and then go back for other animals, until she has in the course of the day a camel, a gamoose, a cow or a donkey all feeding and under her entire charge. In the cotton season a small girl or boy can earn from two to three piastres a day picking cotton in the fields. In former days these youngsters were made to work in the ginning mills, but the Government very wisely passed a law forbidding children under thirteen years of age to be employed in these mills.

This was really the outcome of many accidents.

The children in the villages are too valuable to be sent to school by their parents. Thus there grows up a new generation of illiterate peasants—a prey to the unscrupulous.

One suggestion to remedy this defect was to compel parents to send their boys to school—except from September 15 to November 15, the two main months of the cotton season, when attendance could be optional. The difficulty of finding teaching staff and schools could be gradually overcome.

*La Réforme*, commenting upon an article from the *Gharidah*, relative to the question whether the fellah is happy or unhappy, after agreeing with the native paper that instruction and education are what the fellah sadly needs, says :

“ But of what education does our contemporary speak ? As the fellah is a person who acts by routine, it will be a long time before he will throw off old habits, but when he does adopt new ones as his own he will cling to them with tenacity. There is something excellent in his character. It is upon this that one must count.

“ The fellah is not perhaps happy, but he will finish by seeing that he has every reason to be so, if the present economic progress follows its natural course. He will finish by perceiving the difference that exists between his situation of yesterday and that of to-morrow.

“ He will see that he is no longer the victim of the same abuses and the plaything of the same hazards, and that the men by whom he is surrounded and the circumstances in which his life develops are no longer the same as they were in the past.

“ The fellah is, perhaps, not happy, but he will be.”

It was the sense of what is due to the agricultural worker that inspired Lord Kitchener's whole-hearted desire to give that vital aid towards the earning of his livelihood—the means of irrigation. He spent hours and hours almost daily with Sir Ismail Sirry Pasha and Mr. (now Sir) Murdoch Macdonald, the two leaders of Egypt's irrigation, going over in detail every item in the heavy work of that department. When he had assented to a scheme, and work was begun, he invariably paid a personal visit of inspection, so that when he was present at the inauguration of some great work you felt that the speech he made was no empty ceremonial

flapdoodle or a concoction of terms he neither knew about nor believed in. You had to admit that he had a right there. Possibly he disliked the actual opening ceremonial and the flamboyant formalities which had to be gone through. You could imagine him thinking, as he stood there listening to high personages reading grandiloquent speeches which had been written for them, "Oh, let's get it over and get on with something else." He hated speech-making, and abhorred having his speeches reported. Once at an Irish dinner in Cairo, at which he took the chair, he noticed that one of the guests was a journalist. He was an Irishman, and had paid for his ticket, so that he had a right to attend. But Kitchener was equal to the occasion. Calling him over he said genially :

"Please don't report my speech. You know I'm such a d——d bad speaker."

As a fact, it is quite probable that none of his speeches would ever have been reported. His assistants, however, realised the value of publication as a means of keeping the British Agent in touch with the people, and so his speeches often appeared where otherwise nothing would have been known of them.

Lord Kitchener's repeated trips to the provinces, to see for himself that all the improvements and new regulations he brought about were well carried out and in full working order, excited much comment, for the most part favourable, in the native Press. The *Mahrroussa*, however, struck a note that had not so far been touched upon, and criticised the competition among the provincial notables to spend money recklessly in gorgeous receptions whenever Lord Kitchener went to their part of the country.

The *Mahroussa* said :

“ Although these trips do not cause unmixed pleasure to Egyptians, inasmuch as they are the manifestation of an authority which they would like to see reserved to the Sovereign, and as they strengthen British influence in Egypt, they are none the less useful to the country, and as such we must seek to obtain from them as much profit as possible.

“ On the other hand, from the moment that Lord Kitchener desires to show himself before the Egyptians as the absolute master, it would be well that we should try to render these visits as little onerous as possible for the pockets of the rich and as little painful to patriots.

“ Lord Kitchener knows very well that the rich of the country are not nearly so wealthy as they wish to appear, and that many of them who possess sumptuous palaces and offer rich banquets are in debt up to their necks. I should never be astonished to see the bailiff enter a palace just at the moment when Lord Kitchener was leaving. Such people are worthy of pity, and, besides, Lord Kitchener has no need of all these vain things to increase his glory.

“ I should never be surprised to hear one day that Lord Kitchener, who has instituted Savings Banks and the Five Feddan Law, has given orders to the Mudirs to put a stop to all these decorations and illuminations whenever he goes abroad.”

At the same time, these visits were undoubtedly productive of good results. To take a minute case :

During one of Lord Kitchener's visits to Benha, he was asked by a delegation to give instructions for the town to have electric light, and for the roads to be macadamised and kept in order. His Lordship promised that the matter should receive immediate consideration.

Speaking to the members of the Galioubia Provincial Council, to the omdehs and the villagers, who stood

round about, Lord Kitchener then asked what was the local opinion of the work of the Cantonal Courts, adding :

“ In your fields you must inspect everything yourselves and live on good terms with your neighbours. The Five Feddan Law, for the time being, may not appear as a benefit to the fellahîn, but it will be a great benefit in the future. While examining the statistics of debt, I find that Galioubia is the most indebted of all the Provinces.”

His Lordship then urged them to avoid the prodigality to which they unfortunately so much inclined, and advised them, instead of spending all their savings on expensive ceremonies—as, for example, wedding festivals—to pay their debts.

“ If the Egyptians always thought of paying their debts instead of trying to increase them, they would deserve to be happy.”

Amin Bey, a notability of Galioubia, then begged his Lordship to see into the case of the small landowners, who, in consequence of the Five Feddan Law, were unable to buy the necessary seeds, etc., for their work.

Lord Kitchener replied that he had already approached some banks in order to arrange for them to help the fellahîn in purchasing necessities for the working of their fields. In addition to which he said that the Government was studying a Bill which would be of the greatest utility to the fellahîn.

Another request that was made was that the age limit for pupils in schools should be extended, to which Lord Kitchener replied that the Government was already studying this question.

In conclusion, Lord Kitchener urged the fellahîn to take the greatest care of their crops which, that year, seemed to be in a very promising condition.

The above report of one of Lord Kitchener's visits is illustrative of the direct methods he adopted as British Agent in Egypt.

## CHAPTER IX

### Egypt's First Parliament

THE inauguration of Egypt's first Parliament was due mainly to the efforts of Lord Kitchener. Whatever his critics may deny him with regard to other reforms, no one can gainsay that the first real attempt towards creating a parliament in Egypt was brought about mainly, if not solely, by Lord Kitchener's work and influence.

It is true that even upon this score criticism has not been lacking; but while one who desires to record a situation as it actually is must examine such criticism, it should be borne in mind that a first parliament, like the first of lesser institutions, must take time before it can be rid of its defects. Only time and British representatives can do that. Before the establishment of this new Constitution in July, 1913, there were in existence two public bodies known as the Legislative Council and the General Assembly.

The germ of a legislative institution for Egypt did not arise, of course, with Lord Kitchener. It was Lord Dufferin who instituted the elements of representative government in Egypt. He was desirous of erecting a barrier "against the intolerable tyranny of the Turks," and one of the best ways of shielding a people against oppression not only of enemies but

of friends, is to grant them a healthy legislative weapon.

Lord Dufferin conceived the two bodies—the General Assembly and the Legislative Council.

The old Legislative Council was composed of thirty members. Of this number fourteen, including the President, were chosen by the Khedive and his Ministers, while the remainder were elected by the seventy Provincial Councils (purely local bodies) from among their own members, and by electors-delegate from sixteen towns. The privileges of its members were curtailed and its powers limited.

The Legislative Council could advise, was consulted, in fact, upon new laws and decrees; but as its advice need not have been adopted its influence rapidly declined. Very often, especially during Lord Kitchener's régime, a quorum was unobtainable. Members were implored by messenger, by wire, and by 'phone to "come and make a quorum." Rebukes in the Press might have a salutary effect, and at the next meeting a quorum might be formed after an hour's delay; but at the following meeting they reverted to the old state. So that it was generally thought that as so much indifference to legislate was manifested by councillors in a body whose powers were limited, it could not be expected that the greater and wider responsibilities would be granted them.

"By your action you have postponed the political emancipation of Egypt," said well-wishers.

"By not granting us those unreserved powers," was the reply, "you make our work farcical and wasteful."

The General Assembly of eighty-two members was

composed of the Council of Ministers, the members of the Legislative Council, and forty-six Notables elected by electors-delegate.

The privileges of the Assembly were naturally greater than those accorded the small and less-important body. No direct tax could be imposed without its consent. Since, however, it was possible to raise money indirectly, the importance of the privilege need not be too much emphasised.

In addition, it rarely met more than once in every two years. The public interest in these bodies was, in fact, at a very low ebb. The reformers urged that the reason for this was the pantomimic powers of the Constitution.

However that might be, there was abundant excuse for Lord Kitchener to have postponed that important measure had his concern for the Egyptian people been more insincere than real. He proved not only his regard for the people and his patience with their shortcomings, but his determination to force the pace where possible reforms were concerned.

The new Constitution of 1913 simply meant this: The Legislative Council and the General Assembly were converted into a single body (the Provincial Councils not being interfered with materially), and whereas the old Legislative Council was a purely consultative body, the new Parliament was given the power of initiating legislation—although the Council of Ministers still retained the prerogative. Another important article provides that:

“No new taxes, whether direct, personal, or on property, may be established without the consent of the Assembly.”

Questions may be put to Ministers—although they are not obliged to answer them.

The President and Vice-President and fifteen other members of the Assembly are nominated by the Government.

The sudden promulgation of the brand-new Constitution created an upheaval. Apparently little was known of it until its publication in the *Journal Officiel*, which, strangely enough, was not published in English. It was curious, too, that both the Khedive and Lord Kitchener were absent from Egypt when the announcement was made.

“The public have indeed been kept in ignorance, up to the last moment, not only of the details of the new Constitution under which it is to be governed, but even of the date of its publication, and, as far as we know, the public has not shown itself at all restive under these conditions,” complained the *Gazette*. “In the absence of any general anxiety about the new law, there was no special reason why the Government should take us into its confidence, and so we have the sudden publication one fine morning of a new Constitution for Egypt, differing in many important particulars from the form of Government under which we have lived since the early days of the British Occupation. The document, we have said, has caused some mild excitement here; it will produce a much greater sensation at Westminster, and we may expect to see Egypt once more figuring prominently in the proceedings of a Parliament which has lately come to take an almost nervous interest in laws dealing with the creation of new legislative assemblies or the alteration of old ones.”

However, the Press welcomed the great change with open arms, and the elections took place shortly after.

The aloofness of the Egyptian in these elections was not altogether unexpected by students of the Egyptian character. Lord Kitchener had expressed the hope that the new system might lead the people to take more interest in their civil duties, so that eventually they might become fitted for more extensive powers of autonomous government.

The lack of interest, however, only showed how unacquainted the people were with the essence of political freedom, which was yet to be fully grasped.

The first elections in Cairo, Alexandria, and the provinces plainly revealed the "malesh" spirit. It would have to take Egyptians, just as it had taken other and more enlightened peoples, the usual period of evolution before they could fully enter into the spirit of broad and popular government.

When in January, 1913, the new Parliament was opened, Lord Kitchener took his place *at the rear of the other Consuls-General*. But all eyes were turned on him—*the creator of the Assembly*.

BOOK II  
SOME STRANGE HAPPENINGS



## CHAPTER I

### Lord Kitchener *versus* the Khedive

THE complexity of the political situation in Egypt naturally reacted upon the official relationship between His Majesty's Consul-General and the Sovereign of Egypt. Added to this was the annoying anomaly of two strong men with different ideas and aims being squeezed in the same position of responsibility for the welfare of the country. The political position was enough to dispel any chances of a harmonious relationship. Even a much more amenable representative of the British Government than Lord Kitchener would have found it exceedingly difficult to avoid clashing diplomatic swords with Abbas II. But in the case of Lord Kitchener we had every element which combined to bring the issue between the two potent forces to a head. There was in the first place no love lost between the two men. As we shall see, they had met before—much earlier in the tumultuous history of Egypt—and they had not “hit it.” The forceful personality of the British Agent, who wished to carry out his responsibilities according to his own light, came at once into sharp conflict with the obstinate and wilful personality of the Khedive. Who was to blame? There were those who, while disliking Abbas, were genuinely sorry for the Khedive. His, after all,

was a humiliating position. He was Sovereign, and very conscious of it. Why, then, should a "foreigner" dictate to him—override his behests?

A little cold analysis, however, soon quenches these warm reasonings.

Taking a broad view—in other words, if we bring the history of Egypt into focus—it becomes fairly clear that the sovereignty of the Khedive was limited, and that, in fact, having regard to the suzerainty of Turkey, his powers as representative of the Sultan were of a more nominal order than the powers of Great Britain's representative. Abbas held his position by the will of Turkey, and Turkey's influence in Egypt was, apart from the annual tribute she extracted, purely a negative one.

Abbas may have been genuinely aggrieved at the state of his country, whose destinies at one time were being guided by strangers who were in disagreement among themselves. He may, indeed, have had some cause for resentment at the extra strong pressure which Lord Kitchener applied as England's position became more secure in the Valley of the Nile; and finally, it was perhaps unfortunate that some of Lord Kitchener's subordinates should have so taken the new position for granted that their manner towards him was not so obsequious as a great Khedive could have wished. An intimate of the Khedive told me that Abbas had said: "If I have to give way to Lord Kitchener, I object to the high-handed conduct of other British officials—under-secretaries and such." Abbas, in fact, was sometimes very sorry for himself.

This kind of self-pity, however, would have been more consistent in a man less shrewd than he. His

intimate acquaintance with the detailed development which had led up to the British occupation, should have warned him that the position did not permit of the usual interpretation of his position as Sovereign. It would have been a strange position, indeed, if the British Government, after experiencing and overcoming the widespread difficulties which had beset it in its work of reformation, should have permitted the work it proposed to carry on to be thwarted by a headstrong Khedive. History had abundantly justified the British occupation of Egypt, but Abbas was not so much concerned about that as he was about his own personal position. He was the pivot of all the intrigue against our rule. As an artful engineer of mischief he equalled the best put forward from that hotbed of Oriental chicanery—Constantinople. What sympathy, then, can one have had for the Egyptian monarch? With the most liberal tendencies, with all the goodwill in the world for the rights of small nations, it is nevertheless impossible to find one word of consolation for Abbas or for his small band of malecontents, who wished to see the Britisher driven from the country, to be replaced by the fat representatives of a corrupt Turkish oligarchy.

So far as Lord Kitchener was concerned, his position as His Majesty's representative was clearly defined.

As far back as 1884, when difficulties seemed to be toppling over each other in the endeavour to impede England in the work which she had found herself impelled to undertake, the position of the British representative in Egypt was defined clearly and unmistakably. Earl Granville, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, writing to Sir Evelyn Baring (now

Lord Cromer) in a dispatch dated January 4 in that year, said :

“ I need hardly point out that in important questions, where the administration and safety of Egypt are at stake, it is indispensable that Her Majesty’s Government, as long as the provisional occupation of the country by English troops continues, be assured that the advice which, after full consideration of the views of the Egyptian Government, they may find it their duty to tender to the Khedive, should be followed. It should be made clear to the Egyptian Ministers and Governors of Provinces that the responsibility which, for the time, rests on England obliges Her Majesty’s Government to insist on the adoption of the policy which they recommend, and that it will be necessary that those Ministers and Governors who do not follow that course should cease to hold their offices.”

If you read “ British Consul-General ” in place of “ Her Majesty’s Government,” and “ Khedive ” in place of “ Egyptian Ministers,” you have the clue to the strange diplomatic relationship which existed between Lord Kitchener and the Khedive. That was the position in 1884 ; the ensuing years saw the difficulties which surrounded the British policy being gradually removed, and any hopes which Abbas cherished of being able to overthrow our power had become less and less possible of realisation. A wise man would have accepted the inevitable. He would have recognised that the welfare of the country had improved and that those who had set out to become masters had already achieved their aims. At any rate, such a shrewd man might have seen that the policy of pin-pricking could

achieve no other object than to irritate. It certainly could not divert British policy from its main channels.

But Abbas—perhaps acting under instructions from his august master in Stamboul—continued to indulge in his petty and vain exhibitions of petulance and spite, and so hastened the end which the student of this internal struggle did not fail to anticipate—an end which left him bereft of power and which completely isolated him even from those he attempted to befriend.

## CHAPTER II

### The Unmasking of Abbas II

WHAT attitude the Khedive would adopt when war broke out was never in doubt, and in my original book I gave the position fairly clearly. On my return to London I wrote\* that the outcome of the present crisis would settle the question of Egypt's future once for all.

“It will interpret, for instance, the problematical pretensions of the Sultan, the fatuous rule of the Khedive, and will end the obviously inspired intrigues of German diplomacy. It will put on paper definitely what has been well recognised as Great Britain's unwritten law—the law of supreme control. The question of Egypt's annual tribute of £E675,000 to Turkey will, in all probability, be reopened; the firmans of the Sultan ‘conferring his authority’ on the Khedive will very likely be dispensed with, and the ‘dual control’ which has hitherto characterised and hampered the Government of Egypt will be placed on a less unsatisfactory basis. These are sweeping predictions to make; but they are conclusions arrived at after a study of the country and an exchange of views with eminent Egyptian politicians. About six months ago I published in a Cairo newspaper a state-

\* *T. P.'s Weekly*, November 21st, 1914.

ment regarding the future of Egypt. I wrote in effect what I have summarised above.

“Then, however, I wrote of a protectorate; now, I write of annexation.

“On the appearance of this article a *démenti*, officially inspired, appeared in the local Press; but the statements I made were not merely theories I had formed on my own account, but an actual expression of opinion of a very eminent authority.

“*Around all the intrigue which grows apace in Near Eastern diplomatic circles there stands out an interesting personality who will repay a little study at this juncture. I refer to Abbas II., Khedive of Egypt.*”

Finally, I called attention, in a series of articles which I contributed to several daily and weekly journals, to the hostile attitude of the Egyptian Sovereign.

There soon followed the official intimation of the attitude of Abbas. In the *Globe*, the *Evening Standard*, and in the *Daily News* I drew attention to a paragraph in Sir Louis Malet's dispatch which, curiously enough, was overlooked by the general Press. I may be excused for reproducing one of these articles, since it deals with the matter under discussion:

“The publication of the final dispatch of Sir Louis Malet, the late British Ambassador at Constantinople, clears up definitely several issues of extreme interest. Not least among them is that relative to the attitude of Abbas II., Khedive of Egypt. Referring to the warlike preparations which were being made by Enver Pasha and his German consorts for the invasion of Egypt, Sir Louis Malet states:

“‘The Khedive himself was a party to the con-

spiracy, and arrangements were actually made with the German Embassy for his presence with a military expedition across the frontier. . . .’

“This unmasking of Abbas creates no surprise in British diplomatic circles. What attitude the Khedive would adopt at such a moment as this had never been in doubt. It is notorious in Egypt that he had never taken kindly to the presence of Great Britain in Egypt. To his credit, let it be said, he never disguised his opinions or denied his general attitude in this direction. He possesses all the cunning of his earlier ancestors; but he retains what many of them did not possess—a shrewd and masterful personality. Against this must be mentioned a taint of selfishness, which contributed very largely to his general unpopularity in official circles. His strength of purpose was mainly directed towards personal gain. That is another notorious fact.

“Abbas II., it should be remembered, unexpectedly succeeded to the viceroyalty of Egypt when he was still in his teens. Tewfik Pasha, the Khedive, died very suddenly on January 7, 1892, and so Prince Abbas Hilmi, as eldest son and heir, succeeded him. It did not take long for this change to impress itself. Surrounded by evil counsellors, the young Khedive evidently misinterpreted his position, and gave manifestation of this unfortunate attitude before he was very much older.

“Curiously enough, the first important incident in his reign brought him into sharp contact with Lord Kitchener, then Sirdar of the Egyptian Army. The Khedive, when inspecting the Egyptian Army, openly slighted the Sirdar, whose sheer hard work had succeeded

in bringing the raw troops to a high state of efficiency. Abbas's action was entirely uncalled for. It was manifestly intended against Lord Kitchener, who, to the Khedive's alarm, resigned. This initial trial of strength between two men who were to figure more prominently in Egyptian history ended, as all the world knows, in the complete discomfiture of Abbas. He had to apologise publicly in the *Journal Officiel* in French and Arabic. What the world does not know is of the subsequent passages of arms—when the youthful Khedive had grown to years of maturity, and when Lord Kitchener was no longer Sirdar but British Agent. Possibly the Khedive had outgrown the wild impulses of youth which had been responsible for the open slight to the Sirdar; possibly, also, the British Agent had forgotten the wrath of the Sirdar. As a fact, the beginning of their renewed relations in October, 1911, gave every promise of harmony, if not of cordiality. Pessimists who, on Lord Kitchener's appointment, prophesied an immediate open rupture, admitted that Lord Kitchener's 'handling' of the Khedive was in the nature of a preliminary diplomatic triumph.

“But this forced harmony between the two men did not last long. It could not. Two temperaments so antipathetical, two whose sympathies were as wide apart as the poles, could not possibly act in concert beyond the most formal business stages. And the circumstances were such that even this conventional intercourse was bound, sooner or later, to become disturbed. That matters were not proceeding smoothly was known only to a privileged few; the man in the street knew nothing of it. How different was it a few years previously, when ruptures of this kind between

Abbas and the British Agent showed their 'deplorable effects on the relations between the British officials and the Khedive's subjects. Hostility to the foreign element in the administration, and sullen opposition to its men and measures, showed themselves everywhere after the coming of the Khedive Abbas.' Thus Sir Auckland Colvin.

"It will be seen, therefore, that the type of British Agent represented in Lord Kitchener exactly suited the new conditions. Lord Kitchener, it would seem, in mapping out his plans in conjunction with the British Foreign Office, looked well over the head of the Khedive. He met with characteristic firmness every opposition of Abbas II. On even minor matters, such as the appointment of subordinate officials, he challenged him when he felt himself so justified. He so impressed his power and personality upon the Khedive that he left him bereft of the vigour with which to strike back. The British Agent had no occasion to call in the aid of London in his struggle with Abbas. The extraordinary stories which appeared in the London Press associating the arrival of the British Fleet in Alexandria with the news of the friction between Lord Kitchener and the Khedive on the Wakfs question, only revealed the absolute unconsciencefulness in England of the actual state of affairs in Egypt. The 'friction' was anticipated with sang-froid by those who understood what was happening, just as its sequel was foreseen. The Khedive would demur; but the Khedive would sign. His opposition always took the form of procrastination when all other means had failed. Yet he knew that if he might delay giving his signature to a measure, he could not withhold it altogether. The

high official who gave me the news of the Khedive's capitulation on the Wakfs dispute, told it with as much nonchalance as if he were imparting a matter of weekly routine.

“And yet from a national standpoint this was one of the greatest sacrifices the Sovereign was called upon to make. It took from his control the administration of funds with which Moslem religious institutions were administered. Only a man of Lord Kitchener's audacious strength could have carried this through.

“This was, however, only one instance. A matter which affected the Khedive more personally, and which, accordingly, threatened to bring on a crisis even more acute than the Wakfs rupture, was relative to the sale of the Mariut railway. The Khedive owned the line, and wished to dispose of it. Lord Kitchener objected. The legality of the Khedive's proprietorship was not insisted upon, even if it was, indeed, raised. It was submitted, however, that the railway possessed such strategic possibilities that its proposed sale to a German group involved the question of the country's future safety. The contract for the sale of the railway was all but signed when Lord Kitchener got to hear of it, and made the usual ‘polite’ representations.

“The Khedive was ‘furious,’ I was authoritatively informed. But the British Agent continued to take his daily constitutional, inspect his carnations, and visit the bazaars. It was, indeed, upon this question that the most vital struggle for personal supremacy between the Khedive and Lord Kitchener was waged. And Lord Kitchener won again.

“In the summer, Abbas went to seek solace at

Constantinople, and British diplomats, scenting trouble, smiled. . . .

“Another matter which engaged the attention of the British Agent just before he left Egypt was the means of taking ‘disciplinary measures’ on the question of decorations or titles. The Khedive’s system of selection had been criticised rather strongly, with, it is to be said, reason. Had this European crisis not arisen, the question would have been settled by giving the power of conferring grades and decorations over to the Government.

“These instances might be trebled. They are enough to explain, however, the silence of the Khedive. They are of a character which makes it easy to prognosticate the fortunes of Abbas in the event of our success in this crisis.”

The British Government, however, did not wait till the “success in this crisis” had matured. The position in Egypt, as left by Lord Kitchener, was perfectly ripe for the change which I had insisted upon in the book which was suppressed. On December 18th, 1914, Abbas II. was formally deposed, and his uncle, Prince Hussein, succeeded him with the title of “Sultan of Egypt.” At the same time the Turkish Suzerainty was terminated, and a British Protectorate was declared.

What a forlorn figure Abbas now made! From an attitude of defiance, he began now to assume a semi-apologetic tone as of one who had been badly treated! But it was too late. His sojourn in Constantinople taught him not to expect too much from his late Imperial master, and he must have realised then that it would have gone much better with him had he helped instead of hindered British policy. As it was, even the

Nationalist Press (not published in Egypt, of course) offered him little consolation, as the following extract shows :

“ The Khedive has alienated the only force which could help him efficiently in his contest with Kitchener, even as he had done with Cromer. I mean the Nationalist Party. He made the mistake of following the advice of Boutros Pasha and Sir Eldon Gorst and stifling the National Press, in order to deprive us of all liberty. For merely personal interest, he combated his party, which alone was sincere and disinterested, and when the English, seeing him thus deprived of all serious assistance by the people, turned their backs on him and treated him as a *quantité négligeable*, he saw his mistake, but too late, alas ! and found himself alone before this fortunate and haughty soldier, Kitchener. As a matter of fact, the Ministers and high officials of Egypt are grovelling on their stomachs before the English satrap, outvying each other in baseness to deserve his favour, and to keep their richly endowed portfolios.”

The much-heralded Turkish attack upon Egypt, which was to have been commanded in person by Abbas, fizzled out in a manner that recalled the futility of the late Khedive's opposition to Lord Kitchener's policy. Abbas, disappointed at all turns, made a last, but abortive, appeal to Vienna before disappearing ingloriously from the public gaze.

## CHAPTER III

### A Piquant Controversy

*"In Egypt prosperity and water go hand in hand."*

LORD CROMER.

*"The proper maintenance of those great Public Works is the first condition of the wealth of Egypt. . . . Without an elaborate canal system it might soon become a desert."*—LORD MILNER.

*"Drainage went hand in hand with irrigation. Before the British engineers had been at work ten years, the cotton crop was trebled, the sugar crop more than trebled."*—LORD CROMER.

ONE of the most piquant public controversies during Lord Kitchener's tenure of office in Egypt was that which raged around the Assouan Dam and the drainage system of Egypt. It began early, and, so far as I know, was never ended. It was one of those agitations from which the war gave us an unexpected respite. Its resumption is something to which one looks forward.

In order to appreciate what it was all about we must run back very briefly over the history of the Assouan Dam.

In 1896 it had become vitally necessary to increase the water supply from the Nile. Fresh land was being cultivated, and it became a matter of urgency to increase the supply of water. If the prosperity of the country was to continue, these measures must be taken in hand at once. It was therefore decided

to build a reservoir or dam at Assouan. There were financial difficulties in the way, but these were overcome, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Willcocks's project was accepted with various modifications, and the building of the great Assouan Dam began in 1898 on the understanding that the work was to be finished in five years. By the time the work was completed, however, the prosperity of Egypt had increased to such an extent that it was sought to heighten the dam. This work was duly undertaken, and was completed in 1912. And now, again, the point was: Shall it be raised again? To which question Sir William Willcocks added the significant counter-questions: "*Can* it be raised? Is it safe? Were the best plans to increase the water supply adopted?"

The storage capacity of the original dam was estimated at one million cubic metres, while the heightened dam, at a level of 113 metres above the sea, was intended to hold something like  $2\frac{1}{4}$  million cubic metres. Now, the obvious question of the intelligent reader will be: "Why was not the dam raised to its full requirement in the first instance?"

That question will never be answered officially. The reply that there was not sufficient money may be brushed aside, for there can be no doubt that a strong sentimental objection to swamping Philæ—Pharaoh's bed at Assouan—was the real reason. I believe the original project was to build the dam 118 metres above the sea level. This would have meant a capacity of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million cubic metres.

Sir William Willcocks declared that, together with the White Nile reservoir, now in course of construction, and with the ground water stored in

Egypt, this dam would have been sufficient to "meet every requirement of Egypt and the Sudan for our generation."

That, however, was a might-have-been. The question was whether it were possible to make a third attempt on the same dam in order to meet every contingency? Around this issue there raged a fierce controversy between experts. And this was not the only bone of contention. Upon the system of drainage—with the technicality of which it is not necessary to trouble the reader—completely diverse views were expressed.

The importance of the principles which underlay this controversy between engineers of note was not lost on either the general or the scientific public. Some of the London papers endeavoured to deal with the subject, but they were only able to touch the fringe of it; certainly few, if any, knew what was going on behind the scenes. Briefly, the opponents were Sir William Willcocks on the one side and Lord Kitchener's disciples on the other. Sir William Willcocks's work in the past for the Egyptian Government had given him a "status" which few so far had attained, and he was now up against the principles of irrigation and drainage which his successors were applying to the work of the improvement of Egypt.

Sir William was a very eminent engineer and a most redoubtable opponent. His campaign, which he conducted without quarter, was a perpetual nightmare to the busy officials at the Public Works Ministry. The two chiefs of the Department were the Minister, Sir Ismail Sirry Pasha, and the Under-Secretary, Sir Murdoch Macdonald. Both, being conscientious and hard workers, were obviously much embarrassed by

this formidable opposition, which held up to public ridicule their engineering opinions, while it undoubtedly hampered their work.

The position of Sir William Willcocks was not strengthened by the fact that he no longer enjoyed the confidence of the Government, and for that reason his opposition was regarded by many as being the natural reaction of one no longer in power. Certainly the increasing bitterness with which he strove to discredit his opponents tended towards this assumption, and it was the ungenerous methods he employed which lost for him many adherents. My own interest in the affair began on the day of the inauguration of the heightened Assouan Dam.

I was one of the party invited by the Egyptian Government to attend the ceremony, at which the Khedive and Lord Kitchener officiated. The completion of this wonderful piece of engineering marked a new era for the fellahîn and for Egypt generally. It was only achieved after tremendous difficulties, financial and political. As the *Near East* put it :

“ British brains have contrived many great feats of daring, endurance, and ingenuity in various parts of the world, but it has remained for Egypt to afford the opportunity of setting up a record of the heights to which British engineering genius has attained. The inauguration of the heightened Assouan Dam, which was performed on Monday last, marks a great step forward, and constitutes the crowning point in the programme of irrigation schemes mapped out for the benefit of Egypt and the Sudan by the Anglo-Egyptian engineers.”

The strange opposition of the Egyptologists I have commented upon elsewhere. Nobody suggested that

the dam, as it was, marked the finality of effort in the direction of irrigating the country. What it did do, however, was to afford a very considerable aid towards giving water to the whole of the cultivable acres of Egypt. It was a matter of congratulation for everyone interested in Egypt's welfare. But Sir William Willcocks took this moment to launch forth his campaign against the Government. He himself was one of those who had just witnessed the general enthusiasm at the inauguration ceremony. I have been told that he was piqued because he was not paid the sufficiently high homage that was due to him on this occasion, inasmuch as he had designed the original dam. Sir Murdoch Macdonald, when I mentioned this point to him, was sincerely grieved at the suggestion. The last thing in the world he desired was that Sir William's work should not receive its full acknowledgment.

Be that as it may, Sir William committed an unfortunate error of tactics by writing a long declamatory letter from Luxor to the *Egyptian Gazette*, which appeared in Cairo on the day I arrived back, with other members of the party, from Upper Egypt.

What were Sir William's points ?

Opening with the question : "Has the Assouan Dam been raised for the last time ?" he proceeded to say that since Philæ was now swamped, there was no reason why the dam should not in the future be raised to the level of the original project "before Philæ cast its shadow over it."

It was Philæ again. I wonder what those in England think who now hear, for the first time, probably, that the welfare of the fellahin and the future of agriculture

—Egypt's main source of wealth—was in jeopardy, and even now remains handicapped, by the opposition of a few archæologists!

Those who were responsible for Egypt's welfare showed precious little public spirit in permitting the original estimate to be curtailed. They yielded to influence—an influence which probably would have affected their personal position.

I do not know what stand Sir William Willcocks made at the time. I believe he and Sir William Garstin suggested the removal of Philæ to another site in order that the original project of the dam should not be interfered with. Yet, had Sir William been as strenuous then as he was in his later campaign against those who were now trying to make up leeway, probably the great muddle of the Assouan Dam would have been avoided. What was suggested—and what actually had been done—was to build the dam in instalments. The result was that while it was generally agreed that the original proposed height must be attained eventually—and that only by further heightening the dam—it was questionable whether the foundations would be sufficiently strong to permit of this further building. Sir William, in his letter to the Press, took up this line. “To look at the dam one would imagine that it might be raised with ease, but there are certain difficulties in the way. . . .”

He proceeded to make his points :

The widening of the dam was against the canons of sound engineering, and the canons were now having their say. Let anyone go to the east flank of the dam and he would see that on a length of 200 metres the down-stream face of the dam was like a netted melon and leaking like a sieve ; aggravated somewhat by the

long threads of cement which were being forced into the cracks as they developed, and they were developing fast. This was predicted for the dam in all places where the rock was unsound; and it was unsound there. In places the foundation might have been excavated with a spoon; and if a breach occurred there, it would be a breach which would be remembered, for the hill would go like an earthen bank. Fortunately, the old dam there was 25 per cent. wider than it need be, and in spite of the dislocation of its back by the settling masonry of the new work, it was strong enough to resist. "Plastering over the down-stream cracks is against science. Long holes should be punched into the down-stream face and allowed to leak, while a solid earthen bank should be thrown up on the up-stream side."

"If a strong earthen bank is placed up-stream of the dam in this reach, and the dam itself looked upon as a mass of loose stone backing to the dam, it could be raised 5 metres, or up to R. L. 118 metres, without danger. It would not even be unsightly.

"In some other places among the openings where the rock was unsound on short lengths, the dam has settled a little already, and weak leaks have sprung up; but they are not serious, though they may become so. To raise this patchwork structure 5 metres in all places might be attended with risks. . . . Now, if you raise your level above 112, why not go on to 118? There is no finality in 113 metres, for Egypt will still not have enough water with the reservoir at that height.

"The height that would satisfy all our requirements in the vital question of water is 118 metres. A reservoir

of this height would store nearer four than three and a half milliards of water."

Sir William's criticisms were discussed by engineers all over the world. In Egyptian circles generally he created what amounted to consternation. But he was fighting at a disadvantage. The Public Works Ministry was easily able to mobilise its experts, and all combined to crush him.

Lord Kitchener, however, was not enamoured of a public debate. "Let him have the field for himself," he advised his outraged lieutenants. But the barbs of the old engineer struck home, and while those whom he attacked were unable to reply officially, they did so through a medium. And that medium was I.

Sir William had the free run of the *Egyptian Gazette*, while the columns of the *Egyptian Mail*, which I edited, were at the disposal of his opponents. Neither side knew, however, that Sir William almost obtained the support of both papers. Just before I assumed the editorship, Sir William and the proprietor had arranged the reproduction in full of an important speech he was making criticising the drainage of Egypt. The speech took up practically the whole issue of the paper, and Sir William showed his interest by ordering copies in bulk. I happened to meet the proprietor, and he told me what he had done. I, however, showed him the error of his ways, and wrote the leading article myself! So that next morning Sir William's speech was boomed extensively (it was too late to alter that), but the leading article definitely declared war against him! The anomaly was explained thus:

"In giving full publicity to the opinions of Sir William Willcocks we are actuated by a sense of fairness to him and

of service to the public. The lay reader may not follow the technical part of the discourse, but there is enough to show him that underlying the speech there is a spirit which cannot promote that healthy standard which is essential to the life of public affairs. . . Sir William Willcocks has been looking for mares'-nests, and has become, unfortunately, ensnared with them. He saw fit recently to burst into the natural revelry which acclaimed the accomplishment of the great engineering feat at Assouan, and in suggesting more expense, palpably underestimated the cost. We cannot regard this campaign which he has undertaken with any marked favour. Such eminent engineers as Sir William Garstin, Sir Arthur Webb and Mr. McDonald are as firm in their support of the present policy as one might expect from engineers who regard the question dispassionately. In accepting the views and advice of such a body of distinguished experts the Government cannot go far wrong."

From that day on, the controversy on Egypt's system of drainage and irrigation raged fast and furious. The Public Works Ministry found many champions, but I am bound to say that they carried little weight, since the majority of them were out to obtain contracts from those whom they set themselves to defend.

The echo of the great dispute reached London, but opinions there were, naturally enough, inspired by incomplete data. The *Westminster Gazette*, however, summed up the situation fairly judicially in an article, from which I take the following extract. Under the heading "Remarkable Criticism," it said :

"When Lord Kitchener went to Egypt his attention was quickly drawn to the troubles connected with the subsoil in the Delta of the Nile ; and, in order to prevent the damage to the cotton and other crops, it was found necessary to inaugurate a big drainage scheme. Finding that a group

of proposals had already been formulated to overcome the evils in question, Lord Kitchener invited a couple of engineers from London to examine them ; and with their approval the work now in progress was commenced a year ago, on the modified plans which had been submitted to them. It is calculated that the scheme will be completed in another three years, at a total cost of £2,500,000.

“ Speaking at a meeting of the Khedivial Geographical Society in Cairo, Sir William Willcocks, who was formerly in the service of the Egyptian Government, prophesied complete failure for the system of drainage now being carried out, and serious damage to the land after a few years’ operation. The address was published at length in the English newspapers in Cairo, and has been reproduced in this country, with the result that considerable controversy has arisen over the scheme for which Lord Kitchener has made himself responsible.

“ The scheme now in course of construction will deepen and enlarge the existing drains, create new ones, and involve the pumping of all the drainage water into the sea at Lake Meriout and the eastern end of Lake Borollos. At each pumping station a maximum quantity of at least 7,000,000 tons per day (of twenty-four hours) will be pumped to a height of twenty feet at Meriout, and from ten to twelve feet at Lake Borollos.

“ Sir William Willcocks contended, in the course of his lecture, that it was a mistake to concentrate the pumping of the whole drainage of the central and eastern parts of the Delta at a single station near the sea, his opinion being that thereby an unnecessary quantity is pumped ; and that, since all the drainage and escape water must be pumped, the tendency would be to take the flow in the canals in time of flood, and so reduce seriously the amount of fertilising ‘ red water ’ which reached the fields. Moreover, if the velocity in the canals was not kept sufficiently high by free escape at their tail-ends, the mud would be deposited in the canals instead of in the fields, and would have to be taken out in the annual clearances.

“ Following his criticism of the scheme now being created

Sir William Willcocks declared his preference for a system of drainage by zones, which is already in operation on certain private estates in Lower Egypt. Each zone, or small area, has its own system of drainage suited to the conditions of the case, and its own pumping plant dealing only with true drainage or infiltration water, and lifting into the main drain or into the river whenever possible. In the Government scheme, Sir William declared, all the water must be pumped to a height fixed by the lowest drain in the whole area, whereas in this alternative scheme only a part of the water is pumped to the height required by the conditions of the zone, while free flow of 'red water' can be given in time of flood without addition to the pumping capacity.

"It is worth noting that, in its references to this interesting battle of the experts in a recent number, our contemporary the *Engineer*, while stating that there is no doubt that other engineers of equal eminence with Sir William Willcocks share his objections to the drainage scheme under review, goes on to declare that the Irrigation Department of the Egyptian Government is probably satisfied that the fear of a 'red-water' famine is unfounded, because provision has been made for a sufficient velocity in all canals to carry the mud through to the fields. 'But it would be reassuring,' the writer adds, 'if some official reply were forthcoming dealing with Sir William's two main charges.'

"Inquiries in London yesterday left little doubt that Lord Kitchener, before allowing the work on the drainage system to be started, took every precaution to have the proposals submitted to the highest expert criticism.

"'So far as Sir William Willcocks's objections are concerned,' it was stated by one supporter of the scheme now in progress, 'they are best left to speak for themselves as the views of an eminent engineer which do not happen to have been acceptable to those responsible for the work. The scheme adopted by the Public Works Minister was laid before two of the best experts Lord Kitchener could find, one of them possessing many years' experience of Egyptian irrigation problems.

"The work is being carried out with the full approval of

the Minister of Public Works and his Under-Secretary, both of whom are engineers of considerable repute. It is scarcely likely that the dangers feared by Sir William Willcocks were overlooked when the scheme was considered. Indeed, it may interest certain people to know that the alternative proposals which were so widely published through the Cairo lecture at the beginning of the month, were carefully considered by Lord Kitchener and his advisers in ample time to make free choice of schemes. The fact that the alternative proposals were rejected must be taken as presumptive proof of their inferiority in the minds of those called upon to deal with this problem.

“ It would certainly serve no useful purpose to enter into a defence of the official schemes in the light of the criticisms that have been made against it. Lord Kitchener, the public may rest assured, was fully satisfied of the merits of the scheme which ultimately received his approval and sanction.”

The opposition to Sir William seemed to grow.

All the eminent engineers tussled with him through the Press until it seemed that the combat was rather unequal. But Sir William was never taken aback. He slashed out against all and sundry. He rightfully ignored those unknown sycophants who supported the Public Works Ministry with one hand and held out the other for alms. Indeed, the whole controversy, important as it was to Egypt, suffered through the lack of disinterested expert opinion.

Sir William spoilt his chances by a personal feeling of bitterness, which was too obvious to be ignored. He found fault with every scheme which emanated from the Government. A new scheme for utilising the power of the Assouan Dam he characterised as “old,” and one which was thought of during his tenure of office. He took upon himself a sort of unofficial opposition which made his position as much of a routine as a

Government position itself. Both sides left the man in the street unimpressed. It leaves him puzzled to this day whether the allegation that the Assouan Dam actually leaked was true or not. He only had the words of the contending parties to go upon, and as each placed strange interpretation upon plain English, he remained unenlightened.

Sir William Willcocks had definitely declared that : "In some other places among the openings where the rock was unsound on short lengths, *the dam has settled a little* already, and weak leaks have sprung up ; but they are not serious, though they may become so. To raise this patchwork structure five metres in all such places might be attended with risks."

It does not require an engineering qualification to know that once a dam settles a little, it is finished with ; it can never be raised again.

Which Willcocks was one to believe ? (1) The Willcocks who calmly wrote that, not only in drainage and irrigation does he stand where he did, but that even in regard to the Assouan Dam he still thinks that advantage should have been taken to raise it to 118 metres ; or (2) the Willcocks who said that the dam was "settling" and that a new dam would be more stable ?

I asked Sirry Pasha, as Minister of Public Works, what his view was. Sir William had said that, "After forty years of engineering, he might be trusted to distinguish a natural crack from a raked-out joint. The water, moreover, was flowing out freely and running across the road in half a dozen places." (*Engineer*, May 23, 1913.)

Sirry Pasha, after ridiculing the idea, explained to

me minutely the composition of the dam's material—the percentage of sand and the natural percentage of cells in the sand which must remain unfilled. Explained technically, as he explained it, it would not be comprehensible to lay readers. What it amounts to, however, is that in mixing the sand with cement only 60 to 70 per cent. of the cells are filled up. To make the mortar so strong as to fill up all these voids it would cost, unnecessarily, millions of pounds.

Expert engineers, however, are fully aware that 25 per cent. of cement is sufficient for the purposes of building, and that, as a result, seepage will be fairly abundant.

In this connection, I may relate an amusing story which Sirry Pasha told me as illustrating the fears of an inexperienced engineer.

Many years ago, when he was under the tutelage of Sir William Garstin, he was working on a regulator in the Behera province. After completion, he saw heavy seepage coming through the walls, and "Oh! the thing is bursting!" he at once telegraphed to Sir William Garstin, who, of course, rushed back to the scene.

"What is wrong?" he demanded.

"Why, that, sir! Look at the water."

Sir William Garstin laughed heartily. "Why," he said, "that's nothing but what occurs in all walls with water behind them. It looks very bad just now, but you wait; it will gradually stop, though, of course, never wholly disappear."

"So much for the dam," said Sirry Pasha. "Now about drainage. Any engineer fully conversant with the Behera province knows fully well that it is impossible

and certainly not policy to use partial pumps there. It means double the work. The water there is from two and a half to three metres below the sea level, and even if you partially pumped the water into Lake Mariout you would have to use big pumps to pump the water into the sea."

Sirry Pasha illustrated his contention with the aid of a big map, and certainly his arguments seemed very conclusive.

It should be added that the Government advisers were in absolute accord, even on small details.

At any rate, the work under the Government method proceeded, while all the world's eminent engineers strove to tear each other's arguments to pieces. It would require more than one thick volume to give even a summary of all their views. Here, however, is an indication of the "liveliness" of the controversy :

In his reply to Sir William Willcocks, Sir Henry Brown said: "As my knowledge of Lower Egypt, previous to 1894, was 'only academic,' I do not know whether Sir William Willcocks, while he was an officer of the Irrigation Department, set the fashion of wearing a halo round his head; but I know this, that, urged presumably by some such feelings as moved the fox that lost its brush, he has from time to time, since he resigned his right to wear an official halo himself, done his best to knock off the haloes that adorned his successors."

The situation to-day is that Sir William is still theorising, and Sir Ismail Sirry Pasha and Sir Murdoch Macdonald are building more barrages and dams. They are even going on with the drainage as per the

old methods, and when the time comes either to raise the Assouan Dam again or to build an entirely new dam, you may be sure it will be done—even though Sir William may be right and the entire Government staff of experts wrong.

## CHAPTER IV

### On Banks

THE unsettled state of finance may have been the cause of the bank failures during the period under review. I had my own views on the subject, but as they were those of a layman, I instructed two leading bankers to make investigations and report to me.

They did so in the following statement :

The inquiries you asked us to prosecute as to the functions fulfilled by the various classes of banks operating in Egypt, and the rôle they fill in the economic progression of the country, have not tended to confirm that all such establishments adhere to those high traditions of banking so familiar to us in England. Some of them would appear to make advances in a very loose manner and without proper attention to the security offered in cover. Recent failures have proved this to be the case. Under this system they may not lose their character of utility to the merchant, but they certainly do not tend to enhance the business *moral* of the country. Indeed, in many respects Egypt would be much better without such institutions, and a radical change in their method of procedure would be welcomed.

It was stated that a recent suspension of payment by a private bank in Cairo was regarded with perfect

equanimity, not, we understand, from the smug point of view of it being "another person's misfortune" (because, in this case, it happened to affect a good many of the local banks); and neither, we hope, because the banking world here has become so accustomed to failures nowadays in Egypt that they should have ceased to express surprise or even concern at such occurrences; but rather, we presume, from the confident anticipation that cent. per cent. would be forthcoming after the absorption of the personal fortunes and property of the directors of the suspended firm.

Well, if this anticipation is realised, the banks will be favoured with good fortune, in some cases with more than they merit, having regard to the participation, perhaps unwitting, of some of them in such failures.

We are not so much concerned with the stability of the banks in Egypt, which, we believe, to be quite beyond question, as much as we are concerned with the manner of working of some of these institutions. It is notorious that banking in Egypt is totally different from that in vogue in other parts of the world, and we may, perhaps, be permitted to express our appreciation and gratitude to the "other parts of the world" in this regard. When we complain that we have been kept waiting half an hour, or even longer, for the payment of our cheque (we speak of an account that shows a credit balance), we are informed that we are "in Egypt." When we utter a mild protest at the strange anomaly of having to endorse a bearer cheque, the response is ever the same.

These, however, are but mere details, and our objec-

tion thereto would be removed—since we have long since allowed our Berberine servants to suffer the inconveniences that they entail—had we the conviction that banks in general followed out such meticulous care in other directions. This, unfortunately, does not appear to be the case, and we wish now to refer to a matter of far greater import, a factor that strikes at the very root of the economic development of the country, and that is the indifferent manner in which some of the financial institutions in Egypt would seem to control the placing of their funds, or, perhaps, we may say, other people's funds, inasmuch as the principal function of the banker is to buy and sell rights to the possession of money. Through his medium control of wealth is transferred from those who are unable or unwilling to employ it productively to those that have both the power and the will to do so.

There are three considerations that should affect the mind of a banker lending money. First and foremost, that of security; secondly, its ready convertibility; and thirdly, his profit. Our complaint is not that bankers give too weighty regard to the last, but altogether insufficient concern to the first two considerations. We do not intend to lay this charge at the doors of all the banks. We are perfectly conscious that the older established institutions have continued to adopt a very prudent and enlightened course, and if all the establishments that have come along in recent years had been content to follow on the same lines, the economic situation of the country would no doubt have materially benefited by the possible reduction in the number and magnitude of the failures that have been experienced.

With the advent of each new bank, competition, already keen, becomes still more accentuated, but while the more conservative institutions have maintained rational conditions, the newer establishments have offered and continue to offer every sort of facility to encourage a clientele, which must obviously be accompanied in many instances with a loss.

The private bank in Egypt relies on the larger bank, just as the latter reposes its trust in its head office in Europe, and the responsibility rests on the larger institution to keep the private concern up to a proper standard of banking efficiency. When, as it appears, some banks in Cairo are prepared to accept bills in guarantee of advances with but the barest scrutiny and inquiry as to the standing of the drawers or sureties, we naturally find a similar spirit reflected in the dealings of the private banks in the interior, who very often take bills from the natives, to be afterwards pledged with other banks, that are not worth the paper on which they are written. While confidence reigns and credit is good, everything proceeds satisfactorily enough from one point of view, as the bills are then not met at maturity but replaced by others, but when distrust commences and renewals cease . . . !

If the larger banks would only restrict themselves to the acceptance of good security, the lenders in the interior would be forced to adopt a like course, depending as they do on the former for advances, and the result would be to discourage the extravagance which the present system encourages; it would tend to frustrate that habit of diverting into speculative channels credit ostensibly given for the development of production. It would improve the business *moral*

of the people, and do a great deal towards bettering the economic condition of the country.

It is our hope that financial institutions in Egypt will, in future, give more heed to the banking qualities of the business they undertake rather than to its magnitude, and their desire to procure a clientele.

## CHAPTER V

### The Adamovitch Scandal

ONE of the strangest scandals which occupied public attention during Lord Kitchener's régime in Egypt was the Arles or Adamovitch case. It was strange for more reasons than one—not the least being the perplexing attitude of the British Agent. Here was a most flagrant case of injustice, and not a hand was raised in defence of the victim. Here, too, was as illuminating an example as one could get of the gross anomalies of the system under which we were working to reform Egypt, and not an official word was said concerning it. It was by the merest chance that I was made aware of a shameful political traffic in nationals by autoeratic foreign consuls in a country where we were supposed to hold sway. Once having obtained this clue to an iniquitous state of affairs, there was no power even in Egypt that was going to prevent me from calling to it the attention of the more enlightened world outside. Influential efforts were made, as you shall see, to prevent me from carrying out this first duty of a journalist. Threats were made, and were on the point of being carried out; but it was too late. The wires had been at work, and a prompt question in Parliament nipped the conspiracy in the bud.

Let me give the events in order :

News had casually reached me that the Russian authorities had raided the house belonging to a man named Youritzine at Helwan, a suburb of Cairo, and, despite the protests of the mistress of the house, had searched for documents they could not find, and had behaved in a manner generally more befitting a country which could not boast of British protection.

At any rate, it was a good news story for Cairo, and I used it. Curiously enough, the next mail from London brought in the newspaper cuttings relating to Egyptian affairs, and, in glancing through them, I discovered an account of a Russian's arrest in Egypt which had appeared in the *Daily Citizen* a week or so previously. Now, there had not been a word mentioned in even one of the scores of Egyptian newspapers about the matter. Here was an incident the importance of which was soon recognised throughout the whole world, which was known in London and not at the spot where the event took place. The thought occurred to me that the London newspaper had confused the raiding incident at Helwan. But the story it told was different. A man named Arles or Adamovitch had been arrested at Alexandria by the Egyptian police, at the instance of the Russian authorities, who offered no reason for the arrest. A foreign consul, it seemed, could, by a mere request, and with no explanation, direct the Egyptian police to arrest any man, and place him in an Egyptian prison. Some very interesting details were unearthed in the course of the campaign which followed.

It took the Egyptian Press weeks to realise the significance of what was happening in their midst. Eventually they were aroused from their nonchalance

by sheer force of public opinion. In the meantime, however, I was left to shift for myself. I was able to obtain the aid of a Russian to make special investigations on my behalf. I called public attention to the matter in my paper, as follows :

“ Extraordinary allegations of high-handed actions by Russian authorities in Egypt come from Helwan and Alexandria. These incidents were briefly reported in these columns recently, and are of a nature which necessitated further inquiries. A special representative accordingly made investigations in the matter, and the stories he gives below, as a result, make strange reading.

“ It will be remembered that only a few days after the news of the dramatic but unsuccessful search of Mr. Serge Youritzine’s house at Helwan was made known, we gave publicity to another story of an arrested Russian at Alexandria.

“ Strange to relate, it was only from London that we were made aware of what had happened in Alexandria. So little, in fact, was known in Egypt, even after this publication, that it was concluded that the protesting Russian of Helwan and the arrested man at Alexandria were one and the same person.

“ The accounts below, therefore, make the events quite clear, and its conclusions no less obvious. The recollection of a similar high-handed action by Germany some years back, when the companion of a princess was arrested and sent back to Germany without enquiry, justifies the fear which a prominent resident expressed to our representative, that a ‘ man hardly knows when he is safe in Egypt.’

“ Representations which have been made to Lord

Kitchener can meet with nothing beyond an assurance of personal sympathy, for until the obsolete Capitulations meet the end they deserve, such abuses will continue to live on unmolested."

#### REPORT ON THE HELWAN RAID

"I first instituted enquiries at Helwan, but so quietly had everything been carried out that my earlier labours produced nothing. It is melancholy to reflect that if any one of us were suddenly pounced upon and carried off, no questions would be asked, and, probably, if there were, no answers would be given.

✓ "My subsequent enquiries, however, were more successful, and I was able to glean a little of the history of Mr. Youritzine. The son of rich Russian parents, he, after completing his education, entered the exciting field of journalism—for let it be understood the profession is a little different from its state in England—and eventually he became editor and proprietor of a number of Russian periodicals of Liberal opinion.

"He was a friend of such notable reformers as Maxim Gorky and Tcherikoff, and numerous politicians. A great partisan of a Constitutional Russia, he was regarded as a leader in the movement which followed the Nicholas proclamation of a Constitution. A large number of arrests were unexpectedly made, and, soon after, Mr. Youritzine was numbered among the many thousands whose turn of arrest was bound to come.

"It is computed that no fewer than 22,000 people were hung that year, and so many arrests were made that prisons which were supposed to accommodate 1,000 prisoners had five times that number crammed into them.

“ Mr. Youritzine was imprisoned for three months—a period of enquiry—after which, there being no evidence to substantiate the charges, he was released. Two of his relations were less fortunate. They were young men of twenty-three and twenty-four respectively, and during the time of their enquiry—which lasted three and a half years in each case!—they were confined to prison, with the sad result that one committed suicide and the other became insane.

“ After leaving prison Mr. Youritzine became consumptive, consequent on a cold contracted whilst there. For this reason (as well as the more pressing one of the danger he stood in while he remained in Russia of being rearrested for ‘enquiries’) he left his native country, and travelled round Europe, with Russian spies always at his heels, and finally came to Egypt, taking up his abode in Helwan about six years ago. There he has remained ever since, living peacefully, studying botany, and collecting rare specimens of fish. He is well known in Cairo as a florist.

“Nothing untoward happened until six weeks ago, when it is alleged spies were sent to Helwan to glean information concerning his habits. Two weeks ago the new consul at Cairo called with the police at Mr. Youritzine’s house when he was out, and ransacked the whole house, despite the indignant protests of Mrs. Youritzine.

“ They took away all letters and papers, and next day Mr. Youritzine was formally commanded to appear at the Consulate, under the penalty of force through the local authorities. He duly put in an appearance, and was subjected to a lengthy and searching examination, which failed, as the search had failed, to pin the much

harassed Russian, and so ended in his release. The search, it may be added, took place only after he had purchased a ticket to Russia, where he had intended to stay the summer. By some means or other, the fact became known to the new Russian Consul very shortly afterwards."

#### THE ALEXANDRIA ARREST

"The arrest of Adamovitch, or Arles, at Alexandria, has a thread of connection with the Helwan affair, in so far as an accusation was made against Mr. Youritzine that he was in league with Adamovitch. This he stoutly denies, insisting that he has never seen him.

"Adamovitch is a Russian with wide sympathies towards sailors. He was an organiser of the Russian sailors' strike in 1906, declaring that thirty shillings a month was the lowest pay of any sailor in the world. On the failure of the strike, the organisation was disbanded and the leader arrested and imprisoned. He was fortunate enough to escape a few months after, and, naturally, adopted an assumed name. Last year he was asked by the Russian sailors, who were still disorganised, to re-form the union. This he undertook, and made his headquarters at Constantinople, but the Balkan War breaking out, he transferred his headquarters to Alexandria. His aim was to institute a seamen's home, and to publish a journal called *The Morak* (the Sailor). The preparations were complete when he was, without warning, arrested, his papers seized, and without enquiry sent back to Odessa.

"Naturally, much indignation has been aroused by these two extraordinary actions. A number of well-

known people in Cairo and in Alexandria who are acquainted with Adamovitch declare him to be a very peaceful citizen. The incidents have recalled the Russian affair, and the consequent demonstration in Alexandria a few years back, as well as the German affair in Cairo, when the lady companion of the Princess Schleswig-Holstein was brutally arrested in the streets, and peremptorily sent back to Germany without enquiry. The shock, it is said, was the cause of the death of the Princess soon after.

“People look at each other helplessly, and ask why something is not done. ‘A man hardly knows when he is safe in Egypt,’ said a well-known European resident in Egypt to me. It seems to be forgotten that these outrages are only made possible by the existence of the Capitulations, and that no matter what sympathy is felt, as there is undoubtedly among Europeans, nothing officially can be done. I have reason to believe that protests have been made to Lord Kitchener, but while he has expressed his personal sympathies he is absolutely unable to move officially.

“As regards Adamovitch, his appearance is very prepossessing; he is an intelligent-looking, well-built man of about 35, full of energy. He is most talented, and has had a University education.

“Whilst here he sincerely devoted all his time to the seamen’s organisation, and edited *The Morak*. His methods of organisation and propaganda were of the most peaceful nature (this can be proved by the articles published, which are held at the disposal of the Press).

“In countries such as England, France and Italy, etc., similar propagandists are encouraged in their

efforts ; they sit in Parliament, and hold responsible Government positions. In Russia they are treated as criminals. Adamovitch was never accused of any political crime (as you will see for yourself from the enclosed letter). In fact, with the few with whom he came in touch during his short stay here, he was most sympathetic, and everyone who knew him felt indignant and much amazed at his sudden arrest.

“ With regard to his career, I know that he attended the University at Moscow and then at Heidelberg. He devoted several years to scientific studies, mostly on natural science, some of which were published in Russia, but, nevertheless, he was always ready to sacrifice his personal interests, career, and everything he possessed in this world, for the benefit of the oppressed and deprived. With his high intellect and real enthusiasm he sought the development and liberty of his nation, and was always working for its welfare—surely no crime.”

That was the simple statement from our Russian representative we issued one fine morning to a bewildered public. Yet, despite these revelations, not a sign was given by the British Agency. Yes, indeed, there was one sign. One morning a telephonic message was delivered to me. It came from the Oriental Secretary at the British Agency. Said he :

“ About the Russian business. Lord Kitchener has requested me to tell you that he wants you to tone down those Russian articles.”

“ For what reason ? ” I asked him.

“ The Russian Consul-General, M. Smirnoff, has

been round complaining to Lord K., and he would rather not have him come round complaining."

"Has the Russian Consul pointed out where we have departed from strict facts?"

"That is not the point. I am merely repeating Lord Kitchener's order."

"I am afraid it is not possible for me to relinquish what I conceive to be a public duty."

"Lord Kitchener does not want you to relinquish. He wants you to tone down."

"I'm afraid that's impossible too."

As regards the Russian Consul himself I replied publicly as follows:

"We asked M. Smirnoff a little while back, after he attempted to muzzle us, to point out where we had written one incorrect statement. He has failed to do so, and as long as we have possession of the truth we will not hesitate to publish it.

"The whole of the serious Egyptian Press has now drawn attention to the dangerous power invested in individual European consuls under the existing conditions. We cannot waste time and space with the solitary newspaper which trifles with this very serious matter by suggesting that the whole agitation which we have created is due to the desire to make a point against the Capitulations. As if it needed all this trouble and heartburning to show how antediluvian they are!"

Now, playing at heroics in Egypt is not in the least a healthy pastime, and I had no inclination at that time to leave Egypt. Mightier men than I had made a stand against what they conceived to be injustice, and soon found that the weight of

relentless authority was somehow too much to fight against.

Months afterwards an "important official" in the Ministry of the Interior told my successor that they had been within an ace of suppressing my paper and dealing with me because of my campaign. But the fact was, the news of Lord Kitchener's representations to me had been immediately cabled to London, where it had been produced and commented upon in the Press. In addition, Mr. Will Thorne questioned Sir Edward Grey about the matter, and asked if he (Sir Edward Grey) intended taking any action in the matter. Sir Edward Grey replied that he had not heard that Lord Kitchener had taken any action against me, but that he "would enquire." It seems rather feasible that this unfortunate enquiry trumped the Ministry's action when they were within an ace of it! At any rate, they were able to realise that squashing a journalist with Press connections in London, Paris and New York was not the same formality as had often been applied to the majority of journalists in Egypt, men whose field of journalistic enterprise had by circumstances been limited to the narrow fields of Egypt.

So we continued in our endeavours and brought to light accidentally other scandals of a similar nature. To detail the various happenings as they occurred would require a volume alone. The foreign authorities appear to have lost their heads. They tried their utmost to quell the agitation which was steadily rising, but only succeeded in making a worse muddle of it. The arrest of a youth named Vladimir Tchirsky, who was described as a quiet, intelligent and educated young man, occasioned great surprise among the colony in Alexandria,

where he was well liked. Naturally enough his friends having been informed of the cause of his strange departure, by this publicity six months later, endeavoured to obtain redress for him. This only resulted in further persecution by the authorities. Under the heading of "Amazing Methods," I published the following leaderette :

"We have received information from Alexandria of an attempt on behalf of the Russian authorities to intimidate a well-known town resident, who has been championing the cause of the arrested Russian. According to our informants, representations have been made to the firm where the man is employed, endeavouring 'to force'—that is the term used by one of our informants—the firm to dismiss him.

"We understand that, being an English firm, this attempt at coercion has met with little success. The man in question has been in the firm's employ for twelve years, a sufficient indication of his good character and conduct.

"To have taken these mean and base steps appears to us to be little short of amazing. It is not only amazing, it is positively disgusting, this attempt to rob a man of his livelihood because he is championing a friend in distress—especially when there is justice on his side, as there undoubtedly is in this case. We are making further enquiries into this matter, and will place our information in the proper quarters."

Subsequently in the House of Commons members distinguished themselves by the quiet but persistent questioning of Sir Edward Grey relative to these events in Egypt. The position of the Foreign Secretary was an unenviable one. He recognised the injustice

in the matter, but declared that he was impotent to deal with it. The Labour Party and the extreme Liberals did some very good work in carrying on the campaign which we had initiated in Egypt.

The next step of the Russian authorities was to seize the correspondence of a sympathiser of these arrested men, but as the victim in this case was an Englishman, we had less difficulty in obtaining justice for him.

Protests were now pouring in from all parts as an answer to the excuse of the British Agency that the existing laws permitted these flagrant violations of elementary justice until the foreign Governments agreed to their abolition or modification. Some of the local foreign bodies issued independent protests against the arrests of the Russians. One of the most interesting of these protests came from three big French Masonic Lodges in Cairo, who passed the following resolution :

“The Osiris and Star of the East Lodges affiliated with the ‘Grand<sup>e</sup> Loge de la France,’ the ‘Nil Loge,’ and the ‘Grand Orient de France,’ considering that the extradition, without any definite reason, of the Russian, Adamovitch, constitutes a violation of the most elementary human rights, protest against this extradition and decide to render this extradition public.”

But that was not the end of the business. A few days later, the Russians capped their display by raiding the bedroom of a German mechanic named Ludwig, representing a Berlin linotype firm, and mistaking his tools for burglary implements. The German Consul soon showed that, so far as his Government was con-

cerned, it would not tolerate these outrages, Capitulations or no Capitulations.

Finding the position getting rather embarrassing—for even those organs who supported the Consul in a contemptuous attitude were giving columns to the subject, explaining the “triviality” of the whole matter—the three prisoners were quickly deported.

But if the Russian authorities believed that this move would end the agitation, they were soon disillusioned. What was the British Agency doing in the matter? Would Lord Kitchener follow the precedent of Lord Cromer by sending a representative to Russia in order to hold a watching brief? No answer from the British Agency; but from the Russian Consul a public statement that he was proceeding against me. In an interview which I gave Reuter’s representative, I stated that I would welcome any such action; but it never came off. The Russians knew something. They gave no opportunity of a public enquiry into a scandalous state of things. As a final effort, however, on behalf of the deported and lost souls, I rang up the British Agency, and was answered by one of the higher officials. I asked if he could tell me whether Lord Kitchener was sending anybody to Russia to see what would happen.

“I’ll go and find out.” He returned in ten minutes.

“It’s—er, nothing to do with Lord Kitchener, you know,” he said pathetically.

On June 19th, 1913, dated the previous day from Odessa, the following appeared in the *Morning Post*:

“Three Russian political refugees who were arrested and deported by the Russian Consul at Alexandria, in pursuance of the Egyptian Capitulations, were landed

here to-day from a Russian Levantine liner, and lodged in the central prison. They will probably be dealt with by an administrative police order."

But were they? From that date nobody has ever heard of what became of them, beyond a note which I received from an Odessa correspondent saying that Adamovitch had been lodged in the Odessa penitentiary. "If he be dealt with by what is known as 'Administrative Order,' as is highly probable, he will not be brought before any regularly constituted tribunal, but summarily banished to Siberia. The local Press is not permitted to make any reference to the matter."

I confess that there came a time when the absolute hopelessness of fighting, handicapped and single-handed, these interminable instances of injustice sickened me, and when, as if to mock, it was reported to me that two British subjects had been "held up" by the Russians, I contented myself with personally making enquiries from the acting British Consul, who, in view of recent happenings, made an unusually exhaustive and amusing effort to look closely into the matter and to make "an official entry" of my visit! These dangerous journalists from London must be given no chance!

The powers in Egypt never forgave this direct method of appealing to the public.

"Nothing of that sort must be done again, without reference to us," was the edict. It requires a large purse (to say nothing of a large heart) to fight officialdom in Egypt, and so events, in the shape of a proprietor, among other matters, drew down the curtain for a time.

Soon one was able to breathe in the old even manner. We began to read again of Mr. Smith's rise of two pounds a month, as well as the description of Miss Jones's

beautiful dress at the Saturday night dance. Sometimes we were given a sermon verbatim, and excitement reached the limit when a waterpipe burst. Everything became smug and comfortable. The lights of the beer-house, where officials relaxed after a very tiring day's work in the morning, blinked and winked complacently. Beautiful demi-mondaines sat with them, and were treated by them with the courtesy which is foreign to their wives. . . . Really, who cared a hang about foreign prisoners?

## CHAPTER VI

### Lord Kitchener's Comment

IT must have been rather exasperating to those smug officials to find that an affair on which they had not at first expended a second thought should have been thrust upon the world's attention until its importance had assumed international dimensions. In all quarters of the globe its echoes resounded until the wires were everywhere humming. The diplomatic corps in Cairo were in a frenzy. Hitherto they had had pretty much of their own way—each a veritable autocrat in his dealings with his nationals—and now on a simple issue, which had occurred over and over again, the extent of their powers was being examined in the full glare of public light. It was an unheard of thing, sir!

In England, Russia, France, Germany, and Italy world-celebrated jurists dealt with the problem, raking off the rust of a question which had been considered too difficult of emendation. Lord Cromer was moved to write on the situation, while Lord Kitchener was asked to give his views.

The British Agent must have been only too ready to explain the amazing anomaly that had been handicapping his work of reform. But he could never have imagined that so trivial a peg could have been utilised to hang the great question upon.

It was this outcry in Egypt (for even Egypt can be roused) that drew English, French, and, ultimately, the whole world's attention to the extraordinary anomalies of the Egyptian Capitulations.\*

It drew attention and held it. But the question, after all, was an old one. It began with Cromer and grew with Gorst. "What we have failed to accomplish in thirty years," scoffed the diplomats, "you can never achieve by a newspaper campaign; in fact, you destroy what we have done and what we are doing."

\* The object of the original Capitulations was to afford security to Europeans (or Christians in the broad sense) within the dominions of the Sultan. They date as far back as A.D. 1150, although those granted to England were granted in A.D. 1579.

The Capitulations originally provided such privileges as (1) access for foreigners to Moslem territory, with permission to trade, but not to practise any calling or profession, nor hold lands. (2) Exemption from taxation, other than duties on merchandise. (3) Religious freedom. (4) The right of foreigners, in disputing among themselves, to be judged by their own Ambassadors and their own Consuls. (5) The presence of the Consular dragoman or interpreter, before an Ottoman judge, in civil causes between natives and foreigners. (6) The competent judge, in crimes and offences committed by foreigners against natives, to be the Consul for the defendant, not the local tribunal. (7) Inviolability of the foreigner's domicile. In cases of urgency, Government officers might not enter the dwelling-house of a foreign delinquent without having previously notified the Ambassador or Consul, and being accompanied by his deputy. (8) Prohibition to Ambassadors and Consuls to give protection to Ottoman subjects in Ottoman territory. (9) Freedom of bequest.

Further privileges were conceded during the next century. The Christian was regarded by the Moslems as an inferior being, although he tolerated him as a tradesman. At that time the Sultan was a European potentate, and his concessions were given with the grace of a superior monarch. The Capitulations in latter days were very differently regarded. They were no longer a privilege, but a right—claimed and sustained—to be free from civil and criminal jurisdiction of the Moslem Courts. How much this has been abused I have endeavoured to show.

But what had they done? What were they doing? They gave balls, went to reveillon suppers, frequented the cafés—these diplomats of enlightened countries—while some miserable soul was seized at the whim of any tradesman-consul, thrown into prison by Egyptian police, who never asked the reason why, and probably never cared, and languished, “pending enquiries.” If you protested, protested long and loud, they shipped him away under strong escort, and you never heard of the man again. “Malesh” said those of the diplomatic corps.

Nevertheless, despite the lofty scorn of indolent Civil Servants, to whom a Press campaign came as a rude disturbance after the tranquillity in the form of social columns which told of their doings—or those which could be made public without shocking public morals—manly opposition asserted itself. In England and France the question of the Capitulations formed the theme of the day. Editors of leading reviews found that a subject, placed on the shelves of the diplomatic archives for years, had all the elements of freshness, curiosity and usefulness. Prominent statesmen were asked for their views, and the public heard them for the first time. This was pushing diplomacy from behind with a vengeance. A few weeks later it was announced that “conversations had commenced between the British and French Governments on the subject of the abolition or modification of the Capitulations.”

Lord Cromer's views were of especial interest, inasmuch as the question of modification, if not the entire abolition, of the Capitulations had occupied much of his attention during his career in Egypt.

Lord Cromer said :

“ During the six years which have elapsed since I left Cairo I have, for various reasons, on which it is unnecessary to dwell, carefully abstained from taking any part in whatever discussions have arisen on current Egyptian affairs. If I now depart from the reticence which I have hitherto observed, it is because there appears at all events some slight prospect that the main reform which is required to render the government and administration of Egypt efficient will be seriously considered. As so frequently happens in political affairs, casual incident has directed public attention to the need of reform. A short time ago a Russian subject was, at the request of the Consular authorities, arrested by the Egyptian police and handed over to them for deportation to Russia. I am not familiar with the details of the case, neither, for the purposes of my present argument, is any knowledge of those details required. The nature of the offence of which this man, Adamovitch by name, was accused, as also the question of whether he was guilty or innocent of that offence, are altogether beside the point. The legal obligation of the Egyptian Government to comply with the request that the man should be handed over to the Russian Consular authorities would have been precisely the same if he had been accused of no offence at all. The result, however, has been to touch one of the most tender points in the English political conscience. It has become clear that a country which is not, indeed, British territory, but which is held by a British garrison, and in which British influence is predominant, affords no safe asylum for a political refugee.

“The case of Adamovitch, which has naturally attracted a good deal of attention in this country, is only one out of many instances which might be cited to show the need of reform. I have long since expressed my opinion that the root of the whole evil lies in the absence of any local legislative machinery capable of enacting laws binding on all residents in Egypt, whether European or native. The particular scheme which I advanced during the closing years of my tenure of office in Egypt is, without doubt, capable of much improvement, but I still hold strongly to the principle which I advocated, viz. that the only serious remedy for the existing state of things is to create some legislative body in Egypt which will inspire the confidence of European residents to such an extent as to justify the demand that they should cede the special privileges which they now enjoy.”

Discussing this illuminating survey, *The Times* said:

“When the earlier Sultans of Constantinople contemptuously granted privileges to the Venetians and Genoese dwelling at their gates, they did so because they wished to encourage the foreign trading communities to remain and supply them with merchandise. The Turks, even in their feebleness, have always been strong enough to prevent excessive encroachments based upon the Capitulations. But in Egypt, where the foreign community attained relatively greater power and influence, the Capitulations were gradually so abused that by the time of the British occupation they had a blighting effect upon indigenous Egyptian authority. The foreigner in Egypt enjoyed a degree of liberty to which he was usually a stranger in his own land. He was outside the pale of Egyptian law, and was only amenable to the laws of his own country if the Consul chose to put them in operation. The result was, and often still is, paralysing. Lord Milner wrote long ago: ‘Do you want to clear out a cess-

pool, to prevent the sale of noxious drugs, to suppress a seditious or immoral print, you are pulled up by the Capitulations.' Lord Cromer has said that the Capitulations have protected the 'smuggler, the keeper of a gambling hell, the receiver of stolen goods, the retailer of adulterated spirits,' and still more questionable characters. . . . The broad fact is that the Capitulations remain a clog upon Egyptian progress, and Lord Cromer places his finger upon the real reason why they have never been adequately dealt with."

Lord Kitchener's views were carefully stated, but in the course of his comments he made the sensational admission that no fewer than 283 persons were arrested by their Consuls in one year, an alarming state of affairs. Another comment cleared the air on an issue which had raised a storm of legal controversy everywhere. Quoting the powerful articles of the French, English and American Capitulations, he observed that no actual mention is made in them of any obligation on the part of the local police to arrest a foreign subject and deliver him. At the same time he ventured the opinion that writers on the Capitulations appear to take this obligation for granted. It must have been a surprise, however, for the British Agent to find that, in this new storm of protest, writers on the Capitulations not only did not take this strange and unwelcome responsibility on the part of the local police for granted, but actually raised considerable opposition to it. Lord Kitchener also made it clear that such an unfortunate being might be incarcerated in an Egyptian prison without trial for an indefinite period. He explained that the course followed then, and for as long as we had a record, was the following :

The foreign Consul calls upon the local police to

assist him in arresting one of his own nationals. He sometimes does this by a personal verbal appeal to the police, or by sending one of his officials or dragomans to them, sometimes by a written application. In about three out of four of these applications no mention is made of any charge against the person to be arrested, and it is in practice very unusual for a charge to be preferred. The police then proceed to arrest the foreign subject designated to them. They take him as soon as possible to the Consulate and hand him over to his Consul, obtaining a receipt for him.

The Consul may incarcerate the prisoner in his own Consular prison, but few, if any, of the Consuls now possess one. The Consul usually proceeds at once to deliver the prisoner over to the local prisons department. He either sends him to the prison with his own cavasses, or the local police who have brought the prisoner to the Consulate are asked to take him on to the prison, in which case they comply with the request, being furnished with a letter from the Consul to the authorities. The Consul may now try the prisoner before his own Consular Court, and may punish or expel him, or he may deport him to be tried before some court in his own country. The last course is usually followed in regard to graver crimes by all countries, excepting Greece, which has an Assize Court in Egypt. *But a person incarcerated at the request of his Consul in an Egyptian prison may also be detained there indefinitely without trial and without the Egyptian Government having any say in the matter, the Consul being only amenable to his own laws, on the subject of which the local authorities have no cognisance.*

The rights and privileges in regard to immunity

from arrest by the local police which are enjoyed by foreigners in virtue of the Capitulations are lengthy and complicated, but the following are their main features :

No foreigner can be arrested without the consent of his Consul, or without the presence of that Consul or his delegate, unless he is taken *in flagrante delicto*. In the latter case the Consul must at once be informed ; and the prisoner must be handed over to him within twenty-four hours. As a rule, the Consul appears and claims the prisoner at once.

The police may penetrate into a public establishment to effect an arrest, but cannot enter into a private domicile belonging to a foreigner without the presence of a Consular delegate or the express permission of the foreigner concerned, except in cases of calls for help, fire or inundation. If a foreigner seen *in flagrante delicto*, and pursued by the police, takes refuge in a foreigner's house, the police surround the house and endeavour to prevent his escape until the presence of a Consular delegate has been secured. If the nationality of the offender and of the owner of the house are different, the presence of the Consular delegates of both the nationalities concerned is obligatory.

“The effect of such restrictions on police work can easily be imagined,” was Lord Kitchener's footnote.

## CHAPTER VII

### British Agent Criticised

THE publication of Lord Kitchener's apologia, coupled with the sudden departure for Russia of the three political prisoners, only served to defeat the plan of the Russian Consul. He imagined that since the extradition was now a *fait accompli*, all interest in the scandal would die out. As a fact, it served to intensify the bitter feeling which had been steadily growing. Some of the London journals which had looked askance at the campaign we had been conducting from Cairo now stepped into the breach with a bold criticism of Lord Kitchener's dispatch. They now had no further doubt that a grave state of affairs had arisen.

The three prisoners who had been extradited on this occasion were Adamovitch, Tchirsky, the man who had been kept in prison for six months "pending inquiries," and another editor of a political paper—a man named Masloff—about whose arrest nobody had heard a word until he was well on the way to Russia. Parliament, and political circles generally, were now fully interested, and, in response to an invitation, I explained the situation in the *Daily News*.

"Without any attempt to hold a public preliminary enquiry, the Russian authorities in Egypt have extradited two men, both, so far as we know, for political

'offences'—although it would have been quite the same if they had been charged with stealing a shirt-button, or with forgetting to pay their respects to the Russian Consul. We can only surmise. If by some extraordinary miscarriage of Russian justice these men are pronounced innocent—as I have reason to believe they are—what will become of them? Will the Russian Government convey them back to Egypt and compensate them for having ruined them?

“But, unfortunately, there is little possibility of the unusual happening; and poor Adamovitch knew what he was to expect when he said on the day he was to be extradited: ‘Better half killed here in this Egyptian prison than back to Russian justice—even though I am given the minimum sentence.’

“The most extraordinary part about the whole affair is that the public only became aware of these Russian scandals by the merest chance. The scandalous raid of Mr. Youritzine's house at Helwan was given scanty attention by the Press here. As a matter of fact, it was only after I had been sent down to investigate a complaint made by a friend of the indignant man that the grave and wholesale system of Russian despotism in Egypt became public property.

“Fortunately, my position as editor of a daily newspaper gave me the opportunity of investigating further, and of focusing public attention upon a most intolerable campaign of tyranny. Secret police were as frequent among Europeans in Egypt as they are in Russia. They lured innocent men to their doom with the cunning plausibility which belongs only to the Russian secret police. They marked you, and you were bound to be trapped. With a habit of long

standing, the higher authorities issued mandates which no one dared to disobey.

“They threatened the direst consequences; they resorted to obtaining the dismissal of a man from his employment because he ventured to help his imprisoned friend. . . . But what could one do? You appealed: and you might have begged justice from the Sphinx itself. You protested; and they only laughed disdainfully, because they realised your impotency. They feared nobody; Russia, being a diplomatic factor, could expect no serious remonstrance from England at home, and as for England in Egypt—what legal rights had Lord Kitchener to interfere?”

“In justice to the British Agent, it must be said that he kept himself closely informed of what was going on, and presumably posted Sir E. Grey. It was, I believe, on his initiative that immediate official enquiries were opened into the charges of ill-treatment made by the eye-witnesses of the Adamovitch escape. These charges, I may say, were made through my newspaper, and afterwards denied by the doctors who held the enquiries; but, as I pointed out to the Oriental Secretary at the British Agency, the public protests were too spontaneous to be discredited by an official report.

“Yet, disgraceful as is the case of Adamovitch, more inhuman has been the treatment of the other prisoner, Tchirsky. Here was a man languishing in prison ‘pending enquiries’ for six months. Nobody knew why he was arrested.

“From enquiries I had had made it seemed that this young man was of a generous and gentlemanly disposition. Everybody who came into contact with him spoke very highly of his industry; and so far as we in

Egypt know, he was as good a citizen as any country could wish. Perhaps he would have remained in prison had not the Adamovitch affair led incidentally to the disclosure. As we had given publicity to it, the Consul at once issued an explanation that the man had been in prison because he was obstinate. He admitted that the man denied his Russian nationality, but he added that he was making 'further enquiries,' in the hope of being able to establish his Russian origin.

"Of course it might be correctly inferred that had no publicity been given to his case, he may have languished for ever 'pending enquiries.' What was done in order to hush up the campaign, which was growing very strong, was to ship him away with Adamovitch.

"There is no doubt that, although the Russian authorities snap their fingers at protest, they had been growing fidgety as more disclosures were made. The act of the Russian Agent in complaining to the British authorities here of my articles is in itself an indication of what steps Russia takes in order to shut up the mouth of criticism. He really expected that the result of his representation would be the suppression of my newspaper, or the banishment of myself. By this time, however, he has been educated to English methods. Lord Kitchener took no notice whatever beyond carrying out his promise to the Russian Agent of letting me know that a protest had been made.

"What is to be the end of Russia's methods in Egypt? Despite the fact that the two Russians have been extradited, the campaign, which has been ably supported by the *Daily News*, will do much to make Russia pause before acting in her usual high-handed manner.

“ Public opinion has never asserted itself so strongly before in Egypt. From an apathy which was, in fact, the result of a long-developed indifference to the innumerable wrongs caused by the Capitulations, the Press and the public awoke to the full significance of the Russian outrages which were being committed ‘legally.’ Protests were made, not only by Englishmen and Russians, but by people of all nationalities. The various Consuls came to my office wanting ‘full particulars, please, of this affair which is exciting all Egypt.’ Germans, remembering the affair of last year, when the companion of a German Princess was arrested in the streets of Cairo and sent back to Germany without trial, began to realise that they, too, were always in danger of being summarily arrested by order of the Consul—although they felt assured of a real trial in Germany, and not a Russian farce.

“ Whether the abolition of the Capitulations means, as the *Daily News* suggests, the annexation of Egypt, few care in view of these recent disclosures. All Europeans in Egypt would prefer to be under a solid, well-organised Government than to remain under the sway of an individual and his caprices. The cry really is : ‘ Abolish the Capitulations ; and damn the consequences.’ ”

The reception of Lord Kitchener’s version by the leading journals came as a surprise to official Egypt. The British Agent’s dispatch, instead of pacifying, only brought more influences up in arms against the policy of letting things slide. Thus the *Manchester Guardian* :

“ Lord Kitchener’s dispatch on the arrest of Adamovitch brings out a fact which has not been generally known. It is that the arrest was made by the Egyptian police at the request of the Russian Consul. Had the Russian Consul

been his own policeman, it is clear that he would have been acting within his powers under the Capitulations. A Russian subject in Egypt under the Capitulations is on Russian soil, and subject to the jurisdiction of the Russian courts. Very well, or rather, very ill. But is there any obligation on the Egyptian police to effect arrests on Russian territory or to hand over Russian subjects against whom their Consul prefers an information? Lord Kitchener seems to agree that there is no actual obligation under the text of the Capitulations. But the whole case of Sir Edward Grey was that we were bound hand and foot by the Capitulations, and had no alternative but to let the man go to take his trial in Russia. It was so written in the bond. But, apparently, it is not written that we should arrest. It is one thing to say that we cannot prevent Russia from doing her own dirty work, it is another and very different thing to take a hand in it ourselves. The Capitulations in the present condition of Egypt are a crying scandal that should be removed. But in the meantime we need not make them worse than they are by making Egyptian police the servants of alien Powers and a worse than alien justice."

No less severe in its comment was the *Daily Graphic*, whose foreign editor, Mr. Lucien Wolff, had previously contributed a succinct case against the arbitrary action of the Russian authorities:

"By invoking the testimony of Lord Kitchener on the Egyptian Capitulations in general, and the Adamovitch case in particular, Sir Edward Grey has played very heavily into the hands of the critics. Perhaps that was not altogether undesigned, for, after all, neither he nor Lord Kitchener can wish that the evils of the system under which foreigners live in Egypt should be hidden from the world. Touching the Adamovitch case, Lord Kitchener has practically no defence to offer. Although he quotes certain of the Capitulations, there is nothing in them to justify the claim of the Consuls to arrest and deport their nationals for crimes committed in their own countries. Still, less, does he show that the

Ottoman or Khedivial Government have ever parted with their sovereign right to give asylum to political refugees. It is true that he quotes an obscure French jurist for an interpretation of the Capitulations which would cover the Adamovitch and similar cases ; but on this it is only necessary to observe that M. de Rausas is far inferior as an authority to Sir Francis Piggott, who has the double merit of being an Englishman and of utterly disagreeing with M. de Rausas. For the rest Lord Kitchener gives us a picture of the administration of the law under the Capitulations which may well make Englishmen ask for what moral purpose their troops occupy the Delta, and their statesmen advise and control the Khedivial Government. Not only may political refugees be seized and deported to their own countries under the nose of the British authorities, but any foreigner can be arrested on the demand of his Consul without any charge being preferred against him, and may be kept in prison as long as the Consul pleases without being brought to trial. These are abuses which strike at the very root of the British conception of justice, and they are all the more indefensible because they are actually not justified by either the letter or the spirit of the Capitulations."

The *Daily News* said :

" Lord Kitchener's dispatch on the arrest of Adamovitch is not as illuminating a discussion of the Capitulations as we should have liked. It confirms the fact that the only charge brought against Adamovitch was that last year he headed the strike of merchant sailors at Odessa, which the Russian Consul most instructively styles a 'revolutionary movement.' The 'offence' was, therefore, not committed on Egyptian soil, and, as far as one can see, is not even recognised as a crime by Egyptian law. Do the Capitulations authorise a foreign Consul to arrest and deport one of his subjects for an offence not committed on Egyptian soil? Lord Kitchener quotes the text of relevant articles of the French and English and American Capitulations with the Ottoman Government. These are loosely phrased; but none of them gives any specific authority for the arrest by

their Consuls of foreigners for offences committed outside Turkish territory, and it is clear that the authority given to the Consuls was intended to be limited to offences committed in Turkish territory. There is thus nothing in the text of the Capitulations to warrant the demand of the Russian Consul for the arrest of Adamovitch, and the illustrations quoted by Lord Kitchener do nothing to support the Russian Consul's claim. The only legal evidence offered by Lord Kitchener is a vague reference to the views of the Powers and their representatives in Egypt. It is well known that Turkey, in the case of Kossuth and his companions, denied a claim identical with that put forward in the Adamovitch case, and this country was prepared to back up Turkey on that occasion even by arms. Lord Kitchener offers no explanation of the change in the British attitude. The law may have driven him to act as he did, but he fails to make the legal necessity plain."

Up to now practically the only English newspaper which did not write in support of our attitude was the *Daily Chronicle*. This newspaper eventually fell into line, and in a lengthy article referred to the campaign in the following terms :

"The account of the arrest of Alexander Adamovitch at the desire of the Russian Government, given in Lord Kitchener's dispatch, has created a most unpleasant impression on the public mind. To say that it has made us ashamed of the Capitulations and the humiliating obligations they involve is very far from exceeding the truth. The dislike of the Capitulations that has always existed in Egypt since the occupation has not been decreased by Lord Kitchener's excuses for being compelled to conform to their traditional usage.

"Certainly Adamovitch's offence was not one crying to Heaven for vengeance. His alleged crime was to have instigated strikes among crews at Odessa, and he was 'wanted' by the Russian Government in consequence. If it be a 'revolutionary movement' to instigate a strike

in Russia, it is also a distinct humiliation for Englishmen to be compelled by a treaty they had no hand in framing to lend the policemen for his arrest. The resentment felt, therefore, by all Liberals is natural, and public sense of justice requires some expression of it.

“To the question, ‘Do the Capitulations authorise a foreign Consul to arrest and deport one of his subjects for an offence not committed on Egyptian soil?’ Lord Kitchener has bluntly answered, ‘Yes!’ This answer, however, seems to have been given chiefly on the grounds that for the Egyptian police to hand over a foreign subject to the tender mercy of his Consul is a course ‘consecrated by long usage.’ To many of us it seems a practice ‘more honoured in the breach than the observance.’ But because Egyptian authorities were too eager to yield to Consular pressure before the British occupation is a most unsatisfactory reason for a repetition of this policy when the British flag waves over the Citadel.

“The more this business is considered the more unpleasant the part we have taken in it appears. Although high legal authorities, both here and in Egypt, hold that there is nothing in the text of the Capitulations to warrant the Russian Consul’s demand, we yielded to it without protest. Lord Kitchener’s dispatch, from this point of view, leaves much to be desired. To hand over to a Consular agent one of his subjects, simply because the thing has been customary, is not quite in consonance with British methods of precedent.

“If Lord Kitchener, who has done such splendid work in Egypt, and means to do more, wished to stir public opinion by offering to it an object lesson of the present working of the Capitulations, he could not have chosen a more vivid example of their iniquity than the Adamovitch case. If this has been his aim, he has certainly succeeded. But where his dispatch has failed is to make the legal necessity of this yielding plain. It is scarcely conceivable that the matter can be allowed to rest here. The time has come when the whole question of the Capitulations must be considered. A state of things under which ‘a person incarcerated at the

request of his Consul in an Egyptian prison may also be detained there indefinitely without trial, and without the Egyptian Government having any say in the matter,' is one which the British Parliament ought not to tolerate."

One or two further comments à propos the case may not be out of place here; this is the *Spectator's* point of view:

"Englishmen were reminded a few weeks ago of how little authority they have in Egypt in certain respects by the case of the Russian subject, Adamovitch. So far as we understand the matter, Adamovitch was a political refugee. He was seized by the Russian Consul in Egypt and transported to Russia. English feeling experienced a shock—was there, then, no right of asylum in this English-governed Egypt?"

The great French Socialist organ, *Humanité*, of which the late M. Jaurès was then the editor, said:

"Egypt herself demands the liberation of Adamovitch. To-day's *Egyptian Mail*, under the heading 'Russian Methods in Egypt,' publishes an eloquent article on this subject. It states that the Capitulations have established in Egypt a little Russia, with all its characteristics of tyranny and brutality. It protests against the searching of the house of Youritzine and the imprisonment of Adamovitch. It appears that such perquisitions are rather common in Egypt, where the Consuls are fond of showing off their authority over their compatriots. The Russians are naturally those who have the most to suffer, and the arrest of Adamovitch must, in a great measure, be attributed to the zeal of the Consul, who has only been recently appointed, and who, in consequence, wishes to make a show of his qualities to 'the little father,' the Tsar."

"I understand that the Adamovitch case in Egypt is causing some considerable discussion in diplomatic circles," said a writer in the *Glasgow Herald*. "It may very likely force a demand for an alteration in the Capitulations. At the moment, it is impossible to give more details."

Local feeling was well expressed in the French newspaper, the *Echo Egyptien*. Dwelling upon the interest that the approaching abolition of the Capitulations is creating in Egypt, the new French daily said :

“ It will be conceded readily that the regime of the Capitulations represents as a whole, in the midst of an advanced community like our own, an anomaly and a paradox. By the privileges that it confers it is against the great modern principle of equality. It keeps alive, in the minds of the masses, a feeling of hate, of rancour and of jealousy with regard to the privileged minority. It prevents the accomplishment of social fusion, the making of different elements of the population and the work of assimilation necessary to the health and the life of a social organism.

“ Instead of assisting them, it fights against their instincts of cohesion and natural affinities. Instead of uniting, it dislocates and separates. Sociologically it constitutes the most dangerous element for a society—the element of dissolution.”

The *Bourse Egyptienne*, in an interesting article on the arrest and the right of asylum, said that while the Capitulatory régime exists in Egypt occurrences such as the Adamovitch arrest will always be possible, that nevertheless the cry of the people will always be, “ Do not give him up ! ”

“ It may be that our impression is exaggerated ; that we see things too much from the dark side ; that there are to be found in countries that the Germans call *Polizeistaaten*, judges independent of the Powers and careful of their conscience. All the same, too many gibbets, too many blood-stained ghosts, too many headsmen, hide them from our view. We do not believe there are any, and we repeat, ‘ Do not give him up ! ’ ”

One more item from a leaderette of mine referring to another Russian outrage :

“ Our disclosures of the wretched conditions in which the two Russian women were placed pending enquiries into the charges preferred against them by a man, have created a profound impression. That such suffering should be forced on women against whom no tangible proof was forthcoming is a disgrace to the Egyptian Government. It is an elementary principle of law, approved by every Englishman, that an accused person is regarded as an innocent being until the contrary is proven. The women who were summarily arrested on mere suspicion and placed in the degrading surroundings of the native caracol, reveal to the world an illustration of how foreigners are treated in Egypt under the present regime. It is a crying shame, and we protest, and shall continue to protest, until decent treatment is meted out to foreign suspects.”

As indicating the attitude of mind of those men who were responsible for events which had raised the protests of the rest of the entire world against them, I quote the following reply of the acting Consul which appeared in the *Egyptian Gazette*. Says this worthy :

“ To issue a *démenti* against, or to take notice at all, of the allegations of which you speak, I refuse. Such vapourings of a gutter press should be beneath the condescension of any man. At all events, I, as one of the representatives of His Imperial Majesty the Tsar, consider that they are far beneath mine.

“ I have no doubt that the editors, or whatever they call themselves, of the sheet in question would be delighted if I were to pay attention to their scurrilous paragraphs. A *démenti* from the Consulate would be quite a *réclame* for them.”

The Consul went on to admit the facts of the arrest of five Russians (three men and two women) on a charge

of stealing 8,000 roubles from a third-class passenger. This statement was too much even for the sympathetic representative, who said :

“ Excuse me, did it not strike you that 8,000 roubles was rather a large sum for a third-class passenger to be carrying ? I understand the complainant was travelling third.”

The Consul admitted that it was, but proceeded to explain that there was no reason why a third-class passenger should not have plenty of money. As regarded opening the luggage of Ludwig, he declared that it was a regrettable mistake, but placed the responsibility on the heads of the police.

“ Immediately the whole gang had been arrested,” continued the Consul, “ an enquiry was opened. It lasted four days, at the end of which no conclusive evidence regarding the theft having been produced, the women were liberated. The men remain in custody, and will probably be sent out of the country ; it is believed they are wanted by the Odessa police—on a criminal, not a political, charge.”

“ Are not the women undesirable too ? ” queried our representative.

“ Undoubtedly ; but if they become registered prostitutes we shall take no action against them.”

Before finishing this instructive interview, the enterprising representative of the *Egyptian Gazette* asked one more question. Were not the prisoners wrongly arrested ?

“ No, emphatically no. A charge was preferred against them and, judging from their appearance and professions, there seemed a great possibility of that charge being proved. They were, therefore, arrested on suspicion. The charge was not proved, but that does not make the arrest wrong. In England people are often arrested on suspicion and

afterwards found to be guiltless, I believe. The prisoners in question here did not prove themselves to be guiltless, but their accusers could not disprove their innocence. Thus they were liberated."

"But the men were not liberated," said the representative.

"No, nor will they be in Egypt. In Odessa, if nothing be found out against them, they will then be set free."

## CHAPTER VIII

### A Serious Prison Mutiny

“THE great convict prisons of Tura and Giza are in every way model establishments. Nowadays it is sometimes argued that the prisons are too comfortable, and positively afford an inducement to very poor people to commit crimes ; but in Egypt, as elsewhere, I believe this argument to be nonsense.”

So says Lord Milner in his book on “England in Egypt.” But the statement is, to use a further phrase of his, “official optimism.” The present state of Egypt does not allow of any but official versions.

Those who have written on these matters in Egypt are either rabid Nationalists, who see everything through the distorted spectacles of discontent, or smug officials who imagine they cannot possibly go wrong.

The daily reports which appear in the local papers or are cabled abroad are either written by officials or inspired by them.

This, of course, does not suggest that officialism is incompatible with truthfulness, but simply that a natural optimism must prevail even in those cases where criticism would bring a quicker solution to the situation. When I mention, too, that known correspondents of leading foreign papers are often in the Government employ, it will be seen that journalistic independence

can only obtain growth under difficulties. Should a newspaper print an independent account which is embarrassing to officialdom, an official *démenti* is issued, and is eagerly grabbed by the general Press, which waits, cap in hand, outside the gates of officialdom for favour. Let me give an example of these Government "explanations."

A French morning daily, as well as several other organs, had been agitating that the prisoners of native and mixed prisons were not given proper food.

One paper published an analysis of the bread served out alike to convicts and persons who were undergoing two days' imprisonment for a contravention.

The Government made inquiries into these accusations, and issued the following report :

"Erroneous reports have recently been appearing in the Press with regard to the millet bread issued to the prisoners in the Egyptian State prisons. The facts are as follows :—

"Four years ago the question was considered as to whether an economy in the prison expenditure could not be effected by substituting millet bread, similar to that eaten by the fellahîn in their own homes, for the wheaten bread then issued to the convicts. An experiment was made at the prison of Beni-Suef, and the prisoners were fed on millet bread for over a year. The medical officer of the prison reported favourably on the result. It was found that the weight of the prisoners remained the same as when wheaten bread was consumed, and that their health generally was better than in any previous year, there being fewer cases of gastric complaints. After this successful experiment millet bread was introduced into

all the prisons of the country, and a considerable economy to the Egyptian taxpayer has thereby been effected.

“At the present moment the price of millet and wheat is approximately the same.

“Specimens of prison bread have recently been submitted to the medical authorities for analysis. This analysis has shown: (1) That the ingredients used in the bread are of good quality. (2) That there is no adulteration. (3) That the bread contains no objectionable ingredients. (4) That, owing to the absence of gluten in the millet, the bread is not so plastic as wheaten bread. Thus when stale it is apt to become hard and unpalatable; but fresh bread is issued to prisoners every day.

“A case has been reported in the Press of a prisoner having taken bread with him from a prison and having submitted it to an analysis, which proved unfavourable. The case in question was that of a foreign consular prisoner. Such prisoners are fed by their own consular authorities, and the bread in question did not emanate from the State prison bakeries.”

With reference to this last paragraph the *Progrès* openly accused the Press Bureau of deliberately lying to deceive the public, and concluded with the following stricture:—“This is a fine example of political uprightness to give to a people which needs to be helped in its attempts at moral uplifting.”

On the other hand, as I have already suggested, the absolute disorganisation of the local Press gives it little status and less credit for reliability. So that the official holds the line all the way. Just as backsheesh has been said by the Consuls-General in Egypt to

demoralise, so is this clandestine baeksheesh demoralising to the Press.

Upon the very difficult and complex situation regarding the Press in Egypt I have ventured an opinion elsewhere in this book. The powers-that-be have ordained that the world abroad should have the official versions of events. And no doubt they, possessing all the facts of the situation, should be in the best position to issue a plain and straightforward statement.

I must confess, however, that the official account of a certain grave prison mutiny left much to be desired. It is difficult, of course, even under the best of circumstances to obtain correct knowledge of happenings in a State prison. In Egypt, it will be understood, it amounted almost to impossibility. Yet murder will out, and the leakages in regard to the prisons administration in Egypt were numerous. So common were they, in fact, that little or no notice was taken of them by the local Press. Occasionally one would come across an obscure paragraph which would be overlooked by the ordinary man in the street, but which would, nevertheless, give pause to the student of Egyptian affairs. Here is an instance of four important items tucked away maybe under an account of a ball at a Cairo hotel.

(1) "The Native Parquet at Tanta has issued orders for the arrest of the head jailer and four other jailers of the Tanta prison, all of whom are accused of corruption.

"It seems possible that other arrests also will be made. This is not the first time this year that grave scandals have been discovered in the prisons adminis-

tration, and the new Director-General of Prisons will probably have some hard and disagreeable work before him."

### (2) THE TANTA AND OTHER PRISON SCANDALS

"The inquiry into the accusation of corruption made against the head jailer of Tanta prison has come to an end.

"The evidence of many witnesses seems to show that wholesale corruption and cruelty was rife in the Tanta prison and in the Shelma penitentiaries, where convicts work at the improvement of land, which is subsequently distributed to the fellahîn. It also seems that there was an arrangement between the moulahiz of Shelma and the first jailer to levy a tax on all prisoners, taking from them all sorts of presents in kind.

"Much fraud has been discovered by Miralai Wittingham Bey, new Director-General of Prisons, in the bread rations allowed to the men. Whereas 250 grammes of bread is the usual ration, many prisoners were receiving less than this weight, while others were receiving more than is rightly allotted. The matter is being thoroughly thrashed out by the new chief."

### (3) COUNTERFEIT COINS FORGED IN PRISON

"Some time ago the Director of the Abou Zabal prison was informed by an ex-convict that the coinage industry, which had been flourishing in Egyptian prisons, had not, as he thought, come to an end. The ex-convict informed him that he himself, with one of the jailers, forged coins under the director's very nose, and that he only informed him of the fact to revenge himself

on his confederate, who was trying to cheat him out of his share of the profits.

“In consequence of this denunciation, five persons, of whom two were smiths from Bulac, who had made the moulds according to the model that the guardian of the prison in question had handed to them, were arrested.

“The five persons were brought before the *juge de renvoi*, who released three of them, but kept in custody the ex-convict and his confederate the jailer, both of whom will appear before the Court of Assizes next month.”

(4) “The constant recurrence of the crime of coining false money in Government prisons leads one to the belief that prison soil constitutes very favourable ground for the carrying on of such secret undertakings. Had prison laws been more strict, and prison supervision more keen, offenders would not have dared to launch so fearlessly into what they know constitutes a serious offence.

“The latest instance of a series of such crimes is reported from the prison of Abou Zabal, where two of the men-nurses at the hospital were caught with false coins, and on their rooms being searched an instrument for stamping coins was also discovered. The men have been arrested, and an enquiry has been commenced.”

By a piece of luck I became acquainted with one of these “little prison incidents,” which otherwise would have obtained the usual paragraph. As it was, we succeeded in moving the official world into action—that is, in issuing a *démenti*.

The case in point was one of the “model” prisons

eulogised by Lord Milner in a passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

I have already referred to the desire of leading members of the public to accept the medium I offered them of airing their views. But it was not always leading lights who took advantage of this fresh air of freedom. Curious types blew into my office. One day, a man shown in to me was introduced by his mentor, who accompanied him, as an ex-convict. The testimony of ex-convicts may be open to suspicion, but when that testimony refers to prison life I think it is worth listening to. Of course, he remarked that his imprisonment had been a miscarriage of justice, and so forth. But upon that point I did not press him, nor did he wish to labour it. All he wished was to tell me, if I so desired, the fearful way in which the prison was being run.

“Hardships?” I suggested.

He thrust aside the idea with a scornful wave of the hand. Apparently he had obeyed an impulse in yielding to his friend's advice to come to me.

“Why should I trouble?” he said. “I shall never go back to the prison. It is the others who suffer.”

Whereupon he told me a story which, in all decency, I cannot print in detail. It was, let me say, one of the most revolting I have ever heard in connection with a public administration. The accusations of immorality against some of the warders were sufficient to make it impossible to give publicity to it. I could not use the story. I contented myself by making a note of it for use when I next visited the British Agency. In the meantime I hoped that the man very much exaggerated the facts.

But judge from the strange sequel. Exactly a week later, a mutiny on a big scale broke out at that very prison. Extreme measures alone restored order. A copy of the semi-official inspired report was included in the original MS. of this book, but since the Egyptian Government refuses to part with it\* I am unable to give it here. I can only say that for sheer effrontery and official glibness nothing that came out of the Cairo Press Bureau ever surpassed it. The origin of the accounts which appeared in the inspired Press, referring to "erroneous statements" and "stricter régime," which were circulated everywhere as "evidence," was not difficult to trace. But the correspondent of the *Near East*, who gave the "official" version, had to add that "various incidents have shown that all was not as it should be in the Prisons Administration. The discovery of counterfeit coining in the Delta prison was proof enough of this."

The generally current statement that the comfort of prisons nowadays is a positive inducement to very poor people to commit crimes, is therefore not true so far as the great Tura prison is concerned. There might be, possibly, more truth in this suggestion if it were applied to the Hadra prison at Alexandria, which in compliment to the late Prisons Administrator, Coles Pasha, was waggishly termed "Coles's Palace Hotel." At any rate, there were no mutinies to record there. But I rather think that the solution is one which might give the answer to many other problems, including that of public security. It is this: More British influence is required in the Provinces. The mere presence of an Englishman creates a remarkable

\* See Introduction.

moral deterrent. The native has more or less a feeling of contempt for native authority. The farther away from the centres in Egypt—that is to say, the farther away you go from evidences of Britain's presence—the more you leave behind you that tranquillity which Britain alone introduced into Egypt.

## CHAPTER IX

### Criminal Medical Practices

THE monotony of the summer months in Egypt is rarely relieved by anything of an exciting character.

It is a rule for everyone to fall asleep when the heat comes again, in order to awake vigorous and well to enjoy the social season!

Events in the months May to September, 1913, can fairly claim to have made that summer an exception. Scandal followed scandal so closely that they overlapped! But it simply showed that Egypt particularly had her dark corners in common with most countries, and that it just wanted a little more determination than would be required elsewhere to shame the authorities into action by publicly exposing the evils. Hitherto no encouragement was given to the public examination of these plague-spots, and I found, once having shown a desire to depart from the ancient rule of keeping things dark, and at the same time to adhere strictly and faithfully to the time-honoured journalistic tenet not to divulge the name of my informant, that a number of responsible experts were ready to come forward and unburden themselves of matters which they had long felt should be made public.

It, therefore, came as a shock to many people to learn that there was no official control in the country

over the practice of medicine and midwifery, and that, as a result, criminal practices were carried on more or less openly, and people were exposed to risks which, to say the least, should cause a little uneasiness in the minds of those who lay a certain value on their lives.

It was a delicate subject upon which to treat, but it was a very important one, and being fraught with so many dangers I should have considered that I was failing in a grave duty had I hesitated to expose a state of affairs which was truly appalling, and which called for the promptest investigation on the part of the authorities, not only out of regard for the well-being of the populace, but out of regard for the reputation of the country.

As a result of private investigation, I found that it was not an uncommon thing in Egypt for certain "doctors" and midwives to act in collusion. They frequently dwelt in juxtaposition and, in many cases, occupied rooms in the same buildings. Although I would not go so far as to suggest that this in itself indicates the existence of a system of illegality, the custom, at any rate, leaves itself open to grave suspicion, and certainly lends colour to these very grave charges. In any case, it neither tends to enhance the dignity nor standing of the medical profession, and perhaps I will be forgiven for expressing an uneasiness as to the outcome of such a custom when I have heard of definite instances where midwives have been known to boast of the fortunes they have made in this country out of illegal traffic.

The fact is that practically every country in Europe can now send its medical outcasts—whether *sage-femme* or doctor—to Egypt, where, by merely ex-

hibiting a diploma to the sanitary authorities, which very often is hardly worth the paper on which it is inscribed, they obtain a certificate to practise their "art" there, and when once that is in their possession official control ceases, and they are at perfect liberty to act as they please. Some of them are capable of doing anything, and of running the maximum amount of risk—or, shall we say, incurring a risk commensurate with the amount of backsheesh involved?

An instance is known where a man procured the diplomas of a deceased doctor and presented himself with these before the recognised authorities. He received the necessary certificate and duly commenced practice as a fully-fledged medical man.

It will be realised that this was a condition of affairs that would not be tolerated in any other country in the world. It not only constituted a disgrace to British rule in Egypt, but likewise to the medical profession and to civilisation at large. Of course, the Capitulations were blamed, as they generally are in such instances, and all I can say in the circumstances is, that in a case of this kind, where life or death is involved (not to speak of the morality of the question), neither the Capitulations nor anything else should be allowed to stand in the way of immediate reform.

A regular test for medical men desiring to practise in Egypt should at once be established, and everyone (no matter of what nationality) should be obliged to subject himself to such test. Fully qualified and respectable men would not shirk this formality; indeed, I should imagine that the many medical men of high standing in Egypt would be at one with me in urging this reform, not only out of regard for the

reputation of their profession and their own welfare, but with the object of putting an end to the criminal and immoral practices which are permitted to go on unchecked under the present loose system of granting certificates, and the lack of control over medical practitioners. The public would then be protected from charlatans and quacks, and there would thus not be the number of cases of "legalised" homicide which exist at the present moment.

One has only to walk through the streets of Cairo and examine the name-plates and notice-boards that are in evidence, to see how shamelessly and openly these charlatans flourish on the immorality which they encourage.

There is another class of practitioner which infests Egypt. I refer to the "bird of passage" who generally appears every year "during the season" for what he can pick up. No particular country has the privilege of fathering this particular type of medical adventurer. He is to be found everywhere—in England, France, Austria, Greece, Syria—countries of cosmopolitan character. Each one tells the same story. So many of his patients go abroad that he is compelled to leave the large practice (*sic*) that he has in his own country! He not infrequently is run successfully for a year or two—until the bubble bursts—by those parasites who just manage to hang on to the fringe of society.

I should like to make it clear that these remarks do not in any way refer to those well-known and recognised practitioners who go to Egypt every year, and whose conduct, ability, and reputation are in keeping with the best traditions of their profession.

A meeting of medical men practising in Cairo was, indeed, held for the purpose of considering the position of their profession in that city, and several well-known local men participated in the discussion. Whilst there was a feeling that steps should be taken to remedy such a deplorable state of affairs, I am not aware that this was followed by any definite action.

The British medical profession stands about the highest in the world. It behoves its members to see that no discredit is brought upon them by quacks. They have a duty to fulfil to themselves and to all by calling for prompt and thorough investigation. If the authorities do not see their way to act with the necessary promptitude, then why should not the more respectable medical men in Egypt form an International Vigilance Committee on ethical grounds? The creation of such a committee could but have the most salutary effect on what must be considered a very serious situation.

This campaign, which I conducted with persistency, and—let me add—a little hopefulness, had an extraordinary effect. Doctors of the most conservative type wrote in support of my denunciation. The experiences of doctors seemed to tally. One leading physician wrote :

“ Although adverse to the discussion of medical matters in the columns of a lay newspaper, I cannot resist writing to say that, in my opinion, both the public and the medical profession owe you a debt of gratitude for the just and fearless article.

“ You have not in any sense exaggerated the position, indeed the opposite, for, unfortunately, it would not be a difficult matter to mention definite instances where

malpractice is a daily routine amongst a certain class of doctors and midwives in this country.

“ I say ‘ definite,’ inasmuch as many of those people are fairly well-known, and it would only require a little vigilance on the part of a regularly constituted authority to ensure conviction of the offenders, and have justice meted out to them in the ordinary way.

“ But, although illegal and criminal acts are perpetrated, a policy of inaction characterises the attitude of the authorities, whoever they are. It may be that the subject is fraught with difficulties, for, as you remark, the Capitulations are quoted as hindrances to any effective action. If this is so, it is simply an outrage on society that criminal acts of the vilest nature are allowed to flourish on account of the Capitulations, or any other agreements whatever between the nations in the past, and that the medical outcasts of every country in Europe are allowed to come to Egypt to stultify and disgrace a noble profession.

“ It is stated that there are about 500 doctors in Cairo (don’t know the number of midwives, but they are legion also), and as not one-third of the population can afford to pay a reasonable fee, it means that there is about about one doctor for every 700 of the population.

“ How do they live ? You have only to look at the name-plates to form an estimate of the class of man personified there. He practises the most extraordinary diverse specialities, and to such an extent, that a victim undergoing treatment for an affection stands a very reasonable chance of contracting another disease of a more serious character. It would be very interesting to have an analysis made of the credentials of those

500 men, including the *sage-femme*, and to know how many would be in Cairo if each had to undergo a proper examination before obtaining permission to practise. There is no chance of raising the status of the profession—and as a necessary corollary of safeguarding the lives and health of the people—unless every applicant for permission to practise in Egypt is *compelled* to pass a regular examination, and produce also unimpeachable evidences of character and integrity.

“This is the invariable practice in every other country in the world—why not here?”

“As regards midwives, they should be under rigorous control, and a clean sweep should be made of many of those now practising. Perhaps a few doctors might be subjected to the same righteous treatment, as a healthy deterrent and example to others.

“Anyone really interested in this grave matter can obtain very full particulars from any of the religious organisations or social workers in the protection of women.

“They can supply sufficient information to banish from society, for a time at least, many people now living in affluence in this country.”

Another well-known doctor drew attention to the subject in a wider sphere:

“I doubt if there is a country on earth where there is as much quackery per thousand of population as among the Egyptian fellahîn. Ninety-nine per cent. (and even more) of these illegal practitioners are Egyptian or Ottoman subjects, and have no Capitulations under which to seek refuge, yet they go on practising unmolested for years. Many of them are itinerating practitioners, while others have a fixed residence

and place of business well known to both officials and people.

“The atrocities these charlatans perpetrate on the ignorant fellahin are almost inconceivable to one unaccustomed to see the results of their work.

“To one who knows the conditions in the provinces the action of the Sanitary Department in asking the American Consulate to exercise such careful scrutiny over American graduates seems most inconsistent.

“The poorest equipped graduate from the lowest grade American medical school surely would be infinitely less objectionable than these absolutely ignorant native practitioners.

“The number of such graduates would be small at the most, yet the number of uneducated and unlicensed native doctors is legion.

“Long before the Egyptian officials clear the land of native quacks there will be no low-grade medical schools in the United States, thanks to the energetic efforts of the American Medical Association. It would appear to be another case of the mote and the beam.

“Should occasion arise the writer would be pleased to prove the truth of his statements.”

Finally an echo of the scandal reached London, and an “open letter” was addressed to Lord Kitchener by the weekly paper, *John Bull* :

“EXCELLENCY,—I find in the *Egyptian Mail*, a responsible newspaper, an article in which the gravest allegations are made against medical men in Egypt. Briefly, it is that the scum of the profession from every country in Europe gravitates to Egypt, and that, as there is no official control over the practice of midwifery in the country, ‘as a result criminal practices are carried on more or less openly, and

people are exposed to dangers which, to say the least, should cause a little uneasiness in the minds of those who lay a certain value on their lives.' As your lordship's official residence is in Cairo, you should have no difficulty in sifting these allegations, and you might commence your enquiries at the houses and offices where the name-plates and sign-boards suggest the suspicion that the practitioners they advertise carry on a despicable and atrocious business in the belief that it is one of the protected industries of the British Empire. Supposing you discover the charge to be true, I have no doubt it will not be necessary for me to urge upon you the duty of taking suitable steps to put an end to the scandal."

So far as I know, the only immediate action taken was by the American Consul, who made an investigation and moved in the right direction.

## CHAPTER X

### The Stolen Tomb of Tari

ONE of the commonest crimes in Egypt was the theft of valuable antiquities. These shortcomings were not confined to one class of thief. You had to look in higher circles sometimes for what we in England might charitably term the kleptomaniacs. When there was a bond of sympathy between some of these officials who should have been held responsible for the delinquency of others, and whose names were sometimes mentioned in connection with these thefts, it can be seen how difficult it was for a despised journalist to clear the air of these disquieting "mysteries."

As in the case of other matters which were glossed over, some of the rumours had no foundation in fact; many were woefully distorted; but others were true. In few cases, if any, were the real culprits brought to justice. In the majority of cases incidents of this character were hushed up, and the man in the street, knowing he would never get the full truth, looked askance alike at what was mere gossip and what was undoubtedly a glaring scandal.

Take the following paragraph from a morning paper :

## "THE MISSING ANTIQUITY MYSTERY

"A very valuable antique, which was in the custody of the Egyptian Antiquities Department, recently disappeared, and has been traced to London. The present owner, who purchased it in the usual way, refuses to part with the alabaster until he is paid £6,000. The identity of the thief is said to be known to the authorities, and an arrest may be expected shortly which is likely to create a sensation in European circles in Egypt."

Rumours that a very valuable tomb had been rifled set me to work, and a stir in the hornet's nest was occasioned by my publicly demanding to know "Who stole the tomb of Tari?" The stolen tomb was supposed to have been traced to London, and my enquiries revealed a strange story.

As usual, little of it had found its way into the local Press, and there appeared to be some readiness on the part of the authorities to allow the matter to drop.

It appears that in September, 1911, the gaffirs of the Antiquities Department made the discovery, as a result of some persons being seen coming from the direction of the tomb at unusual hours of the morning, that the tomb of Tari, which belonged to the 26th Dynasty, and which was situated a little to the south of the Pyramids of Giza, had been broken and stolen in parts.

The Antiquities Department was immediately informed, and at once strict enquiries were made.

The result of these investigations was the arrest of certain natives, and at the hearing the gaffirs in the Antiquities Service—who were witnesses in the case against the natives—were found to be guilty, and these were tried at the Giza Court and sentenced to

long terms of imprisonment. The chief witnesses against the accused were certain well-known antiquity dealers.

There was some indignation expressed in the Antiquities Service at the result of this trial, and eventually, through the services of Sir Gaston Maspéro, the men appealed against their sentence with success, the Court of Appeal returning the verdict of "Not guilty," and discharging the men.

In the meantime the Antiquities Department had discovered that the tomb, which had been purchased by a French dealer in Cairo, had been dispatched to London, where it remained in the care of a dealer.

The part of the tomb which was stolen comprised several square pieces, and having been taken to London, it was impossible to find out its exact location.

Nothing happened for many months. One day, Sir John Maxwell, chancing upon a curiosity shop in London—Sir John being a collector himself—discovered the tomb which had been missing from Egypt. Sir John at once questioned this proprietor, and gleaned from him the fact that he was holding it on behalf of a dealer in Egypt. The news was communicated to Egypt, and as a result the dealer offered the tomb back to Sir Gaston Maspéro—who, however, for a variety of reasons, refused the offer.

Attempts were now being made from several centres to get the Government to move against the gaffirs of the Antiquities Service. An animated correspondence appeared in the native journals by indignant curiosity dealers and their friends, in which they called upon the Government to take action against the thieves. But Sir Gaston Maspéro stood by his men, of whose

innocence he felt assured. It, in fact, resolved itself into a case of antiquity dealers against the Antiquities Service. Actions and counter-actions were threatened.

One of these moves was by the liberated gaffirs, who regarded themselves as having been much wronged.

I called on Sir Gaston Maspéro, who had played a very prominent part in the investigations following the robbery. It was mainly through Sir Gaston Maspéro's individual efforts that a law was passed, after some trouble, making it illegal for any person to sell antiquities, or to leave the country with antiquities, without the permission of the Government.

The famous Egyptologist told me that he sincerely believed that his men were blameless in the matter.

"It seems to me," Sir Gaston Maspéro said, "that we have to keep a strict watch on a certain class of antiquity dealers, who stay at nothing in matters where their little gains are concerned. If I were to give you a list of the valuable antiquities which have been stolen from the country, it would indeed result in an outcry for the introduction of laws as stringent as those of the time of Ismail Pasha. Those laws are still in the statute book: but the courts will not recognise them.

"Dealers, as a rule, bear in mind the complicated nature of the laws of this country when they ship antiquities away. So that, in many cases, the expense and trouble of taking actions are so great that we are bound to let the culprits go unpunished.

"There was, in the case of the stolen tomb of Tari, an exaggerated value placed on it, else not a quarter of the trouble would have been taken in the robbery.

"As I said before," Sir Gaston concluded, "the affair is one of preserver *versus* destroyer, that is to

say, the Antiquities Department against antiquity dealers. In spite of the law promulgated recently, the dealers have robbed the country of several valuable antiquities. This sort of thing must not go on much longer. We shall make every effort to stop it."

Sir Gaston made a point of mentioning the fact that he had not the slightest objection to tourists buying scarabs, coins and other small objects. What he strenuously objected to was the despoiling of valuable tombs and temples. He showed me cases where large and beautiful edifices were smashed in order to cut away a portable slab.

The day after I had given publicity to this "mystery" there came the inevitable "hidden hand," which threatened us with all sorts of penalties if we persisted in examining these unpleasant subjects. I followed this demand with a leading article (which I quote), again asking: "Who stole the tomb?"

"So far as we are able to judge we have not heard the last of the story of the stolen tomb of Tari, interesting details of which we were able to place before the public for the first time a few days since.

"The question is one which relates to the whole issue between dealers and the Antiquities Service. In the story we printed it was seen that, prior to the tomb having been stolen, an offer had been made for it to the Government by the dealers interested.

"The present policy of the Government being to conserve as many of the country's antiquities as is possible, it refused to part with the tomb, which was regarded as a good specimen of the work of the 26th Dynasty.

"After Sir Gaston Maspéro had left Egypt for Europe on vacation, the tomb was stolen. There is no doubt it was not an unpremeditated act; it was, on the contrary, a culmination of deep scheming and base ingenuity. At

any rate, there is evidence that men were seen carrying away parts of the tomb, on camels, in the dead of night, near Giza.

“The mention of a well-known Anglo-Egyptian official in the matter must not be seriously regarded, as we know that the person in question was interested only as a collector of antiquities. Yet it would seem in reading between the lines that there are two parties in high circles who cannot see eye to eye on the question of the ownership of Egypt’s antiquities.

“Sir Gaston Maspéro has all along taken up a firm attitude that the country should have first say in the matter of the retaining or the selling of them. Being a great enthusiast, he naturally looks with scorn upon anybody who ships from this country any valuable relics of Egypt’s past. He terms it, in fact, robbing the country.

“The dealers, on the other hand, are not attracted so much by the art and beauty as by the material gain in the business. They count Egyptian antiquities in sovereigns, where Sir Gaston Maspéro thinks of them in stanzas. No doubt there is much to be said on either side.

“We agree with Sir Gaston Maspéro when he deplures the despoiling of valuable tombs and temples in order to cut away a slab for professional dealers.”

Then came an amazing sequel. I received a visit from three dealers, one of whom declared that he was the French dealer referred to as having purchased the tomb. He now stated that he had, indeed, made this purchase, *but that before the tomb was sent to London it was officially sealed by the Antiquities Department.*

That it was true, indeed, that divided counsels existed on the subject of the antiquity laws, the statement by Sir Gaston Maspéro when he resigned his position as Director-General will show.

First of all he wished to say that his relations with Lord Kitchener had always been marked by the most

perfect correctness, and though sometimes it happened that they were not always in agreement, each of them kept his own point of view. "Lord Kitchener," said Sir Gaston, "had attempted a certain military propulsion to every branch of the administration, and he found it difficult to submit to the observations that might be made to him by those who, while recognising his reforming zeal, yet differed from him as to the means to be employed.

"For instance," continued Sir Gaston, "there is Lord Kitchener's scheme to erect the statue of Rameses the Second in the Bab el Hadid Square, which I have opposed. I have especially pointed out how difficult it would be to transport such a huge work from Badrasheen to the Square, and then there is the expense. It would cost at least ten thousand pounds, and in my opinion this money would be much better employed in excavation work, as the annual sum of £E30,000, which is granted in the budget, is insufficient to cover all the expenses of the Museum. Although Lord Kitchener appeared to be of my opinion, I am perfectly well aware that he proposes to organise a public subscription in England to obtain enough money to carry out his project.

"I have also at times had disputes with Lord Kitchener over administration questions in connection with persons who had been found guilty of contravening the Antiquities Laws. Lord Kitchener was desirous of enforcing the law severely, and often demanded imprisonment when a simple fine would have met the case.

"On one occasion, too, Lord Kitchener asked me to reprimand a subordinate, who had taken his mistress

with him during a tour of inspection in Upper Egypt, but I refused on the ground that it was not my business to interfere in the private life of my staff."

Sir Gaston Maspéro said that he had always had great difficulty in obtaining money for his Department. He had been fifteen years in the service, and in that time the budget had been increased from £E15,000 to only just twice that sum.

A French Count, who was exploring in Egypt at the same time, wrote me an extraordinary defence of the dealers in this connection. It covered about a hundred pages. But even this well-written plea failed to answer the question, "Who stole the tomb of Tari?"—a mystery that remains unsolved to this day.



BOOK III  
CRITICISMS



## CHAPTER I

### A Criticism from India

THAT Lord Kitchener befriended the fellah, at any rate, even his bitterest enemies will admit. In a remarkably outspoken criticism of the British Agent's general policy in Egypt, *Capital*, believing that "something more than ordinary rumour had definitely assigned to Lord Kitchener the acceptance or refusal of succeeding Lord Hardinge in the Viceroyalty of India," said that

"the avowed object of almost every act of Lord Kitchener's policy in Egypt has been to benefit one class, the agriculturist, the *fella* (*Indice ryat*). For the *fella* he has caused roads to be built in the interior of Egypt where none existed before. For the use of the *fella* he has instituted official cotton-weighing *halakas*, places where the grower can bring his cotton to be weighed prior to sale, and where the latest market prices are regularly posted up. For the landless agriculturist he has caused to be reclaimed many thousand of acres of erstwhile barren soil, and he has provided him with large model settlements at Bielah and Shalma. The small landowner he has protected, or endeavoured to protect, from the consequences of his own unthriftiness by the provisions of the Five Feddan Law. This he has done, and more, for the agriculturist in Egypt, and judged solely from the standpoint of the improvement which has taken place, as a result, in the position of the fellahin, his administration may be said to have been

successful. In the administration of a large country, however, more especially one containing such diversified elements and interests as Egypt, there is very much more to be considered than the ultimate benefit of one class or caste. The governing policy of a land must be judged from the good or harm it does, or has done, to the country and inhabitants thereof as a whole, also from the continuity of it, or otherwise, when the initiator is removed, as in the ordinary course of nature he must be some day. It is, therefore, necessary to view the policy of Lord Kitchener from broader and more general standpoints than the good he has done for the fellahin only, if we are to arrive at a correct valuation of it."

This is the kind of refreshing criticism that one would have liked to quote in the Egyptian Press. It threw into relief the good work Lord Kitchener had actually done, while, *per contra*, it showed in a queer light the shoals of maudlin eulogies which had been so lavishly and so ruthlessly poured on the great man as to make the dispassionate judge recoil in amused wonderment.

The Egyptian critic in the *Capital* was evidently very biased—so prejudiced, in fact, as to detract somewhat from an otherwise valuable contribution. When, for instance, he states that because of Lord Kitchener's whole-hearted policy in favour of the fellahin it is doubtful if there has been one single act of Lord Kitchener's legislation in Egypt which has benefited the country as a whole, while there has been much to "harm it," he plainly reveals himself as a one-sided critic. To him apparently every accomplishment of the British Agent miscarried.

"The Five Feddan Law and the Act constituting a Legislative Council have frightened capital—a most serious matter in a country which has no accumula-

tion of money of its own and lives largely on credit. His methods of financing his schemes also, together with his treatment of that great financial authority, Sir Paul Harvey, have done much harm in the same direction."

Events, at any rate, have falsified those criticisms which minimised the financial abilities of Lord Kitchener. There was, without doubt, a considerable undercurrent of public fear that those well-meant schemes were dictated more from the heart than from the head.

But the critics were, as I have said, of the same class who opposed Lloyd George's democratic proposals. The benefiting of the many must indeed exasperate the few. To Lord Kitchener the welfare of Egypt lay in the direction of the fields, and what better—what more reasonable—than to look after the welfare of the toiling guardians of her fields?

The critic went on to speak of Lord Kitchener's "want of diplomatic tact," and recalled the episode of the last German Diplomatic Agent in Cairo—a reference which will bring him scant sympathy nowadays.

"It is, however, with regard to the continuity of the policy he has initiated, when he himself is removed, that the weakness of Lord Kitchener's whole administration lies. He has initiated a policy (whether for weal or woe) in Egypt, which he has been carrying out with the hand of the master. He has been the prime mover of it, and not only has he failed to gather around him men who, in the absence of the master, could carry on the work, but he has deliberately sacrificed such men as possibly could have done so—had they desired. It has been the old tale of Curzon and Kitchener over again. There is only room for one strong man in the country where Lord Kitchener is, and that man

is Lord Kitchener. Any other prominent official who dares to hold and to ventilate an opinion of his own must go."

That was perfectly true with regard to Egypt.

"When Lord Kitchener came to Egypt the strong man of the Government was Sir Paul Harvey, the Financial Adviser. It was he who was brought by Lord Cromer to Egypt in a time of financial stress, and he enhanced his reputation as a financial expert by his work in Cairo. Within a few weeks of Lord Kitchener's arrival, however, rumours of friction began to spread, and these were quickly confirmed by the resignation of Sir Paul Harvey because, as he is reported to have said, he could not see his way to lend himself to legislation which was bound to have such 'unfortunate financial effects' as that contemplated by Lord Kitchener. He left for England, where he was promptly appointed Financial Adviser to the Insurance Commissioners. In Egypt he was succeeded by Lord Edward Cecil, an estimable gentleman who knows nothing whatever of finance, but who acts the part of the marionette on the string controlled by the master. Similarly with the Adviser to the Ministry of Public Works. Lord Kitchener found Mr. Dupuis, a gentleman who, after having made his reputation in the Public Works Department in India, was specially selected for Egypt and proved one of the most successful heads of this Department the country ever had. He dared, however, to hold opinions of his own on the way public works should be managed, and—he had to resign. He has been succeeded by Mr. Murdoch Macdonald, who, for the agility with which he moves on the string, has been awarded a C.M.G. Similarly with the Chief Engineer to Municipalities, Department of the Interior, another gentleman specially selected from India for service in Egypt who had proved successful. He had to go because he ventured to hold opinions on municipal working which did not coincide with those of Lord Kitchener. He has been succeeded by a very estimable gentleman from the Sudan, who has no opinions of his own, but can be relied upon to see eye to eye with the master."

I do not know anything about the latter officials, but I do know with regard to Sir Murdoch Macdonald that Lord Kitchener could not have chosen a more capable, a more hard-working Under-Secretary. That his position was entirely dependent upon his co-ordinating with the views of Lord Kitchener one need not hazard too deeply. It was only by not calling in too many cooks that Lord Kitchener accomplished things in Egypt. Prior to his coming there were too many divergent expert opinions to facilitate the work of reform.

Another grievance of the *Capital* critic related to Mr. Gerald Dudgeon, who gained his early experience of agriculture in India and Uganda, was subsequently Inspector-General of Agriculture in West Africa, and had been eminently successful for some years as Director-General of Agriculture in Egypt. The Department of Agriculture had now been elevated into a Ministry. It was naturally expected that Mr. Dudgeon would, in view of his record of success, receive the post of Under-Secretary. "It is true his services have been retained in the position of Technical Expert, but he has been subordinated to an Under-Secretary brought from the Department of Direct Taxation, who does not know the difference between a cotton-boll and a corn-bob—but he will dance when the string is pulled, while Mr. Dudgeon has opinions of his own in agricultural matters, and will not."

And his conclusion was that these "instances, few out of many, show very conclusively that once the strong hand of Lord Kitchener is removed, there are no elements remaining which will tend to a successful continuation of the policy he has inaugurated in Egypt."

I do not agree with this. The foundations set by Lord Kitchener are capable of bearing the hardest tests. The new status of Egypt for which he worked will help towards this, and despite the calamitous set-back caused by the war, the Egypt moulded by Lord Cromer and set by Lord Kitchener will become not the least of Great Britain's cherished possessions.

## CHAPTER II

### Why the Englishman is Disliked

THE statement has been made by bewildered British students of Egyptian politics that the Egyptian does not like the Englishman. This charmingly frank and innocent conclusion is arrived at with a tinge of bitterness.

“After all we have done for them—which they fully admit—they will be glad to see the back of us.”

Strangely enough, these writers have said nothing of the Briton not liking the Egyptian. Perhaps these students failed to notice the stand-offishness of the superior British official towards the common Egyptian. If they had given heed to this obvious fact they would have saved themselves a host of doubts and theories. The British have been credited with a natural aptitude for government abroad. This must have originated before our advent in Egypt; for, well as we have done there, we could have accomplished much more—the friendship of the Egyptian, for instance—if we had been wiser in our choice of civil servants. As it is, we appear to have been at pains to send our snobs to Egypt. The Land of Paradox has become the City of British Snobs. Officialism is there in its element. Petty tyranny, narrow-mindedness, tactlessness, and bumptiousness germinate and

thrive. A list of the worse offenders can be seen in the Birthday Honours of the past. How in the name of equity they ever reach there, is one of those official mysteries upon which one is not expected to enquire. Toadyism and the worst elements which have even disappeared from our Parish Pump politics might explain it. There are now three easy ways of becoming titled and honoured. One is by first assuming the rôle of a bloated parvenu, another is by the process of being an unruly politician, and the third by belonging to the Egyptian Civil Service.

But the educated complaining Egyptian official will, if he be frank, consider that the weakness of the Briton is just as hereditary as his own weakness. While the first maintains the John Bull masterful attitude, born of conquest, the Egyptian is passing through a state of transition which has not altogether thrown off the unattractive and unhealthy characteristics of the past. No liberated subject race can at once possess that frank, open, manly attitude born of freedom and fearlessness.

The British official at best is unbeloved of the unofficial Briton, and it is too much to expect him to gain the love of the subordinate Egyptian. All this, however, emphasises the need of carefully choosing tactful and gentlemanly Britons for official posts. It is this type that sows the seeds of love or hate in the coming generation of educated Egyptians. The aloofness towards a certain type of the old generation—usually half-Turkish—is understandable. His undisguised immorality, his general coarseness, his cunning, make him a type which is shunned anywhere among fairly respectable folk.

The growing Egyptian, more refined, more Westernised, is, however, a person worth cultivating; and it is time some of the Britons in Egypt began practising the favour.

Before leaving this subject let me give an actual example of this attitude towards the Egyptian.

A friend of mine, a type of our officials in Cairo, in other respects quite a decent, polished Englishman, took me along with him in the side-car of his 4-h.p. motor-cycle to the Pyramids. He was out to break records, and incidentally any obstacle that interfered with this object. The policemen on the road were, as they usually are to Europeans and especially Englishmen, quite humble, and fearful of this Englishman on his tearing motor-cycle. (If it had been one of his own race!) Coming back from this record-breaking journey, I noticed a little half-naked boy on an obstinate donkey, riding near the middle of the road. We passed him by merely swerving to the right a little. Then my friend slowed down.

“Why?” I asked.

In answer he called a policeman whom he had espied.

“Take that boy to the caracol,” he commanded.

The lad, scenting danger, had veered the donkey round and tried to make off.

“My good fellow, leave him!” I protested.

But my friend took the policeman’s number, and that frightened individual set off at a trot after the unfortunate lad.

“You see,” explained my friend triumphantly, “the policeman knows I have his number, and if he doesn’t arrest the boy he’ll catch it himself. I’ve had four this week.”

“And what will they do to the wretched lad? Execute him?” I asked despairingly.

“Oh, they’ll impound his donkey for three or four days.”

“His sole means of livelihood——”

“Serves him right for getting in the road.”

I have given this example simply because it is typical. There must be a very considerable number of “criminals” manufactured in this wise. The fact is, the cringing and abjectness of the native have transformed many responsible Britons in Egypt from masters tolerant towards their inferiors into the kind of tyrant who recalls Egypt’s darkest history.

## CHAPTER III

### Lord Kitchener and the Press

LORD KITCHENER'S known lack of sympathy towards the Press made it an interesting speculation as to whether the soldier's sense of slaughter would be applied to Egypt's only medium of public expression. We were not long left in doubt. Through the Ministry of the Interior five vernacular journals soon received their quietus. No fuss was made; none of the inconvenient law-suits which waste so much time and money in countries where they are too sensitive about rights.

The difficulty of appreciating the unique state of the Press in Egypt becomes more and more apparent the deeper one furrows the field of journalism in the Land of Paradox. The outsider who imagines he can gauge the status of the Egyptian Press by the usual measures is soon hopelessly held. For go anywhere else in the world, and I warrant you will not find a state so anomalous, so peculiar—a Press so enmeshed in the toils of officialism, exploiters, and political adventurers. In no other country in the world, too, has the Fourth Estate descended to so low a level where all its great powers for good have been so grossly perverted. In such a country as Egypt, where light is just beginning to dawn, the need for a healthy

Press as a guide or a medium is as essential as Western Government; but circumstances, which we shall examine, have combined to render the Press impotent and discredited. To-day Cairo and Alexandria boast more daily newspapers than London, yet the number which are self-supporting is significantly few. There are, indeed, some outstanding newspapers which, in ordinary circumstances, would make great organs; but even they suffer from the general impure atmosphere.

The bulk of the newspapers come under the same category, and can therefore be examined collectively. They are produced without any regard to the news or literary side. Their appearance creates little interest, and their inevitable disappearance less. When they live it is in some mysterious manner which one can guess at rather than unravel. In the general corrupt atmosphere this passes by, with nothing more than a "malesh" shrug of the shoulders. You can buy the opinions of any of these newspapers as easily as you can buy drugs in Egypt.

It is necessary, for the guidance of those readers who are not so well acquainted with affairs in Egypt, to run over briefly the present state of affairs.

An experienced English journalist, on making his acquaintance with the Egyptian Press, is bewildered. When that state is passed he is inclined to be amused. He intuitively tries to get at the secret of its wonderful existence, and the reason which prompts the efforts to continue to exist. He finds firstly that the whole business is generally accomplished in the usual lackadaisical manner of the East. Newspapers are launched in Egypt with as little regard for the future as toy

balloons are released by frivolous children. A few men gather together in a café, and one suddenly suggests starting a newspaper. Very shortly afterwards you are offered, without any kind of preliminary notice, number one of a new daily. It never offers or pretends to offer anything in the way of new departures. It has exactly the same items as the rest—copied from the same source! Practically all the news—very often including the leaders—are cuttings from another paper.

This is how it is done: "A" gets a cutting from a London or Paris paper. It may be of two or three columns in length. "B" lifts it bodily, including any comments of "A" without the slightest acknowledgment. "C" takes it from "B," "D" from C," until the end of the whole alphabet!

Most of the dailies are run by three men—editor, sub-editor, and proof-reader.

The reason for this unhappy state of things is, of course, the cosmopolitan nature of Egypt's inhabitants, so that, in order to cut down loss, a two-sheet paper is—as in several instances—divided into two sections, each written in a different language, say English-Arabic, German-French, Italian-French, English-Greek, and so on. One little weekly paper, in fact, used to print in five or six languages.

English journalism presents the greatest difficulties. Everybody wants a good English paper, but comparatively few buy one, since the clubs provide all the newspapers. As the majority of the English newspaper-reading community belong to clubs, the extraordinary difficulties of running a newspaper successfully can easily be appreciated.

And yet, were it not for the obstacles, due to the authorities, newspapers would multiply. If a man possesses printing plant for turning out, say, an Arabic paper, what extra cost is it, he argues, to print what is virtually a French, German, Greek, Italian, or any translation of his Arabic paper? The outlay is, in fact, precious little, and it gives him another "pull"—which is the main object. If he is a German he has a pull at the German Agency; if an Egyptian a pull at the Palace; if a Frenchman a pull at the French Agency; and so on. In the past, as we know, the French journals pulled a bit too hard—in a manner, too, not calculated to bring credit upon the profession of journalism in Egypt. The story of the *Bosphore* needs no recapitulation. But it is safe to say that the prejudice that kind of undisciplined journalism created has never died away. And the reaction has been too extreme. An unwholesome subservient state prevails. The prejudice of the past, combined with the priggish insularity of the official, who measures his worldly importance by his purely local status, has been sufficient to lull any genuine journalistic enterprise into a scared retreat. The sources of important news in Egypt are controlled and closed by those who form the bulk of English readers. They "persecute for that which persecution hath engendered." They refuse to help the journalist and then are contemptuous of him because of his helplessness! And in those instances where they do help, what price is there to pay? Just the price of the paper's individuality and independence. Give an unbiased criticism of a department, and never show your face there again. I could, of course, give many instances. Here is a

case in point. A certain head official once let me have a "White Paper" which was to be issued in due course. This enabled me to publish it a day in advance of any other newspaper. The difficulties of administering his department were known to me, and I dealt very sympathetically with what was undoubtedly a report of the gloomiest order. I headed this account "Pessimistic," and it was probably the best euphemism one could have used. Judge my astonishment when next time I saw his mightiness he nearly flew at me for having used that word! That source of information was closed to me for ever.

Criticism of the Government is not always followed by the suppression of the offending journal. What is suppressed, as can be seen in the above illustration, is news. That inquisition is far more subtle. That is one of the causes of the bad state of the Egyptian Press. Yet—did the Government create the bad Press or the bad Press the relentless Government?

This problem can be better understood by illustrating it with other events with which I was connected. Take this instance:

News had reached me that the Alexandria Municipal Commission had decided to shut out journalists from their meetings. This astounding intimation was no sooner verified than I was telephoned by a high official and asked not to take notice of the matter. It was explained to me that the action was taken because the councillors in the debates simply played to the passions of the mobs who, they knew, would read their speeches in the newspapers. This exhortation resulted in the matter being treated in all the newspapers as an item of small importance, thus:

“ A meeting of the Alexandria Municipal Commission took place on Wednesday at a quarter past four in the afternoon, under the Presidency of Ahmed Ziwar Pasha.

“ Present were Messrs. Demetriadis, Fenderl, Eeman, Hassabo Bey, Abdallah Bey Gheriani, Emin Bey Yehia, Alf. de Menasce, Alleman, Gamil Bey Sabet, Ehrlich, Swinglehurst, Ayoub Bey, Abdel Aziz Bey Gheriani, Arcache, Salvago, Barbaza, Mohamed Bey Ei Dib, Grandguillot, Dr. Valensin, Stagni, Mansour Pasha, and Mohamed Pasha Yeken.

“ After the reading of some documents and a short discussion, at a quarter to five the President rose and asked to make a communication ‘in camera.’ The journalists present were asked to retire.

“ At half-past seven the sitting came to an end.

“ After the communication had been made by the President, M. Fenderl laid before the meeting a proposition according to which the Press, for the moment, should be excluded from the meetings of the Alexandria Municipal Commission.

“ After a long discussion M. Fenderl’s motion was adopted by sixteen votes to five, one member abstaining.”

Here was a deliberate attempt to strike at the vital rights of the Press, and we find the persecuted journals feebly lying down under it.

The *Egyptian Gazette*, whose subtleties of expression were often more exasperating to members of the Government than an open attack, afterwards devoted a leading article to the matter, which is well worth quoting. It first of all referred to the “remarkably outspoken letter” addressed by the Prime Minister to the members of the Alexandria Municipal Commission, wherein he told them in the plainest possible language the impression produced on his mind by reading the published reports of their debates, which had led to the complete exclusion of the Press from the meetings of the municipi-

pality. In this communication of Mohammed Pasha Said, particular stress was laid on the previous meeting of the Commission, when Baron Alfred de Menasee ventured to criticise Dr. Ruffer and Dr. Granville :

“ Criticism is always dangerous here, and that levelled at the Vice-President and Director-General of the Municipality on the occasion in question necessarily included the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for their appointments. As Minister of the Interior, therefore, the Prime Minister felt it incumbent on him to take effectual means to prevent a recurrence of such serious outbursts of criticism on the part of the independent elected members of the Municipality, and the necessary corollary of his missive was the exclusion of the Press. This latter step will be a serious blow to many of the more obstreperous Councillors, who enjoyed the opportunities for self-advertisement afforded by the presence of a number of industrious newspaper reporters. Their speeches were faithfully chronicled and the readers of the local newspapers were treated to columns of verbiage, which during the intervals between the meetings afforded topics for innumerable leading articles of a violently polemical character. Now there will be no longer any opportunity for publicity, and [the only knowledge of what goes on at the meetings will, it is imagined, be doled out in the shape of meagre and colourless official reports, as uninteresting as the weekly official account of the meetings of the Municipal Delegation.

“ For our own part, we very much doubt whether this will be the case. Instead of the public having full reports of the Commission, the newspapers will be compelled to fill up the hiatus in the official reports by communications gleaned from the Councillors at the meeting, which will naturally be coloured by their prejudices, and the last state of things will be worse than the first.”

The *Gazette* proceeded to give an instructive illustration of the truth of this in the case of the Prime Minister's

communication. It was never intended to be delivered to the Press.

“So grave were the contents of this missive considered to be that the Governor of Alexandria, before reading it, ordered all the reporters present to retire. Yet, an hour or two afterwards, a fairly accurate summary of its contents was to be found in the Italian daily journal, the *Messagero Egiziano*, which was printed the same evening. The consequence was that, in order to prevent an unofficial and garbled version becoming current, the Municipality had to communicate the text of the Prime Minister’s letter to the Press at midday yesterday, although on the previous evening the Governor had carefully excluded all journalists from hearing a word of its contents.

“There was really no need for any such precaution from the first. The letter of Mohammed Pasha Said is full of excellent advice and sound common sense, but the secrecy surrounding it had led to extraordinary tales as to what it contained. If such is the first example of the new system of municipal secrecy, it is a highly paradoxical beginning of the regime.”

It ventured to think that observers might well be sceptical as to whether the system would have the desired result. The old polemics would still continue, whether the Press was or was not represented at the meetings. Years ago, before the innovation was introduced, of newspapers reporting the Commission’s debates, the acrimony of some of the councillors and of the Press was the same as it had been lately, and the late Mr. Zouro and others used to indulge in journalistic onslaughts on Shakour Pasha, much as their successors do at the present day. The only method of stopping such things was that the Press Law should be made applicable to European newspapers, which it was to be hoped would be as soon as the Capitulations were done

away with. When that happy day dawned, a special clause should be added to the Press Law securing the Alexandria Municipality from criticism by the suppression of any newspaper which opened its columns to such attacks, and severely punishing any municipal councillor who might be found guilty of aiding or abetting the offending journal. This would guarantee complete immunity to the municipality from all criticism, and the officials could be allowed to go on with their duties in perfect peace and tranquillity, while the city would never be in danger of losing the service of functionaries owing to inopportune newspaper criticisms !

My own comments on the matter were not so finely balanced. This action from a newly created body which boasted of its progressive principles seemed to me outrageous, and I warned a certain high official that it was overstepping the mark, urging that the decision of the Alexandria Municipal Commission should be repealed.

Through the columns of the *Mail* I insisted upon the need for a strong Press which would be able to resist such iniquities as "the curtailment of the liberty of the Press at the Alexandria Council and the Provincial Councils :

"With a weak Press, weak systems are perpetuated, criticism is silenced, and abuse becomes rampant."

"We shall print news," I wrote, "if that news is in the public interest, whether those concerned like it or not. We shall give the truth in our possession frankly and fearlessly. If we are human enough at times to err we shall not hesitate to say so and take the consequences." That I venture to think was the only policy any London journalist would adopt.

The attitude of the oldest English newspaper as regards the Press Law was, however, not clearly defined. We find it declaring that the drastic action pursued by Mohammed Pasha Said in respect to the powers given him by the Press Law had been of enormous value in assuring peace and quietude, and the impartiality with which the blows had fallen on journalists of all shades of opinion, from extreme Nationalists to Anglophiles, such as Mohammed Bey Wahid, for instance, had convinced all classes of the heterogeneous population of this country that the Minister of the Interior was fully determined to stand no nonsense. That course of action had evoked the bitterest resentment, but few would question its wisdom, for there were several special reasons why a Press Law should exist in Egypt and why it should be strictly enforced. The first was the extreme ignorance and consequent credulity of the people. There was no invention of the journalistic fancy, however improbable, that when once seen in print did not find ready credence. Even more or less educated natives attached unquestioning belief to any preposterous story that they read in the newspapers. Another reason, no less important for curbing the Press in Egypt, was the terrorism that the vernacular newspapers exercised over individuals. The judges of the bench had not yet arrived at that stage of intellectual emancipation as to feel themselves indifferent to newspaper criticism, and as regards other individuals, the same observation applied with even greater force. Such were the grounds which made the enforcement of the Press Law in Egypt an absolute necessity, and the Minister of the Interior, who had to exercise this, the most invidious of his duties, in carrying this law

into execution had earned the gratitude of the country by his activity in using the great powers entrusted to him with absolute impartiality.

This attitude is criticised in a pamphlet by Mr. Mikhail, who gives instances of the suppression of various journals in support of his plea for the freedom of the Press.

The suppression of *Al-Akhbar*, a daily newspaper, which was much appreciated by all Arabic-speaking sections of the community, may also be taken as an instance of the "absolute impartiality of the Ministry of the Interior." The criticism on account of which it was suppressed was, in the opinion of the author, written in the mildest possible tone. The whole Press in Egypt expressed regret at its suppression.

*Misr-al-fatat*, a daily newspaper, was suppressed for an article in which it criticised the Egyptian Government for declaring Egypt's neutrality during the Turko-Italian war.

*Wadinnil*, a daily newspaper of Alexandria, was suppressed on account of an article on the military operations in the Sudan. This suppression took place soon after the noble fight of *Wadinnil* against the corruption in the Alexandria Municipality. However, as a result of his complaints to various high authorities in the country, the editor of the suppressed paper was appointed manager of *Al-Ahaly*, the organ of Mohammed Pasha Said, the Premier and Minister of the Interior, who was responsible for the suppression of *Wadinnil*. This editor was able to fight for himself, "but no one appears to have given a thought to the numerous employees of the paper who were suddenly deprived of their means of living."

The circulation of *Egypt*, a monthly paper published in London, was prohibited in Egypt some time ago owing to its criticism of the Egyptian Government.

*Al-Lewa*, a daily newspaper, was suppressed with the excuse that it had appointed a new editor without notifying the Ministry of the Interior, thus breaking one of the articles of the Press Law.

*Al-Alam*, also a daily newspaper, was suppressed for an article entitled "Opinion of the Nationalist Leader on the Balkan War," contributed by Mohammed Bey Farid, who was then in Geneva. This article was described in the Ministerial order as "being concluded with a severe attack against the Ottoman authorities on whom it lays the responsibility of what has happened to the Ottoman army, is of a nature to excite the Moslems and fill their hearts with anger against the above-mentioned authorities in such circumstances as the present, which require quiet and tranquillity," says the author of the pamphlet.

"It would be well to consider in what way the staff of the numerous papers had offended that they should thus suddenly and without warning have their means of livelihood taken from them, on the pretext that one writer on the paper had ventured to express an opinion adverse to the Government. I say 'pretext,' for in not one single instance of the suppression of a newspaper has the accused writer been brought to open trial as he would have been in a civilised community, and given the chance to explain or defend his position. In the case of a daily newspaper, the matter is very serious on account of the great number of people employed, and at a moment's notice cast adrift with no hope of further

employment, since each paper suppressed renders their chance of a situation more remote."

*Misr*, a Coptic organ, which always supported the British policy, published, on the occasion of the suppression of *Al-Akhbar*, an article in which it was suggested that a Press censor should be appointed in order that the editors might be able to consult him as to whether they were stating their views in a manner displeasing to the Government, and risking the suppression of their papers. Any native journal in Egypt is exposed to ruin by being suppressed if it has the misfortune to irritate a Minister. It has happened on several occasions that a newspaper was suppressed the day after the appearance of an article which the editor never dreamt would displease the authorities.

"Robbers and blackmailers are, in Egypt, treated more fairly than editors accused of infringing the Press Law."

The newspaper, *Misr*, complained that the Government refused a large number of applications for permits to start newspapers, which were presented by eminent personages and well-known writers. The applications were refused for futile motives, such as owing to false reports brought by Government spies, prejudices of high officials, etc.

The repressive measures exercised by the Government towards the Press had resulted in moderating the tone of the newspapers; but the suppression of five newspapers plunged two hundred and fifty families into distress owing to the numbers of persons thrown out of work by such measures.

Some people attributed these measures to Lord Kitchener, and stated that he had expressed the wish

that Egypt could only have three newspapers, but I considered that this charge was erroneous, and refused to believe it.

As for this granting of permissions to start newspapers, I am of opinion that the vigilance exercised by the Government to-day should not only be maintained, but, if possible, increased. Hard cases there will be, but we cannot create new laws which will not increase these hard cases, as well as the general danger. During my residence in Cairo I was approached by two Egyptian gentlemen who asked me if I would edit a paper they proposed starting.

“We know you are not afraid, and are sympathetic with justice. . . . Will you edit the paper against the Occupation? There are many rich notables in and out of the Assembly who will pay much for these articles, which we will send to English members of Parliament. . . . You will make much money.”

The type of men who made this interesting overture was representative of that contemptible crowd which longs to get rid of English influence in order to play ducks and drakes with the country as in the glorious days of old.

Complaints have been made, too, against the Press Bureau, a sort of institution which gives employment, if it gives nothing else. It endeavours to delude the Press into believing that it is there to help it; but the fact is that its only use is to read carefully every newspaper published in Egypt, send outstanding articles with private comments on their significance to headquarters, and when a newspaper wants pulling up, to pull it up. Its use, therefore, is purely a negative one.

Lord Cromer has been quoted by disappointed would-be newspaper proprietors as having said :

“ Fear of publicity acts as a check on abuses of various sorts, and helps to mitigate the defects to which, in Egypt as elsewhere, a necessarily bureaucratic form of government is exposed. On the whole, my personal opinion is that, in so far as the government and administration are concerned, the action of the Press in Egypt has, at its best, been beneficial, and at its worst has not been seriously detrimental to the true interest of the country.”

But Lord Cromer has since publicly stated that his views in this connection had altered. He no longer felt the advisability of allowing complete liberty to the Oriental Press. As the *Gazette* pointed out, Lord Cromer's quoted words were used when the licentiousness of the vernacular journals had by no means attained the extraordinary pitch that was reached during the times of Sir Eldon Gorst and necessitated the re-enforcement of the Press Law. There have been some hard cases, no doubt, but the measure was much needed ; and in view of the fact that Alexandria and Cairo have, even after so many newspapers have been suppressed, considerably more daily papers than has London, and since the rate of literacy among Egyptians is only eighty-five for males and three for females per thousand, according to the last census, it cannot therefore be considered that Egypt needs any further additions to its daily Press.

That the law needs some modifications, however, is obvious.

This Press Law of 1881, while having beyond doubt called a halt to the dissemination of the false news

and misleading comments, added greatly to the difficulties of administering the country. "Yet on the other hand," said the *Gazette*, "the result has been to force the Press so far in the opposite direction that now obsequiousness to and the adulation of the Government are the chief characteristics.

"All criticism," it argued, "is suppressed, and, to avoid giving offence, the newspapers prefer to remain silent about matters which should, in the interest of the country, receive outspoken comment. Sir Eldon Gorst, when announcing the revival of the Press Law, stated that there was a practical check against any misapplication of the measure, since if a newspaper was suspended or suppressed irregularly, the aggrieved parties could have recourse to the law courts and bring an action for damages against the Government. Unfortunately, this so-called check is, critics allege, quite illusory, since the judicature is not independent of the executive, and in not a single case has anyone ventured to avail himself of the tribunals.

"That the unsparing use of Article 13 of this law has done good it would be idle to deny. In fact, the whole tone of the vernacular Press has changed since it became evident that the Minister of the Interior was determined to stop its licence, and that he had the full support of Lord Kitchener in this policy. Before the re-enforcement of the law in 1908 the state of affairs was so deplorable that the Press had grown to be a burden to the country and the great majority of the inhabitants deplored its excesses and fully recognised the evil which flowed from them. In March, 1902, the General Assembly complained in strong language of the want of proper control over the Press,

and passed a resolution asking the Government to take steps to prepare a Press Law ; and in January, 1904, the Legislative Council called the attention of the Government to the necessity of putting into operation the Press Law passed in November, 1881. In fact, the inaction of the authorities in this matter was regarded as a confession of weakness,

“As Sir Eldon Gorst pointed out in his report for 1908, many of the articles published in the newspapers were calculated to arouse the passions of the mass of the people, who must remain for years to come far too ignorant to appreciate the absurdities and the falseness of the diatribes which were read out to them daily in the villages. The Egyptian youths still at school or college were persevering students of this species of literature, and the future generation were rapidly becoming demoralised by the violent nonsense which was poured daily into their ears. The respectable middle classes, who were otherwise disposed to support the policy of gradual administrative reform, were terrorised into outward political hostility by the abuse which was showered upon anyone who did not oppose root and branch the Anglo-Egyptian administration, and the native officials found it very difficult to carry out their duties conscientiously in view of the intimidations to which they were constantly exposed. . . . The lower-class journals indulged in scurrilous abuse of the highest dignitaries in the country, both in their public and private lives, which, apart from the annoyance it caused, tended to undermine all respect for authority. Appeals calculated to stir up fanaticism, either between native Christians and Moslems or between Egyptians and

Europeans, became more frequent, and this feature was especially dangerous in a country with a mixed population of Europeans and natives, Christians and Moslems. All this has, however, been changed since 1908, and it is solely due to the Press Law. . . .”

There can be no doubt that an unblushing system of bribery and blackmail exists on a widespread scale between the Press of Egypt and various vested interests. No pretence is made on the part of the one to sugar its threats, or of unwillingness to bribe on the part of the other. Subsidies of varying amounts are paid to a great number of the newspapers on the flimsiest of pretexts, generally “for insertion of any news item which might be sent along,” but for the actual purpose of closing the columns of the newspaper to criticism of shortcomings. Some of the directors are very frank. “We don’t want any advertisement,” said one with a smile. “We will pay you £140 a year to treat us kindly. Of course, that includes your not saying anything unkindly about us.”

Pashas subscribe to newspapers printed in languages they cannot understand; others pay annual subsidies to be saved from personal attack and to be able to attack others.

Press campaigns are arranged for and against a certain project—according to the highest bidder.

It is said that during the famous Moslem-Copt controversy a certain newspaper one day printed a furious diatribe against the Copts; the next day it veered over and published one against the Moslems. Each side outbade the other in giving the usual palm oil. Almost anything may be inserted in many of the leading newspapers by paying so much a line!

And this is the Press the sentimentalists at home want to "free"!

It is not correct to assume that if you close these public channels, other and more dangerous channels will be found. If the Press is to be used to flow filth into, that channel must be cleared; if it break out elsewhere, stop that. But it would be madness to allow the greatest of all public channels to be thus choked. To give it an impetus by "freeing" it is a dangerous policy.

The *Gazette*, giving reasons for the unflourishing state of the Press, cited many examples of the unbusinesslike manner in which the Moslem daily Press was conducted; but it thought that the Syrian daily papers in Egypt were quite differently managed, and brought in most satisfactory revenues to their proprietors.

"When newspapers are carried on with insufficient resources they have to recoup themselves by illicit means, and, as Sir Eldon Gorst pointed out in his report for 1901, when dealing with the Press, the Oriental is far more sensitive to Press criticism than is realised in the West, and a personal attack in the newspapers may often cause social life to become intolerable. The temptation to the unpaid native journalist under such conditions is irresistible, and so the newspapers manage to eke out an existence, although there is no public need for them. Under such conditions the less newspapers the better, and the statement that 'if there is no room for them they will soon cease to exist' is not true, for although there is no room for them they do exist by preying on the community."

Here is an example indicative of the fact that not only Moslem newspapers are harnessed:

A paragraph had appeared in a local English

newspaper stating that Mrs. — Pasha, wife of a high Anglo-Egyptian official, had, by reason of her "multitudinous" friends, been able to invite only a limited number to her garden party, at which a Fire Brigade display would take place. A second display, however, would be given a little later on, when she hoped to invite others.

This paragraph was lifted by the *Egyptian Morning News*, and was made the theme of an amusing but quite pertinent article. It wished to know who Mrs. — Pasha was that she might use a public institution for her private garden parties. The attitude taken up by this usually incorrigible paper was, in this instance, generally endorsed, although few were so fearless as to give public expression to their opinion. The next morning the same newspaper appeared with another satirical reference, advancing that, following Mrs. — Pasha's precedent, other lesser lights were giving garden parties at which the department under their control would "perform." The next issue contained a letter from "A Lady," who concluded a very short but very indignant letter by asking the editor, "And what are you? A miserable journalist?"

The sequel came next day when, in a prominent position in the paper, a humiliating apology was made. There was no denial of the statement made, but a pitiful and helpless eulogy of the offended parties, which revealed the iron hand of some official taskmaster. That was quite an illuminating exposition of how to deal with journalists who ventured to criticise British officials.

A week or so afterwards another paragraph relat-

ing to the movements of the same official drew forth some comments in another journal. Under the heading, "—— Pasha's Four-in-Hand," it read: "A correspondent writes to point out the inaccuracy of the paragraph which recently appeared in the *Egyptian Gazette*, and which ran as follows:

"'Mr. and Mrs. —— Pasha came up with their four-in-hand, and entertained a party of fifteen for tea on the terrace at Mena yesterday.'

"Our correspondent asserts that the official in question is in the habit of taking out nearly every day four horses belonging to the Cairo Fire Brigade in his 'four-in-hand'! Thus the men of the Fire Brigade have the extra harness to clean as well as the coach. We presume the official explanation is that the horses do not get enough exercise otherwise."

As a matter of fact, I myself saw the flourish of the arrival of the four-in-hand, and heard what seemed to me to be the vulgar trumpeting which usually marks the progress of these old-fashioned means of conveyance. No reply, however, was made to these charges in this newspaper. Neither was any apology made or asked for. Dealing with the *Egyptian Morning News* and the *Egyptian Gazette* was not quite the same matter.

Here then you have the case *pro et con* the Freedom of the Egyptian Press. What is the solution? To grant emancipation wholesale would bring in its wake the inevitable chaos which is the pathway between Reform and Progress. As a means to a desired end the liberal-minded man will brush these objections aside. He will point to a hundred and one striking precedents at home, many of which the women of

England have used with effect in their suffrage campaign.

But there is a difference. Universal suffrage, let alone an extended franchise to some women, would create little or no upheaval in England. In Egypt the immediate emancipation of the Press would be playing into the hands of the adventurous type of man, to whom Egypt is, or has been, a haven.

Grievances, on the face of it, are serious. But only on the face of it. After looking below the surface one comes to the conclusion that the time is not yet fully ripe.

## CHAPTER IV

### Plague Spots of Egypt

THE moral atmosphere of Cairo may perhaps account for the laxities which are the little cancers in Egyptian officialdom. It is difficult to deal with the matter without avoiding a charge of grundism and prudishness. But as the author does not set himself up as a model of righteousness and writes from experience, he begs that his sincerity will be accepted, if not his conclusions.

Public opinion is created by the man on the spot. The dweller in Egypt who writes a private letter home, and more especially the journalist who contributes to foreign newspapers, creates this public opinion, which in its turn may help to fashion, if it is persistent enough, diplomatic opinion. The extraordinary position which England occupies in Egypt impels upon the Englishman in Egypt the need of being on his best behaviour. We do not govern Egypt by the sword. If wild oats must be sown, let us at least perform the process as privately as possible. During a stay of nearly two years in Egypt I have witnessed exhibitions of gross misbehaviour in public places by men whose public positions should have been a guarantee of their good behaviour. One tries to look at the matter broadly. These men are practically cut off

from many of their usual sources of pleasure, and when they find an outlet they use it unrestrainedly. That is the only possible excuse. One, however, is reminded of that despicable type of cad who, only providing a leader can be found, will exhibit the most hysterical form of "courage" by ragging and attacking persons and property while surrounded by a mob of sympathisers. The charm of a crowd is that it is difficult to bring this display of hooliganism home to individuals. This type is invariably the most sheepish when isolated. In Egypt the habit of forming crowds is not thrown off. But they are small crowds. They would go to music-halls, sit in any seats they preferred, despite the remonstrances of the nervous attendant, interrupt the performance, throwing sallies of considerably heavy brilliance at the performers, and enter into indignant altercations with foreign members of the audience who resented this behaviour. Sometimes, I am afraid, our military men were the culprits, and one saw the spectacle of Tommy up in the "gods" looking down below where his trainers and commanders were making public nuisances of themselves.

This kind of lapse I know happens everywhere. In India the excuse of such disorders was the importation of a class of Europeans of a "lower social grade" than the men who formerly came out to mercantile houses and other business establishments. The men I am dealing with were not of this "lower social order." If they were, they would soon have been dealt with by the authorities. But the men who misbehaved in this fashion in Egypt were not so easily amenable to authority.

The military discipline, even in the matter of control over the men's private form of pleasure, did, I am bound to say, improve considerably with the advent of General Byng's command.

Nevertheless, one would have thought that high officials and officers themselves would have been conscious of a sense of responsibility which rested upon them so long as they remained in Egypt. In the public bars where men and women met to drink, smoke, and dance, it perhaps did not matter so much, although the exhibitions here did nothing to maintain the moral status and authority of these governing bacchanals.

The only hopeful feature in these wholly depressing scenes was the occasional restraining influence of a fellow officer, whose conduct, altogether in keeping with the best traditions of the British officer and gentleman, helped to stem the orgy by gentle and well-timed reminders.

This type of officer went to the dances and concerts, drank his beer or whisky with moderation, and when he stayed at hotels paid his bills. And yet he seemed perfectly happy.

There are, of course, many plague spots in Egypt of the kind which are just as prevalent in more civilised countries. For instance, the writer who complains that "about the only saleable article of consumption that is not adulterated in Egypt is poison" must know that adulteration is, alas! universal. At the same time this, like all bad things in Egypt, is in a much more aggravated state. Wines, cognacs—specialities of famous houses—are counterfeited on a large scale in this country of imitators.

Another just complaint referred to is that connected with the "white slaves." The infamous "Yellow Ticket" which creates prostitutes out of respectable women in Russia was existent in Egypt! Two women who were arrested on a false charge of theft and released were informed that if they registered themselves as prostitutes they need not be deported—this despite the indignant declaration of the women that they wished to remain as they were—respectable women.

Tragedies in the ill-famed Wagh-el-Birket district were numerous. This is, indeed, the plague spot in the heart of Cairo. Much has happened since I last saw the place, but it long remained a shame and a disgrace. There is a certain type of tourist who seems to go to Cairo simply to enjoy these most disreputable scenes. There has certainly been an improvement during the last few years, but no one can fail to remark that while the hotbeds of sin and debauch of the Boulac Avenue have either been done away with altogether or relegated to the vicinity of the Sharia Abbas, the Wagh-el-Birket still flaunts its painted and glaring hideousness in the very heart of the town.

The whole of one long street, not three minutes from two of Cairo's largest hotels, is the nightly scene of open, flaunting vice.

No lady may venture down the Wagh-el-Birket after nightfall, and, as could be seen from the almost weekly reports of sanguinary affrays in this street, it is even dangerous for a peaceable man. All large cities have their haunts of vice, and it is too much to expect that Cairo should be the exception in this respect. But most other cities do not make a vile display of their shortcomings.

One is aware that the various Consuls in Cairo do their utmost to aid the police in their difficult work of keeping the city free from undesirable elements, and we know, too, how hopeless this work must seem at times. Surely, if Cairo must have its vice under regulation, the authorities might remove this haunt to that quarter of the town where vice is licensed.

There is no reason why a street like the Wagh-el-Birket should, with its acknowledged dangers, be allowed to offer insult to innocent new-comers and the peaceable citizens. Something should be done.

Other shortcomings are being overcome. For instance, in a letter from Cairo which I received recently, it was stated that the Cairo City Police had arrested a batch of no less than 165 youths of immoral character.

The "Anzacs," probably not altogether with the express laudable desire, helped to blot out one of Cairo's plague spots during their sojourn in Egypt.

But officialism will have to be much more alert than it was while I was in Egypt if it is to keep pace with public sentiment. Take the following complaint of the extremely low tone of the music hall. There was nowhere in Cairo where one might take a lady without affronting her modesty. The kind of veiled—and often unveiled—indecency is no stranger in music halls in England, but it must be admitted that Cairo went a shade or two farther. This low kind of cosmopolitan continentalism ought to be got rid of now we are in full control in Egypt. Englishmen in the audience, as I have said, did not set much of an example.

One result of public agitation was the enactment of a drastic law curtailing the privileges of these night cafés, cabarets, music halls, and such places of rendezvous.

The new law divides public establishments into two categories. The first includes cafés, restaurants, cabarets, concert halls, sporting establishments, places of entertainment, clubs, and other similar places open to the public. The second comprises hotels, pensions, furnished apartment houses, and other similar establishments offering lodging to the public. In addition to the new law, theatres, etc., will be subject to the Theatre Law of 1912.

Establishments of the first category cannot be opened in solely residential districts, near places of worship or of instruction for the young, near cemeteries or tombs that are the object of public veneration.

Anyone wishing to open a public establishment must notify the local *gouvernorat* or *mudirieh*, in writing, at least fifteen days in advance, and the establishment can be opened on the sixteenth day after such notices unless in the meanwhile the applicant has been notified to the contrary. However, a special permit is necessary if it is for the opening of a new establishment on the site of a house that has already been definitely ordered closed for a contravention of the new law. In the same way, fifteen days' notice must be given for transferring a public establishment from one place to another, while for a temporary transfer three days' notice is necessary. A house of amusement which has been shut for a year, or devoted to some other use, cannot be reopened until all the formalities of the new law have been complied with.

The tenant of the building is responsible for every contravention. He must see that all parts of the house open to the public, and those where food and drink are prepared, are clean and in good repair. The water

must be approved by the sanitary authorities, and all drinking-water taps must be at some distance from the latrines, which must be quite separate from the rest of the building.

A special personal licence, for a fixed period, must be obtained for the sale of alcoholic and fermented drinks.

Every public establishment of this character must bear a distinctive sign above its principal entrance, and above each door there must be a lantern, which must be lit from sundown until closing time.

Between April 15 and October 14 public establishments must be closed at 1 a.m. and cannot be opened before 5 a.m., and from October 15 to April 14 they must be closed at midnight and not open before 6 a.m.

No immoral entertainment or meeting can be held in these establishments, and no music, dances, or songs can be performed without a special permit, renewable yearly. No game of hazard can be played nor hashish be permitted on the premises.

In certain cases the police and inspectors appointed by the Sanitary Department can enter public establishments.

All hotels, pensions, apartment houses, etc., must keep a register on which will appear the full name, nationality, and place of origin of each resident, who must fill up such details immediately upon arrival, and who must also write his (or her) date of departure. The register will be stamped by the *gouvernorat* on each leaf, and will be open to police inspection at any time. . . And so on.

It seemed such an obvious thing to do, but no steps were taken till the authorities were forced to take them.

## CHAPTER V

### Corruption

OF the three C's which were the bane of Egypt during the early régimes, two, we know, have practically disappeared. The courbash (a strip of hippopotamus hide used for flogging is no more, and the corvée is practically abolished. It is said that 100,000 men were made to work three months in the year, for eighteen years, to build the great Pyramids. This system, termed the "corvée," was enforced by the courbash. This "assistance which is compulsorily rendered" was excused on the plea that it became necessary to flog the Egyptian people in order to prevent them from starving.

After a magnificent and persistent effort this pernicious system was abandoned, although even to-day it is brought into use when other means fail.

The deplorable state of crime in the provinces is too complex a subject to be dealt with in a discursive manner, but there is no doubt that public insecurity had reached the limit in those days when everything else showed brighter signs.

Hardly a day passed but one heard of a horrible crime somewhere. Very significantly, crime seemed to be at its highest in the summer. During the oppressive heat the arm of the law appeared to grow feeble and to allow evil to get the upper hand.

In June, July, and August the Khedive, Lord Kitchener, the Advisers, the Ministers, and a large number of officials were on vacation, and their absence seemed to act as a spur upon the law-breaker. The suggestion was seriously mooted that the courbash should be introduced as a deterrent ! That the natives feared this form of punishment was certainly true in a measure, but public opinion did not altogether favour a return to a system which we had boasted of having destroyed.

As it was, a native paper complained that we were still tolerating the "corvée" system—after having declared that we had abolished it.

It was the *Misr*, a Coptic newspaper, which made this serious allegation. It said :

"It is thought now that the 'corvée,' under the yoke of which Egypt groaned for centuries, has disappeared. It has not ; it still exists, and thousands of poor inhabitants still carry its weight even in this enlightened twentieth century.

"This kind of 'corvée' consists in forcing thousands of persons to leave their crops and their work to guard the Nile dykes during the flood, night and day.

"They are moreover obliged to send to their homes for their food as well as for instruments and tools which they may need if a dike breaks.

"If at least this 'corvée' was imposed on everybody, indistinctive of class, in a regular and just manner, there would be less cause for criticism, and it would be relatively acceptable. But, unhappily, it is only the poor who are called upon for this work ; while the rich owners, who are the first to benefit by the work of the dike watchers, are in no way incommoded, just as if the poor were their serfs.

"It is a flagrant injustice to allow such a state of affairs to exist. It is incompatible with the rights of citizens and

the degree of progress to which Egypt has attained, and it is detestable in every way.

“The grave inconveniences of this ‘*corvée*’ are to be seen when it is known that the Omdehs, Sheikhs, and notables use it as a means for annoying the poorer fellahin and for satisfying their private revenges.

“There are some of these tyrants who even seize the occasion of the absence of the men on ‘*corvée*’ to rob and cause all kinds of depredations.

“The Government constantly states that it is thinking of suppressing this ‘*corvée*’ and putting the watching of dikes into the hands of contractors, but so far nothing has been done, for financial and social reasons.

“We think, however, that this excuse is valueless and quite unacceptable in this century. It would be easy for the Government to ease these poor folk of their heavy burden. The Government protests that it would be impossible for contractors to guard the dikes when there is a high flood. This is a fallacy, as the engineers who made the dikes are capable of guarding and preventing the flood from destroying them.

“Should the contractor find difficulty at first it is the duty of the Government to help them. In any case the Government ought to bring these ‘*corvées*’ to an end in one way or another.

“As the Minister of the Interior has given orders to the omdehs to send lists of persons who will be engaged on this ‘*corvée*’ from August 10th we hope he will show a spirit of equity in making the rich and the great as well as the poor, participate in the ‘*corvée*,’ which brings more profit to the former than to the latter, until the country is delivered of the whole evil system. For ‘equality in injustice is justice,’ says the old Egyptian proverb.”

The third C could not be abolished by act; and so it remains, as it remained during the Cromer and Gorst period, although in a milder form. Corruption was still one of the sores which Lord Kitchener had yet to heal. “In no other country probably has corruption—

the canker which eats away the heart of most Eastern governments—been more universal than it was in Egypt during the reign of Ismail Pasha," said Lord Cromer. While, therefore, it would be too much to expect that a canker of centuries' growth should disappear, as by magic, with a wave of a British wand, there is no doubt that in the vast works of reform that are being undertaken this hidden disease is not receiving all the attention its danger warrants. That corruption is still rife in the public service is obvious to all who care to observe, and it seems a pity that, when cases are brought before the attention of the authorities, a tendency to hush up the distasteful matter should take the place of a determined and resolute public investigation. The impossibility of giving instances here can be appreciated. The proper place for such particularised accusation is the courts of law. At any rate, we can generalise and then leave the matter as a reminder to those high officials who are responsible for the pure state of Egyptian administration. On two or three occasions rumours of a consistent and grave character have been spread broadcast concerning the indiscretion of well-placed officials from whom one would have expected a more than usual vigilance over their own action. Discounting any fantastic exaggerations that may cling to the original story in its careering round the clubs, it is sufficient that what shred of the truth there was, was sufficient to hang a court of inquiry on. Such an examination would, in itself, have exercised a good moral influence by its publicity. It would have acted as a deterrent; as it was, the extreme care with which the truth was clothed and hidden made responsible persons bewildered and incredulous. An instance

of this can be seen from the fact that a true report of a stolen Egyptian tomb (dealt with in Chapter X. of Book II.) which I sent to a leading penny London journal was returned *in proof* with the intimation that "Mr. — (the editor) felt at the last moment that the allegations contained in the article were of so grave a character that he felt unable to accept the responsibility for them."

The proof, as I have said, was sent to me. There were great headings of an "Egyptian Antiquity Mystery," with such sub-headings as: "How Departmental Authorities are Cheated"; "Robbed Tomb"; "Statue offered to Mr. Pierpont Morgan at £18,000."

The paper in question was the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the editor, Mr. Garvin.

The circumstances in this particular case, however, were such that I decided not to let the matter sink into oblivion so easily. I accordingly publicly dealt with it in my own paper, until I relinquished my editorship, after which nothing more was heard of the mystery.

There is no doubt that, in other spheres of the Government service, bribery remains unchecked. What action Lord Kitchener took in this important matter is unknown. A few public examples would have given an indication. Increased salaries as a deterrent have been often recommended by great publicists. But are they? A highly-paid official would, if he were corrupt, accept bribes on a higher scale. A corrupt clerk would not expect to receive as big a sum as, say, his chief.

"The safeguard against corruption in civilised countries is that society condemns venality." If society in Egypt is to be included in this category one

would like to obtain a sign from it to that effect. Up to now, publicity on this disagreeable subject has not been encouraged. The extreme difficulty of abolishing corruption in its entirety is manifest in Western countries, and it would be a blind optimist who declared that even England, which has a very high standard of public life, is altogether free from it.

Lord Cromer's story\* of the state in the Ismail period is a sufficient reminder of the full-bloodedness of the disease with which we have to deal. Ismail Pasha's subjects followed humbly in the footsteps of their master. They took and they paid bribes. From the half-naked donkey-boys, who in shrill tones demanded "backsheesh" to the extent of a piastre or two from the winter tourist, to the highly placed pasha, whose assistance could only be obtained by the payment of more substantial sums, all, or nearly all, were venal. The contractor bribed a Minister to obtain a contract on terms unduly advantageous to himself, and would then bribe the clerk of works in order that he should not enquire too carefully whether the terms of contract had or had not been strictly executed. The subordinate official bribed his superior in order to get promotion. The landowner bribed the engineer in order that he should obtain more water for his fields than was his due.

The kades were paid by both the plaintiff and the defendant to any suit, the decision usually being given in favour of the highest bidder. The Government surveyors were bribed to make false measurements of land. The village sheikhs were bribed to accord exemption from the corvée and from military

\* Vide "Modern Egypt."

service. The police were bribed by everybody who had the misfortune to be brought into contact with them. The passenger by railway found it cheaper to give "backsheesh" to the guard or to the ticket-collector than to pay for a ticket. As a preliminary to bribing a *moudir* to enquire into any alleged grievance, it was necessary for the petitioner to bribe the hungry satellites, who hang about the office of the *moudireh*, before the great man could be personally informed that any petition had been presented. The ramifications of the system were, in fact, endless. Egyptian official and social life was saturated with the idea that in Egypt personal claims and interests, however just on their own merits, could never be advanced without the payment of "backsheesh."

Matters, of course, have improved since those halcyon days. If, indeed, English officials could not improve on that state, they had come in vain to Egypt. But one fears that, nowadays, the comparative calm and good fortune which we have brought to Egypt have, as a concomitant, an unhealthy feeling of fatalism regarding lesser matters. The jealous watchfulness that characterised the reformers of the old days—men who were chastened with worry and danger night and day—is nowadays being somewhat relaxed.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Nationalist

IT is a very poor advocate who is unable to present some sort of a case. Probably one of the easiest causes to espouse is that of the Nationalist, for he can always invoke some sympathy by appealing to the heart rather than to the head of man.

The "rights of small nations," "living under the heel of the foreigner," and other battle-cries are flamboyant enough, but they convey a sense of injustice which cannot be too summarily dismissed from one's conscience. Yet, withal, the "Egypt for the Egyptians" agitator is the least impressive of that type. He is, of course, not always the murderous heathen he is painted in some quarters. The class who attempted to take Lord Kitchener's life is so unimportant, either as regards number or in actual influence, as to be worth no more than a passing reference. The true Egyptian patriot will sit with you outside one of Cairo's innumerable cafés, and argue his case in a broad, intelligent manner. He will make some admissions against his case, just as he will insist upon your making concessions.

I must admit, however, that the occasional student of Egyptian politics begins with a curious handicap. He becomes innocently bewildered when he endeavours

to sift a real Egyptian from the huge crowd of cosmopolitans. I have sat for hours discussing the engrossing topic of Nationalism with a warm and spirited advocate, to find afterwards that my friend himself was anything but an Egyptian. He looked the part, and spoke it; but he was an unconscious impostor. It is indeed true that the majority of those who insist upon their Egyptian nationality for political convenience are from a conglomeration of Eastern nations—a man, say, born in Syria from a Greek mother and a Circassian father who brought him over to Egypt when a lad!

The more general type of man who schemes for an “unfettered” Egypt is generally the bloated half-Turk, half-something else, whose interests, in the main, are mercenary and nothing else. He has actually no more æsthetic sentiment about the political state of Egypt than a gamoose. Let him obtain unlimited fodder at the expense of others, and he will be content. It was individuals of this type who wrote the pages of Egypt’s blackest history. Heaven forbid that we should permit him to hold sway again!

The state of Egypt to-day is far from being ideal. She has yet a long way to go. Even so, there are places in enlightened England which would readily exchange lots with her. As I passed the wonderful fields of sunlit Egypt I could not help contrasting the picture with that of the East End of London.

“How many of the shivering wretches in those parts,” I thought, “would be envious of these ‘down-trodden peasants’ if they could only see! East London, at any rate, had no Kitchener to sympathise with and look after it. Compare the pauper

in the sun of Egypt, covered only with a sheet of linen—and desiring nothing more!—with a few dates or a sugar-cane when he is not sleeping in the warm fields—compare him with the shivering wretch in a garret in Stepney, pinched and consumptive, slaving from twelve to sixteen hours a day for a pittance. . . .”

The Nationalist here will ask: “Why does not the Englishman allow his imagination to be stirred and his sympathy moved by this squalor you speak about in the East End of London?” And then I make reply:

Consider yourself very fortunate that you, an outsider, should have been chosen for this wonderfully good fortune. You know that the reason why we sent great Englishmen thousands of miles from our own misery in order to help yours was because circumstances, in the very inspiring form of finance, necessitated those early steps. The end, as you also know, is rather different from that anticipated by England in the first instance. Since he was already there the Englishman thought he might just as well knock the country into shape; for the surroundings, after all, were good to look at, and the climate most inviting. If only the East End of London could, by some chicanery, get itself mixed up with frenzied finance, and if it could manage to substitute green fields and a nice sunset for its present squalor and filth, it would have some chance. Good-looking poverty always takes precedence, especially when it has a nice bright sun to lighten it up. Sunless and lifeless, who knows but that the state of a great portion of England’s capital has been overlooked in the dark?

Oh, yes; we nourish our anarchists here—but

they are invariably scheming against systems abroad ! Let the Nationalist be sure that Egypt's poor will be emancipated much quicker than East London's. Our philanthropists are too near the squalor at home to appreciate and understand it.

The complaint of the Nationalist of the insularity and surliness of some of the minor officials in the Egyptian Civil Service, who, were it not for this tolerant employment, would probably be sticking stamps on envelopes in a dingy office in London or Paris, I have dealt with in another chapter.

Nevertheless, bad though he is, he is a thousand times preferable to a certain type of pseudo-Egyptian who, were he in the position, would only batten on the Nationalist. Members of subject races, when placed in a position of superiority, invariably become relentless taskmasters. I have observed numerous instances in Egypt. The Levantine becomes a brute when he becomes a master—and a particularly obnoxious type of a brute too.

Lord Cromer, in completing his overwhelming evidence against a certain type of Egyptian pasha, added a polite footnote dissociating the modern pasha from this judgment. He was, he said, speaking of the old-fashioned pasha—a type that had almost entirely disappeared. The modern pasha might have his defects, but he was generally an educated and enlightened gentleman.

While undoubtedly there is a fast-growing type of better man, there yet remains the brood upon which one cannot place much reliance. Only a firm Western rule can guarantee the essentials of good government, the responsibility of which might otherwise devolve

upon him and his kind. Egypt's latter-day history and her present position are a sufficient answer to the claims of those with extreme political ideas.

"Self-indulgence and corruption have eaten the heart out of the Turkish oligarchy," wrote Lord Milner. "It is the curse of the whole vast region which still lies under the blight of the Ottoman dominion, that the governing classes are devoid of the morality which is essential to governing well."

That class would again govern Egypt if England left Cairo to-day.

## CHAPTER VII

### The New Woman

A MOVEMENT of considerable significance was that in regard to the emancipation of the Moslem woman. That such ideas had found root in Egypt revealed the gradual awakening of an ancient people. The trend towards modernity, in so far as the material side of things was concerned, was in itself a triumph for the Westerner; but that such movements of reformation should include rites and customs which were the growth of centuries and were practised with all the religious solemnity of the Oriental, was a surprise even to those enlightened Europeans who hoped for great things from their strange protégées.

Egypt, therefore, was startled one day to read an account of a ceremony at which two hundred girl pupils displayed their educational prowess in the Arabic language. This new educational movement had been growing in the dark, and, as the Egyptian Press said, it came as "a distinct shock (and we use the word advisedly) to the Egyptian notables, who were present to hear that what they saw before them was but a drop in the ocean." As a fact, during that school year there had been educated at elementary schools, belonging to or inspected by the Ministry of Education, no fewer than 26,000 native girls!

Thus began the dawn of the Egyptian woman's emancipation. It must be remembered, however, that the New Woman, as we understand her in England, can hardly ever hope to find her counterpart in the Land of the Pharaohs. The reason for this is that the Eastern woman marries at an early age. In Egypt the vast majority of girls marry at the age of fifteen, or even earlier, and if marriage, as one believes, obviates modern tendencies in woman, it certainly obliterates all signs of them in the married Egyptian woman.

The modern young native is a fairly intelligent fellow. He thrives on education, so much so that he continues, as a rule, to attend private schools after he is married. Hitherto a lack of mutual sympathy between Egyptian man and wife has been entirely due to the educational and intellectual disproportion between them. As regards what should actually be taught to the new woman in Egypt, the local Press found it difficult to agree, but the following is typical enough to cite :

“ We would draw up our elementary syllabus for girls with this ideal always in view : to fit them to be the wives and mothers of a nation that is just finding its own educational feet, and requires ‘ coaxing ’ by the presence of some intellectual sympathy within its own home. Arabic must be the first and most important subject ; we must teach the women to know and to love their own language. And in this connection how exceedingly wise the Ministry have been in absolutely forbidding the teaching of English in these schools, as calculated to have a disturbing effect on the mental contentment of the lower class. After that, for even though they are soon to become wives our children are very young, we must give them an infinity of object lessons ; we would like to transplant all our girl pupils, and their teachers too, to some such institution as the Passmore Settle-

ment holiday school in London, and thus by an unceasing round of object lessons to fill their minds with myriads of new ideas for work and play. And in this way we would eradicate the one great fault which is of real consequence in a girl, whatever be her nationality—the fault of idleness. And thirdly, we must teach them music, This is evidently being done to some extent already in our schools, for very sweet were the songs the girls chanted to us the other afternoon on their exhibition day. But if still greater attention is paid to this, not only will they be developing into expression that tiny soul which is hidden deep down within them, but also it will go far to enable them to form at least some kind of home life in Egypt.

“That, after all, must be the aim of female education ; at present there is no home life in this country, and the consequent evils of this lack are too obvious to need emphasising. But wherever a truly educated wife comes there is a home always round her, and it is by the title of ‘home-maker’ that the ‘new woman’ in Egypt must be known to posterity.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The purely educational movement was, however, not the most startling. A propaganda which created something approaching consternation among the more orthodox Moslems was the proposal to abolish the *yashmak* or veil. Strangely enough, many of the promoters were young men, who soon found themselves ranged against elderly opponents, whose disapproval was based on reverence for conservative customs. Those who favoured the unveiling of woman pointed out that the Koran was not responsible for the custom. It was Mahomet who introduced the veil on the plea that, “If beauty causes so much war amongst men, it is better that it should be hidden.”

The new movement, however, gained confidence in the undoubted fact that the thick veils were being dis-

carded by the young women for thin ones. The formation of the new society was well received in many quarters, and upon the publication of their plans—which, briefly, were to carry on the propaganda of Judge Karsin Amin Bey, a celebrated advocate of the reform—the “Ahram” received a telegram from sixteen lawyers and ten young men “of good birth,” announcing that they had joined the new movement. I fear, however, that the abolition of a custom which is so much against the sentiments of Islam will take a long, long time.

In connection with these reforms I might mention here a meeting I had with that wonderful and fascinating personality, the Princess Nazli. Probably one of the cleverest women in the East, the late Princess was a staunch advocate of the emancipation of woman.

“It is just a question of time,” she said, with a quiet emphasis. The dear lady was, indeed, a hopeful representative of her class, and the manner and ease with which she illustrated her contentions were irresistible.

She has certainly left many adherents among the harem ladies!

## CHAPTER VIII

### The New Sudan

IN his perpetual work of reform in Egypt Lord Kitchener never forgot the Sudan, and the task of bringing that "vast trackless country" up to a high state of cultivation was being brought nearer completion every day.

As we have seen, the progress of Egypt was, in a great measure, bound up with that of the Sudan, and Lord Kitchener, rather than endeavour to separate the inseparable, bound them with the tie of all-prosperity.

Of Sir Reginald Wingate's excellent work we shall doubtless have some appropriate record in good time, but for us in Cairo it was enough to watch in this relation the movements of the Conqueror of the Sudan. In his report for 1912, Lord Kitchener made the pleasing announcement of the abolition of the annual subvention paid by Egypt to the Sudan, for civil purposes, since its reconquest in 1898. This subvention had amounted to £E253,000 in 1908, and was gradually decreased until Lord Kitchener was able to abolish it.

This action reflects the steady progress since 1898. Before the Mahdi's insurrection the Sudan had nine million inhabitants, seven millions of whom died by the sword or by famine before the reconquest of Khartoum.

“The whole population was practically starving,” said Lord Kitchener in his report for 1911. Before 1912 had passed, the population had increased by more than a million, and the revenue had jumped from £E35,000 in 1898 to £E1,375,000. But the years 1913-14 will be the most memorable in the new history of the Sudan. In January, 1913, we find a deputation of traders waiting on the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, respecting a loan of three million pounds for the Sudan. The next scene is in the House of Commons, where the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, is asking the House to agree to a resolution for guaranteeing the interest on a loan of £3,000,000 to the Sudan. He drew what the *Telegraph* called a “very roseate picture of the cotton-growing capabilities of that country . . . and if he had been drawing up a company prospectus he could not have splashed on brighter colours with greater zest.” The fact was the amazing development of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan sounded almost like a romance to those who were unaware of the steady work which had been going on.

The preliminaries to the spending of the £3,000,000 began early in 1914. In the new year Lord Kitchener, Sir Reginald Wingate, Sir Arthur Webb, Mr. (now Sir) Murdoch Macdonald, and other irrigation experts paid a personal visit of inspection to the Sudan, examining the sterile land which it was proposed to transform into valuable cotton fields.

I remember the enthusiasm of the Egyptian Under-Secretary of State for Public Works when he returned. “It’s the most wonderful plain in the world,” he told me, referring to Gezira. “It will produce even better cotton than we now have. We’ve started work,” he

added, with a twinkle, "and now Lord Kitchener's going to ask for the money."

A Blue Nile dam and a White Nile barrage were going to convert land which was perhaps valued at ten piastres to perhaps two thousand times the value. This surely was the greatest era of hope in that country that Lord Kitchener had ever witnessed. New Year's Day, 1914, saw the beginning of this bright era. The Gezira tract of 1,500,000 acres of land was considered the most suitable area between the Blue and White Niles. With the two immense projects for engineering works regulating the two great rivers nearing completion, the prospect of turning "the old hotbed of Mahdist barbarism" into elysian fields of produce seemed very bright. The outbreak of war has only postponed, certainly not killed, these wonderful prospects. The proposal was to build two dams, one across the White Nile, near Jebel Auli (forty-five miles south of Khartoum), and one on the Blue Nile at Makwar, near Sennar. The former project would be benefiting Egypt, since it would be used as a reservoir in connection with the dams at Assouan, Zifta, Esna, and others. The object of the latter dam was to raise the water levels after the flood had passed. This would supply the canal that is to irrigate the great plain of the Gezira.

Nobody questioned the three millions sterling loan as being able to prove an excellent investment, and it was only when the European War of 1914 broke out that its prospects seemed to wane.

## CHAPTER IX

### Problem of the Political Future

AND now, one may well ask :—"Where do we stand to-day? What of the future of this Land of Paradox?"

When Lord Kitchener left Egypt the British Agent-Generalship went with him. A High Commissioner now rules. Military "Occupation," and all its attendant anomalies, have vanished before the magic wand of "Protectorate." The Sultan has displaced the Khedive—in person as well as in title—and the fictitious suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey has been formally and finally disposed of. Yet, withal, these drastic changes do not constitute the settlement of Egypt's "eternal" problem. Her destiny will be finally shaped only when one more step has been taken. We shall see what step.

The endeavour in the past to analyse the complicated political status of the Land of Paradox has invariably led to worse confusion. The suzerainty of the Sultan, the sovereignty of the Khedive, the assumption of the Occupying Power, the influence of the Consuls-General, the significance of the Legislative Assembly, the character of the Egyptian, the intrigues of the Turk—these and hosts of other conflicting influences have been the undoing of the political student at home. Even Lord Cromer, the maker of Modern Egypt, felt himself at a

loss to define the Government of Egypt. "The dictionary must be searched in vain," he has said, "for any terse description of it."

But events have moved somewhat since Lord Cromer made that statement; and the position is such to-day that Egypt's "eternal" question is on the eve of its final solution.

The key to the future of Egypt is seen in the past relations between that country and Great Britain.

History has shown that the banks of the Nile in the long past have been a happy hunting-ground for political adventurers and bankrupt nations.

The men have fattened on Egypt, and the nations have grown rich on her. Modern history proves to all—malcontents as well as sympathisers—that the rule of Great Britain has been administered in accordance with her highest traditions. She has, by her men and her money, converted a country staggering with a loan of ninety-one million pounds, and a population of half slaves, into a land of prosperity and comparative happiness. She has been able to do this despite the open and veiled opposition of jealous friend and bitter foe—not least among them Germany. She has had to contend with difficulties that would have broken the will and determination of a nation less puissant and courageous. Only in recent years has she been able to overcome many of these obstacles. Since the advent of Lord Kitchener those that remained could be narrowed down as follows:

- (1) The mistrust in the Khedive.
- (2) The intrigues of Germany and Turkey.

It was in consequence of these that the country continued to remain fettered with the most anomalous

and antiquated laws. A detailed exposition of some of these laws that were maintained until recently by the existence of Capitulations would astonish many. Suffice it to say that, through them, the commercial and political capitals of Egypt were the clearing-houses of the criminal scum of the earth. Small wonder, then, that in almost every report the British Agent-General begged for their abolition. Small wonder that Lord Kitchener, in carrying out urgent reforms, made short shrift of the Khedive and his precious opposition.

The "Dual Control" to which the Khedives, by the Sultan's formal firman, were a party, only succeeded in delaying the progress of Egypt. Nominally the Khedive ruled; but actually the British Agent was always supreme. His "advice" was bound to be followed. Yet Abbas, the deposed Khedive, as we have seen, was able to harass the Egyptian Government by a studied policy of procrastination. So far as he is concerned, we may write "Finis" without a tinge of regret.

The action of Turkey also unburdens our hearts of any sympathy we may have felt for her upon the question of Egypt. Although Great Britain would never have permitted the susceptibilities of Turkey to interfere to any great extent with her plans for the betterment of Egypt, there can be no doubt that she allowed herself to be somewhat influenced by the claims—however flimsy—of the Sublime Porte. She allowed Egypt to pay her an annual tribute of £E675,000. The final obstacle in the shaping by Great Britain of Egypt's future is Germany—or *was* Germany, for it cannot be assumed that we shall take her views into consideration. As a fact, there is every reason to hope that the

annexation of Egypt will take place when the map of Europe comes to be redrawn. ,

It will be seen then, at any rate so far as Egypt is concerned, that this great war will have proved to be an unmixed blessing. It has removed entirely the main obstacles to complete British control.

What we are bound to consider, however, is the pledge given, and given again, by British statesmen, that we would not alter the political status of Egypt.

“The policy of Her Majesty’s Government towards Egypt,” wrote Lord Granville, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to Sir Edward Malet on November 4th, 1881, “has no other aim than the prosperity of the country and its full enjoyment of that liberty which it has obtained under successive firmans, concluding with the firman of 1879. . . . It would seem hardly necessary to enlarge upon our desire to maintain Egypt in the enjoyment of the measure of administrative independence which has been secured to her by the Sultan’s firmans.” A volume might be compiled of the speeches delivered on similar lines by subsequent speakers. In the Anglo-French Convention of 1904 the first clause of the article reads :

“His Britannic Majesty’s Government declare that they have no intention of altering the political status of Egypt.”

In the face of these weighty utterances it would appear rather difficult for the British Government to reconcile its traditional policy with a new policy of annexation. But we are now dealing with the actual situation as it is to-day. The promises made in all sincerity ten, twenty, and thirty years ago would have been carried out if Egypt’s development had been in

the nature of an evolution. Instead, by Lord Cromer's marvellous personality and influence the whole nature of the country was revolutionised. It swallowed the seeds of Western ideas and thrived on them. It became so Anglicised that England became necessary to its further development, just as Egypt has become necessary to the British Empire.

There is not an honest Nationalist in Egypt to-day who does not admit the wonderful influence for good that this country has had upon Egypt. Only the stimulus of an overreaching ambition on the part of the Egyptian student leads him to imagine that he could do what experienced British statesmen have been able to do only with the utmost difficulty. Only arrogance and selfishness lead the older Nationalist to back him.

Those who insist upon the letter and spirit of our earlier promise have only to look at the similar situation that was created in the Sudan. The utter abhorrence of the idea of occupation was never more plainly manifested than it was by the British Government of the day, and yet we found ourselves *nolens volens* in possession, with the Egyptian, of this "vast trackless land."

The recognition of a radical change of British policy relative to the future of Egypt was noted by Sir Edward Grey in his speech in the House of Commons in 1910—after the murder of the Egyptian Prime Minister. The Foreign Secretary then declared that the British Occupation would continue, must continue, "more so now than ever." He fully admitted that there had been no logic in the history of the British Occupation of Egypt.

They drifted into the occupation of the country, and they had to deal, not with logic, but with facts and consequences. "Much mischief," he said, "has been caused without any reason or justification, by doubts being disseminated as to whether we were firm in our intention to retain our responsibility in Egypt."

He believed it to be absolutely essential.

"Many of those who refer to the subject have very little conception of the evil, the mischief, which would result if by any chance the British Government to-day left any uncertainty in people's minds as to whether they intended to retain the occupation of Egypt."

The gradual veering round of the British Government is, however, more effectively demonstrated by its silences. Between 1893 and 1904 nothing was heard of our so-called "pledges" to Egypt. The bomb-shell flung by the Anglo-French Convention, the unrest in Egypt consequent on the succession of Abbas II., provided exceptions to this new policy of silence; but nothing more would have been said until the final status of Egypt had become a *fait accompli*. The outbreak of this war and the threatening attitude of Turkey caused Sir Edward Grey to make a declaration different from what he had intended, and earlier than he had intended. In the telegram to the British Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople the Foreign Secretary said: "If Turkey remains neutral and Egypt remains quiet, and should no unforeseen circumstances arise, His Majesty's Government do not propose to alter the status of Egypt."

"A report has reached me that it has been alleged that the annexation of Egypt is under consideration by His Majesty's Government."

“ You should emphatically contradict this to the Turkish Government, and say that we have no intention of injuring Turkey, and you should add an assurance in the sense of the first paragraph.”

This despatch went much farther than any other in disclosing the intentions of the Government before the entry of Turkey into the war. There can be no doubt that Sir Edward Grey tried his best to conciliate Turkey at a critical juncture of the crisis. Even then he was unable to state definitely that the political status of Egypt had not been under consideration of His Majesty's Government. He referred to annexation, when all the while it was a Protectorate and not annexation that the Government were considering before the war. Then note the qualifications: *If* Turkey remained neutral; *if* Egypt remained quiet; *should* no unforeseen circumstances arise.

Sir Edward Grey repeated, what I have already suggested, that we had no intention of injuring Turkey. A Protectorate would have had the consent of Turkey—at a price. And we should have paid this price rather than “ injure ” Turkey.

We have obtained our requirements—sufficient for the moment—without any such consideration. The change which, curiously enough, was announced by some of our leading journals as “ annexation ” is, I believe, undoubtedly the forerunner of the greater and more lasting change.

When that day arrives the riddle of Egypt will have been, once and for all, solved.

## CHAPTER X

### Agricultural Outlook

WE have looked into the political future. But there is another outlook quite as important. In Egypt "prosperity and water go hand in hand." As has been said, "the proper maintenance of those great Public Works is the first condition of Egypt. . . . Without an elaborate canal system it might become a desert."

Let me describe, therefore, in summing up, the agricultural Egypt. Let me give the picture of its present condition and trace its destiny as shaped by the iron hand of the late Lord Kitchener. To-day, from its southern confines between Wadi Halfa and Assouan, down to Cairo, the agricultural land of Egypt is a narrow but gradually widening strip of land. It is mainly on the western bank of the river. Nowhere is it more than from ten to fifteen miles in width. It is a region in which, for untold ages, basin irrigation held sway.

The whole cultivatable area covers about two and a half million feddans. Of this only 1,200,000 feddans are under the new or perennial system of irrigation. Under the basin system of irrigation the country was divided up into large hods or basins. Into these the Nile, in flood, was allowed to flow with its fertilising waters.

This system meant having crops in the soil from August to March. It did not allow of the production of the more valuable cotton, which in Egypt grows between March and October. To serve the latter crop mainly, perennial irrigation was introduced. In this case the Nile was no longer allowed to flood the land and stand upon it for a month or more. The whole area was now divided up by canals to feed each separate portion of ground with a perennial supply of water and to allow the cultivator to take of it what was his due.

This latter system meant barrages, storage dams, and concomitant works. About twelve years ago, somewhat contemporaneously with the completion of the Assouan Dam, half a million feddans in Upper Egypt were converted from the old to the newer, or perennial, system of irrigation.

From Cairo to the sea, on the other hand, lies the remainder of Egypt and the great Delta of the Nile. At its apex, near Cairo, lies the more fertile soil. Farther northwards the middle zone is also highly productive; while the northern or lowest lying area is mainly composed of lake, marsh, and highly salted soil. In bygone days the great cities and fertile regions surrounding them were undoubtedly in the lower zone, if not actually on the sea border.

How long ago, or in what epoch, this was true one does not care to hazard even a guess. The remains of ancient "koms" or mounds, however, indicating the sites of long since forgotten cities, reveal clearly the fact that the lower part of the Delta was at the period the more favoured area.

What change caused the alteration in fertility, or

the migration of the population to the apex, is equally difficult to say. Possibly the theory that Alexandria long ago subsided a few feet may have been just as true of the whole country. This may have caused the drainage problem to become as acute in that day as it is in this.

Whatever may have been the cause, Egypt is to-day fringed by a long and narrow line of sand inside which lie great shallow lakes. Behind these, again, lie the reedy marshes. Here duck and wild fowl find a home. Through this area the two main branches of the Nile pour their annual muddy flood into the Mediterranean. For untold years they have overflowed the banks, depositing silt alongside them, until gradually the lines of the main channels have become marked as low, raised plateaux above the general level, where cultivation makes spasmodic efforts to wrest back land from the surrounding dreary wastes.

Some time in the last century the famous Mohammed Ali introduced perennial irrigation into Lower Egypt. He abandoned the old basin system and introduced the present staple product, cotton. To-day the area cultivated covers 3,500,000 feddans, while the waste or uncultivated area is 1,500,000 feddans.

The introduction of storage water, to assist the natural flow of the Nile in summer, is important. This quantity frequently varies from year to year very considerably, and practically never was equal to supplying that portion of the present cultivatable area which demands summer water.

Even with storage, the present day cultivator is restricted to 40 per cent. of his whole area, as being the maximum for which he can get water. Appar-

sently increased apply and increased cultivation have resulted in the deterioration of the productivity of the middle area of the Delta. The problem which Lord Kitchener set before the Public Works was the arrest and reversal of this deteriorating process, at the same time providing for the improvement of marsh and lake areas and subsequent migration of inhabitants from the over-densely populated areas nearer the apex of the Delta.

The schemes thus promoted include complete and satisfactory drainage, taking the Delta area by area.

Obviously, a complete drainage system for the entire area cannot be found in a day. Of the 4,000,000 feddans advisable to drain, work is in progress in two areas of about half a million feddans each. For the others, plans are being prepared, and I have no doubt that they will be taken in hand as soon as money is forthcoming to deal with them. Besides the drainage, irrigation will also require great improvement and extension. This also is being studied, and will of necessity have to be taken in hand until every feddan inside the sand dunes, whether only partially cultivated, or lying in marsh or lake, is brought into use.

Fortunately, as the Yorkshireman said of ale, "There may be many kinds of ale, but no bad ale." This may be said as regards the land of Egypt. There is no bad land wherever the Nile silt lies. Though it may be highly salted to-day, it is all capable of reclamation and conversion into good land. On the day when the great lakes fringing the coast are reclaimed, and the shallow Menzala Sea is once more replaced by waving green fields, of which cotton is the staple product, Port Said will rise into prominence. It may never equal,

but it will at least rival, Alexandria as a commercial port.

Fortunately, there is also a very strong opinion to support the theory that the nearer to the sea the better the cotton. At any rate, if the product of the lower area ever approaches that of the middle zone, the prospects of its future cultivators are roseate indeed. Even if the cost of reclamation be put down at the very outside figure of £E40 per feddan, there is a very large margin of profit between that of £E40 a feddan and £E100 to £E160, for which good land in the middle area can be sold.

To meet all this development the question is: Where is the water supply to come from? The heightened Assouan Dam, with its immense volume of 2,423,000,000 cubic metres to add to the summer supply of the river, had, in the year 1914, been found inadequate to supply even existing demands of cotton and rice cultivators. An order had to be issued from the Ministry of Public Works, so arranging the distribution of water that the growing of rice is made impossible.

Evidently, then, further storage of water must be provided somewhere. Here another engineering problem comes in. An attempt is to be made to regulate high floods, which, on their way to the sea, overtop and undermine the banks that protect the cultivated lands. Disastrous floods have been known not only to destroy cultivation, but to cause serious loss of life.

The scheme for utilising a dam on the White Nile for the purpose of holding back some of the flood waters has been adopted. At the same time the same water could be held up to augment the summer supply. But

this new volume alone, which can conceivably be a greater one than the new Assouan Dam, will not of itself settle the problem of Egypt's future water supply.

The final solution will be to deal with the Nile at the point where the streams issue from the great lakes in Central Africa and Abyssinia. These lakes are in the rainy districts, and cover enormous areas much beyond anything in any of the reaches of the river itself.

I am told that the use of the flood protection dam on the White Nile will satisfy for some years to come the demand for summer water in Egypt. But when the remaining portions of Upper Egypt are converted to perennial irrigation, and the whole of the Delta throughout reclaimed, nothing will then satisfy but control of the equatorial lakes. Then, and then only, can the final development of the Delta of Egypt be accomplished. Only then can the country become dense with population.

When that day comes—and Lord Kitchener was able to lay, safe and sound, the only basis on which it can be made possible—further development can only be made along a new line. Industrial development alone must keep pace with the growing population.

On that day Egypt will be able easily to produce for Manchester considerably more than double the present total value of cotton: the present output is 7,500,000 kantars.

And this leaves out of the reckoning the new world of cotton in the Sudan!

## CHAPTER XI

### A Final Word

THE few experiences that I have recorded, gained during my short residence in Egypt, could be multiplied indefinitely from the records of those whose association with the country is of longer duration than mine. But the reader may well ask, since what I have said is more or less of a destructive nature, whether I have nothing of a constructive character to offer. What, in fact, should be the nature of our rule after the war? The present position of the country is that of an interregnum. It is under the strictest martial law, and no far-reaching reforms can be entered upon for some considerable time.

My first suggestion is that Parliament should take a much more serious interest in Egypt than it has hitherto—not only in regard to Egypt, but in relation to other parts of the Empire Overseas. A strange apathy has hitherto been exhibited by the nation's representatives. Take the case of the Indian Budget. Up to now discussion on this immensely important subject has been of the vainest order. A matter involving the welfare of hundreds of millions of our fellow-subjects has been the signal for emptying the House of Commons, while, as regards the Egypt of the Occupation, all vital questions were more or less burked

by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The stereotyped formula was invariably on these lines :

“ The question could not be gone into as it is one that purely concerns the Khedivial Government ”— which was tantamount to saying that the British Agent did not consider it advisable to answer the question. Agreeing that the position of Sir Edward Grey was one of a very delicate nature, it must be pointed out that this tendency to suppress discussion found a ready echo in official circles in Cairo.

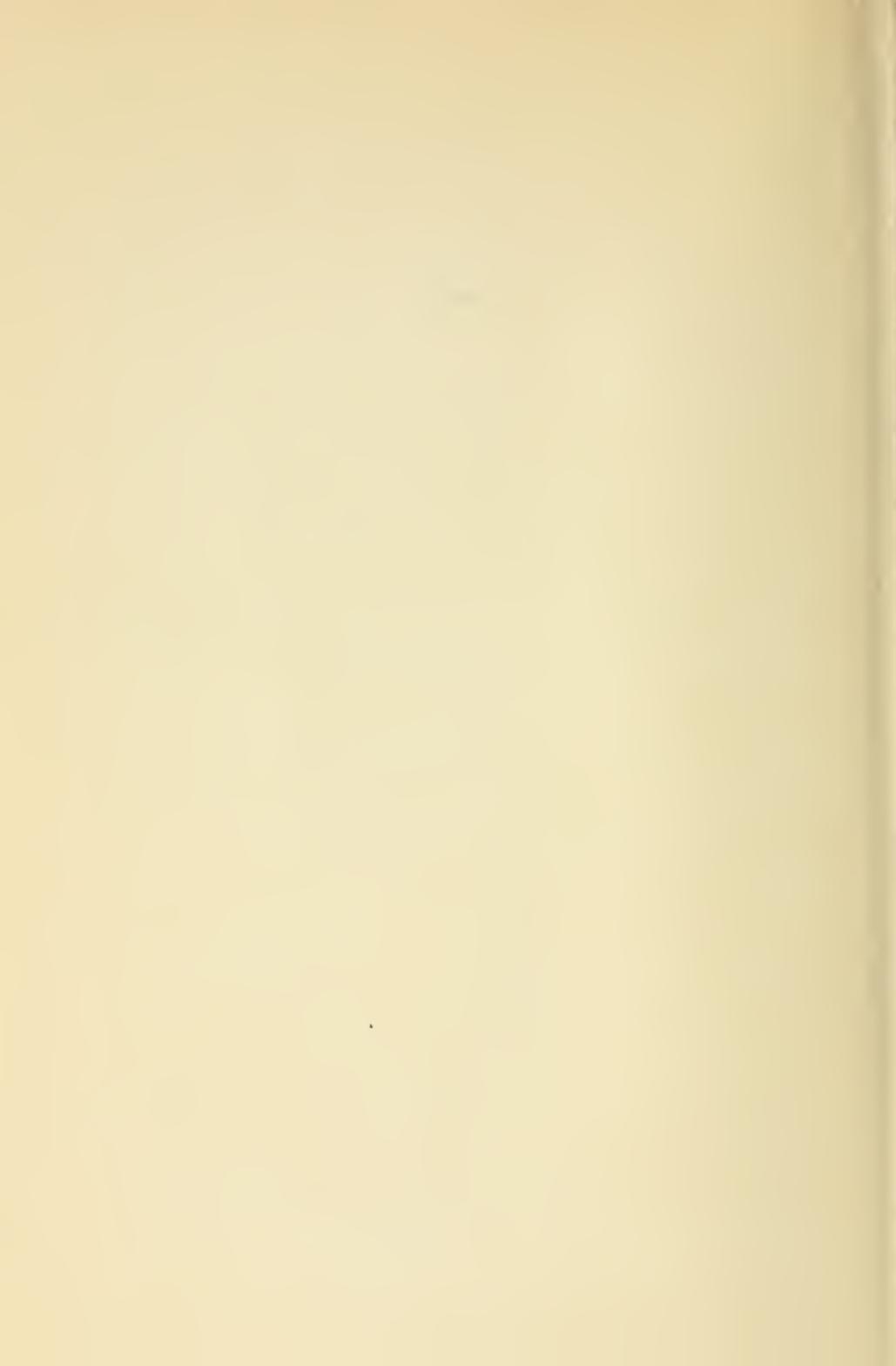
Since the war there has sprung into being a movement demanding that the people should be entrusted with the control of its foreign policy. That policy was postulated before the war by a small but insistent party of extreme reformers. They demanded that the House of Commons should not be left entirely in the dark by the Foreign Office in regard to important matters affecting the Empire. This may or may not be sound policy. It is, in any case, full of pitfalls if indulged in to the extreme. A broad and moderate policy would be helpful so far as Egypt is concerned. Up to now the attempt to pierce the veil of diplomacy has not been very fortunate from the point of view of Egypt. This secrecy, alas ! is combined with an ignorance of the actual conditions that prevail in Egypt, and even were the diplomatic veil lifted, it would avail nothing but mischief unless a better acquaintance with the country were first made. Hitherto this absolute ignorance, combined with a lack of Parliamentary information, has helped to aggravate matters. The few men who could speak with authority are prevented, by self-interest or party ties, from letting the truth be known.

All this ought to change now. Trusting-the-man-on-the-spot policy should now be, in these days of cables, a thing of the past. It is almost two generations ago since the supreme type of an ambassador of this class, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, gave up the reins of power at Stamboul, and his sole successor in modern times was the Proconsul of Egypt, Lord Cromer, who wielded autocratic powers for years, unhampered by the Foreign Office, with the complete confidence of Parliament. It was the unfortunate Denshawi affair which brought this house of cards to the ground. A complete reversal of policy followed, but it was too sudden to be of any practical utility, and the worry and disillusion hastened the death of Sir Eldon Gorst, Lord Cromer's brilliant successor.

From the past we must learn to guide our future footsteps. Of course, any suggestion I have to make is absolutely tentative, but I look forward to the day when there will be an Egyptian Committee, freed from all party control, and consisting of a few members of Parliament bound together solely in the interests of Egypt and the Sudan. If such an official body has existed in the past, its activities have invariably been nullified by the presence of one or two cranks, who, however disinterested they may have been, only served to bring their cause into discredit by an injudicious attitude. These men served those they wished least of all to serve—the Anglo-Egyptian officials—who pointed to the indiscreet utterances or stupidity of their criticism as signal examples of mischievous interference from home.

The Egyptian Committee I have in mind would be composed of solid men of all parties. It would deal

with the situation from first-hand knowledge, and would advise the Government. It would, I am sure, deal dispassionately with Egypt's shortcomings — as, indeed, I hope I have in this volume—and remove those petty obstacles which are the cause of so much irritation. Under the survey of a body of this character, such disquieting occurrences as the Adamovitch scandal, the Tura Prison Mutiny, or the Stolen Tomb of Tari would be speedily dealt with. Criminal medical practices would be short-lived. The state of Egypt's banks would be inquired into; a solution of the Press problem would be found, the plague spots of Cairo removed, and immorality and corruption checked. In short, all the little drawbacks which tend to mar a very healthy state would be removed, and Egypt would speedily take its place among the brightest jewels of our Overseas Dominions.



## INDEX

### A

- ABBAS II., unmasking of, 76 *et seq.*  
Abou Zabal prison scandal, 146  
Adamovitch scandal, 105 *et seq.*  
    arrest of Adamovitch, 106  
    British Press on, 128 *et seq.*  
    Egyptian Press aroused by, 106  
    extradition of Adamovitch, 128  
    French Press on, 137, 138  
    frenzy of Diplomatic Corps over, 120  
    Lord Cromer on, 123, 124  
    Lord Kitchener criticised in connection with, 128 *et seq.*  
    Lord Kitchener on, 125, 126  
    prisoner sent to Odessa, 118  
    *The Times* on, 124 (note)  
Adulteration, 205  
Agent-General, Lord Kitchener appointed, 29  
Agent-Generalship abolished, 229  
Agricultural outlook in Egypt, 236  
*Al-Ahaly*, suppression of, 191  
*Al-Akhbar*, suppression of, 191  
*Al-Alam* quoted, 192  
    suppression of, 192  
Alcester, Lord, 18  
Alexandria, bombardment of, 28  
    massacre at, 27, 28  
    rivalry of Port Said with, 240  
*Al-Lewa*, suppression of, 192  
*Al-Shaab* quoted, x  
Anglo-French Agreement, 26

- Anglo-French Convention, 232  
Antiquities Department and Tomb of Tari, 162  
"Anzacs" at Cairo, 207  
Arabi, Ahmed, 15  
Arabi Bey, 161  
    heads mutiny, 16  
Arabic, schoolgirls' prowess in, 222  
Assouan Dam, 84 *et seq.*  
    approved by Sir H. Brown, 98  
    controversy concerning, 84  
    Egyptologists oppose, 87  
    failure of, prophesied, 93  
    opening of, 45  
    Sirry Pasha and, 97, 98

### B

- "BACKSHEESH," payment of, 215  
    216  
Baker, General, 21  
Banking conditions in Egypt, 100  
Baring, Sir Evelyn (*see* Cromer, Lord)  
Berber reoccupied, 23  
Bribery in police service, 216  
British expedition to Suakin, 22  
British officials in Egypt, 177  
British Press on Adamovitch scandal, 128 *et seq.*  
British Protectorate declared, 82  
British subjects arrested, 118  
Brown, Sir Henry, 98  
Byng, General, 205  
Byng, Hon. Mrs., 7

## C

- CAIRO-ALEXANDRIA road, 46  
 Cairo, "Anzacs" at, 207  
     moral atmosphere of, 203  
     music halls in, 207  
     night cafés in, 207  
 Cairo-Helwan road, 46  
*Capital* quoted, 171  
 Capitulations, Egyptian, 121, 124, 126  
 Cecil, Lord Edward, 174  
 Cholera in Egypt, 19  
 Coles Pasha, 149  
 Colvin, Sir Auckland, 80  
 Committee of Imperial Defence,  
     Kitchener appointed on, 27  
 Convention, Anglo-French, 232  
 Cookson, Sir Charles, 17  
 Coptic grievances, 38  
 Corruption in Egypt, 210 *et seq.*  
     Lord Cromer on, 212, 215  
     Lord Milner on, 221  
 "Corvée" system, the, 211  
     and the *Misir*, 211  
 Cotton-growing in the Sudan, 241  
 Counterfeit coining at Delta prison,  
     149  
 Courbash, the, 210  
 Crescent *v.* Cross, 33  
 Cromer and Kitchener, 1 *et seq.*  
 Cromer, Lord, approves restriction  
     of Oriental Press, 195  
     close of service in Egypt, 26  
     Commissioner of the Public  
     Debt, 14  
     his appreciation of Kitchener's  
     military genius, 23, 24  
     his work for Egypt, 1  
     maker of modern Egypt, 1  
     on corruption, 212, 215  
     reports on Adamovitch scan-  
     dal, 123, 124  
     returns to Cairo, 19

## D

- Daily Chronicle* quoted, 135  
*Daily Graphic* quoted, 133  
 Delta prison, counterfeit coining  
     at, 149  
 Digna, Osman, 21  
 Diplomatic Corps, indolence of, 122  
 Dongola reoccupied, 23  
 Drainage and irrigation schemes, 25  
 Dudgeon, Mr. Gerald, 175  
 Dufferin, Lord, 19, 50

## E

- EAST End of London contrasted  
     with Egypt, 219  
*Echo Egyptien* quoted, 138  
 Egypt a Land of Paradox, 229  
     contrasted with East London,  
     218, 219  
     educational progress in, 57-9  
     political future of, 229  
*Egypt*, prohibition of, 192  
 Egyptian Capitulations, anomalies  
     of, 121  
     antiquity of, 121 (note)  
     Lord Cromer on, 124 (note)  
     Lord Milner on, 124 (note)  
     powers of Consuls under, 126  
 Egyptian girls, early marriage of, 223  
*Egyptian Morning News*, 200  
 Egyptian Press, bribery of, 198  
     emancipation of, deprecated,  
     202  
     unique methods of, 182-4  
 Egyptologists and Assouan Dam, 87  
 Elections for first Parliament, 68  
 England and Egypt, 14 *et seq.*  
 Englishmen in Egypt, 203  
     disliked by natives, 177  
     hooliganism of certain, 204  
 Enver Pasha, 77  
 Europeans, massacre of, 27, 28

## F

- "FELLAH'S Friend," Lord Kitchener the, 52  
 Financial chaos in Egypt, 14, 15  
 Five Feddan Law, the, 11, 50, 55  
 Foreign policy, control of, 243  
 French Press on Adamovitch scandal, 137, 138

## G

- GARSTIN, Sir William, 89  
 Garvin, Mr., 214  
*Gazette*, the, quoted, 196, 199, 201  
 General Assembly, 65, 66  
 George, Mr. Lloyd, on the Sudan, 227  
 German and Turkish intrigues, 230  
 German opposition, 230, 231  
 Gezira, plain of, 10, 227  
 Gordon, General, death of, 21  
 Gorky, Maxim, 108  
 Gorst, Sir Eldon, 26  
     tragic end of, 28, 37, 244  
 Goschen, Lord, 14  
 Granville, Dr., 187  
 Granville, Earl, quoted, 74  
 Great War, Khedive's attitude in, 76 *et seq.*  
 Grey, Sir Edward, quoted, 36, 114

## H

- HALF-TURKS, mercenary, 218  
 Harvey, Sir Paul, 174  
 Haunts of vice in Cairo, 206  
 Helwan raid, report on, 108, 109  
 Hicks-Beach, Sir Michael, 24  
 Hicks, General, 20  
*Humanité* quoted, 137  
 Hunter, General, 24  
 Hussein, Prince, first Sultan of Egypt, 82

## I

- INDIAN Budget, 242  
 Indian criticism of Lord Kitchener, 171  
 Inspector-Generalship of Forces, resignation of, by Lord Kitchener, 27  
 Intrigue, German and Turkish, 230  
 Italian-Turkish war, outbreak of, 33

## J

- JAURÈS, M., 137  
*John Bull* and Lord Kitchener, 158  
*Journal Officiel*, 79

## K

- KAN-EL-DOUBARA, British Agency at, 8  
 Karsin Amin Bey, Judge, 225  
 Khartoum, death of Gordon at, 21  
     fall of, 21  
 Khedive, a forlorn figure, 82  
     and Arabi Bey, 16, 17  
     and Lord Kitchener, 71 *et seq.*  
     apologises to Lord Kitchener, 79  
     appeals to Vienna, 83  
     attempts to dispose of Mariut railway, 81  
     attitude of, in Great War, 76 *et seq.*  
     deposed, 82  
     friction with Lord Kitchener, 80  
     slights Lord Kitchener, 78  
     sovereignty of, 229  
 King George and Lord Kitchener, 29  
 Kitchener, Lord, accepts Khedive's apology, 79  
 Agent-General, 32, 33

- Kitchener, Lord (*continued*)  
 a keen observer of politics, 10  
 alleged lack of sympathy towards Press, 181 *et seq.*  
 and King George, 29  
 and Lord Cromer, 1  
 an indifferent auditor, 4  
 British Agent to Egypt, 5  
 clever "handling" of the Khedive by, 79  
 collector of blue china, 10  
 criticised, 128 *et seq.*  
 deals with tactless head of department, 12  
 director of South Eastern and Chatham Railway, 30  
 encourages fellahin to save, 53  
 first report as Agent-General, 38-41  
 fondness for music, 10  
 friction with Khedive, 80  
 garden parties given by, 7  
 his broad outlook, 5  
 his masterfulness, 6  
 his term of office a landmark, 3  
 his work in Egypt, 3  
 inaugurates first Parliament, 64, 68  
 Indian criticism of, 171 *et seq.*  
 institutes People's Savings Bank, 11  
 interest in fellahin, 53  
 introduces Usury Law, 54  
 irrigation schemes assisted by, 59  
 laborious days of, 10  
 lays down roads, 42, 43, 46  
 launches Five Feddan Law scheme, 11, 50  
 meets Prime Minister at Malta, 38  
 member of Committee of Imperial Defence, 27
- Kitchener, Lord (*continued*)  
 mesmerises his critics, 5  
 military genius, appreciation of, 23, 24  
 multifarious duties of, 9  
 not impervious to praise, 4  
 on Adamovitch scandal, 125, 126  
 open letter to, by *John Bull*, 158  
 prevents disposal of the Mariut railway, 81  
 protects the small-holder, 55  
 removal of Coptic grievances, by, 38  
 reports on Sudan, 227  
 resigns Inspector-Generalship of the Forces, 27  
 resigns Sirdarship, 79  
 returns to Egypt, 27  
 returns to London, 26  
 shuts down newspapers, 4  
 Sirdar of Egyptian Army, 23, 78  
 Sir G. Maspéro and, 116, 117  
 slighted by Khedive, 78  
 suppresses native journals, 181, 191, 192  
 the "Fellah's Friend," 52  
 the "Lloyd George of Egypt," 11  
*versus* the Khedive, 71 *et seq.*  
 visits the Khedive, 31
- L
- LEGISLATIVE Council, 65, 66  
 Levantine a brutal master, 220
- M
- MACDONALD, Sir Murdoch, xi, 86  
 Mahdi heads Sudan rebellion, 21  
*Mahroussa*, the, quoted, 61  
 "Maleshism," 47-51

Malet, Sir Edward, 232  
 Malet, Sir Louis, 77  
 Marriage, early, of Egyptian girls,  
 223  
 Masonic lodges, protest by, 116  
 Maspéro, Sir Gaston, and Lord  
 Kitchener, 116, 117  
 and Tomb of Tari, 163  
 resigns Director-Generalship of  
 Antiquities, 165  
 Medical practices, criminal, 151 *et*  
*seq.*  
 American Consul and, 159  
 author's campaign against, 155  
*et seq.*  
*John Bull* on, 158  
 Menasce, Baron Alfred de, 187  
 Military disorders in Egypt, 15  
 Milner, Lord, on Ottoman self-  
 indulgence, 221  
 on prison scandal, 142  
 Miralai Wittingham Bey, 146  
*Misr*, the, quoted, 211  
 "Modern Egypt" quoted, 23, 215  
 Mohammed Ahmed, 21  
 Mohammed Ali, 238  
 Morgan, Mr. Pierpont, 214  
 Moslem women, emancipation of,  
 222  
 Morley, Lord, 27  
 Murder of Prime Minister of Egypt,  
 233  
 Music halls in Cairo, 207

## N

NATIONALIST agitation, 27  
 Nationalists, 217 *et seq.*  
 and Civil Service officials, 220  
 Nazli, Princess, 225  
 New Woman, the, 222 *et seq.*  
 native Press on, 223  
 proposal to unveil, 224  
 Nubar Pasha, 15

## O

OFFICIALDOM in Egypt, fighting,  
 118  
 Ottoman self-indulgence, 221

## P

PARLIAMENT, elections for first, 68  
 Passmore Settlement, the, holiday  
 school, 224  
 Plague spots, Egyptian, 203 *et seq.*  
 Police service, bribery in, 216  
 Population, loss of, in Sudan, 226  
 Port Said a rival to Alexandria, 240  
 Post Office savings banks estab-  
 lished, 25  
 Press Bureau complained of, 194  
 Press Law, criticism of, 196  
 Prime Minister meets Lord Kitch-  
 ener at Malta, 38  
 Prime Minister of Egypt, murder of,  
 233  
 Prison mutiny, 142 *et seq.*  
 Professional Tax, abolition of, 25  
 Public Debt, Lord Cromer Com-  
 missioner of, 14  
 Pyramids, Great, building of, 210

## R

RAS-EL-TIN, palace of, 31  
 Roosevelt, Mr., 35  
 Ruffer, Dr., 187  
 Rundle, Major, 22  
 Russian authorities, arbitrary action  
 of, 116, 117  
 arrest British subjects, 118  
 extradite Tchirsky, 128  
 raid house of Mr. Youritzine,  
 106

## S

SAID, Mohammed Pasha, 190  
 criticised by Mr. Mikhail, 191

- Salt Tax reduced, 25  
 Sanitary Department, powers of inspectors of, 209  
 Savings banks, establishment of, 25  
 Sirry Pasha, Sir Ismail, xi, 97  
 Schleswig-Holstein, Princess, 111  
 Schoolgirls' prowess in Arabic, 222  
 Seymour, Admiral, 18  
 Smirnoff, M., 112  
 Stratford de Redcliffe, 244  
 Stuart, Colonel, 18  
 Suakin, British expedition to, 22  
 Sudan, abandonment of, 21  
     and Mr. Lloyd George, 227  
     British loan to, 227, 228  
     *Daily Telegraph* on, 227  
     population of, 226  
     rebellion headed by Mahdi, 21  
     starving natives in, 227  
     the new, 226 *et seq.*  
 Sultan of Turkey's suzerainty over Egypt abolished, 229
- T
- TANTA prison, arrest of jailers at, 145  
 Tari, Tomb of, the stolen, 160 *et seq.*  
     discovered by Sir J. Maxwell, 162  
     offered to Mr. Pierpont Morgan, 214  
     Sir G. Maspéro and, 163  
 Tchirsky, Vladimir, arrest of, 114  
     extradited, 128  
     inhuman treatment of, 130  
 Tel-el-Kebir, battle of, 18  
 Tewfik Pasha, 78
- Theatre, Law of 1912, the, 208, 209  
 Thorne, Mr. Will, 114  
 Tribute, Egyptian, paid to Turkey, 231  
 Tura prison mutiny, 245  
 Turko-Italian war, outbreak of, 33
- V
- VEILING of women, 224  
     Koran not responsible for, 224  
 Vice, haunts of, in Cairo, 206
- W
- Wadinnil*, suppression of, 191  
 Wagh-el-Birket, Cairo, 206  
 Water supply, future, 241  
 Webb, Sir Arthur, 92, 227  
 "White slavery" in Egypt, 206  
 Willcocks, Sir William, 93  
     criticised, 98  
     opposes Sir M. Macdonald, 86  
 Wilson, Sir Rivers, assaulted, 15  
 Wines and spirits, adulteration of, 205  
 Wingate, Sir Reginald, 226  
 Wolff, Mr. Lucien, 133  
 Wolseley, Lord, routs Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir, 18  
 Women, Moslem, emancipation of, 222
- Y
- YOUNG Turkish rule, 33  
 Youritzine, Mr. Serge, and Russian authorities, 106-10  
     raid on house of, 106



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