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## MODERN EGYPT

EDITED BY

HALFORD LANCASTER HOSKINS

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the publication of twelve monographs on modern Oriental culture beginning January, 1932, and continuing bi-monthly for two years as special numbers of THE OPEN COURT magazine.

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*Courtesy of Sesostris Sidarouss Pasha.*

HIS MAJESTY, KING FUAD I OF EGYPT

*Frontispiece to The Open Court*

# THE OPEN COURT

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THE NEW ORIENT SOCIETY MONOGRAPH SERIES

NUMBER FIVE

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## THE FOUNDER OF MODERN EGYPT

BY HALFORD L. HOSKINS

Tufts College, Massachusetts

MODERN is often a deceptive term. When applied to human institutions, which tend to change slowly, it may be used descriptively to cover a long span of years or even of centuries; when applied to style of dress, it may scarcely embrace a decade. It is, at best, a relative measure. In modern Egypt a very large portion of the population live, labor, and die under circumstances little different from those which have obtained in the Valley of the Nile for many centuries. Yet Egypt may still be spoken of as "modern," though not necessarily in terms of railroads, improved irrigation methods, up-to-date cities, and contacts with the outer world, although these are important and indicative. Rather it is attitudes and points of view which are significantly modern and which deny the suggestion that modernity in Egypt is a superficial veneer which has naturally resulted from tutelage to a European Power. In the growth of national consciousness, the struggle for the expression of the *vox populi*, in the critical examination of social and religious customs and tenets hoary with age, in the mental stirring of the fellaheen themselves, are the evidences of an Egypt which is fast breaking the fetters of an almost changeless past.

Many of the symptoms of Egypt's awakening scarcely antedate the World War. However, even a cursory review of the history of the country discloses the fact that everything which may be called modern in Egypt springs from a series of basic changes conceived and deliberately introduced by one remarkable man about one hundred years ago. His career, which was scarcely less noteworthy than that of his contemporary, Napoleon Bonaparte, likewise was made possible by political upheaval and foreign invasion, events which, because of their far-reaching consequences, may be spoken of briefly.

Down to the close of the eighteenth century Egypt was a country

practically unknown to western Europe. It had been Mohammedan in religion and culture since the Saracenic invasion of the seventh century, Turkish in allegiance since its conquest by the Sultan Selim in 1517. The government of Egypt for nearly three centuries after the latter event was a unique arrangement of checks and balances, in which authority was cleverly divided between a Turkish pasha on the one hand and twenty-four Egyptian Mameluke beys on the other. Such a régime was characterized by unexampled violence, rapine, and fraud, without hope of redress on the part of the victimized population as long as the Ottoman government was believed to possess the power of enforcing its decrees. However, in 1766 Ali Bey, one of the Mameluke chieftains, contrived, by coercing his colleagues and ousting the Turkish Pasha of Cairo, to make himself for the time being dictator of Egypt. For the next quarter of a century Egypt remained in successful rebellion, and gave every evidence of having escaped entirely from the suzerainty of the Ottoman Porte.

This situation in Egypt, coinciding with serious defeats of Turkey at the hands of Russia and Austria, presaged the opening of a new era. This did not ensue, however, except through a period of remarkable confusion and travail. The temporary severing of Egypt from the authority of the Sultan gave opportunity for the opening of European commercial contacts with that country and the reopening of an ancient route of trade and communication with the East. A growing appreciation of the strategic position and potential value of Egypt and of the ease with which an invader might establish his authority there inevitably attracted a covetous Europe. Given a favorable moment and a Napoleon Bonaparte, the French occupied Egypt in 1798 and, by bringing that country definitely within the sphere of European politics, laid some very important foundations for a new Egypt.

However, it was an obscure soldier of fortune who became the principal instrument of Destiny in shaping the future of the country of the Nile. Among the Albanian levies sent by the Sultan to Egypt in 1799 to assist in driving out the French was a young officer, erstwhile a tobacco merchant of Kavala, with the not uncommon name of Mohammed Ali. Nothing about him seemed unusual during the chaos of the next few years, in fact, except his skill, or perhaps his good fortune, in escaping death, which seemed invariably ready to wait upon those who rose to positions of power or authority



*Courtesy of* SOCIÉTÉ ROYALE DE GEOGRAPHIE D'EGYPTE

MOHAMMED ALI  
The Founder of Modern Egypt

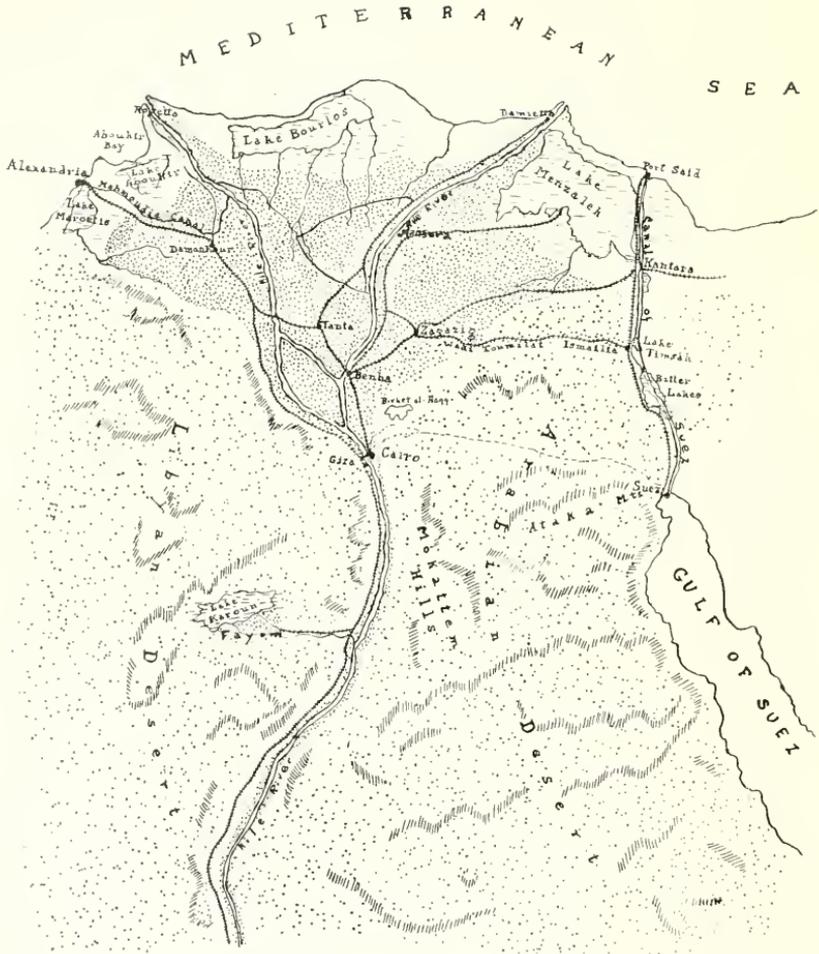
in Egypt Mohammed Ali was not idle during these years, for he was not without ambition. He rose steadily in rank and importance, not scrupling to employ any effective means, abruptly changing alliances, conspiring to set up one dictator after another, whom he as often helped to pull down. One of the few indications of the superior judgment which was in later years to place him among the great men of his time was to be found in his shrewd manipulation of forces which he could not control and in the calculating patience with which he approached his goal—the mastery of Egypt. Thus, by means of his Albanians, he played the Turks and Mamelukes against each other and the sheikhs and ulama against both; he conspired with the French against the English in 1805 and thereafter supplied great quantities of grain to assist the latter in their campaigns against the French. By treachery he slaughtered the principal Mamelukes; he employed his unruly Albanian and Turkish forces in campaigns against the Arabs, ostensibly to placate the Sultan; he found in the Arabs a means of becoming rid of his own former associates, the Albanians; and then devoted the remainder of a long life to not quite successful efforts to displace, or to secure independence from, the Sultan.

For fully fifteen years after his appointment as Pasha of Egypt in 1805, Mohammed Ali was compelled to use every possible resource to maintain a position which so many of his predecessors had found completely untenable. That he succeeded at all in a country so completely ruined by the depredations of its former rulers, by factional feud and by foreign invasion, is eloquent of the shrewdness of the new Viceroy, and his methods and motives must not be viewed with the jaundiced eye of a less violent age. "Nothing struck me so forcibly," said a European visitor to the Pasha, "as the egotism which seems to be the predominant feature of his character. He sees, feels, knows, dreams of nothing but self. The projects of this singular personage, however enlightened or disinterested in appearance, are all designed solely with a view to augment his own solitary state, or confirm him individually in power." But while it was undoubtedly true that self-interest was the lodestar of his early life and perhaps the later as well, it is equally true that no change of importance could have been made in the administration of Egypt in the early nineteenth century except on the basis of his complete control of every detail. Personal ambition and Egyptian progress in this instance walked hand in hand.

Reform of the administration of Egypt was at first not a matter of choice for Mohammed Ali—it was a prime necessity. Ransoms imposed on the more wealthy Mamelukes, confiscations of property on flimsy pretexts or none at all, forced loans from well-to-do Cairenes, and ruthless plunder of rich Copts supplied funds with which to pay temperamental Albanian mercenaries, to bribe agents of the Porte, and to begin the establishment of a viceregal court. But Mohammed Ali well understood that the killing of geese is not productive of golden eggs. Until some dependable source of revenue, other than extortions, arbitrary tax levies and impositions, could be found, the new régime could not be regarded as more stable than its predecessors. Necessity, to an ingenious man, is the mother of invention. Sources of income there were in Egypt if they could be controlled. *Ergo*, they must be reserved for the Pasha.

Thus originated the system of monopolies. Taxes which had been farmed under every earlier administration since the days of antiquity were quickly centralized. The traffic in and sale of tobacco, salt, and coffee was made a function of state, and their prices greatly increased. From time to time other articles passed under government control. During the Napoleonic Wars, for example, grain came under state control and proved to be for the time being the most lucrative monopoly of all. The British demand for this important commodity at one time reached the stage where even impure grain, steaming with fermentation, still commanded a high price. The next logical step was the extension of the principle of monopoly to the land itself. From the beginning of his dictatorship Mohammed Ali had seized such properties as he could lay hands upon. In 1810 he began the further confiscation of such of the better lands as were held on insecure titles. This practice was improved upon and extended in subsequent years until the greater portion of the cultivable land of Egypt became the personal estate of the Pasha on which the peasants labored under *corvée* and had practically the status of serfs.

The nationalizing of the soil of Egypt (for the state was, according both to Mohammedan law and to custom, identical with the ruling power) adversely affected only the interests of a relatively small class of proprietors. The condition of the fellah remained substantially as it had been before. Not so the land itself. The demands of state required that it yield more consistently and abundantly than before. For this a constant supply of water was necessary, and



MAP OF EGYPT

whenever the affairs of government permitted, the Pasha busied himself with measures for improving irrigation and for reclaiming waste lands. Old irrigation canals were reopened and new ones constructed. Many thousands of water-wheels were built and installed. These were not always efficacious during the season of low water, and in order still further to increase productivity, Mohammed Ali set his French engineers to work in 1835 on a great barrage, or weir, on the left or west branch of the Nile about sixteen miles from Cairo. Construction was pushed as rapidly as possible, too rapidly, as it proved, and some years later the greatest project of its kind in the world, built at enormous cost, was completed. For more than a score of years it gave service before the insecurity of its foundations made an extensive rebuilding necessary. Its partial failure was due to haste rather than to faulty plan.

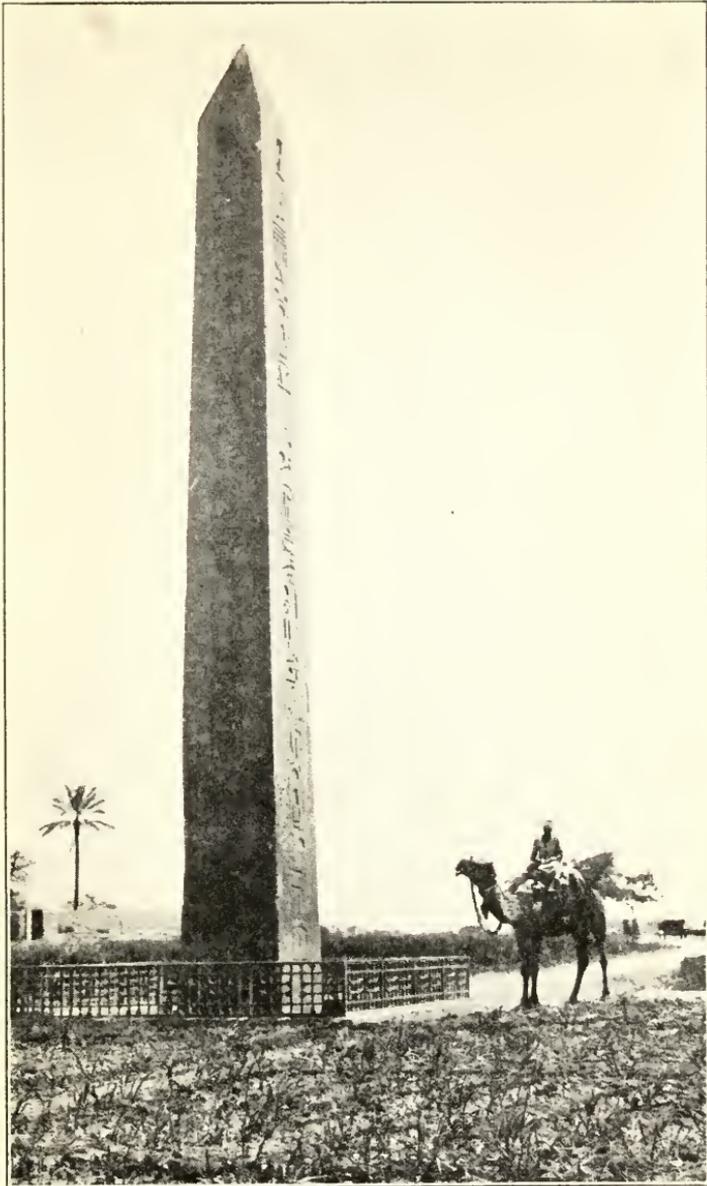
All this was done, of course, with little thought of the betterment of the Egyptian people. Some of the changes, in fact, worked real hardship to a considerable portion of the population. However, they did contribute very largely to the augmentation of the Pasha's power, and indirectly made possible many innovations which eventually redounded to the advantage of all classes in Egypt. At the outset, the success of the Pasha meant thorough exploitation of the country and its population. It meant the exchange of a haphazard scheme of Turkish and Mameluke levies, in which the rich largely escaped burdens and the poor paid such varying amounts as they were supposed to possess, for a scientific arrangement in which one's property and income were known and under which all classes bore the burdens of state. It may have worked hardship on a greater portion of the population than any previous administration ever had, but at least it had the partially compensating advantages of security of life, if not always of property, and right of appeal to the Pasha himself.

Among the works born of the ambition of Mohammed Ali which were productive of important consequences to Egypt in future was the creation of what may be called a national army to support his designs on independence. In 1820, he commissioned a French officer, Colonel Sèves, better known as Suleiman Pasha, to lay the foundation for such an army. Since the necessary man-power for a large military establishment did not seem to exist in Egypt, Mohammed Ali turned his attention to the Sudan, a rich, populous region, which might well provide a recruiting ground. During the years 1821-1823

his Egyptian levies overran almost the whole of the Sudan and would have entered Abyssinia but for the warnings of Great Britain. His new territories did yield some economic fruits, but as a military recruiting ground the move was a dismal failure: the Sudanese died like flies under compulsory military training. The Pasha had, then, as a last resort, to draft the despised Egyptian fellah in large numbers—a vain expedient, he feared, for the Egyptian peasant had survived through the centuries more because of his unwarlike character than because of any sterner trait. The results of this move were astonishing. The fellah did, indeed, have a great dread of military service. He ran away or resorted to self-mutilation to escape the draft, and frequently deserted the ranks after training had begun. But the campaigns in the Morea in 1824-1827, and still more, the campaigns against the Turks in Syria during the next decade, demonstrated conclusively that, when properly equipped and efficiently commanded, the Egyptian fellah was the equal or the superior of the boasted professional Turkish soldier.

The effects of the Pasha's military policy were profound. In the first place, the withdrawal of many thousands of able-bodied men from productive farming necessitated a more paternal attitude toward those who were left in order to safeguard the foundations of the state. Secondly, the effectiveness of his peasant army enlarged the Pasha's schemes of conquest and indirectly but materially influenced his entire policy from about the opening of the Morean campaign. But most important of all, military service made a man and a citizen out of him who had never aspired to any position of trust, respect, or honor. The knowledge that he was capable of meeting and defeating in battle those of other races and of higher classes brought a dawning realization to the fellah that he was of some importance; the knowledge that he was fighting the battles of Egypt as against Greeks, Turks, or Arabs, that the Pasha relied on him and publicly celebrated his victories, seems to have given rise to an embryonic feeling of loyalty and patriotism. More than to any other single feature of his policy, the growth of national sentiment in modern Egypt can be traced to the *nizam jedid*—the new model army of Mohammed Ali.

The Pasha's dreams of independence and of founding an Arab empire touched upon the interests not only of the Ottoman Porte but inevitably those of European Powers as well. For the success of his external policy, the Pasha was necessarily beholden to Great Britain



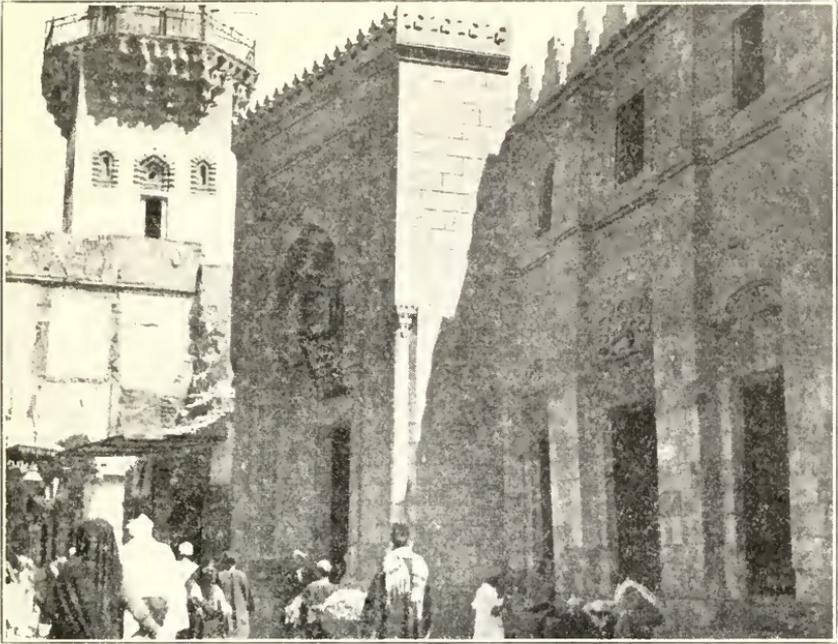
*Courtesy of P. G. Elgood*

#### OBELISK

All that remains of Egypt's ancient university in the city of On or Heliopolis. Moses and Plato are said to have studied there.

and France in particular. To them he frequently appealed for guidance and their methods he strove to copy. It is probable that he never harbored any serious illusions about the possibility, or even the desirability, of completely Europeanizing his country. More than perhaps any other oriental of his day, the Pasha of Egypt realized the essential differences between the character, outlook, and institutions of Eastern and Western peoples. However, he was convinced, through observing the rapid growth of trade and the technical improvements due to the Industrial Revolution, that the study and adoption of western methods might not be inconsistent with much of the culture and many of the institutions of the East. Both for the sake of attracting favorable attention to his own modern outlook and progressive tendencies and for the purpose of introducing into his own country as many practical improvements as possible, Mohammed Ali therefore undertook a study of the life of western nations, and in order to lose no time, he took into his service such experts as could be obtained for moderately good stipends. His employment of Colonel Sèves has already been adverted to. Several other Frenchmen also, mostly young officers, were employed in various capacities at one time or another, some of them in his new model army. His marine, for which he developed so great an affection, was in large measure the work of the skilled and faithful Cérisy Bey, who was secured from the Government dockyard in Toulon. Others were employed as secretaries, medical officers, and occasionally administrative officers. Fewer Englishmen were employed, partly because of their government's proscription of the foreign service of British officers, and partly because of the greater unwillingness of Englishmen to take service in Egypt. For that matter, while Mohammed Ali ever maintained the highest regard for English ingenuity and ability, he found English servants less tractable than other Europeans. He frequently made use of British business and commercial houses established in Egypt as his agents, however. Messrs. Briggs and Company, for instance, carried out a great variety of commissions for him, and the firm of Alexander Galloway and Sons served him on a number of occasions. His regard for English character is well illustrated by his remark on the occasion of being shown the captain's cabin on a British ship of the line. "These English," he observed, "are a great people because they always have their shelves filled with books. Mine have only pipes."

However, the employment of Europeans not naturalized in



*Courtesy of P. G. Elgood*

#### ANCIENT TYPE OF SCHOOL

Egypt was intended from the first to be temporary and provisional, pending the training of his own subjects for such duties. In order the more rapidly to build up a body of highly trained Egyptians, the Pasha about 1824 began the practice of selecting from the sons of distinguished Egyptian families small groups to be educated abroad. These were looked upon as wards of the state and were naturally to enter the Pasha's service upon their return. Quite arbitrarily they were assigned to various branches of learning: some to medicine, some to trade and industry, some to engineering, others to more academic studies. On the whole, the Pasha's expectations along this line were not realized, chiefly because of the unworthy character of many of the youths sent to Europe, who had been chosen without any reference to their individual fitness. But some, such as Hekekyan Bey, later rose to positions of trust and distinction. The fact that the majority of these students were sent to France will help to explain, together with the effects of the French conquest, the prevalence of French cultural influence in Egypt to the present day.



*Courtesy of P. G. Elgood*

MODERN TYPE OF EGYPTIAN SCHOOL  
The new Polytechnic School of Arts at Abbama

Mohammed Ali founded a medical school of his own, under the celebrated French surgeon, Dr. Clot (Bey), hoping thus to lay the foundation of medical knowledge in Egypt. But probably the most significant indication of his interest in the welfare of Egypt which is not traceable directly to personal ambition is to be found in the growth of a system of secular schools. The ancient al-Azhar mosque and university summed up education in Egypt at the outset of the Pasha's régime. Its nature and purpose were wholly ecclesiastical, its outlook fundamentalist and medieval. It held aloof from the secular world of affairs. It was wedded to the *status quo* of dogma and superstition, yet it was revered by devout Mohammedans everywhere. Without attempting to interfere in any way with this established institution, Mohammed Ali, once he had Egypt definitely in hand, set up series of new schools for other and more practical purposes. Not fully appreciating the necessity of elementary foundations, his first establishments were colleges and training schools, such as the famous Polytechnic School created in

1833, designed to prepare young men for the higher offices in the army, navy, and state services. As the need became more evident, preparatory and elementary schools were founded, not as public schools in the more recent sense, but solely for the purpose of feeding the higher institutions and preparing for some branch of government service. Eventually there were several primary schools in each *mudirlik*, all organized on a somewhat modified European basis and under the direction of European instructors. The admission of youths to these schools was therefore, to all intents and purposes, admission into government service, since all expense of instruction, even to food, clothes, and lodging, was borne by the state. Schools have since been founded in Egypt, of course, for much more general purposes, but it may be noted that even today the idea persists that a degree from a state institution entitles its holder to a government position.

Mohammed Ali's attempt artificially to bring about an industrial revolution in Egypt fared little better than his efforts to create an educated class within the space of a handful of years. At enormous cost, he had brought into Egypt the latest machinery for the manufacture of cotton, silk, and linen cloth. Simultaneously, as monopolist of Egypt, he issued instructions for the planting of great numbers of mulberry trees, and annually prescribed the acreage to be planted in cotton, flax, and indigo. The raw materials for a cloth industry were forthcoming in due time, and the experience gained in the production of raw fabrics has been advantageous to a more normal and natural growth of these materials in recent years. A century ago, however, Egyptian technique was not equal to the task of operating delicate and complex machinery, nor could repairs be made except after long delay and at great cost. Similar results followed the Pasha's introduction of machinery for the manufacture of rum, sugar, and even firearms. But although enormous sums of money were sunk in these enterprises to little immediate avail, they were not destitute of beneficial results. These experiments, being generally regarded in Europe as successful, brought Egypt into favorable notice, while the introduction of new plants and processes into Egypt was productive in times to come of numerous advantages. Moreover, these experiments were not without their moral and cultural effect on the Egyptian people.

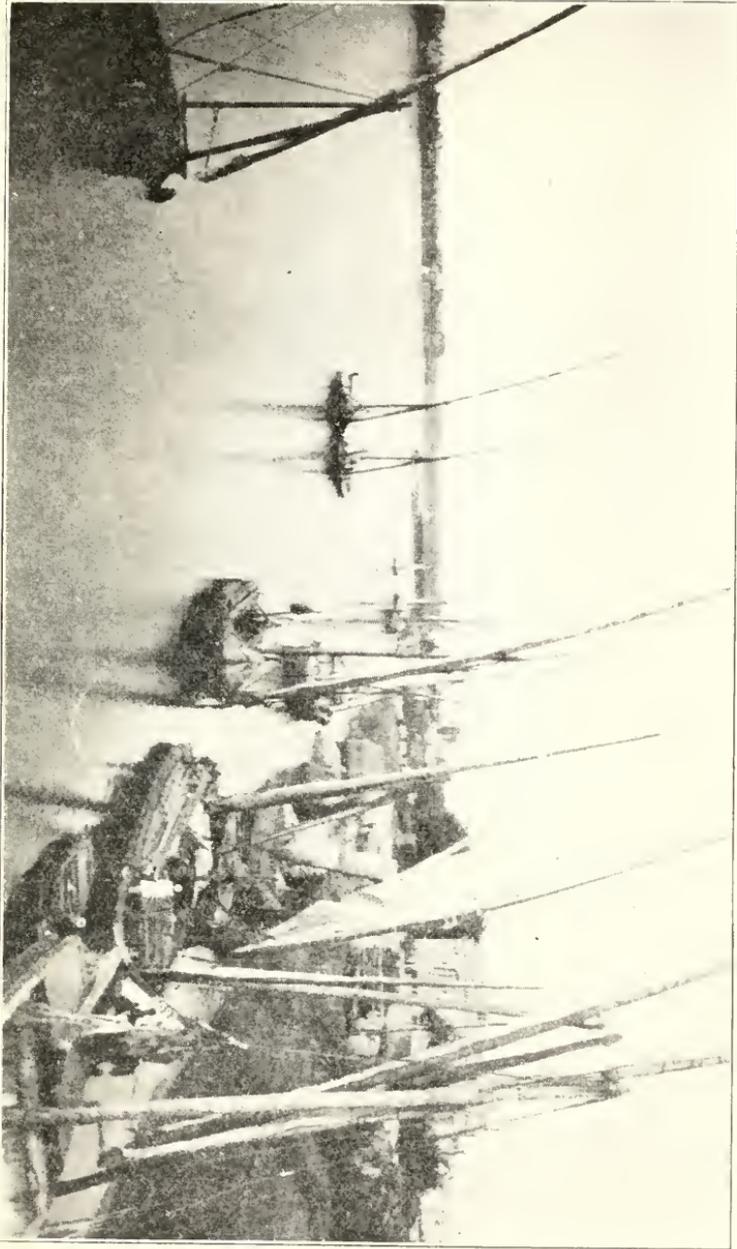
Far more important economically than the Pasha's mistaken attempts to mechanize his country was his generous attitude toward

the Greeks. From the time of his accession to the Egyptian pashalik, Greek refugees from Turkish misrule sought asylum in Egypt and were not denied. After the beginning of the Greek revolt in 1821, and particularly after the time when the Pasha's own forces were coöperating with those of the Sultan in suppressing the Greek revolutionaries, considerable numbers of Greek families found their way to Alexandria, where they were welcomed without regard to the Sultan's orders for their destruction. Egypt to them was the land of opportunity. Becoming protégés of the Pasha, and exempt from many of the burdens imposed on the Mohammedan population, they grew and prospered, founding and developing new industries and forging ahead in nearly every branch of activity. Their aptitude for manufacturing and commerce is manifest in the names of Egyptian firms today. But not alone in economic respects did their establishment in Egypt justify the judgment of Mohammed Ali. They also functioned in many ways as cultural agents. Their communal schools, hospitals and philanthropic institutions inevitably have exerted a deep influence on the non-Christian elements of the population, while their contributions in the realm of science, art, and literature have not been meager. They have been a powerful leavening influence.

Having become a convert to the efficacy of European science, Mohammed Ali undertook whole-heartedly to introduce its benefits, as far as he comprehended them, into Egypt. Accordingly, he established hospitals of a type previously unknown in Egypt and developed a keen interest in the promotion of medical knowledge among his subjects. At his instance, the medical school at Abuzabel, already referred to, was founded. Most of the instructors of the school were French doctors who had no knowledge of the language of their students, while the latter were equally ignorant of the speech of their masters. The net result of this experiment was deeply disappointing, but it did not militate against the adoption of other, and perhaps more effectual methods for the checking and controlling of the epidemics, especially of cholera and the plague, which visited the land of the Nile at not infrequent intervals. A virulent epidemic of cholera which ravaged the country in 1831, carrying off an appreciable portion of the population, led the Pasha to appeal for advice to the consuls of European states. At their suggestion, rigid quarantine regulations were adopted. These failed to stay the disease, but the Pasha, instead of adopting

*Courtesy of H. I. Kohbau*

TRANSPORTATION ON THE NILE



the characteristic Moslem attitude of ascribing it all to the will of Allah, merely planned to establish a more efficient quarantine on other occasions.

An occasion for a more thorough testing of European methods of prevention was furnished by a visitation of the bubonic plague in 1835, which brought all normal activities to a complete standstill. Again the assistance of the European consuls was solicited, and under the presidency of the British Consul-General a Board of Sanitation was established. This had absolute authority for several years over matters of public health, and in one form or another continued until near the end of the reign. Political considerations as well as problems of health and sanitation may have prompted the formation of the Board, for at that time Mohammed Ali was anxious to curry favor with European governments by any means. Some of the work of the organization, however, was permanent. A modern lazaretto was founded at Alexandria to stop the importation of infectious diseases, the destruction of some of the filthier sections of the city of Alexandria was accomplished, and numerous breeding places of diseases were wiped out—measures unpopular enough at that time with a considerable portion of the population. A good many years were to elapse before the continuation of this good work was incorporated into a consistent government program, but the beginnings of the present extensive efforts to eradicate disease from a country which was once as disease-ridden as any on earth must be ascribed to the founder of the present Egyptian dynasty.

It is difficult to determine to what extent, aside from the practical necessities of government, Mohammed Ali was concerned with the ideal of justice. There was nothing in his background, his environment, or his early training remotely suggestive of justice for all. Turkish government took no cognizance of human rights. Yet from the early days of his power, the Pasha concerned himself with equalizing burdens, suppressing dishonesty and corruption, and substituting something equivalent to law for unmitigated violence. It may be that the material advantages of this type of government impressed him with the basic principles of justice, or it may be that his regard for European institutions or his desire to appear modern and progressive in European eyes introduced a benevolence into his despotism. At all events, he did much to regularize the administration and to temper the wind to the shorn lamb.

There were serious obstacles in the way of judicial improvement. Formal justice among Mohammedans had always been intimately associated with the exercise of religious prerogatives. As in Europe for a long period of time, legal affairs concerning marriage, divorce, contracts, wills, and inheritance pertained to the supreme religious authority, and in Egypt were administered by the *mufti* as representative of the Sultan. The establishment of a system of secular courts for civil procedures, therefore, would be attended with a certain risk, for even Mohammed Ali realized the danger of tampering with matters of faith. Justice in criminal matters, however, remained in the hands of the executive authorities. But for a people brutalized by centuries of pitiless exploitation no elaborate system of justice would serve. It was more needful that the lines of proper conduct be clearly understood and that punishment be prompt and effective than that there should be any quibbling over legal technicalities or rights of individual liberty.

Notwithstanding many difficulties, real improvement was made. Two new non-sectarian courts were established at Alexandria and Cairo to deal with disputes of a commercial nature, especially those arising between Moslems and Christians. In other civil matters, a degree of justice was obtained through the despatch of strict mandates and circular letters to the responsible officers of administration throughout the country and by sparing no pains to see that these were obeyed. The Pasha himself went about the country on tours of minute inspection at irregular but frequent intervals, and he and his secretaries were unwearied in their perusal of the reports demanded of all his officials. He deprecated the bodily punishment of delinquents and offenders except for crimes of a serious nature. He preferred to govern by precept and example rather than by the bastinado and the sword. "All about me," he said toward the close of his career, "well know that I love not to harm any man. For forty years I have held my hand from sharp punishment; but if I am compelled to do otherwise, the fault will not lie at my door." A few public torturings and protracted executions toward the close of his reign were rather to serve as warnings to other evil-doers, who might be inclined to take advantage of a tolerant prince, than to indicate the vindictiveness or the choice of the Viceroy. Certainly his reputation for fairness in later years is one of the significant features of his reign.

As long as the resources of Egypt were being fostered primarily



*Courtesy of Dr. H. V. Neal*

WOMEN CARRYING WATER FROM THE NILE

for the purpose of enabling the Pasha to defeat the Sultan, the net benefits of the Pasha's reform program were problematical, as European Turcophiles never tired of pointing out. Throughout the eighteen thirties, a time of great material advance in Egypt, every man, every beast, every piastre was weighed and measured according to one scale—that of military value. Perhaps it was not, in the long run, a disadvantage to Egypt that, through British intervention, the Pasha's hopes were brought to irremediable ruin in 1840 after his crushing of Turkish forces in Asia Minor and at a time when the way to Constantinople lay open. Mohammed Ali never recovered from the failure of the great aim of his life—that of establishing an independent empire. However, being left Egypt in hereditary tenure, he was able to console himself that at any rate he was the founder of a dynasty which might carry on the constructive work which he had begun. There still remained to him nearly a decade of peaceful life, which he devoted more wholeheartedly than ever before to the material and cultural development of his country, with a motive no more reprehensible than that of securing the favorable verdict of history.

The Egypt he left at his death in 1849 was in all respects a very different country from that to which he came with a force of Albanian irregulars a half century before. He had failed, it is true,



*Courtesy of Dr. H. V. Neal*

TYPE OF PLOW USED SINCE PREHISTORIC TIMES

to eradicate a variety of abuses. Both slavery and the slave trade still existed, although in late years the traffic in human beings was considerably lessened. Poverty was still wide-spread, yet a large improvement in conditions of living is indicated by an increase in the population from about 2,460,000 in 1800 to 4,476,440 in 1848. Ignorance, superstition, and disease still held a large part of the population in thrall, yet real headway had been made against all of these relics of the past. The roster of accomplishments far exceeds that of failure: a few of the more fundamental and enduring must serve to illustrate the rest.

Mohammed Ali himself liked to think that he had succeeded to some degree in founding a nation, based on popular loyalty to the prince. The evidences he found always disappointing, and he was prone to complain of the lack of appreciation of his work. However, he was not a patient man, and he never realized that what he tried to do by arbitrary methods within the space of a generation could only be brought about after a considerable lapse of time. Much of what he did was probably misunderstood by his subjects, but means did not exist for the expression of popular sentiment, in any event. That the Pasha did not fail in causing a vague stirring of national sentiment is witnessed by the report of the British Con-

sul-General, Charles Murray, to Lord Palmerston, in commenting on the death of the great Viceroy. "The attachment and veneration of all classes in Egypt for the name of Mahomet Ali," he wrote, "are prouder obsequies than any which it was in the power of his successor to confer. The old inhabitants remember and talk of the chaos and anarchy from which he rescued this country, the younger compare his energetic rule with the capricious, vacillating government of his successor, and all classes, whether Turks or Arabs, not only feel, but hesitate not to say openly that the prosperity of Egypt has died with Mahomet Ali or (in their oriental phraseology) the breath of Egypt has left its body. . . . Very rarely would it be that Your Lordship would hear in any province of the Turkish Empire such a phrase as the following: 'If Allah would permit me, gladly would I give ten years of my life to add them to that of our old Pasha.' Yet this I have known to fall from the lips of more than one during the last illness of Mahomet Ali."

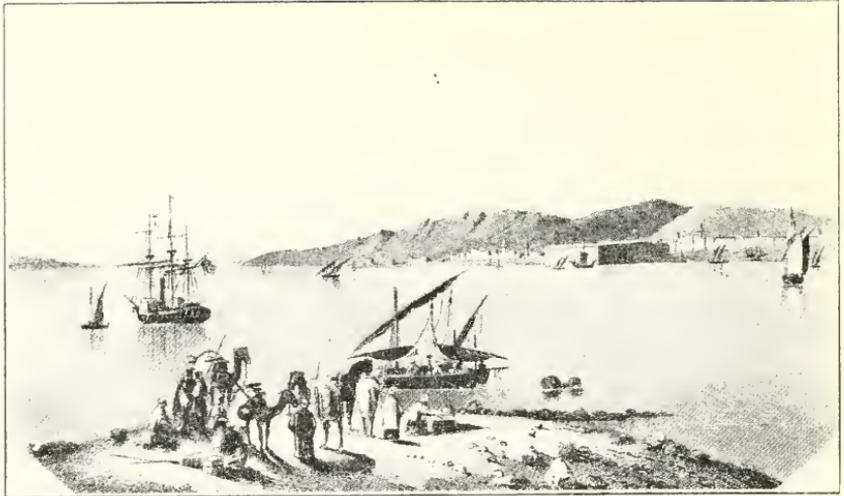
More instrumental in laying the foundations of a modern Egypt even than personal loyalty to the sovereign was the ending of the isolation of Egypt. Few Europeans had visited Egypt prior to 1800, and they generally found it essential to disguise themselves in native costume to avoid the insults and injuries customarily showered on all infidels. From the beginning of his reign, Mohammed Ali made safety and security of foreigners a cardinal point of policy. Afterward, by promoting European contacts, by the adoption of European methods, and particularly by the founding of schools through which foreign ideas were disseminated, he laid the basis in knowledge for a tolerance and sympathy which must ever precede any real cultural advancement. Mohammed Ali's work progressed but slowly after his death, but from it may be traced most of the lines of development of Egypt of the present day.

## THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF EGYPT

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL P. G. ELGOOD, C.M.G.

**F**IVE HUNDRED years before the birth of Christ, Cambyses the Persian swept across Sinai and planted his standard in Memphis and Thebes. It was the end of the Pharaonic Empire, and from the calamity Egypt did not wholly recover. One invader has succeeded another and the tale is not yet complete. For twenty centuries and more, Egypt has been the victim of conquest and satrapy.

The French occupation (1798-1801) was a turning point in the history of Egypt. It gave a fresh lease of life to Turkish sovereignty, but it also produced a man in Mohammed Ali, who laid the foundation of Egypt's present prosperity. But his government was too personal, too arbitrary to outlive his times: nor did it do so, as subsequent history testifies. Of Abbas, a grandson, and Said, a son, little need be said, but Ismail, another grandson, who ascended the throne in 1863, requires longer mention. About his memory so many stories revolve that the true is not easy to separate from the false. Yet this much is certain: during his short reign of sixteen years he brought Egypt to the brink of beggary. At his accession the public debt stood at £ E. 3,000,000; at his abdication it amounted to £ E. 100,000,000, and for the major part of that formidable total there was little to show. The country could well afford to support its ruler's whims in the beginning. War was raging in the United States and the spinners of Europe were paying fabulous sums for Egyptian cotton. Then the golden harvest dried up, and Ismail began to borrow at ruinous discounts or rates of interest. Two instances will suffice. Out of a nominal loan of £ E. 32,000,000 floated in 1873, Egypt received £ E. 11,000,000 in cash and £ E. 9,000,000 in depreciated script, and for the accommodation paid in annual interest £ E. 2,156,000. At another moment in return for a cash advance of £ E. 72,000, the sovereign handed over £ E. 230,000 of Egyptian stocks. Finance of this type carries its own penalty, and in midsummer 1875 the borrowing came to an abrupt end. Alarmed at Ismail's personal extravagance, European bankers would lend no more. In despair he offered to a syndicate in Paris the 177,000 shares subscribed by his predecessor to the Suez Canal Company: but doubtful of the value of the security, the syn-



*Courtesy of Longmans Green & Co.*

THE SUEZ ROADSTEAD ABOUT 1840  
From *British Routes to India*, H. L. Hoskins



*Courtesy of H. L. Hoskins*

THE SUEZ ROADSTEAD TODAY

dicate hesitated, and getting wind of the negotiations, Disraeli on behalf of England bought the shares for £ E. 4,000,000. Hitherto the domestic concerns of Egypt had been of no particular interest to England. If investors chose to speculate in Egyptian securities, it was their concern and not that of the Cabinet. But partnership in the Suez Canal altered this point of view: England no less than France thenceforth was directly interested in the maintenance of stable government in Egypt. None the less, Disraeli had no intention of embarking upon any adventure in that country, and to Ismail's protests of solvency he turned a deaf ear. The end came in June, 1879, when the Sultan of Turkey, pushed by England and France, forced him to abdicate. Ismail could hardly complain of the fate that had overtaken him. His wilfulness and extravagance had well nigh ruined Egypt, and posterity will remember him more kindly for his creation of the Mixed Courts.

Tewfik, his son, succeeded. The new reign began inauspiciously with low Niles, poor harvests and epidemics which took toll of man and beast. Under the strain Egypt bent, and sought in vain for relief. It was not to be found. England and France, endeavoring to ward off bankruptcy, had succeeded in promulgating a law of liquidation (1880) that lightened part of Egypt's heavy burden, but taxation was still intolerably high and justice seldom obtainable. Tewfik, a simple-minded and frugal man, was no ruler to ride the storm, and matters went from bad to worse. In their plight the people turned to Islam for comfort, and al-Azhar, the seminary of Islamic lore, in return whispered of the need of brotherhood of Moslems. Out of the wild talk of Alims and sheikhs, there sprang up a hatred of Europeans, and a belief that their interference in the affairs of Egypt was at the root of her ills. Under these influences a crudely national party came into existence, that planned to dethrone the sovereign and establish a republic. Led by Arabi, the army was the first to show its hand. Military grievances were numerous and legitimate enough, but Tewfik did not handle the business well. He accepted a national ministry, gave Arabi the portfolio of war. It was a rash experiment, and the new minister took every advantage of his authority. There seemed no alternative but intervention, yet England in particular hung back. She had joined France in a dual control of Egyptian finance without enthusiasm, she had held aloof from the commission of public debt,

she had refused to nominate an Englishman to supervise collection of Egyptian revenue. She had never coveted possession of Egypt, she did not desire it now.

In the end many unoffending Europeans lost their lives in the tumultuous days of June, 1882. The patience of the British admiral gave way: getting no answer to his letters of remonstrance, he opened fire on the forts of Alexandria July 11. France did not participate. Her commitments in northern Africa were already heavy, and she was reluctant to add to them. It was thus left to England to fulfill the Anglo-French promise to support the authority of the throne. Military operations succeeded naval: news of Arabi's intention to destroy the Suez Canal transferred the campaign from Alexandria to Ismailia. The British and Egyptian forces met at Tel el Kebir on the 10th of September in an engagement ending in the rout of the latter and the capitulation of Cairo. Thus began an occupation, which continues to this day.

In a sense England had accomplished her mission. Order had been restored, Arabi and his confederates were prisoners of war: there seemed no great reason to retain a garrison in Egypt. But decision was not so simple as that: the future would remain doubtful until the worst of Egypt's grievances had been redressed. They were legitimate and manifold, and an impartial survey of Egyptian conditions in the autumn of 1882 justified the impression that abuse of authority was at the bottom of the evil. The throne itself was the worst offender: its word was law, its prerogative was illimitable. It imposed burdens upon the people by simple decree, it drew no distinction between national revenue and the civil list. The incidence of taxation was painfully imperfect: the heavier burden fell upon the wretched peasant. The kurbash and the prison were the twin pillars of the administration, and provincial authority used both mercilessly. Crime also was rife: no man's life or property was safe in a country where brigandage and blackmail marched hand in hand. Various departments of the State needed reconstruction: everywhere corruption and indolence reigned supreme. Irrigation was in deplorable straits. Incompetent engineers wasted the valuable summer water, neglected to keep in repair public works. The barrage, Mohammed Ali's great conception, at the apex of the Delta, stood unusable: its foundation had subsided, its piers were cracked. Military service was another affliction. Pay was generally in ar-

rears, the term of engagement illegally extended, the ration issue insufficient. Robbed and maltreated, conscripts deserted right and left. No less oppressive was the *corvée* or system of forced labor, which swept the countryside clear of able-bodied fellahin in order to construct works frequently of questionable utility and to clear canals and drains for the benefit of wealthy landowners.

Hesitatingly the British cabinet reached four conclusions: first, that a peaceful Egypt depended upon the removal of grievances; secondly, that reconstruction of the administration alone could remove the grievances; thirdly, that England would indicate the method of reconstruction; and lastly, that British troops must remain in Egypt until the task was accomplished. There had never been talk of annexation or of prolonging occupation once stability was assured. Lord Dufferin as special High Commissioner came to Cairo to lay the foundations of constitutional government. His mission went no further than a modest experiment in organic law—he was to maintain the throne with a drastic restriction of its former prerogatives. No new tax in future was to be imposed without consent of a General Assembly, no new measures could become law until a Legislative Council had debated it. It was Egypt's first introduction to representative government.

Meanwhile Europe was divided. Germany, Italy, and Austria saw nothing unreasonable in England's programme: France and Turkey hotly contested it. The indignation of France was natural, but illogical. Having refused to cooperate in the disagreeable business of intervention, she was not in a position to complain. She vented her annoyance in pressing England to specify the date of the army of occupation's departure: a question that the British Cabinet would only answer by the formula "as soon as the state of Egypt permits." But conscience was pricking Mr. Gladstone, the prime minister. He was anxious to remain on good terms with France, he was also desirous of relieving his country of the cost of maintaining the army of occupation. Spurred by this reasoning he decided to reduce the force in Egypt to the limit of a small garrison in Alexandria as the first step toward evacuation.

However, before a soldier could move, orders were countermanded. The southern Sudan was ablaze with revolt. Isolated Egyptian garrisons, making what terms they could, had capitulated: Khartoum, the capital, was in danger. Impressed by that menace,

the Egyptian prime minister hastily conscripted 10,000 fellahin, and bade their commander, General Hicks, stamp out the insurrection. But Hicks was trapped in the deserts of Kordofan, his travesty of an army wiped out. At once England pressed on Egypt the need of evacuating Khartoum while there was yet time: but neither the ruler nor his ministers would listen. "Let us talk of evacuation," said the prime minister testily, "when we've beaten these insolent rebels." It was a vain boast, for Egypt had neither the troops nor the money to undertake the reconquest of the Sudan, and England declined to lend either. In the end Egypt gave way, and General Gordon was selected to conduct the evacuation.

Throughout 1884 Lord Cromer, British agent and consul general, was patiently struggling with other embarrassments. Egypt was confronted with £ E. 8,000,000 of pressing liabilities with no money to give. Even the right to borrow had been denied. To meet emergencies and provide money for current needs, Cromer convincingly urged an immediate loan of £ E. 9,000,000. To demonstrate their complete disinterestedness in Egypt the British government invited the coöperation of Europe, and the convention of London in 1885 gave Egypt a fresh start by placing £ E. 9,000,000 at her disposal. At this point England vaguely took stock of her responsibilities in Egypt. They were growing apace, and she contemplated transferring their burden to other shoulders. Turkey, the suzerain Power, was the obvious alternative and was invited to take up the task. The Sultan was very willing, and his representative, Muktar Pasha, met Drummond Wolff in Cairo. But the two commissioners could not agree. Muktar was for reconquering the Sudan as a beginning, Wolff for reform and retrenchment in Egypt. The British cabinet then decided to negotiate directly with Constantinople. They offered to withdraw all troops within three years, reserving only right of reoccupation if circumstances required, and the Sultan would have signed an agreement on those lines but for the remonstrance of France and Russia. Mistakenly Turkey listened to the counsel, and her single opportunity of recovering control over Egypt passed.

Meanwhile Cromer was endeavoring to make one piastre do the work of two. The new loan provided £ E. 1,000,000 for development, and there was little doubt where the sum could be most profitably spent. Egyptian prosperity springs from intensive agriculture,



*Courtesy of P. G. Elgood*

#### THE SHADOOF

An ancient method of irrigation still used.



*Courtesy of Dr. H. V. Neal*

#### THE TIME-HONORED METHOD OF IRRIGATION

which in turn depends upon a punctual and adequate supply of summer water. To assure that elementary need Mohammed Ali had built his barrage, and to its reconstruction a little troop of British engineers applied themselves. The distribution of water and clearing of canals had been handled from time immemorial, though never very efficiently, by the *corvée*. Now a fresh difficulty supervened. Relieved from his fear of the *kurbash* under the new administration, the fellah ignored the summons of authority and stayed at home. Cromer for once was puzzled. Despite despairing cries from the ministry, remonstrances from provincial authorities and appeals from the land-owning classes, he would not reintroduce the *kurbash*: from lack of money he could not substitute paid labor. However, by skimping and paring, Egypt contrived to find the money from her own resources, and in 1890 the *corvée* was formally and finally abolished. The outlook was then brightening. Bankruptcy no longer stared Egypt in the face, the dead weight of the Sudan had been lifted. A reserve fund had been created, and money was available at last to recondition administrative services. But the ministries of justice and interior were painfully in need of reform, and it was only by pointed reminders that in a conflict of wills the English voice must triumph that the judiciary was reformed.

Tewfik died (January 7, 1892), and his son Abbas Hilmi sat on the throne. A wayward youth impatient of counsel and restraint, flattered and importuned by a court of parasites, he picked a quarrel with England at once. To the sagacious Cromer the incident pointed a moral. He had begun his work in the expectation that the Egyptian people under guidance would accomplish their own salvation: the attitude of the throne and of its advisers caused him reluctantly to put away that hope. Unless the process of reconstruction was quickened, he was forced to admit that a century would be insufficient for the task, and fortified with that belief he altered his procedure. Hitherto executive authority had been exercised by Egyptians, and ministers as they thought fit followed or rejected counsel tended by Englishmen. That was now changed. At the side of each minister sat a British adviser, whose word was law; at the elbow of the provincial mudir or governor was a British inspector armed with little less authority. It was not ideal administration: it led in the end to the exclusion of Egyptians from the more important offices of their government. It hastened reconstruction, no doubt, but it also left a distrust of England's intentions.

None the less, under it Egypt prospered. The Sudan was reconquered, the administration purged of its grosser defects, and of the many obstacles that had hindered regeneration, there remained only the jealousy of France and the burden of the capitulations. From the first days of the occupation France had hindered and thwarted British plans, less out of affection for Egypt than from desire to pay off diplomatic scores elsewhere. But in 1904 the moment seemed opportune to come to an understanding: then France needed British good-will in Morocco as much as England needed the good offices of France in Egypt. Thus came about an Anglo-French declaration, that left England a free hand in Egypt. The capitulations were less easy to handle. Under them the foreigner escaped arbitrary taxation and arrest, and treaty and tradition consecrated those elementary rights. But in the nineteenth century the burden had become embarrassing: before applying either taxation or laws to the foreign community, Egypt had first to obtain consent of the fourteen capitulatory Powers. It seemed to Cromer an archaic procedure, and he proposed to substitute for the Powers a local council representative of resident foreigners.

The indignity of the proposal rankled: already wounded by a convention (January 11, 1899), recognizing an Anglo-Egyptian condominium in the Sudan, and by France's acknowledgement of the occupation, Egypt stirred uneasily. Out of the resentment was born a national party led by Mustapha Kamil, an inspiring personality, whose fierce denunciation of the occupation found an echo in the hearts of his fellow-countrymen. Abbas Hilmi patronized him, sheikhs and notables hung upon his words. All Egypt was convulsed with the struggle, but Cromer did not stay to see its conclusion. He had written his last despatch, had spoken his last word, and in the spring of 1907 he laid down his stewardship. It had been a memorable one: it had rescued Egypt from insolvency, it had planted the seed of virtuous administration. No man had ever served her better.

England was now at the parting of the ways, uncertain whether Egypt would respond best to further Anglicization of the government, or to a reversion to earlier ideals. Sir Eldon Gorst, taking Cromer's place, had no doubts: he indicated at once his intention to curtail the power of advisers, to restore to ministers their old predominance in administration, to limit British influence in the civil service. The policy worked admirably for a while: the throne coöperated enthusiastically and a new prime minister in full sympathy with

Egyptian aspirations took office. The national party began to disintegrate. There was a short struggle for supremacy between it and the cabinet, but Mustapha Kamil was dead, and his mantle had fallen upon less capable men. Moslem and Copt fell out: rival congresses embittered the dispute.

Gorst did not live to enjoy the fruit of his labors: in 1911 he went home to die. Criticism and comment pursued him to the grave. With one voice the foreign community condemned his policy as premature, and Europe agreed with the judgment. Nevertheless, he had ploughed too deep for a successor to disturb his work, nor did Lord Kitchener attempt to do so. That remarkable man was more concerned in the betterment of agriculture than in the political aspirations of Egypt, and he flung himself into its study. There was, no doubt, room for a vigorous hand. Cotton, the staple crop, was deteriorating in quality and in yield, due to inadequate drainage, overproduction, and insect pests. Meanwhile, population was increasing by leaps and bounds while the area of cultivable land remained stationary. Common sense bade Egypt in these circumstances to prepare against a day when economic pressure would oblige the fellahin to break virgin ground, and Kitchener cast an inquiring eye upon the extensive lakes and marshes that border the Mediterranean shore. Their reclamation was an extensive undertaking, and Kitchener was perhaps in too great a hurry to succeed. But if his execution was at fault, his insight was true enough: Egypt can never have a sufficiency of cultivable land. Meanwhile there had arisen an insistent cry for parliamentary control of the executive, and reluctantly Kitchener turned from agriculture to answer it. Gorst's modest experiments in organic law had whetted Egyptian appetite for wider concessions and Kitchener thought to satisfy it by creating a single legislature, invested with larger attributions than the two chambers it displaced. He was mistaken: nothing short of parliamentary control would now please Egypt.

War arrested the reflexion: unexpectedly Egypt found herself a participant in the struggle. Turkey, the suzerain Power, entered the lists, intent on blocking the Suez Canal. Military authority in Egypt proclaimed martial law. The news shocked society. Martial law had a sinister note, a hint of actual hostilities by no means relieved by a later understanding that England "undertook the sole burden of the war without calling upon the Egyptian people for aid

therein." It was a rash promise; for no human intelligence could predict in 1914 the course and consequences of the World War. Worse was to follow. Peace had sufficiently indicated the anomalies of a military occupation of Egypt; war with Turkey made their continuance impossible. A new form of government had to be devised, a new nationality provided for the Egyptian people. Annexation and autonomy were considered and rejected: the first was certain to promote suspicion among neutral Powers; the second, to increase difficulties in defending the Suez Canal. Between the two extremes stood a protectorate: no very satisfactory alternative in view of the earlier pledges given by England on the subject of the occupation, but an expedient probably less open to objection than the others. On the 19th of December, 1914, England announced her decision, and simultaneously invited Prince Husein Kamel, son of Ismail, to accept the throne in place of Abbas Hilmi, whose attitude was suspect.

The Turkish attack on the canal failed dismally, but for the two years following Egypt had to bear the inconveniences incidental to a state of war. They were at first light enough, but in the summer of 1917 that comfortable state of affairs came to an end. British strategy called for an invasion of Palestine. Across Sinai grew up a long line of communications, before Gaza there lay a field army needing labor and produce. For awhile Egypt provided both uncomplainingly: then the supply dwindled and military authority was forced to requisition. Crops and animals were seized, labor was compulsorily recruited: a melancholy comment upon England's undertaking in 1914. None the less from the war Egypt profited materially. Her revenue exceeded expenditure, her financial reserve increased. She had been saved from invasion, she had few dead to mourn. Agriculture had prospered. Her savings probably amounted to £ E. 150,000,000; her exports and imports had doubled in value. All this good fortune and more Egypt owed to her association with England.

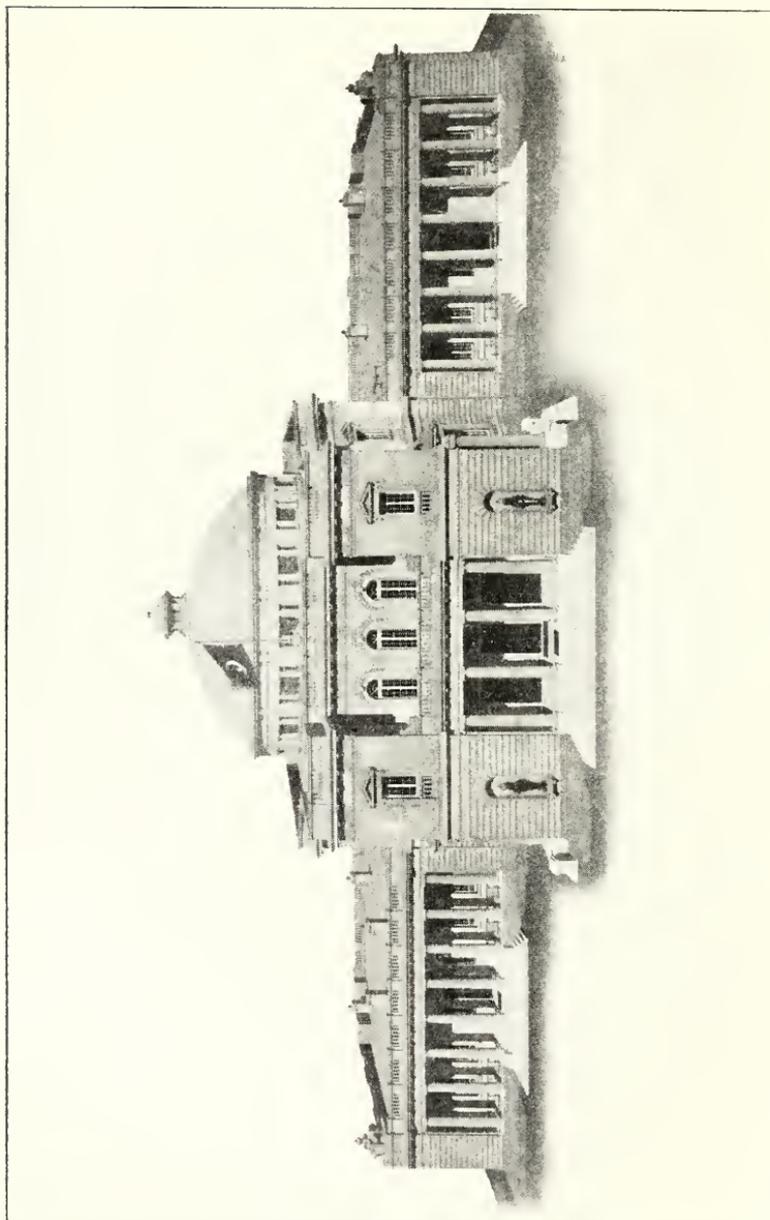
Meanwhile, President Wilson's inspiring reminder of the right of small nations to self-determination had stirred Egypt to the quick, and following the armistice Sa'ad Pasha Zaghul, a former Minister, stepped forward to champion his country's claim. He asked leave to discuss the grievances in London: for answer he was bidden to stay at home. It moved him to defiance. He issued a stream of

manifestoes, he called upon Europe to mark the measure of England's iniquity. So violent grew his language that military authority sent Zaghlul to cool his tongue in Malta. His arrest was followed by wild disorder. Administration came to a standstill: a lust for blood and destruction fastened on the country. In some perplexity the British prime minister commissioned Lord Allenby as a special High Commissioner first "to restore order," next "to maintain the King's protectorate on a sure and equitable basis." The first was easily accomplished. But Allenby's triumph went no further: try as he would, he could not succeed in convincing Egypt of the virtue of a protectorate.

Such was the situation when Lord Milner, at the head of a commission of inquiry, arrived in Cairo. His welcome was ominous: he was bluntly recommended to confer with Sa'ad Zaghlul, then in Paris, or betake himself home. Moreover Milner was handicapped by his terms of reference: he was only empowered to discover a form of constitution that "under the protectorate" would satisfy Egyptian aspirations. No such formula could possibly be devised, and Milner meditated upon a new line of approach. He met Zaghlul and a delegation, known later as the Wafd, in London, and boldly proposed a treaty of alliance between the two nations with acknowledgement of England's special interests in the valley of the Nile. He was prepared to be generous in turn—to withdraw the protectorate, to admit the sovereign independence of Egypt, to guarantee the country against aggression, to withdraw foreigners from the administration, to confine the duty of the British garrison to the protection of the Suez Canal. It was not enough. Egypt coveted the Sudan also and Milner regretfully broke off negotiations. Twelve months later Adli Pasha took up the thread. He was no more successful than Zaghlul, and Lord Curzon could only believe that in common with the whole world Egypt was suffering "from the cult of disruptive and fanatical nationalism." Meanwhile Allenby in Cairo was by no means at his ease. Conciliation had failed. Negotiations had borne no better fruit and he could think of no alternative but to offer Egypt her independence. Thus came about the unilateral declaration of the 28th of February, 1922, terminating the protectorate but reserving at the discretion of England security of imperial communications, defence of the Suez Canal, protection of minorities and foreign interests, and the future of the Sudan.

Some months later came the promulgation of a constitution and the meeting of Egypt's first parliament with Zaghlul as prime minister. Through the first session debate seldom wandered far from the reserved points, and Zaghlul went to London to settle them on his own terms. He returned empty-handed, boasting of his failure, speaking of England as the irreconcilable enemy. His intemperate words threw the country into a ferment, his attitude towards the throne encouraged the cry of "revolution or Zaghlul." Mutiny among Egyptian troops stationed in the Sudan broke out, Sir Lee Stack, governor general of the province, was assassinated in the streets of Cairo. It was a sorry business: the culminating crime of a long tale of political murders. Punishment followed: Zaghlul hid his face in retirement, the constitution was suspended and parliament was dissolved. It was well for Egypt to have a respite from democratic government, and the new prime minister, Ziwar Pasha, waited six months for the country to recover its senses. Once more the elections went in favor of the Wafd, as Zaghlul's party was now universally called, and Ziwar hardly knew what to do. England with some reason was suspicious of a Wafdist ministry. Egypt would be exposed to further mortification, if Zaghlul came back to power. It was a dilemma from which Ziwar escaped by persuading the King to dissolve the new parliament.

But palace rule, however benevolent in intention, is never a satisfactory substitute for constitutional government, and it fell to Lord Lloyd, replacing Allenby in the spring of 1925, gently to remind the King of that truth. It must be said of the tumultuous years which followed the declaration of independence, that His Majesty Fuad the First, who succeeded to the throne in 1917, had behaved with good sense and dignity. His position was always delicate and frequently extremely embarrassing. He had given parliamentary government a trial and found it wanting: driven to the opposite course, he found himself hedged about with constitutional limitations ill suited to a country so backward as Egypt. Nor had it always been easy to reconcile his concern for the true welfare of Egypt with his duty towards her elected representatives. The two interests frequently conflicted, and decision was often perplexing. On this occasion the elimination of Zaghlul made the way easier, and a new parliament met a new leader. It was a business-like assembly: party was forgotten in the interest of the State. Debate pro-



*Courtesy of P. G. Elgood*

THE EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENT HOUSE

ceeded smoothly, significant testimony that deputies recognized parliamentary government was still on trial.

Taking advantage of an official visit to London, Sarwat, the new prime minister, called on Sir Austen Chamberlain, minister for foreign affairs. He found that Englishman ready to discuss a settlement of the reserved points, and out of the conversation emerged another draft treaty, making substantial concession to Egyptian sentiment. It might have ended the differences but for an obstinate belief on the part of a parliament wholly Wafdist, that this party alone must have the honor of negotiating a settlement. Sarwat was not a member of it: his relations with Mustapha Nahas, the successor of Zaghlul now dead, were by no means cordial. Presently the whisper passed that Egypt was betrayed, and fearful of forcing an issue, Sarwat resigned. Nahas stepped into Sarwat's shoes, and at once picked a quarrel with England. He paid dearly for the temerity. Chamberlain took advantage of the dispute to remind Egypt that she must not interpret the four points reserved under the Declaration of 1922 as she thought fit, and Nahas, accepting the implication, made way for Mohammed Pasha Mahmoud. Some change was necessary in the interests of Egypt. To many Egyptians anxious for a settlement with England, the pretensions of the Wafd had become intolerable. Behind that party stood no doubt the bulk of the electorate, but a parliamentary majority, however important in domestic issues, is less so in negotiation. In that field negotiators must have not only a sense of statesmanship but some acquaintance with the virtue of compromise, and there was no sign that Nahas or his colleagues enjoyed either. Marking the moral, Mohammed Mahmoud prevailed on the King to suspend parliament. His term of office was too short to accomplish much, but he succeeded at least in persuading England to acknowledge Egypt's paramount right over the waters of the Blue and White Niles. That achievement, in itself of no small merit, passed unnoticed in the news that Mohammed Mahmoud had wrung out of Mr. Henderson, a new foreign minister, a treaty more favorable to Egypt than his predecessors. There was the customary stipulation that Egypt must approve the draft, and Mohammed Mahmoud returned to Cairo to prepare the electoral rolls. It was not his good fortune to carry negotiations

with England to the end. The elections ended in an overwhelming victory for Mustapha Nahas, and once more prime minister, that Egyptian went confidently to London. He was no more successful than his predecessors, Sa'ad Zaghlul and Adli, had been nine years earlier. The Sudan was the stumbling block. Egypt would not abate her claim to sovereignty, England could not afford to satisfy it.

Recalling the suspension that had befallen earlier parliaments, Nahas set to work to guarantee his own against a similar misfortune. Under his auspices suspension or even modification of the written constitution of 1923 became an act of high treason, and punishable by a new supreme court of justice. It was too much for the good sense of the King to admit, and with excellent discretion he refused his assent to the bills. The Wafd rushed on its doom; it swore to defend the constitution at all costs. In this wise the issue narrowed to a contest between the throne and the party. The first picked up the challenge. Ismail Pasha Sidki formed a new cabinet of ministers unidentified with any particular party, and the King adjourned parliament indefinitely.

In vain the Wafd protested, in vain it called on Egypt to pay no taxes: Sidki answered the defiance by proscribing all public meetings of the Wafd, confiscating its manifestoes, suspending newspapers that dared to publish them. There were whispers of revolution, but Sidki had the armed forces of the crown at his back. Presently he was able to publish a new constitution without provoking fresh disorder. To many Egyptians Sidki's constitution was the negation of democratic government, the triumph of the throne at the expense of the people. Among their number was the late prime minister Mohammed Mahmoud, who advised the electorate to boycott the coming elections. To that daring counsel Sidki answered smoothly: he begged his adversary to reconsider the decision, he guaranteed no interference with the polls, he spoke of the need of a united nation to reopen negotiations with England. But his undertaking went no further than words. He banned a national congress called by the Wafd, he ignored a declaration signed by four ex-prime ministers and twenty three ex-ministers that not only contested the validity of elections under the new constitution, but warned England that no treaty negotiated by Sidki would bind Egypt. Yet despite that protest, few observers conversant with Egypt could doubt how the poll would go. Sixty-five per cent of the



*Courtesy of P. G. Elgood*

#### VILLAGE ARTISANS

Voters of today

electorate were reported to have voted, and the result was a personal triumph for Sidki. None the less, considering that within the last eight years four parliaments have sat, ten prime ministers have held office, it would be rash to assume that the life of the present parliament or of the present cabinet will be long.

Such briefly is the story of England in Egypt: a stewardship in effect of which England has no need to be ashamed. She has nursed her charge to adolescence, she has provided it with ideals of citizenship: so much at least will be admitted by posterity. The political history of the occupation may be conveniently divided into five phases. Indecision distinguished the first: England could not hit upon a consistent policy, much less name a date when the occupation would end. That uncertainty died away, and a vague conviction that the interests of England and Egypt were permanently indivisible replaced it. War introduced the third phase: the proclamation of a protectorate followed. The fourth terminated in admission of Egyptian sovereignty, and the fifth still awaits conclusion. The Sudan remains the only obstacle now to settlement. If occupation constitutes a title to sovereignty, then it must be admitted that the Egyptian claim in law to the Sudan is substantial. With the conquest of Sennaar in 1820 by Mohammed Ali and the annexation

of the upper basin of the White Nile by Ismail fifty years later, the Sudan passed to the keeping of Egypt. But the administration of this vast dependency proved too difficult to be successful. Misgovernment and rebellion were a commonplace, and in 1886 Egyptian arms were forced back to Wadi Halfa. But that retirement did not invalidate sovereignty, nor was the Egyptian title questioned until the reoccupation of the Sudan in 1898. Then England, who had partially financed the campaign and lent troops for the reconquest, claimed a predominant voice in the administration of the dependency. Her concern was with the Sudanese people; their welfare she believed should take precedence of the interests of Egypt. There have been setbacks to that ideal and doubtful adventures; but England can at least claim that her administration of the Sudan has profited its inhabitants no less than herself. The foundations of self-government have been laid, their development is assured; but until the process is completed England cannot with propriety withdraw from her task. So far no responsible Egyptians have yet indicated their intentions towards the Sudan: beyond postulating the sovereignty of Egypt over the whole valley of the Nile, they do not go. It is not enough: it is indeed debatable whether the people of the Sudan would acknowledge Egyptian rule.

Little has been said in the course of negotiation of the capitulations, and the ultimate disappearance of consular courts adjudicating between their nationals has been taken for granted. But the subject cannot be dismissed quite so cavalierly. Consular courts are not the only sinners, or the only jurisdiction that is independent of Egyptian sovereignty. To them must be added a dozen or more tribunals which adjudicate according to their own tradition of practice on marriage, divorce, and inheritance. These tribunals are Egyptian, but the law they administer is personal to the community they represent. It would be well if Egypt repaired her own legal anarchy before crying for the abolition of consular courts. And perhaps the clamor would be less insistent but for a belief that with the consular courts would go the capitulations. Certainly so long as capitulations exist, the sovereignty of Egypt is incomplete: more fallacious is the common belief that the European escapes taxation from their protection. It is not so, nor indeed would the foreign community object in principle to taxes on income or even to death duties, provided the State will not discriminate against for-

eigners. Unhappily on that point it feels little confidence. A supreme judicature international in type and embracing all existing tribunals and procedures, might conceivably furnish the guarantees the foreign community requires: but twice in the past Egypt has rejected that alternative, and there is no reason to believe that she would not do so a third time.

Although taxation is inelastic and amending legislation is still cumbersome, Egypt's financial situation is one that many countries burdened with legacies of the war may well envy. Her public debt stands at the modest figure of £ E. 91,000,000, and the reserve fund swollen with budget surpluses of prosperous years equals two fifths of that sum. Unhappily its investment is less satisfactory. Cotton is one offender. Confronted by falling prices the State bought half the 1928-1929 crop, and so locked up £ E. 15,000,000 of the reserve. It was a rash adventure. The cultivator obtained no permanent relief, the State became entangled in a doubtful operation. The market has not recovered, and a third of the cotton stored in the government go-downs still awaits a purchaser. The balance of the reserve is also heavily mortgaged. The heightening of the Aswan dam to hold up five milliard cubic meters of water in place of two and a half, the projected construction of a second reservoir on the White Nile forty miles south of Khartoum, and of subsidiary barrages, canals, and drains to distribute increased supplies of water, will exhaust the liquid reserve. And behind expenditure on irrigation are other commitments unrealizable and only indirectly remunerative: notably advances to cultivators, loans to coöperative and industrial societies, generous pledges of support to new agricultural and mortgage banks. Yet Egypt need feel no reason to be uneasy. Last year's accounts disclose a handsome excess of revenue over expenditure and the estimates for the forthcoming twelve months include a contribution of £ E. 5,000,000 on account of capital expenditure. Prudent finance should show no less happy results in the future. The industry of the Egyptian cultivator, his courage in facing falling prices, the stability of the climate and the fertility of the soil are sufficient guarantees. None the less there are lean years ahead, and Egypt would be well advised to consider her administrative expenditure. Economies have been made, no doubt, but there is still ample room for further and more drastic cuts.

Within the past twelve years on five separate occasions Eng-

land has endeavored to settle her differences with Egypt, and has failed. It is true that a government more stable in appearance than its predecessors holds office today in Egypt: but the country, nevertheless, is torn with faction and dispute, and until political parties lay aside their rivalries and approach England as a united nation, it may be wiser to wait on time. Yet if the future is uncertain, at least England can look back on the past with humble satisfaction. Her achievement in Egypt cannot be undone. The superstructure she has been at pains to build, may shake from time to time, but the foundations will not move. They are laid too well.

## TAHA HUSAIN AND MODERN EGYPT

BY MARTIN SPRENGLING

IN the New Orient more than elsewhere, outstanding individuals are representing and carrying the modern urge and drive of the ancient peoples of Asia. Gandhi is far from standing alone in Asia though few can even remotely approach his stature. At the opposite end, Mustapha Kemal, the Gazi, is as different from Gandhi as night is from day: but in him is summed up new Turkey. Ibn Saoud of Arabia is distinct from both, but he is modern Arabia. In Persia Shah Pahlavi, and in China, Chiang Kai Shek are not out of place in this august company.

Egypt, since the death of Saad Zaghloul, seems to be without effective leadership. In the purely political sphere this is true. In the realm of humanity and human interest, Egypt is not so poor. The pages of her distinguished journals and of many notable books published in the great center of Arabic culture, Cairo, give ample evidence that on that side old Egypt has a score or more of earnest workers striving for their own and their country's uplift. All this is done in much more quiet fashion, in difficult Arabic, in a land under the shadow of a great colonial power, and does not so easily find its way into our public prints as did the lightning flashes of Zaghloul's banishments, recalls, and repeated elections in the murky atmosphere of the years just after the war. It is a clean, strong movement making steady and effective headway against reactionary obstacles set in its path without let or hindrance, perhaps even abetted in high places since the death of Servet Pasha.

This movement has a leader second to none in the great New Orient. One of the rarest of the great blind men which the Near East has produced since Homer is Taha Husain. Only forty-three years old, in or out of official position, of which he has never held any but that of a teacher, he is the accepted and adored leader of all that is finest and noblest in the striving of modern Egyptian youth. Born in 1889 in a village of upper Egypt, he himself sketches for us his childhood and youth in a book which in Arabic he called *The Days*, we would say *Red-Letter Days*. He has the rare gift of describing with the warmth and life that only one who has lived what he writes can give, a typical childhood in a poor village on the Nile, while at the same time he delineates in deft, delicate strokes

with unvarnished truthfulness the development of his own marked personality. As a work of art, this book easily ranks in its class with Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, and as a book which should and presently will be read by high-minded and worth-while youth the world over, it ranks higher. Those who read English can now enjoy it and judge for themselves, for it has just appeared in an admirable British translation by Paxton over Taha's own signature under the title *An Egyptian Childhood*, published in London by Routledge and Sons.

It leaves him, a 13-year old lad, at the great old medieval mosque-school of al-Azhar. Much of the teaching there was antiquated, dry-as-dust booklearning. The boy's unerring instinct found for him a *sheikh*, Seyid Ali al-Marsafy, who knew how to flavor his medieval lectures with a sanely critical attitude and with a distinct departure from over much grammar and rhetoric. Under this kindly guidance there were laid open before the blind boy's eager mind the stately halls of medieval Arabic literature, and he presently came to see embodied in these cloistered tomes and teeming through the aisles of their pages, the living spirits of men, as few or none had seen them before him. Ten years of lovingly arduous toil at al-Azhar in an incredible state of isolation and malnutrition due to the ignorance of parents, teachers, and the society in which he lived as to the problems of a sensitive blind boy, were the next formative element in the rich life of Taha Husain.

During the last four of these years, he added to the studies at al-Azhar work at the newly founded Egyptian State University. There great European teachers, Nallino, Littmann, the elder Guidi, and Santillana, showed him the beauty and value of modern science and research. Again it seems incredible, but the writer has it from Littmann's own lips, that Taha the blind was by far the keenest and quickest student of Syriac language and literature. With Guidi he learned South-Arabic, in writing, structure, and vocabulary as unlike his native North-Arabic as Latin is to English. His first book on the great blind poet-philosopher Abu-l-Ala al-Ma'arri constituted a doctor's dissertation of which any university in the world might be proud and, together with a disputation on it, procured him a doctorate in 1914.

His work in France, whither he was now sent, coincides almost entirely with the war. He was a student at Montpellier 1914-1915. Financial difficulties caused him three months of agony in Egypt.

The liberality of the late Sultan Husain enabled him to return at the beginning of 1916. From here onward his life in France became paradise to him. Aided by the daughter of the house in which he found lodging he pursued a rigorous course of studies, which led him from the house to the Sorbonne, to the College de France, to the Library of Sainte Genevieve, and back to the house again, where evenings were spent in reading French literature. In 1917, after he had attained the licentiate in literature, he asked for and obtained permission from his home authorities to marry the lady who had become the light of his life. With her his work went on to the completion of his doctorate with a magnificent study on the world's first sociologist, the North-African Arab Ibn Khaldun. And still he strove on until, with Latin and Greek at his command he attained the diploma of the highest grade in the study of ancient history early in 1919.

Since 1919 he has taught at the Egyptian University, first as Professor of Ancient History, then with the reorganization as Professor of Arabic Literature and presently as head of his department. Last year, the reactionary minority now in control, saw fit to demote him to an office job, from which it presently accepted his outraged resignation.

All this sounds like the making of a tremendously learned man. And a man learned beyond the measure of all but a few in the world's history, is Taha Husain. In this he takes a rightful, modest pride. But he is not a mere shirtfront stuffed with vain knowledge. His books, essays, and articles exhibit on every page a rare mastery of a wide range of subjects, but they are not crammed with footnotes and bibliographies, as once those of his forebears were with long lists of the transmitters of their knowledge from the original happenings in Mohammed's day down to the split second in which they were writing. Taha is far more than that.

For one thing, he is a supreme creative artist in literature. This is difficult to demonstrate in translation. A good translation, that comes very near to transmuting not merely the bare sense, but the truth and beauty of the original into British English, is that of Taha's childhood story to which reference has been made. The American reader may want to compare this writer's translation of the first and last chapter of the same book, which will soon appear in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*.

But Taha Husain is more than a great scholar and a rare artist

in words. If Gandhi is the Mahatma of India, Taha is no less the great-souled, saintly leader of the coming generation in Egypt, despite his blindness, nearer in some respects to the realities than Gandhi. Writing always in language and style intelligible to all intelligent Arab readers, he is at his best when he talks directly, as he often does, to the general reading public rather than to the student specialist. Now with motherly tenderness, now mercilessly severe, he urges, lifts, and leads his people up from the slough of sloth and despond.

In 1924, he contributed by request a series of popular articles to the *Hilal*, a magazine read from Bombay to Morocco, regularly on file in the Oriental Institute Library at the University of Chicago, in grade largely on a par with Harper's or the Atlantic Monthly. He chose for his subject *Leaders of Thought*. In eight articles, some running through more than one number, he dealt successively with Homer, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Between Two Eras, and The New Era. Now, frankly, would you expect Scribner's or Harper's to run such a series? And would you as a representative of the American reading public run to read them unless they promised laughs at philosophers in Hades? The Arabic *Hilal* did publish these studies, and Arab readers did buy, beg, and borrow the magazine in numbers to read them.

And what did Taha have to say? Let us look at the essay on Homer. He begins by warning his readers what not to expect. They would expect to find under such a head a few biographical data, a few snatches of quotations, the sort of thing that Plutarch gives: fragments of a single individual detached from his surroundings and background, as if that environment did not exist. Now he, Taha, has learned that such a picture is a false and distorted picture, and he would have his readers learn the same. The group, the folk and surroundings in which the individual leader lives and sings or writes or philosophizes or makes war or politics is as important as himself. Hence we are going to observe the group and the individual and as much as we may of the entire surroundings and so gain as full a picture of human life as possible.

And with what thinker or philosopher shall we begin? There are many. There are more than ten. Nay, there are more than a hundred. In truth, their number cannot be counted. Many such individuals are unknown to us. Many a thinker may, nay, must there be, who was of great influence in the rise of his group, in preparing

them for inevitable changes: the course of time has wiped out their personality and buried it from our view so effectively, that we may know of their circumstances little or nothing at all.

With such a person or group of persons, says he, I shall introduce my leaders of the world's thought. I mean those persons about whose names and personalities little or nothing is known, who indited the Iliad and the Odyssey. You may be surprised, that I begin with personalities so vague, inditers and reciters of epic poetry. Why do I start with Homer and the Homerids? Think back a moment to that Greece to which modern civilization may in such large measure be traced. Compare it with the roots of Islamic civilization! In the nomadic stage underlying Islamic as well as Greek culture, how do men first voice their thoughts, their emotions, their life and the things that move and change it? In poetry and song!

Homer has been shown by modern research to be a mere name. Yet what a name! Not only Greek, all European, nay, also all Arabic civilization is permeated by an astonishing amount of the beauty, the grandeur, the forms and ideas created by the man or group called Homer. We may not know them, but we can easily picture them to ourselves from their works. Imagine a group that cannot read or write, that has no philosopher and wants none, that desires in its life no more than eating and drinking, plenty and safety. They are living this crude life in an ancient, not very beautiful nor very orderly Greek town. One day, there comes to them a man with a musical instrument in his hand. He begins to play. People gather round to listen. Presently he adds to the tune a song. He sings in sweet, simple, beautiful words the tale of a little group of heroes, in whom are personified the splendor, power, and courage which are the ideals of his hearers and subtly weaving in ethical, social, political ideas and sentiments, which give these hearers new, but still natural ideals. The people, crowding round, are entranced. They applaud him, bid him stay, make him welcome, give him presents. He stays a while and then moves on to another, similar town. And with him move and spread the new beauty, the new ideals, the new civilizing agents. And what civilizing agents! Look what they led to in the days of Athens' glory! Look what they led to through the Renaissance in Europe! If you look close, though the mediæval Arabs knew little directly of Homer, you will find much of this forgotten hero of thought in mediæval Arab civilization. And how much more of his grand uplifting power is seizing

upon us again in this modern age! Do you not now think I was right in classing the poets of the Iliad and Odyssey among the great leaders of human thought?—But you ask me, what are the Iliad and Odyssey? Ah, that I shall not tell you. I want you to read the Iliad and Odyssey. They were written to delight you and men like you. So Taha cajoles and entices his people to walk with him on the road to culture and its glory.

But not always is Taha so bland and his mood so gentle. At another time, shortly after, we find him writing a column in the weekly *Siyasa*, which corresponds in the Arab world to the *New York Sunday Times*. Here Taha speaks of the golden age of Islam, the age of Baghdad the resplendent, of Haroun al-Rasheed and the fabulous glory of the Arabian Nights. The Arabs of today look back with the greatest pride on this day of their power and splendor. They picture it to themselves as an age of ideal orthodoxy, justice, and all that is ideally good and great in the history of their religion and their empire. Now Taha in these *Wednesday Talks* unsheathes the flashing sword of truth. He knows, as no one else now living, the literature of and on that age. He uses this literature as a merciless mirror to flash upon his people the terrible truth of that age. And what is that truth? That it was an age of the breakdown of nomad crudity, simplicity, and relative sobriety; that the impact of rapidly acquired power, luxury, riches, and sedentary civilization upon a nomad people had led to a grave crisis in Islam; that this age was one in which poets openly sang with sneering, materialistic cynicism of all good and decent things in life; that it was an age of profligacy, drunkenness, and every vice; that this vice was not the property of a small class, that it was deeply ingrained in the courts of royalty and nobles, that theology and religion were not free from it, that it had permeated every class of society. He is criticized for this fearless candor on the shortcomings of the Islamic past. Made more fearless by censure he has the gravest, best-written and argued criticism printed one Wednesday. In the next number he replies:—When and under what circumstances does a people borrow peacock plumage for its glory from the fancied glory of its golden age? When does it guard with the most foolish jealousy against the idea that any stain or blemish may be found on the morals and manners of its forebears? Take the case of the Greeks! In the days of the Roman Empire, when Greece was laid low, when there were no more Alexanders, Platos, Phidiases, then it is that the

second-rate historian Plutarch criticizes the great Greek "father of history" Herodotus. And what is his criticism? This epigone accuses the naïvely sincere Herodotus of indiscretion, nay, of lying, because he tells most unseemly tales of Greek heroes of the Persian wars, who lived in or near his time. Herodotus depicts these men as actual human beings, avid for power and glory in the pursuit of which they resort on occasion to treachery, deceit, and bribery; when their efforts fail and they are cornered, they exhibit ordinary human cowardice or even more than ordinary cravenness. In a time of general decadence this appears to Plutarch impossible, unworthy of the high estate of idealized forebears, and so he accuses Herodotus of falsehood and indiscretion. Thus the Greeks! And now Taha follows up his parable with a confession more terrible, more sincere than any the writer has ever read in Augustine or the Books of Samuel. For himself in particular and for all Moslems and Arabs in general, especially those of Egypt, he says: This is our estate. We have neither name nor fame, and so we appropriate the fame of our ancestors as an adornment and a glory for ourselves. Hence any description of this ancestral fame in natural human terms appears to us to detract not from our ancestors alone, but from them and us together. Is it not so? Else what is our glorification of the Arabs? What is our glorying in the Pharaohs? What is our boasting over the remains of their greatness? It is a species of self-deception by which we conceal from ourselves the state of ignorance, decadence, and weakness in which we find ourselves.

We leave the matter there. Taha Husain is a simple teacher, now a teacher out of a job. He lets politics severely alone. But tell me, is he not a great teacher, though he have no class? And do you know a greater prophet in the New Orient? When kings and counsellors of the present shall be long forgotten, he and his work will still be living and working with Homeric vigor and beauty.

## SOCIAL TRENDS IN EGYPT

BY HABIB I. KATIBAH

AN Islamic tradition says that "when Allah created the world Murder said, 'I am going to Syria,' and Dissension said, 'I shall go with you'; and Fertility said, 'I am going to Egypt,' and Servility said, 'I shall go with you'; and Misery said, 'I am going to the Desert,' and Health said, 'I shall go with you.'" The tradition is, of course, but an allegorical epitome of broad social truths recognized by the Arabs hundreds of years ago, and which, to a considerable extent, are still applicable today.

There is little doubt that the submissive and servile nature of the great majority of Egypt's population has been one of its most characteristic points. That the great run of its fellahin, who have always constituted the bulk of its population, never successfully revolted against their Pharaonic masters, or their Greek and Arab successors, is matter deserving consideration. Such brief uprisings as have been recorded made no material change in their mode of existence, nor did they eradicate that servile and submissive nature, and inject in its place a virile, self-reliant and independent spirit.

Only in the times whose happenings and events fall within memory of most readers of this journal are we witnessing a wide political, economic, and social upheaval among the common people all over the world, and the Egyptians have shared in the change. Only in the last decade or two are we beginning to see the man with the hoe in Egypt, as in many other countries, raise his head a little to rest from his labors and ponder over the mystery of his existence, the meaning of his destiny, and to enjoy ever so little, some of the comforts that are certainly his due in this vale of tears. The majestic Nile, the enchanting moon, the wonderfully clear and blue sky of Egypt, set off with slender and graceful palm-trees, are all beginning to have some meaning to him. And beyond them, beyond the magnificent Pyramids of Giza, symbols in eternal stone of his own slavery and oppression, beyond the Mediterranean Sea, the world outside opens to him a panorama of such vast significance that life is beginning to be to him more than arduous drudgery and slavery to the soil from sunrise to sunset each day of the year. The



*Courtesy of H. L. Hoskins*

THE BEGINNING OF THE DELTA

Egyptian fellah has begun to feel and to think, and a portentous sign it is.

Some two years ago the editor of a leading Arabic newspaper in Cairo ventured an explanation of the fact that the Egyptian people shows an infinite capacity to absorb punishment, a seeming insensibility to subjection, oppression, and exploitation from whatever source they come. Egypt, he said, is a flat country, a narrow strip of fertility flanked on either side by the desert, invitingly exposed to the open sea in the north and hemmed in by the wilds of Sudan to the south. The Nile, he expounded, which has been the life-giver of Egypt, has been also the enslaver of the receivers of its bounty. Whoever controlled it controlled their very destiny and subsistence. The Egyptian fellah is literally chained to the soil, the source of his livelihood. When he is oppressed he has no other refuge to run to; no "rock of salvation." All the country before him lies flat, and the lash of the tax-gatherer and feudal lord can reach him wherever he goes. The Egyptian fellah, therefore, is submissive and servile not so much by nature or choice, but by the compulsion of his physical environment.

Today, however, physical environment plays less and less in-

portant a rôle in the social adaptations and progress of peoples and nations of the world. Psychological, social, and economic forces that seem to spring from man's determined efforts to better his state and force even environment to conform, have affected almost every nook and corner of the habitable globe. The Egyptian fellahin and their equally unfortunate and oppressed brethren in the cities, had little to do with the historic movements and catastrophes which finally are bringing them redemption from their social bondage, but they, nevertheless, have awakened to their supreme opportunities and are manipulating them to their own ends. At last they are becoming insistent that, since they are entitled to a franchise which nominally puts the reins of government in their hands, some benefits of this government should accrue to them. Consequently, political masters, foreign and native, conform to the outward rules, at least, of the political game, and seek the vote of the Egyptian common man with promises of reform and social amelioration. The result has been that considerable progress has been made in economic and social reforms which promise to be lasting and which presage the dawn of a new and better day for Egypt.

On Egyptian social life as it exists today and has existed for generations we need not dwell. It has not changed much in its fundamental aspects, yet just enough to show the trend of modern influences. Lane's "Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians," written almost a century ago, or Stanley Lane-Poole's "The Story of Cairo," written a generation ago, with little modification still suffice as guides to the colorful life of present-day Egyptians, described recently and intimately by such modern Egyptian writers as Mohammed Haykal, Dr. Taha Hussein or Ibrahim al-Mazini. The superstitious and fetishistic customs that cast their evil spell on the life of the ignorant Egyptians still have a strong hold, as one may see in the wretched crowds that throng the Hasanain Mosque or the Masjid of My Lady Zainab in Cairo, or the Mosque of Sidi Ahmed al-Badawi in Tanta, and hundreds of local shrines or *mazars* throughout the Valley of the Nile. The *walis*, living and dead, still exercise their sway over the masses. From the moment he sees the light of day, through his childhood, manhood, and on to tottering age and death, the average ignorant fellah or poor city dweller is governed by strange superstitions and ceremonies, some of which are perhaps as old as the First Egyptian Dynasty and may be even vestigial remnants of the animism of the

Stone Age. The *zar* (magic) which has been described by many writers on Egypt, is still commonly practised by Egyptians, and sometimes by well-to-do and supposedly enlightened ones among them. Except for the intensity and prevalence of these superstitions and customs, they are not essentially different from others existing elsewhere, as one may learn who peruses the pages of the "Golden Bough." Nor has Egypt emancipated itself as yet from the thral-



*Courtesy of H. L. Hoskins*

#### THE OLD PERSISTS IN CAIRO

dom of ignorance in matters of personal and social hygiene, an ignorance which claims annually a heavy toll of victims. Even educated and cultured Egyptians sometimes have retained habits which were based on the age-old conception that infection is from Allah, and that microbes are figments of the imagination. Ophthalmia, bilharzia and ankylostomiasis are still devastating curses of Egypt, as they were in the days of Moses and Aaron. Added to these is the more recent yet terrible curse of addiction to drugs which, it is claimed on high authority, has laid its withering hand on no less than half-a-million of Egypt's population, perhaps the highest ratio (3.9%) of drug addiction in the world.

No student of Egyptian life can ignore these matters. They are the first things that command his notice when he steps from

a boat to the Egyptian shore and is pressed upon by pitiful crowds of dirty, ragged, blear-eyed beggars, or is pestered by bare-footed peddlers of cheap trinkets. But no fair student of Egyptian life would stop there. No realistic study of any people in the East today is complete which fails to take into consideration social tendencies and latent forces which are slowly but determinedly sweeping the old order before them, and which are gradually modernizing social life. It is these modern tendencies which should be examined particularly.

Beginning with the Egyptian child, we find that great steps have been taken by the Egyptian Government to infuse notions of modern hygiene and child care among the masses of fellahin and poorer city dwellers. Due to Sir Mohammed Shahin Pasha, Under-Secretary of State for Public Health, a child welfare section was created in the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior in 1927. Simultaneously a number of ante-natal and post-natal clinics were distributed in the various towns of Egypt in addition to children's dispensaries and maternity schools. Permanent and travelling child welfare clinics now number forty, each in charge of a doctor, assisted by a qualified nurse.

How great the response has been among the common population of Egypt to these modern agencies of health may be judged from the following table based on one in a recent issue of the journal *al-Hilal*, which gives comparisons in numbers of clinics established and children and mothers served by them during the first year of the child welfare section and three years later.

	1927	1930
Number of clinics.....	8	27
Number of pregnant women.....	35,759	29,451
Number of deliveries under clinical care	1,730	17,758
Number of visits to women in travail....	286	1,718
Number of visits by qualified midwives	7,917	65,249
Number of visits to mothers		
by clinical nurses.....	8,735	70,136
Number of children taken care of		
by clinics.....		277,060

The ratio in these figures must have risen correspondingly since; as we have seen in Mohammed Shahin Pasha's report, the number of those clinics has jumped to forty, an increase of thirteen in

one year. And it is clearly apparent from the above figures also that the response by the Egyptian mothers kept pace with the increase in number and facilities of those clinics.

It is interesting from the social point of view to learn further from the statistics in *al-Hilal* that in 1930 no less than 24,416 lectures were delivered before women groups at the clinics themselves and at individual homes. This latter aspect of the child welfare crusade by the Egyptian Ministry is of incalculable benefit, for it is the most effective direct weapon against the evil influences of superstition and ignorance, and in time will lighten considerably the burden of the welfare corps. Popular education in this direct and simple manner is still in the embryonic stage in the Near East, but its potentiality is stupendous.

What becomes of the Egyptian child after it has passed the critical infant stage? It is estimated that more than fifty per cent of the death rate in Egypt is that of infants between the ages of one and five. The fate of the Egyptian child is not a happy one. Usually it is born in ignorant and unsanitary surroundings, and its bringing up is inferior, sometimes even debasing. There is no law, so far, against child labor in Egypt, although a move in that direction is under contemplation. It is almost a superhuman task to change this environment through the education of the parents, most of whom are illiterate and have no time to attend to the cultural side of life. Indirectly a great deal has been accomplished by the government, but aside from infusing some valuable hygienic and social information not much could be expected.

With the growing generation it is different, and here is where the Egyptian Government can hold its trump card against the odds of ignorance and the inertia of old customs and traditions. This it has done by an ambitious program to promulgate free and compulsory elementary education throughout the whole length and breadth of Egypt. According to this program, formulated in 1925, it is the aim of the Ministry of Education to give a school seat to every Egyptian boy and girl by the year 1947-8. Through a system of *mudiriyyah* (a section roughly corresponding to our state) grants and federal coöperation, free elementary schools are being rapidly instituted all over Upper and Lower Egypt. Thus from a total of 776 elementary schools in 1925 attended by 71,000 pupils the number increased in 1931 to 1,557 schools with a total attendance of 178,012. All these are government compulsory schools and do not



*Courtesy of P. G. Elgood*

#### FELLAHIN BOYS AT PLAY

include private institutions, mosque schools or *maktabs*, or missionary and foreign establishments. And in all these schools children study half the day and are released for work in the fields or factories the other half. A recent experiment in outdoor education has also been tried. Medical inspection is carried on in these schools with gratifying results. Thus among 11,717 school children inspected, ninety-two per cent were found to be infected with trachoma in various stages, and twenty-five per cent in the acute stages (one and two). But after proper treatment the latter ratio dropped to eight per cent.

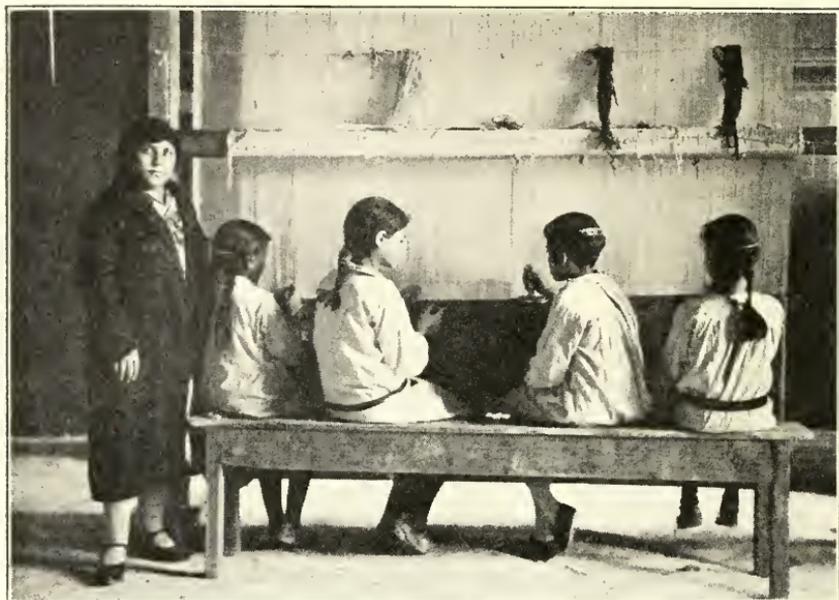
Institutions for the care of children outside the schools are, however, still few and far between. There are, according to official reports, only three homes for foundlings under governmental control, with a capacity of 327 beds. There is a reformatory school for boys and girls at Giza, Cairo, and another at Marj (for boys). But as yet child vagrancy has not been adequately attended to. Here, probably, is a rich field for philanthropic activity. Here is a typical instance. A little street urchin, hardly seven years of age, was walking down Fnuad Street, in Cairo, barefooted and ragged, holding in hand a cigar box full of chewing gum and candies which he was peddling. Suddenly the boy spotted a little toy balloon sail-

ing away in the sky. The boy forgot for the nonce that he was a little business man struggling against the heavy odds of making a living while still at the threshold of life. He looked up with a beaming, innocent smile and a strange gleam in his eyes; a sudden light of cheer suffused his sallow face. He was a boy again, oblivious to the cruel buffets and knocks of a heartless world, insensible to the cold indifference of the throngs in the street who spurned his wares as they hurried by. He was following the toy balloon and sailing with it in imagination to lands of distant dreams. For a few seconds he, too, was at play, even though only in imagination, until the balloon was wafted out of sight.

Such children, and one comes across hundreds of them in the cities of Egypt, sometimes huddle in corridors and doorways to sleep in their ordinary clothes. The only mitigation of their hard lot is the consoling consideration that Egypt usually has such a clement winter that hardly do those gamins suffer from cold, and their brown little bodies that peep through their torn rags get a plentiful share of the actinic rays of the sun.

More fortunate children find in the Boy Scout and Girl Scout movement a happy release for their playful instinct, as well as an opportunity for the development of those splendid traits and habits of coöperation, fair play, loyalty and altruism that are associated with that movement. The rapid growth of the Scout movement in the Near East is one of the more promising signs of development since the War. In Egypt, it is asserted, every government elementary and secondary school has its Boy or Girl Scout organization, with a central bureau in the Ministry of the Interior.

Female education, more than ever before, is receiving the serious attention and solicitude of the Egyptian nation and government, with the result that the ratio of educated women in Egypt has risen surprisingly in the last decade, and, according to some figures, has more than quadrupled. This has been especially true of the Moslem woman, whose education in the past had been sadly neglected. Since 1919 the number of primary schools for girls has increased from four, with an attendance of 578, to sixteen, with an attendance of 16,523. In the field of higher education, too, the Egyptian woman has taken a prominent place. There are now two high schools for girls under government control with 201 and 167 students respectively, besides a college for girls of the upper classes,



*Courtesy of H. I. Katibah*

#### RUG WEAVING

Instruction in Rug weaving under the auspices of the Egyptian Feminist Movement



*Courtesy of H. I. Katibah*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE EGYPTIAN FEMINIST UNION

a finishing school, recently founded in Giza. Two normal schools for girls, the Sanieh Training College for Women, and the Hilwan Training College, with 407 and 176 students respectively, supply the government primary schools with a constant stream of competent teachers, trained in the modern methods of pedagogy and psychology. The Egyptian National University is open to men and women alike, and many Egyptian women, mostly Mohammedan, have availed themselves of its wide opportunities, while many women students have been lately included in student missions studying abroad. Again here we do not include missionary and foreign institutions of learning where thousands of Coptic and Mohammedan girls receive their higher education. The American missionaries have long been active in this field and deserve high credit for their splendid work.

This leads naturally to the discussion of the feminist movement in Egypt which has lately received some attention here and in Europe. It has become a social axiom that no nation can hope to attain any degree of social progress, or attaining it could hold it for long, when fully half its population, and that which is more directly influential in the bringing up and early education of the rising generation, is neglected and suppressed. This truth has long since dawned on the minds of Moslem social reformers in Egypt and elsewhere. The movement to emancipate the Moslem woman and elevate her social status went hand in hand with the nationalistic and literary renaissance of the Near East. Qasim Amin, the real founder of the feminist movement in Egypt who stirred the Moslem world with his impassioned appeal for the emancipation and education of the Moslem woman more than thirty-five years ago, had among his staunchest supporters Mohammed Abdou, the famous Mohammedan liberal, and Sa'ad Zaghlul Pasha, who later rose to the leadership of the national movement in Egypt.

With the exception of Turkey, where women's rights have been almost fully recognized by the Kemalists Government, Egypt has today the most highly developed and efficient feminist organization in the Near East, and its women are well on the road to complete emancipation. The Egyptian Feminist Union, with its new headquarters on Qasr al-'Aini Street in Cairo, is a very influential organization with many-sided activities. Its president, Mme. Huda Sharawi, is one of the ablest and most successful women leaders

in the Moslem world: her splendid courage and example have done much to enhance the status of the Egyptian woman. Many laws favorable to woman, such as one limiting the age of marriage, another granting equal educational opportunities to girls, and still another granting redress to woman in the religious courts in matters of divorce, have been passed mainly through the influence and agitation of this Union. The last of these laws was passed only recently, and the first record of a Moslem woman in Egypt divorcing her husband went on the calendar a few months ago. In this connection, it may be noted that unveiling has become almost universal among the higher circles of Moslem women in Egypt, and the fashion is spreading among the women of the middle and lower classes.

These are some of the phases in which Egypt has been "making up for lost time." has been catching up with a social-economic standard which, for generations, has been accepted as the norm and measure of highly civilized communities. Progress in many ways has been phenomenal. Having just escaped from feudal and autocratic institutions differing little from those of Europe in the Middle Ages, Egypt has taken one leap squarely into the new order without passing through various intermediary stages, for which the West paid so dearly in blood and anguish. It is emblematic of the times that countries in the Near East which had not developed the railway now use more and more frequently the truck and automobile for communication; and that in Arabia where the telegraph is still rudimentary the telephone and wireless have been adopted at less cost and superior efficiency.

In Egypt this sort of social acceleration has sometimes brought forth anomalous results. Thus labor unionism is a recognized force, with a labor party and a labor magazine, while Egyptian industry is still in its first stages of development. The fruits of labor unionism are being reaped by laborers who hardly realize their industrial rights, let alone the economic and social implications of the philosophy on which it rests. It must be said, moreover, that Egyptian labor enjoys conscientious and enlightened leadership usually recruited from the educated leisure classes.

More amazing than the growth of labor unionism and more urgently needed is that of the coöperative movement among the Egyptian fellahin. This latter movement, which owes its inception to

the crisis of 1907, was legally recognized by legislation in 1923. In one year, 1930, the number of the coöperative agricultural societies in Egypt was more than doubled and the membership was almost doubled, as may be seen from the following comparison of figures by Sayyid Ahmed al-Bakri in the magazine *al-Muktataf* for April, 1932:

	1929	1930	1931
Number of Coöperative Societies	217	514	539
Total Membership .....	22,336	44,000	54,000
Paid Capital (In Egyptian Pounds)	80,985	133,000	154,000
Reserve (In Egyptian Pounds).....	9,558	13,000	18,000
Loans Contracted by Societies (£ E.)		127,694	273,805

The newly organized Agricultural Bank of Egypt, under government control, gives preferential rates of five per cent interest to coöperative societies, against seven per cent to individual borrowers, a consideration which in itself is sufficient to guarantee the growth and stability of these coöperative societies.

A strong tendency also has appeared among many of these societies for the coöperative development of agricultural industries such as dairies, apiaries and sericulture. Instances of coöperative buying are common, while coöperative marketing, especially of the cotton crops, is one of the salient features of these societies.

There is undoubtedly a growing interest on the part



*Courtesy of H. I. Katibah*

A MODEL FARMING VILLAGE  
Property of H. M. King Fuad I

of the Egyptian fellah in the value of technical knowledge, and magazines in Arabic relating to different technical fields are fairly numerous. *Al-Muktataf* has recently introduced a special department for news and information pertaining to the coöperative agricultural movement. Last year an agricultural-industrial exposition was held in Cairo attended by thousands of farmers, and in which the coöperative societies were well represented. The exposition program included a cinema in which farmers were shown the latest phases of the coöperative movement in Great Britain, and a lecture at the American University of Cairo where the American minister gave a talk on the subject of agriculture and the coöperative movement, and films, brought especially from Washington, were shown.

Space limitations forbid extended notice of other phases of the modern social development of Egypt. These include the trend toward liberalism in Islam, as demonstrated in the reform of al-Azhar; the progress made in the fields of higher education; the modern renaissance in literature, art, and music; the great service which the press, particularly the illustrated Arabic weekly, is rendering to the cause of popular education; the splendid work which Russell Pasha, the Hakimdar of Cairo, and his staff of loyal and competent officials, are making in checking the flow of smuggled drugs, the deadly heroin, cocaine, hashish, and the still more deadly synthetic esters, and the heroic crusade they are conducting to alleviate, if not eradicate the evil curse of drug addiction in Egypt; the equally splendid work which the department of health is undertaking to mitigate the affliction of bilharzia, which is said to claim fully forty per cent of the native population. Especially praiseworthy in this direction is the work carried on by the expedition of the Rockefeller Foundation in Cairo under Dr. Barlow. Every one of these subjects has a direct bearing on the progressive trend of the social development of Egypt.

Here a question arises which has often tended to discount the credit deserved by native Egyptians for their recent progress. It is frequently asked if the Egyptians could have accomplished all these things had it not been for the British occupation of Egypt. This question is difficult to answer. What would have been the course of history had it not been this or that, is matter of idle speculation. It is a fact, however, that Egyptians, left to themselves, have carried on the work with commendable sincerity, honesty, and zeal.



*Courtesy of H. I. Katibah*

#### BILHARZIA PATIENTS

A detention camp of Bilharzia patients of the Rockefeller Institute Expedition.

The fear which Lord Cromer, whose three-acre law is the Magna Carta of the Egyptian fellah, once expressed that "a freely elected Egyptian parliament... would not improbably legislate for the slave-owner, if not the slave-dealer," has been belied by time. Present and past Egyptian parliaments, in spite of numerous handicaps, have given good accounts of themselves. They have to their credit considerable social and economic legislation which has proved the progressiveness, far-sightedness, and loyal patriotism of the majority of representatives. Occasionally some of them have outlined legislative programs which would be considered advanced in any country. Thus in 1928 Dr. Abdul-Rahman Awad submitted a bill for the "betterment of the race," in which he boldly advocated the compulsory medical examination of couples seeking marriage.

The social tendency in modern Egyptian legislation is indeed one of its promising characteristics. Higher education, in its broader and cultural senses, was fully developed long ago; and Egyptians often contrast their progress along this line with the stupid, bureaucratic system developed under the British and known by the name of its sponsor as the Dunlop System, which was calculated to produce subaltern officials and clerks who knew how to take orders from their superiors. Dr. Faris Nimr, able editor of *al-Mokattam*, and one of the friends and supporters of the British régime in Egypt,

from his long career of observation and study of the Egyptian situation recently gave as his chief criticism of British administration in Egypt that "they have left a legacy of a highly developed government system, one hardly inferior to that of England or the United States, but paid little attention to the people themselves. The Egyptian system of education," he continued, "did not receive from them the same kind of attention or solicitude which the railways, the police, or irrigation was accorded. Consequently we have quite a gap between the system and the people for which it was made. Violations which create a furore of criticism and agitation in Egypt would pass almost unnoticed in less developed countries like Syria, Palestine or Iraq."

It was, therefore, only natural that when the Egyptians took hold of their own affairs they busied themselves with the betterment of the social system under which they lived, and sought to fill the gap which was left by the British.

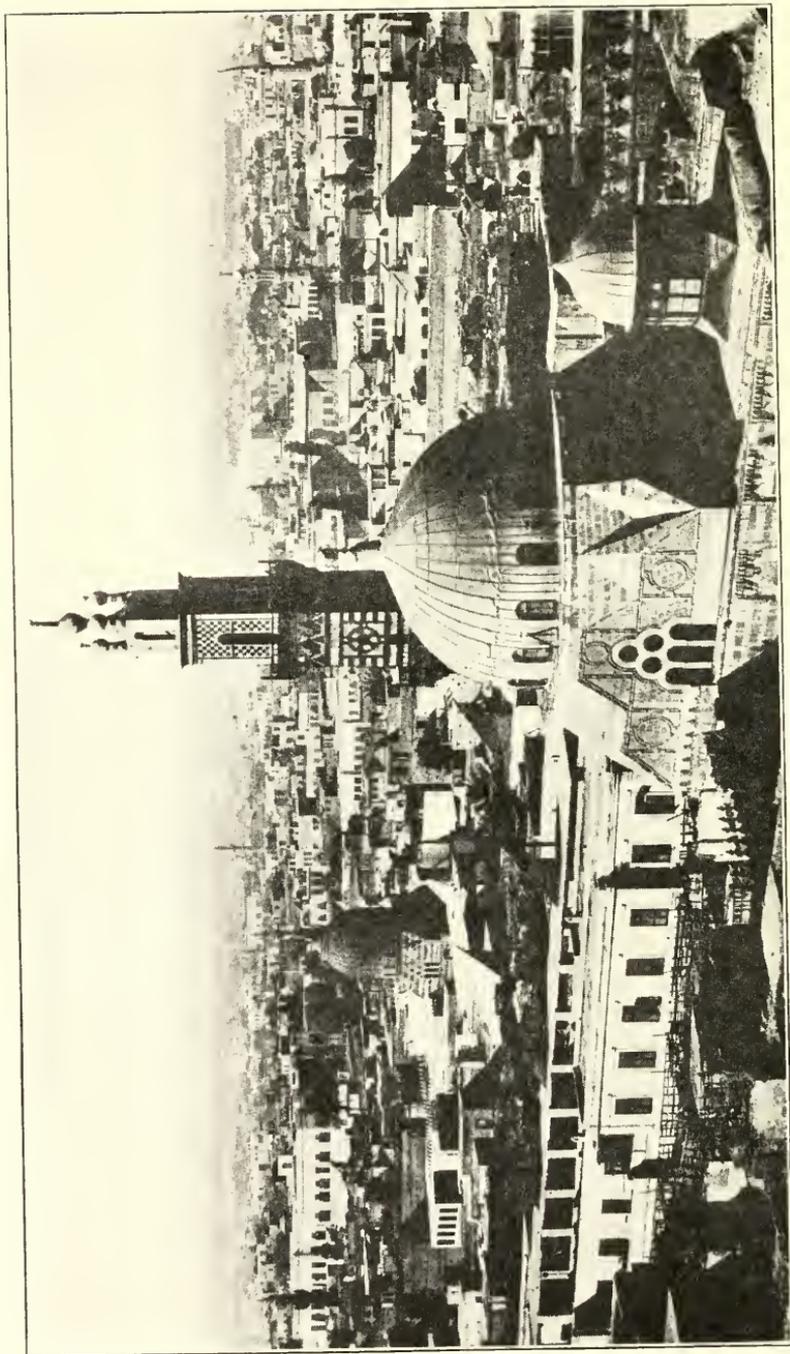
## MODERN RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES IN EGYPT

BY SHEIKH ALY ABDEL RAZEQ BEY,  
Formerly Judge in the Islamic Religious Courts of Egypt,  
and  
DEAN ROBERT S. McCLENAHAN  
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THE name "Egypt" is derived from three ancient Egyptian words, "Ia," "Ka," "Ptah," which originally meant "The place of the abode of the spirit of the God of Wisdom 'Ptah.'" For at least two or three milleniums the wisdom was very largely confined to the priests and, consequently, kept within the circle of what was considered religious wisdom; hence also the word "hieroglyphic," the secret knowledge of the priests.

For the past thirteen hundred years, the wisdom of Egypt, its culture, and life have been very closely identified with, if not entirely moulded by, the religious system known to the world as "Islam." To a very remarkable degree, the religion founded by Mohammed made and continued its impress upon the intellectual and social, the individual and the national character, practically to the exclusion of any other large and vital influences. This religion and culture originated in Arabia and, in the earlier periods of Islam, extended westward as far as Southern France, eastward as far as India and even to China, northward as far as Russia, and southward throughout Africa. In some communities, however, it entered more vigorously into the life of individuals and groups than others; this was particularly true in those nations where the Arabic language became predominant, that is, in the Near East and across North Africa. Certain cities became identified as the centers of Islamic thought, particularly, Basra, Kufa, Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo, and from these influences have radiated, both Islamic and Arabic, throughout these thirteen centuries. The entire history and literature of Islam has felt the force of the influence of these cities, through their schools, interpretations of religion, history, and literature.

Cairo is to Egypt what Paris is to France; but the throbbing life, the example and leadership of this very modern, as well as very ancient, city has extended quite beyond Egypt into other lands. Naturally, the Nile Valley has received first, and to a very much



A GENERAL VIEW OF CAIRO

greater degree than any other community, the predominating influence of Islamic Cairo. Whatever there was of pre-Islamic religious influence, whether pagan or Christian, to a very large degree gave way throughout the centuries to the penetration of Moslem thought. Egypt, by its very geographical position, was a buffer state, so to speak, between the East and the West. The Occidental considered the religion and culture of Islam as represented primarily by Egypt and Arabia; the Oriental regarded Cairo as one of the two main outposts of Islam in contact with the Western world—the other one being Constantinople.

Notwithstanding the predominating influence of Islam in Egypt, there has continued throughout the centuries a Christian community, known as the Coptic Church. In more recent times there have grown up very much smaller communities of Greeks, Armenians, Roman Catholics, Syrians and, within the past three-fourths of a century, a Protestant Christian community. But the Moslems represent about ninety per cent of the population; all the Christian communities together make up the remaining ten per cent, except for a very small percentage of Jews. In considering modern religious tendencies in Egypt, one must, therefore, keep primarily in mind these thirteen-fourteenths of the population since, for practical purposes, we may omit the very small communities other than the Coptic and Protestant communities, as they do not actively enter into the creation or the maintenance of religious currents in the nation.

The national religion of Egypt is Islam, as stated in the present Constitution. This does not mean that Christians are not admitted to citizenship. On the contrary, in the National Parliament and in the King's Cabinet there are Christians and, in the former, that is in the Parliament, there are even two or three Jews. This in itself is an indication of the tendency toward a recognition of other religions in an Islamic state.

Whatever may be said with reference to changes or currents in the religious mind of the nation with reference to the Moslems, finds its counterpart in the Christian community. At the head of the Islamic community stands the Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar; at the head of the Coptic community, stands the Patriarch. Both of these symbolize extreme conservatism; both occupy positions of guardianship over traditional religion; both maintain a very great influence within their own religious communities; the Patriarch's community naturally is only a fraction numerically as compared

with that of the Grand Sheikh. The Sheikh of al-Azhar, however, bears no authority as a spiritual head, as does the Patriarch; he is not officially "Sheikh al Islam." The Protestant Christian community while small in number is very active, but has not the leadership of one man; it is marked by a lesser tendency to conservatism and a greater tendency to what is suggested by its name in the history of the last four hundred years.

In considering present religious tendencies, it will be helpful to consider theological currents before passing on to a discussion of religious practice. Remembering their very large and predominating position in Egypt, we may begin with the Moslems. Among these there are manifested two very distinct communities, the "conservatives" and the "modernists." Egypt has been passing through such a decided transition since the days of Mohammed Ali, a hundred years ago, and especially within the last three decades, that the two camps, the conservatives and the modernists, are distinctly recognizable. Conservatism finds its greatest advocates in the *ulama* (singular *alim*, scholar) of al-Azhar, that institution of traditional orthodox Islam founded a thousand years ago at Cairo. The *ulama* are often known as "Sheikhs," as distinguished from the less conservative "Effendis," the more or less Europeanized citizens. They are largely of the Maliki school of orthodox, although there are some of the Shafi'i, Hanafi or Hanbali schools. Other communities in the Islamic world would probably claim to be equally as orthodox and conservative as the *ulama* of Cairo and Egypt, if not even more so; for example, Meccans and Wabhabees, those of Southern Arabia, and perhaps cities in North Africa or Afghanistan. But Cairo and al-Azhar have maintained for centuries a prestige for Islamic religion and culture. Here foreign languages and literature, the history and literature of non-Islamic peoples, except in so far as they have come into orthodox Moslem writings, the sciences, inventions, and general culture of other nations have been excluded. No non-Moslem, not even a Shi'ite "heretic" Moslem, has ever been admitted to al-Azhar as student or instructor, except in cases where he has carefully concealed his views. The whole tendency and attitude has been that of isolation from pagan, Christian, or Jewish thought, and the defense of the faith laid down in the earlier centuries of Islam, based upon the Koran and the traditions of Mohammed, its founder.

The *ulama* have maintained the position of guardianship over

orthodox Islam. However, even they have been profoundly influenced by the movement originated about thirty years ago through the late Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, who at that time was Sheikh of al-Azhar. No one, and least of all himself would venture the opinion that he was anything but conservative. He was, however, a man of most vigorous mind and splendid character and, as it were, the first to recognize the absolute necessity of study of present-day conditions with a view to the proper relations between them and orthodox Islam. He has been called a pioneer in modern Islamic thought and is regarded as the leader of quite a number, even within the conservative group, who would suggest no essential changes in the approach of Islam to modern life; and he is regarded with reverence and profound respect by these and many who have more or less withdrawn from the older conservatism of the past centuries.

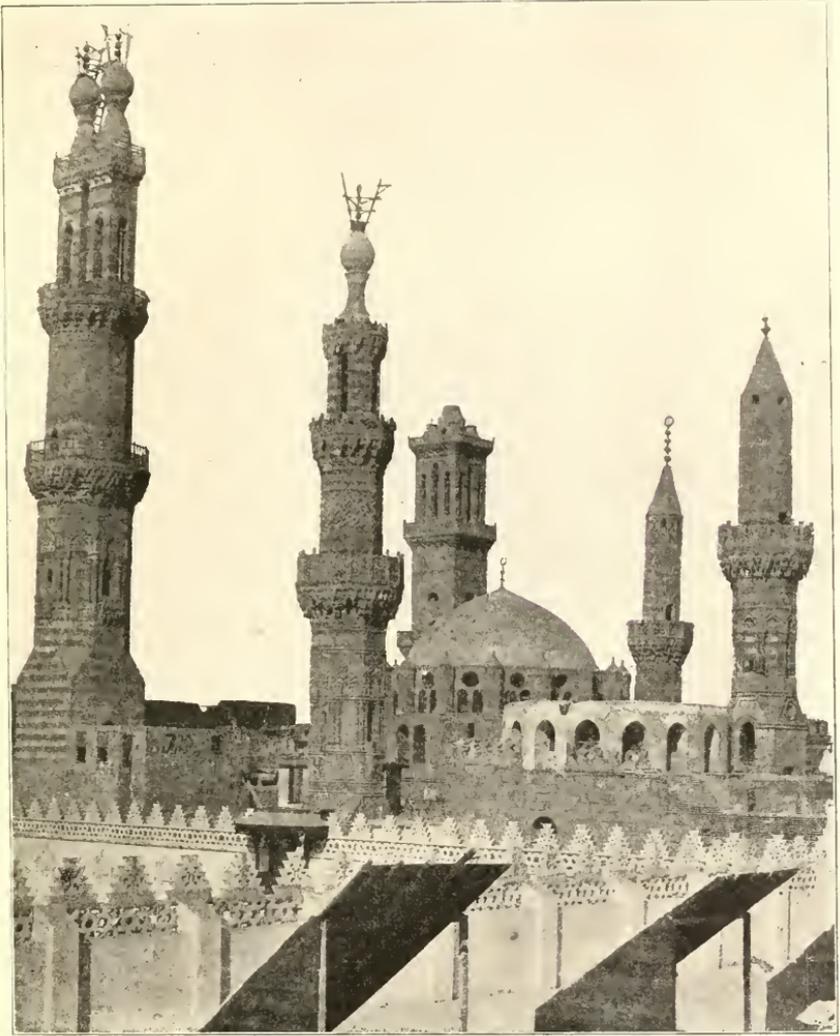
There has been a considerable amount of contact of the conservative *alim* with other than strictly conservative Islam. Politically and socially, even economically, conservatism has been feeling the touch of outside influences within the past century, as it has not for a thousand years. When the Khedive Ismail fifty years ago said, "My country is a part of Europe and not a part of Africa," this was indicative of the exposure of orthodox Mohammedan thought to other influences than its own; even the conservative Moslem could not deny this.

The conservative Christians, whose ecclesiastical head was, and is, the Patriarch, have held to the traditional and orthodox faith of the Christian religion which had been handed down to them according to tradition since the days of St. Mark and the founding of the Christian Church in Egypt. The various councils of the Church had covered authoritatively and finally, as far as they were concerned, all questions of doctrine or worship or ecclesiastical influence. The attitudes of the Christian Egyptian were, and are, those of the conservative Moslem, except that he did not look to the Koran and the traditions or the *ulama* for authority, but rather to the succession of patriarchs or the councils of the church. He, too, has ever maintained an attitude of religious isolation, insulation, and separation; but he, too, has been conscious of the impact of other thinking upon his religious life; so that the conservative Copt is largely represented by the priest, or bishop, or indifferent member of the community. Also within the Protestant Christian circle there are conservatives, who prefer to take their stand strictly upon a

fixed scripture and the knowledge of its content, and to whom in many cases this is sufficient for every question of human life.

There is very little contact between these three conservative communities. Naturally, each one looks upon the other as far removed from the truth and its application to human living. Each is suspicious of the influence of the other; but the position and prestige of the conservative Moslem, of course makes his influence far greater than either of the other very much smaller communities.

On the other hand, there are Moslems who may be described as "modernists." During the past generation or two, these have come forward in rather large numbers. They have given rise to a number of questionings, if not whirlwinds of religious struggle, in their departure from orthodox and conservative theology. They have been brought in contact, in various ways, with the literature and culture and life, with the destructive and constructive elements, in other religious communities than their own. Some of these modernists would insist upon a partial divorce or separation between the fields of religion and science; that is, they would not have religious dogma or tradition dominate a full and frank consideration of scientific phenomena, yet they would not ask for the exclusion of religious considerations from their own thinking or that of others. To be sure, in some cases there are leaders who are frankly opposed to any religious thought or confession whatever, but the majority would maintain an allegiance to their own religion, however much they might recognize the value of scientific inquiry. Another group of Moslems would separate religion and politics, that is, they would deny the authority of religious leaders in matters of the state, just as they would deny the authority of politics in the realm of religion. They insist that the state and nation may exist without being an integral part of any religious system, and that a religious system may exist in and with, but not as a part of, the state. This group is full of the spirit of inquiry. Its members are ready to ask, "What is religion? How far is it a spiritual and personal matter rather than one of controlling the investigation of science or of guiding one's relations as a citizen?" They are intent upon the adaptation of science, religion, and politics to the life of the individual or of the community. They have their eyes open for change and reform, in so far as these may appear rational and profitable, but without necessarily trespassing upon the fundamental elements of faith and religion. They would, in the majority of cases, in-



AL-AZHAR MOSQUE AND UNIVERSITY

sist that these changes or adaptations do not seriously affect the faith, the spirit, or the creed of Islam. They would declare that these are superficial only and that they are not serious or contrary to the creed and spirit of their religion. They would declare that deep religious feeling is still essential, but that it must not be subject to dogma, traditionalism, or the religious customs of their fathers.

Notable among these currents are the "reforms" in the Azhar University, which has been the intellectual and religious center of Islam in the Near East for centuries. Here we find the introduction, in quite recent years, of a new curriculum including four years of primary and five years of secondary study like that of the Egyptian Government schools, except that instead of foreign languages there is an increased amount of the Arabic language and training in Islam. Beyond this there is appointed four years of professional training for teaching, for service in the Moslem sacred law courts and in advanced Islamic culture. Still beyond this are prescribed three years of specialized or graduate study qualifying for distinguished Islamic leadership.

The venerable Azhar mosque is to be maintained as a place of prayer and worship only, and around it is to be built up a large and modern equipment and facilities, library, etc. Branch schools of the Azhar have been established in some eight other centers in Egypt, where instruction in the first nine years of the sixteen-year course is conducted. The Koran and the traditions are maintained as the most essential part of this curriculum, but it is frankly stated that in order to secure a more or less marketable education, the Egyptian young man must receive instruction in modern subjects, other than what have been regarded as all-sufficient in the study of the Arabic language and Mohanumedan religion. This movement has been welcomed by a great body of the younger students of al-Azhar and its allied schools. They are ready to face frankly the demands of comparative study of the religions tenets and influences of Islam, and place themselves in contact with non-orthodox Islamic thought, and even with non-Islamic literature and movements of every kind. It is contemplated that in the near future there will be included a knowledge of one or more foreign languages, also, in the whole curriculum of educational institutions conducted under the Moslem Benevolent Endowments, which will in itself be a striking innovation in Islam.

Another indication of the present liberal tendency is the frank discussion of delicate religious questions in the Arabic press and in periodical literature in Cairo. Another is the current discussion of the rights of the Califate. Yet another is the question of the prestige of the Moslem *shari'a*, or sacred law, which has been until modern times the one criterion for jurisprudence.

In the Christian community, there is the same evident tendency toward modern, as compared with traditional, thinking. The authority of the Patriarch has been challenged by a growing sentiment among the laity. The observance of the forms of worship and the maintenance of orthodox church life, even in matters of doctrine, are feeling the impact of questionings, of discoveries, either out of the Scriptures directly or otherwise. In addition to formal church worship, there has been introduced a very large amount of preaching and the organization of numerous groups for discussion and consideration of spiritual values at which orthodoxy looks askance. Sunday Schools, religious literature, new customs within the church, and the like, are radically changing Christian life.

There has been some evidence, both in the Moslem and Christian communities, of the influence of atheistic literature from outside. Much of what the modernist regards as sound and wise is looked upon by the orthodox as dangerous and atheistic. Efforts have been made by both religious communities to prevent the spread of such real departures from the faith. Indeed, some three years ago the Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar, the Coptic Patriarch, and the Grand Rabbi of the Jews joined in contributing articles to a symposium in a leading Arabic periodical in Cairo, calling the attention of the public to the dangers of irreligion in the country. Meanwhile, some of the leading editors of Cairo have stood as defenders of the orthodox faith, both in their editorials and in the contributions to their newspapers, while at the same time they have frequently been condemned themselves as being heretical and even atheistic. Even in the National Parliament there has been a voice raised on behalf of the national religion, Islam, and of unity and orthodoxy on the parts of the Christian Church, that is, the Coptic.

In any case, whether through the increase of literacy in both communities or the tendency toward philosophy in the higher schools and State University, or more general access to the knowledge of the content of the Koran and Christian scriptures, or Arabic or foreign religious questions, there is no doubt that there has been a



*Courtesy of P. G. Elgood*

THE NILE AT MODERN CAIRO

shift of emphasis on the part of the leaders of thought. Political currents have entered into this stream of thought, and the work of foreign missionaries has been conducive, not necessarily to radical changes, but at least to discussions and consequent changes in the religion's character and customs of the people, whether Moslem or Christian. In many cases, these influences may be superficial; without doubt, in some cases they are profound and far-reaching in their consequences. The spirit of inquiry, the spirit of freedom, the demand for independence of thought, are not confined, as many supposed a few years ago, to political considerations. Rather they leap over the boundaries of political and enter into the field of religious and social and other life, in a way which cannot be prevented by authority or dogma. The present tendencies point to an increase of this spirit of inquiry and adaptation and recasting of the religious thinking of the nation.

It is manifest, from what has been observed, that today among the Egyptian Moslem and Christian leaders of thought, there is a force which seems to drive conservative thinkers into an ultra-conservative position and others into a more liberal position. In the

"no-man's-land" between these, there is a group, rather large in numbers, who incline to rationalize religious beliefs and to find some process by which they may make religious beliefs, old and new, fit into changing conditions. The reinterpretation of theology is face to face with demands which give a new color to the faith of former generations. Egypt's geographical position between the Occident and the Orient symbolizes this profound religious struggle which is going on within and which is deeply affecting the life of the nation.

Over against the theological tendencies, which have been appearing in recent years in the Nile Valley, there are the changes and tendencies which are even more striking in the religious practice of both the Moslem and the Christian communities. Here again we must recall that the Moslem community is some ninety per cent of the total population, so that these changes are more conspicuous both to the casual observer and to the student of the problem than they are in the smaller Christian community. In a recent public address in Cairo it was noted, for example, that there has been a departure from the standards of conduct in the cities in such matters as attendance at the cafés and theaters. A generation or two ago it was entirely taboo for any of the twelve thousand students of al-Azhar even to be seen at a café or a theater; even Shepheard's Hotel was referred to as a drinking place. Dancing, participating in music, vocal or instrumental, phonograph, radio, attendance at the cinema and such public amusements have entered into the common life of the people within the past two or three decades to such a degree as would have completely shocked the "religious" individual a generation ago.

In the villages the changes are not by any means as great. The evolution has been slower. Nevertheless, wherever one goes one finds indications of this change in former standards of decorum. There is no longer a quick and general response to the call of the *muezzin* from the minarets of the mosques to the daily prayers. The religious fasts and feasts have not been observed as carefully in recent years. There is not the same respect and prestige of religious leaders, whose authority was almost absolute for centuries. Superstitions are regarded and observed far less than formerly, although there is a very large residuum of those which have persisted through the centuries. In the mosques, as well as in Christian churches, the clocks show the time of day as from midnight for twelve hours

repeated rather than from sunrise to sunset; that is, the Occidental method of time reckoning obtains rather than the Oriental. There is also a very much increased observance of the western calendar for the year instead of the Moslem or Coptic, although often and in all official documents both the Christian and the Moslem dates are placed side by side. There has been considerable discussion of the wisdom of deciding and announcing Moslem religious feasts and fasts on the basis of mathematical and astronomical calculations rather than upon the testimony of two witnesses as to the appearance of the new moon for the Moslem lunar calendar.

The question of the wearing of the hat rather than the Oriental head-gear has threatened to divide Moslems into two camps. The whole problem of marriage, monogamy versus polygamy, the question of divorce, age of consent, rights and status of minors, have felt the impact of these present-day influences. The *wakfs*, or Mohammedan and Coptic benevolent endowments, have been made a subject of vigorous scrutiny and very largely taken over by the Government. The Egyptian Minister of Wakfs, however, deals only with Mohammedan *wakfs*, which are for the support of the mosques and schools and benevolent institutions under its authority. There has been some question of the wisdom of translating the Koran into other than the Arabic language; but thus far it has not been done in Egypt. And technically, translations of the Koran are not to be admitted by the Customs authorities.

The tendency toward an education of both young men and young women outside of the circles of orthodox Islamic teaching has greatly increased, so that we find in the quite modern government and private schools multitudes whose education is decidedly Occidental; this is true from the kindergarten and primary schools right through secondary and professional schools to the Egyptian University; the students of all these schools very frequently have practically no knowledge of the fundamentals of their religious beliefs, whether Moslem or Christian. It must be said, however, that there has been a very mild effort to retain in the government schools some instruction in the tenets of their religion for the students of both faiths; but it is generally a very superficial instruction when compared with the very inclusive religious instruction which prevailed for centuries.

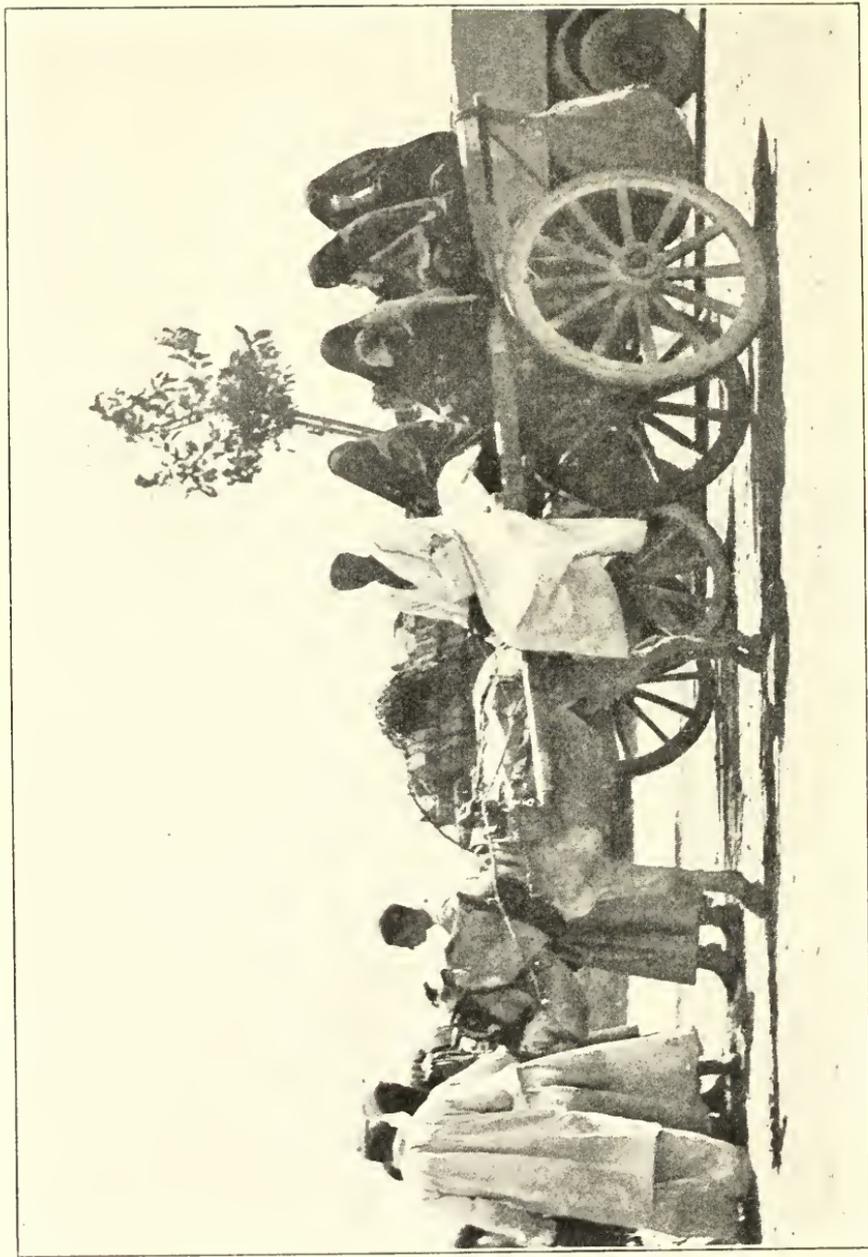
Another distinct reaction of the modern influences on the life of the nation is the present position of the *shari'a*, the sacred Moham-

medan law, in the ordinary judicial processes of the country. For a thousand years or more, the *shari'a* was the one law of the nation, except that for the foreigner, with his capitulations, or the Christian or Jew, with his special codes for matters of personal status, some provision was made outside of the *shari'a* on the ground that he was not amenable to it. During the past century, the influence of European, and especially French, law increased until in the seventies the Khedive Ismail established the modern courts on the basis of the Code of Napoleon. These have jurisdiction over all Egyptians without consideration of creed, except in the matters of personal status, marriage, minors, estates, etc.

The new Constitution of Egypt declares that Islam is the religion of the State. It also declares that there shall be religious liberty in Egypt. The interpretation and application of these two items of the Constitution are giving rise to considerable discussion already. It is universally admitted that the application of the *shari'a* with its interpretation of *fiqh* (theology), does not seem entirely possible in the present state of Egyptian culture and thought. For example, the thief does not have his right hand cut off; the non-faithful wife is not stoned to death; many Moslems take interest on their deposits with banks or individuals without being subject to punishment by the Moslem orthodox law; and many conscientious Moslems do loan money for interest. Even the Government itself has a postal savings bank, and many Moslems are identified with other banks and financial institutions in which interest is an important consideration. The question of insurance has come into the thought of the public only in recent years, and the ethics of it gave rise to considerable discussion.

The interest in the pilgrimage to Mecca seems to have decreased to a very large extent. This may be due to questions of administration and control which have arisen between the Egyptian Government and that of the sacred territories in Arabia out of matters pertaining to sanitation, police duties, and similar matters. Quite recently, the decrease is certainly due to financial stress. But in any case the annual tribute of the Egyptian Government of immensely valuable gifts of money, grain, silks, gold, and silver, to the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina has ceased.

In the matter of women, Egypt is apparently proceeding cautiously and slowly. It is true that there has been a very manifest change in the appearance of women in public, their demand for recognition



PEASANT WOMEN ARE STILL CONSERVATIVE

Courtesy of P. G. Elgood

and rights, their manner of dress, their questions of marriage, travel, and general liberty. Not all have snatched off the veil, as has been the case in Turkey, and yet the younger generation are appearing in the schools in large numbers, and the older ones answering in places of adult education, amusement and social life far more often than formerly. The Egyptian Government, some two years ago, established a course of lectures for women only, covering most topics of interest and profit: but this was discontinued after one year, apparently for lack of enthusiastic support.

Kasim Amin Bey, some twenty years or more ago, issued a book on the rights of women and measured many of his considerations by Islam itself. This was the beginning of a rather vigorous feminist movement, and there exists a national organization of women, under the leadership of Mme. Huda Sharawi, who has represented this organization in international feminist movement conferences in London, Berlin, and America.

Within the Christian community, there has been a much more obvious and rapid movement toward a change in social life. This may be due somewhat to the closer connection between the Christian manner of life in Europe and the requirements of even a conservative Christian community in Egypt. Nevertheless, the Coptic church and the Protestant church in Egypt show striking indications at times of a desire to maintain the traditional manner of life along with this departure from the religious requirements of the extreme orthodox leaders. The Coptic church has been well nigh split by the demand of the laymen for more authority through its *majlis*, or church assembly, versus the authority of the Patriarch. The demand has been made that the church court should control the properties and secular appointments of the church, and leave to the clergy the spiritual interests of the community; even in this latter very considerable changes are demanded in the direction of spiritual provision for the people, the education of the clergy, and the like.

The Protestant church has grown to a community of some sixty or seventy thousand, extending from Alexandria to the Sudan. It is marked by a very extraordinary standard of literacy, an intelligent clergy, and zeal in the enlightenment and education of all, both in secular and religious instruction, in its schools and churches, both in the cities and villages. It has also the distinguishing mark of emphasizing the extension of the distribution of Bibles in any

language throughout the country. With its more than one hundred ordained clergy, all of whom are graduates of secondary schools or colleges, it constitutes a vigorous and far-reaching influence.

Perhaps the two greatest influences which are producing these modern religious tendencies are the newspapers and travel. The periodicals, whether daily, weekly, or monthly, provide a forum which, with the present Press Law, give a very remarkable freedom for the discussion of any of these questions. While it is illegal to publish any attack or vilification of any religion or its founder, there is still open a very large field for the consideration of problems directly connected with either theology, religious practices, or the social conditions arising in modern times. At times these discussions have impinged so sharply upon religious sensitiveness that they have given rise to real friction within the circles of the religious communities and of the Government. They have been made the object of attacks in the National Parliament, where the extremely orthodox of either religion and the extremely liberal have clashed. It is proposed by some that the Government should undertake a very strict censorship and establish laws controlling any religious activity in Egypt, with the example of Turkey in this matter before them. At this point the statements of the Constitution relative to Islam being the religion of the State and the guaranteeing of religious liberty rise up as problems for interpretation along with the purpose of the nation to be second to none in its standing internationally.

The matter of travel and acquaintance with other than Egyptian traditional thought is affecting the families which make up the nation. Frequently whole families are off to Europe together. Families in the provinces come, in increasing numbers, into the cities through the facilities of railways, automobiles, river traffic, to very large expositions for greater publicity has been given to matters of industrial and agricultural welfare. From the attraction of tens of thousands who visit the city of Cairo and come into contact with the exhibits and with each other, a new spirit of inquiry has been awakened. The wealth in Egypt which followed the War produced remarkable changes in the social life of the people. Inevitably these changes had considerable effect on religious attitudes, as the latter have, in turn, on social tendencies.

Politically, there is certainly some relationship between the conditions within the country and its currents of religious thought.

Since the abolition of the Califate at Constantinople, to which Egypt, as a part of the Moslem world, was responsible, the question has arisen where the Califate should be centered, if and when it should be again established. Cairo has been mentioned for a place in such considerations. One difficulty has arisen in that, by the custom of Islam, the Calif should be a ruler of an entirely independent Moslem state, competent to maintain and safeguard the interests of itself and other Moslem states.

For fifty years Egypt has been a sphere of influence and part of that time a protectorate under a non-Moslem power, England. It gives rise to a real question as to whether the modern religious tendencies would make it possible for the ruler of Egypt to be the Calif or whether the Califate should be established elsewhere. In any case, the political and the religious problems of Egypt seem to be closely interwoven, so much so that one does not know what direction some of these currents may take in the near future.

If the question arises as to what the trends, the possibilities, the dangers, and the values of these considerations are, then it is only fair to say that in the minds of many these changes are not serious, that the religious spirit, the creeds and the prestige of either Islam or Christianity are maintained as thoroughly as ever. There is a quick religious response in defence of religious faith on the part of both the Moslem and Christian communities. The former is, and always has been, a very thorough religious community, measured by the standards of the whole system of Islam; the latter has maintained its existence for nearly two thousand years in the face of overwhelming numbers of non-Christians. Both communities would claim allegiance to their faith and would in the majority of cases maintain that the fundamentals still stand, whatever changes may be manifest in the social and even in the semi-religious life of the nation. They would claim that character is weak but not faith; they would claim that the deep religious feeling is sufficient to maintain and safeguard the religion of their faiths. And yet, there do exist conditions which indicate some serious rifts in religious thinking. There does exist enough evidence to indicate to many that these changes are more than superficial, and that they threaten the nation with atheism, or at least agnosticism and scepticism. Certainly the trend is strongly in the direction of freedom of thought.

The difficulty at present is that if one makes bold to express

some freedom of thought, especially through the printed page, he is liable to be made the object of attack, by either the Moslem or the Christian community, as being a dangerous citizen, a corrupter of religion, and as having forfeited his rights as a citizen. Religion, science, politics, social life, national life, even the economic life of the nation are offering today conflicting currents which in both force and character are creating a new life for the nation. It seems probable that the challenge of orthodoxy or heterodoxy is liable to be thrown down at any time, and nothing so influences the direction which things will take as a deep-seated religious mind of a nation.

Cairo, as has been said, forms the center of authority and influence for the nation; and Cairo has in its heart al-Azhar, which itself seems ready for at least some change while maintaining its faith in Islam. The Christian church of Egypt has passed through its time of martyrdom, especially in the days of the Roman Empire. Both communities retain profound religious convictions, probably much more than would be found in other nations. If the present religious tendencies in Egypt are moving in any one direction, as they certainly are, it is going to mean changes which cannot be measured today, but which are unquestionably vital.

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