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MEMOIR OF
MOHAMMED ALI

By

HONBLE. SIR CH. A. MURRAY

J. Hayworth-Dunlop
D. Lit. (London)

Nº 799

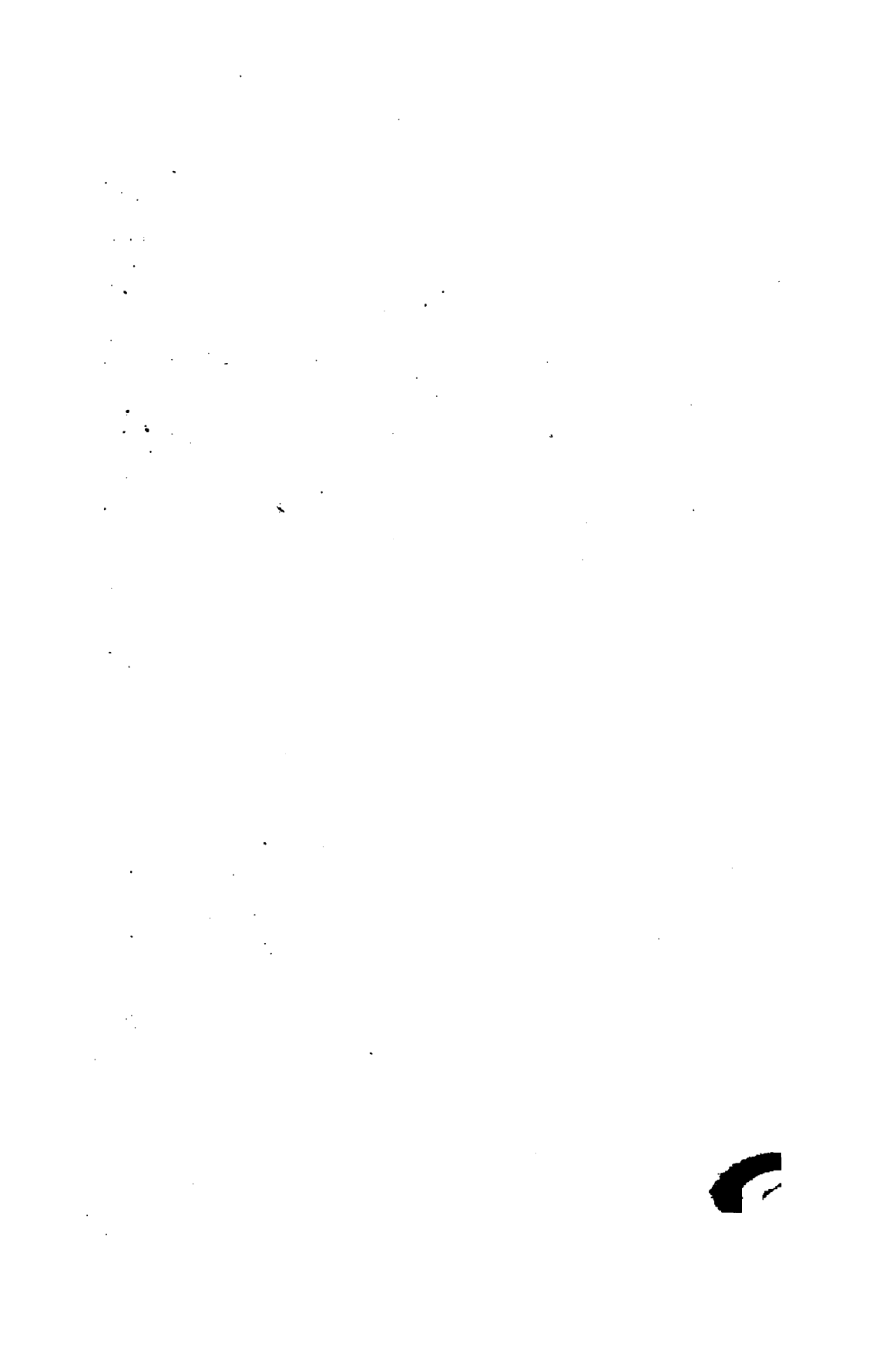


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*The Hon. Sir Charles Augustus Murray, K. C. B.
From the painting by Wills Muddox, Esq.*



Wm. C. ...
...

A SHORT
MEMOIR
OF
MOHAMMED ALI

FOUNDER OF THE VICE-ROYALTY OF EGYPT

BY THE
HON. SIR CHARLES AUGUSTUS MURRAY,
K.C.B.

whilst H.M. Consul-General in Egypt, 1846-53

EDITED BY THE
RIGHT HON. SIR HERBERT MAXWELL, BART., M.P.

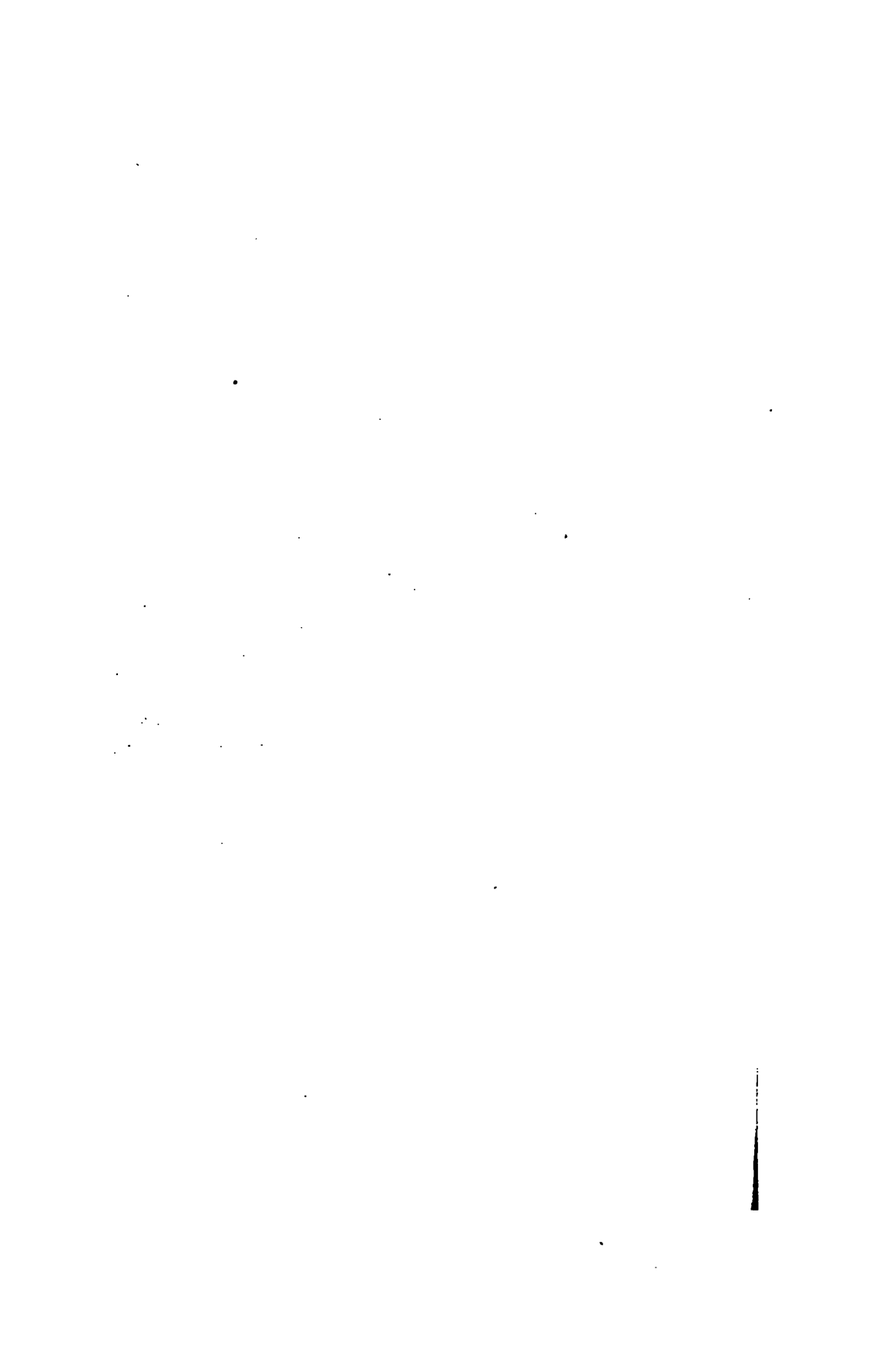
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INTRODUCTION

AMONG the papers placed at disposal of the editor when he was writing a biography of the late Hon. Sir Charles Murray, there was a memoir of Mohammed Ali, written by Sir Charles, and apparently intended for publication. Some extracts from this memoir given in the biography attracted the attention of persons in Egypt who are interested in the recent development of that country, and a desire was expressed that all that Sir Charles had written about Mohammed Ali should be published. Lady Murray having kindly given her consent, the memoir is given here exactly as Sir Charles left it, with the exception of two sentences which altered circumstances rendered it desirable to omit, and a few trifling alterations of construction, such as every writer has to make when his composition appears before him in print.

Of Sir Charles Murray himself, and of his connection with Egypt, a few words may not be out of place.

The second son of the fifth Earl of Dunmore, he was born on November 22nd, 1806, was educated at Eton and Oxford, took his B.A. degree at the

age of twenty-one, and shortly afterwards was elected to a Fellowship of All Souls. After some years of travel on the Continent and in North America he was appointed Groom-in-waiting at the Court of Queen Victoria, and a few months later, in 1838, became Master of the Household. He was the author of several works, and mixed much with literary men, being a frequent guest at Samuel Rogers's famous breakfasts, where Macaulay and Sydney Smith used to meet in wordy tournament.

In 1844 Mr. Murray became Secretary of Legation at Naples, and in 1846 received the appointment of Consul-General in Egypt, while Mohammed Ali was still Viceroy. The impression made on Mr. Murray by the abilities and work of that ruler, and the high opinion he formed of the general advantage of his policy, caused him to write down his impressions at the time, and they retain peculiar value to this day, owing to the author's deep insight into Oriental character, and his profound study of Oriental languages and history.

Among Mr. Murray's notes the following sombre narrative occurs, showing that Mohammed Ali's methods of government were not entirely in harmony with approved modern system.

"On the evening of February 7th, 1852, I had a long conversation with Abbas Pasha, on the history of his family, and gleaned a great many curious facts illustrative of Turkish character and

manners. His Highness spoke entirely without reserve, and mentioned as an undisputed fact that his own father, Toussoun Pasha, had been poisoned by Mohammed Ali. I said I had heard the story before, but never gave credit to it, as I had always understood that Toussoun was Mohammed Ali's favourite son.

“ ‘He was so,’ replied the Viceroy, ‘for a long time, but at last M. Ali grew jealous of my father’s popularity with the army, and considered his own safety thereby endangered, wherefore he ordered him to be poisoned. Toussoun one evening gave a banquet to a large company, at which, having drunk freely, dancing girls were introduced, and during their performance Toussoun drank two glasses of brandy or liqueur, into which the poison had been inserted. He complained soon after of head-ache, went to bed and was dead in six hours.’

“I asked his Highness if he had ever heard of any proofs tracing this tragedy to the orders of Mohammed Ali.

“ ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘I can tell you one very conclusive proof. The news of his death was conveyed by a swift courier to Cairo and was first communicated to M. Ali’s chief officer, who being ignorant of his master’s intention, and afraid of the effect which might be produced upon him by the sudden announcement of the death of his favourite son, proceeded to break

the intelligence to him cautiously, and entering the Viceroy's room, said,

“ ‘ Sir, news has arrived of Toussoun Pasha.’ ”

“ M. Ali starting, replied, ‘ When, how did he die ? ’ and proceeded to feign the most extravagant grief.

“ ‘ How,’ continued Abbas, ‘ could he have known from the words of the officer that his son, who was a young man in perfect health, had died unless he had himself decreed it ? ’ ”

“ I confessed that the confirmation was strong, and dropped the subject.

“ Finding his Highness in a communicative mood, I asked him to enlighten me on the oft disputed question, whether Ibrahim had really been Mohammed Ali's son.


“ ‘ You know,’ replied he, ‘ that Ibrahim was never a friend of mine. Mohammed Ali always made us hate each other, and he wished to take my life, but I will not tell an untruth regarding his parentage. The story generally received, as to his mother having been a widow, with child by a former husband at the time of her marriage with Mohammed Ali, is a mere fabrication. I know all the circumstances from a very old woman who was about the harem during my childhood, and who, having been nurse to my father was very fond of me. She told me that M. Ali had named his wife a virgin, and that her first child by him was a *daughter*, who died

young, the second was Ibrahim ; Toussoun, Ismael, and Nazle Hanum—all these were of the same mother.’

“His Highness added that Mohammed Ali had more than once meditated taking the life of Ibrahim. He had taken that of Toussoun, and had ordered the death of Nazle on account of her shameless profligacy ; but he, Abbas, had himself saved her by interceding in her behalf with her proud father.”

Less reprehensible, but not less characteristic of an Oriental ruler ardent in the work of reform, is the following from another of Mr. Murray’s note books.

“There was in Alexandria the tomb of a Scheik obstructing some building improvements that Mohammed Ali contemplated making, and he wished to remove it, but feared to do so on account of the religious prejudices of the inhabitants. A project struck him however, by which, without diminishing the honour paid to the Scheik, he might carry out his building plan. He assembled a large body of men secretly, and one night when it was very dark, he admitted them suddenly and made them demolish the tomb and rebuild it in a more convenient spot. The men were taken out of the town before morning, and when the inhabitants awoke, all Alexandria was full of the miracle wrought by the Scheik in moving his tomb from one quarter to the other.”



It was by the help of Abbas Pasha, who succeeded Mohammed Ali as Viceroy, that Mr. Murray was enabled to send the first hippopotamus to England that had ever been seen there. Abbas sent a party of hunters to the White Nile, where, on the island of Obaysch, they captured a calf, which was sent down in charge of a company of infantry, and safely delivered to Mr. Murray at Cairo in November, 1849. From Cairo the animal was conveyed to London, in a specially constructed chamber, by the P. and O. steamer *Ripon*, and arrived in the Zoological Gardens on May 25th, 1850. It lived there for twenty-eight years, dying in 1878.

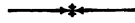
Mr. Murray left Egypt in 1853, having filled the office of Consul-General for seven years. The following year he went as envoy to the Court of Teheran ; in 1859 he became British Minister at Dresden, and in 1866 he went in the same capacity to Copenhagen, receiving in the same year the honour of knighthood. Sir Charles's last public service was as Minister at Lisbon, a post which he held till his retirement in 1874.

Sir Charles Murray died in Paris on June 3rd, 1895, in his eighty-ninth year, and will be ever remembered by those who had the privilege of his friendship, for his varied gifts, his charm of manner, and his unfailing kindness to those who sought his help.

H. E. M.



A SHORT MEMOIR
OF
MOHAMMED ALI.



IN the earliest years of the nineteenth century, a man, half trader, half soldier, began to distinguish himself in the wars of Egypt. His extraction was humble. But though indigent and meanly descended, though ignorant of everything beyond the rough life of a Turkish guard-house and the chicaneries of a petty trade, the adventurer had no sooner been placed at the head of a body of troops than he showed himself born for conquest and command.

Among the crowd of Osmanlis and Memlooks who were then struggling for the perilous inheritance of the Pharaohs, not one could compare with him in the qualities of the captain and the statesman. He became a general—he became almost a sovereign. Out of the fragments of old provinces which had gone to pieces in the general wreck of Turkey, he formed for himself a compact and vigorous state. He created a power mightier than

that which the arms and sympathies of Europe reared on the ruins of ancient Greece : mightier than that to which Ypsilanti,* with the aid of Russia, vainly aspired upon the Danube.

The state he had rescued from anarchy he ruled with the ability, severity and vigilance of Abubekir or Hyder Ali. Rapacious and untaught, he had yet enlargement of mind enough to perceive how much the prosperity of subjects adds to the strength of Government ; and if sometimes mistaken in the method he adopted for attaining this object, he was always consistent in its pursuit. Out of a frightful confusion he educed at least imperfect order. He was an oppressor, but he had the merit of protecting his people from all oppression but his own, and afforded them a security that they had not enjoyed for many ages. Such was Mohammed Ali, founder of the modern Vice-Royalty of Egypt, and one of the greatest Mussulman captains who had existed since Tárík† gave his name to the height of Calpe, and the stern retribution exacted for a lady's dishonour brought confusion to the banners of Roderick.

* Alexander Ypsilanti, appointed Hospodar of Moldavia by the Porte, 1774—1804. He was then deposed at Napoleon's instance, and fled to St. Petersburg. In 1821 he returned at the head of the Hetærists, but his legion was totally routed by the Turks in 1822.—ED.


† The Arabic conqueror of Spain, A.D. 711. The name Gibraltar is a corruption of Jabal-Tárík—the Mount of Tárík.—ED.



Mohammed Ali was born at Cávála, a small town of Roumelia, opposite the golden Island of Thasos, some time in the year 1769, the precise day being unknown. The same year gave birth to Napoleon Bonaparte and to Arthur Wellesley. His reputed father—for there is a doubt upon this subject—was named Ibrahim Agha. He was a peasant who supported himself partly by such negligent and imperfect cultivation of a small piece of land, as was then understood in Turkey, and partly in the same manner as most of the inhabitants of the coast, by fishing. He was also chief of a few watchmen furnished by surrounding villages for the security of the roads. Ibrahim Agha died while his son was still a child, and Mohammed Ali was brought up in the household of the petty governor of his native town. He was a bright-eyed, eager boy, full of humour and good spirits, and soon became a favourite with the cavasses and pipe-bearers who loitered about the anti-chambers and porticos of the rustic potentate. He showed himself especially adroit in settling such disputes as arose over their nargillys, respecting pistols with silver stocks from Aleppo, and the supple blades of Damascus. He learned to read a little, to write less, and to repeat by rote the first chapter of the Koran from the lips of some grave Moslem pedagogue almost as ignorant as himself. Whatever scanty learning he may ever have possessed must have been then acquired, for

he soon became too busy to obtain even such superficial education as was thought necessary for a Turkish boy eighty years ago. "The only books I ever read," he used to say long afterwards, "are men's faces, and I seldom read them amiss."

There lived also then at Cávála one of those roving Frenchmen who may be found at most of the coast towns of the Levant, boasting of their country, vexing their Consuls, full of gossiping vanities and light-headed schemes ; but gay, frank, and very proud of forming acquaintances among the Turks. They are more popular in the East than other Europeans ; perhaps because their humour is not so aggressive ; and the stately Osmanlis, inaccessible to strangers generally, take to them very readily. It is a curious intercourse, although it usually appears to give much satisfaction to both parties. The Turk, in truth, looks down upon the Frenchman with a good-natured but supreme contempt, as upon a lap dog who can play many ingenious tricks, and who does not snarl like other dogs. The Frenchman considers the Turks as a primitive and barbarian people who require organization. To their organization, as he would like to see them organized, he gives much thought, and is full of many amusing schemes on the subject. He regards the Turk, moreover, as a curious specimen of natural history, and an excellent block on which to hang some cobweb



theories. Both, entirely misunderstanding each other, agree admirably.

The name of the Frenchman who lived three-quarters of a century ago at Cávala was Lion. He followed the calling of a small merchant, or more probably acted as agent for some commercial house at Marseilles, whence he came. In his rambles about the little place he soon picked up Mohammed Ali, and took a great fancy to the jolly, intelligent lad. Kind and impulsive, he loaded the child with kindnesses, taught him the mysteries of trade, and filled him with fine ideas of the *grande nation*. Those ideas coloured all the thoughts of Mohammed Ali's after life. The impression of them remained as vivid as ever for half a century. The habitual love and admiration with which he regarded the countrymen of his friend never diminished till the fall of Acre. Fifty years afterwards also the Viceroy remembered those kindnesses and fine ideas that had won the nameless boy. Hearing that M. Lion had returned to France and was unprosperous, the great Pasha wrote to him to come and meet good fortune in Egypt. M. Lion died the day he was to have embarked on this voyage. But the grateful Prince would not be balked, and a gift of £400 to the merchant's sister showed with what unaltered gratitude he remembered his old companion.

Superstition is always busy with the biographies of great men; but there is a tradition about

Mohammed Ali before he was born. It is said that while his mother was pregnant, she had a dream which she caused to be interpreted by one of those impostors, common in the East, who pretend to the art of divination. This person predicted that the unborn child would one day attain the highest power and grandeur. The prophecy is said to have taken hold upon her imagination, and she told it often to her son, in whose ambitious mind it fructified and worked its own fulfilment. It is certain that the boy of an ardent temper, and precocious sagacity sought eagerly for an opportunity to distinguish himself. Fortune is never coy to a bold wooer, and a good chance soon occurred.


The inhabitants of a village in the district of Cáwala refused to pay a tax imposed upon them, alleging, probably with perfect truth, that it had already been levied. This tax was the hated *kharage*, an impost as detested as that which called forth the blow of Wat Tyler ; or that which estranged the hearts of the Roman populace from Rienzi. It was a sort of poll tax, paid only by the Christian subjects of the Porte, and was a perpetual source of difficulty. It was hated by the Rayahs : partly from the humiliation which attached to it, and partly from its injustice. An idea prevailed both among the dominant, and the subject race, that it had been originally imposed on the conquered people of the last Palæologus as

a price to ransom their lives from year to year. In reality, however, it was merely an equivalent paid by the Christian population of Turkey, as a contribution towards the maintenance of an army from serving in which they were excluded.

The *kharage* was particularly obnoxious in Roumelia, where three-fourths of the inhabitants were Christians ; and their peculiar institutions offered them very efficacious means of resistance.

No conquest has, perhaps, ever been final where the victors and the vanquished have remained permanently of a different religion. Thus, wherever the Moslem arms imposed the faith of Mahomed, as they did throughout so many of the kingdoms of Asia, the conquerors hold sway down to our own time. Wherever they failed to do so, as they everywhere did fail in Europe, the fruit of their triumphs has been always insecure. After the imbecility and religious disputes of the last bigoted and drivelling heirs of Constantine had ended in the destruction of the Byzantine Empire, the Greeks were still permitted to worship after their own faith. They were permitted even to elect their own archbishops or *despots*, and every community was suffered to choose its primates or chief men to settle their disputes. The Patriarch only was appointed by the Sultan ; but even then the feelings of the Phanar were scrupulously consulted, and once appointed, his authority was almost absolute.

The great power thus confided to the Greeks was soon abused. The smallest village had its despot and its *oda bashi*. These persons really performed all the functions of magistrates and rulers. They did their best to obstruct all government but their own, and were especially the enemies of Pashas and Cadis. Rare, indeed, were the cases referred to the Turkish authorities. The Rayah was always prepared to suffer any extreme of tyranny from his own people rather than submit to the mildest sentence pronounced by a Turk. By close union, by adroit bribery, by great cunning and secrecy in their intrigues, they were able to defy their Pashas. By wily misrepresentations to the Phanar, they found little trouble even in procuring the dismissal of a stiff-necked governor. The dominant race, who possessed all the virtues and all the vices of conquerors, who were frank and open in their dealings, though harsh, violent, and arbitrary, were unable to cope with these shrewd managers. If a pasha was not powerful enough to despise both parties his position was pitiable. If he had succeeded his father, as was commonly the case, he could possess no private property with which to purchase peace and safety. The Sultan was heir to all officials; and household spies took inventories of everything they possessed, down to the implements of the kitchen and the stable. He could not acquire property by trade, for he did not



even understand its most obvious principles ; and the Turkish gentleman was essentially an aristocrat. On the one hand, however, he was obliged to satisfy the rapacity of the Porte by frequent and splendid presents, or his successor was sent from Constantinople with a firman and a bow-string. On the other hand, if he gave his litigious subjects the smallest chance of complaint, his place was of little worth ; and with the loss of his place usually went the loss of his head. He could hardly satisfy all parties. He became, therefore, commonly either a shameless tyrant, and rebelled against his sovereign if an attempt was made to displace him, or he became a timid and passive instrument in the hands of the primates.

It is probable that in ordinary times the Governor of Cávála would have soon ceased to press his claims, whether just or otherwise. It was the safest course that so insignificant a person could adopt. Some idlers and vagabonds would have been arrested as a matter of form, and would have made their escape a few hours afterwards. There would have been a great deal of plausible talk from the despot and the *oda bashi* ; a present of a few lambs ; perhaps a small bribe in money to cavasses, and the affair would have ended. But on this occasion the necessities of the Governor were pressing, and he was determined that the tax, whether due or not, should be paid.

While still hesitating what course to take

Mohammed Ali offered his services, and with that boyish ardour which troubles itself little with consequences, bluntly declared that he would soon contrive to bring the refractory villagers to reason. The Governor, half surprised and half amused at the vaunt, but being at his wits' end, placed a handful of troops under the young man's orders, and gave him authority to act as he pleased.

His mode of proceeding was marked by all that energy and decision which has usually signalized the first exploits of successful military adventurers. It was bold, artful, and characteristic. It illustrates vividly also the Turkish government of Roumelia at the time. It was rule of that kind which had turned one of the most smiling gardens of the ancient world into a wilderness for the fox and the jackal; which had caused the grass to grow in the streets of those beautiful cities that were the delight of Hadrian and Amurath I., until their successors had forgotten even the palaces of the Bosphorus; which had made the calling of an avenger and a robber the most popular that could be followed by the descendants of those Thracians whose valour had once been the boast of Rome, who had fought under Belisarius and Phocas for the fast fading glories of the great Empire, and had rallied loyally round even the last impotent princes who swayed the sceptre of Constantine — Leo the

Armenian, Michael the stammerer, the infamous Zoë, and the malefactor Romanus.

The service on which Mohammed Ali had volunteered was not to be accomplished without much difficulty and danger. If the slightest intelligence of his movements had become known, the Pallicaria would have posted themselves behind trees and stones, with long rusty guns in their hands, and, unseen themselves, have picked off every one of his little band. Had they failed in this, the primates and principal inhabitants of the place would have been certain to fly before his arrival and conceal themselves in places of which they alone possessed the secret. He would have found nothing but a few old men and women groaning beside their empty hearths, left purposely to mislead him, and to carry information of his proceedings. Caution and secrecy were the only qualities that could avail him. They are qualities not often united with the greatest courage and promptitude in action, but he possessed them all.

Mohammed appeared suddenly at a certain refractory village, entered the mosque, and while apparently absorbed in prayer, sent for four of the principal inhabitants of the place on pretext of some ordinary business. Not suspecting danger they came at once. They were immediately seized, and conducted in chains to Cávála. He stilled the wild shrieks and clamour of the

villagers by threatening to murder his prisoners if he were in any way molested.

The *kharage* was now paid, and the Governor, delighted with so successful a tax-gatherer, made Mohammed Ali a subaltern of his palace guard. The captain of that body dying shortly afterwards, the subaltern succeeded him, and the Governor gave the captain's widow, one of his own relations, in marriage to the young Agha. This lady became the mother of the dynasty which now rules in Egypt.

The early part of Mohammed Ali's married life seems to have been devoted almost entirely to trade, though he still kept his post in the household of the local Governor. He is said to have dealt in a coarse kind of tobacco, for which Salonica is the chief market. It was a trade in which many rogueries were practised. They consisted principally in adulterating the weed with horsedung, and the scraped bark of certain trees.

In 1798 the Porte, at length seriously alarmed by the progress of the French in Egypt, determined to take arms against them. The Capitan Pasha waited in the roads of Marmorice for recruits; and Cávála was called upon for its contingent. This was the turning point in the fortunes of Mohammed Ali. The Governor, anxious to gain favour at Constantinople, furnished three hundred men, fully armed and equipped. His son, a youth named Ali Agha, was appointed to the chief com-

mand of this force. Mohammed Ali was sent as his lieutenant and chief adviser. Disgusted, however, with a stormy voyage, and the privations he was compelled to endure at Aboukir, Ali Agha pined for his home. He quitted his army and left his troops under the command of Mohammed Ali, who, according to the easy fashion of the time, promoted himself to the rank of *bim-bashi*, which is about equal to that of lieutenant-colonel.

His conduct throughout the war was that of a brave and ready soldier. He is said to have shown great judgment, sagacity, and deference to authority ; qualities rare enough among all men, but especially so among the rabble of Tchaoshes and Bashi Boozooks which formed a Turkish army in those days. He first distinguished himself at Ramanyah against General La Grange, being chosen by the Capitan Pasha to lead a night attack upon a fort occupied by the French; and their prompt evacuation of it alone prevented the success of the bold and crafty plan which he had laid to entrap them. While attached with his corps to a part of the British army, he evinced such high courage and conduct as obtained the explicit approbation of the Commander-in-Chief.

The campaign was completely successful. The dagger of an assassin had put an end to the life of the gallant Kleber, and the incapacity of General Menon, who succeeded him, soon lost all that Napoleon's victories had acquired in

Egypt. The French were entirely expelled from the country: and thus ended a part of the great design, which Bonaparte had planned with the Sultan of Mysore, to overthrow the British power in India. That design had been frustrated no less by the fortune and genius of Mornington and the valour with which Baird had buried Tippoo under the arches of Seringapatam, than by the brilliant operations upon the Nile under Abercrombie and Hutchinson.

At the close of this eventful war Mohammed Ali had obtained the rank of Brigadier-General, and was recommended by the Grand Admiral to Khosrow Pasha of Egypt, by whom he was received with great favour. But the time was fast approaching when Mohammed Ali was to take a position which would place him above or below any man's patronage: for he who aspires highly must walk alone. The discontent of the Turkish troops, clamorous for long arrears of pay, and mutinous by habit, soon opened a wide field for unscrupulous ambition. On this field the Brigadier-General determined to enter, and he did so with unusually clear prospects. Like most successful captains he was the darling of his soldiers. His rough manners, his ready jests, his daring courage, had succeeded in winning their entire devotion. They looked upon him as the defender of their rights against the generals who embezzled their pay and the commissaries who sold their rations. He was the


chosen spokesman on all occasions—the sole mediator between them and authority. He took care always to display an ostentatious anxiety for their welfare. By these means he had acquired great personal influence. His mind, singularly shrewd and alive to everything that could promote his interests, perceived at a glance the immense advantage that might be derived from the affection of the army in troublous and unsettled times.

His proceedings, therefore, were soon of such a character as seriously to alarm Khosrow Pasha, who, like most men in a fright, committed a great indiscretion. He sent a threatening message to the popular general, which became at once the signal for open revolt. The troops declared themselves determined to protect Mohammed Ali from the Pasha's anger. From defence they soon proceeded to aggression. After a brief struggle, Khosrow Pasha, with his successor, Khoorshid, were driven from power, and on April 1st, 1806, Mohammed Ali was appointed to the vacant post by the sovereign whose lieutenants he had twice displaced. He was then thirty-seven years of age.

It was determined that the investiture should take place with great pomp. Seventy Tatars came from Constantinople, bringing the three horsetails and other insignia of the greatest pashalik in the empire. They preceded the grand chamberlain of the Sultan, bearing the imperial firman, with the customary presents and pelisse of honour.

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It was determined that the investiture should take place with great pomp. Seventy Tatars came from Constantinople, bringing the three horsetails and other insignia of the greatest pashalik in the empire. They preceded the grand chamberlain of the Sultan, bearing the imperial firman, with the customary presents and pelisse of honour.

The Porte, however, positively enjoined the new viceroy never to raise contributions nor to levy any extraordinary taxes.

This order was an amusing instance of presumption. With great prudence Mohammed Ali had secured the official appointment from the Sultan by a large bribe, affecting a politic indifference till it could be obtained. He had refused for two months to exercise the supreme power which had been offered him by the great sheiks. But though in name a vassal he was in reality a sovereign. He had been chosen by the unanimous voice of the army. The whole power of the Sultan was, according to the plainest proof, insufficient to displace him.

The state of the Turkish Empire at this time was so miserable as almost to defy description or belief. All was transition, confusion and obscurity. The old order of things was everywhere passing away. The new order of things was not yet created. The wide reforms effected by Mahmoud II. had entered no man's imagination, and Stratford Canning was a boy. Titles and ceremonies were still retained, which implied that the heir of Yelderim and of Solyman the Magnificent, was absolute ruler of the vast empire which they had governed, and that the great pashas were his lieutenants. In reality he was little more than a shadow. He was cowed by the priests and janissaries in his own seraglio.




There was treason in his councils, mutiny in his armies. The position of Mustapha IV. can only be compared to that of the descendants of Arungzebe, when the Rajahs of Benares and the Nabobs of Oude and of Bengal could insult with a mock respect and a real contempt the weak heir of the Great Mogul, who exercised a nominal power at Delhi. But even the house of Tamerlane hardly fell lower during the great anarchy of India, than did that of Othman at the commencement of the present century.

The Greeks were constantly in revolt, while their chiefs and ringleaders enjoyed the highest honours at Constantinople. They had seized on all the commerce, the diplomatic relations, and the wealth of the country. They possessed nearly all the intelligence and all the knowledge that was worth having. No Turk, however powerful, could resist with safety the subtle influence of the Phanar, and the Patriarch was in reality a more important person than the Sheik-ool-Islam. Greeks enjoyed the rich hospodariats of the Danube. Greeks, or feigned renegades, in whose conversion no faith could be placed, had the lead in military affairs, and whispered insidious councils to the Seraskier and the Capitan Pasha. Algiers and Tunis, the splendid conquest of the Barbarosas, were virtually independent. The great pashas bore the same relation to the Sultan as Earl Godwin and the Earl of Northumberland

bore to Edward the Confessor, or as the Duke of Normandy or the Duke of Burgundy bore to Charles the Simple.

In some places, as at Yanina and Bagdad, the pashas affected the state of sovereign princes. They received embassies and openly defied order. At Bucharest and Yassy the governors were like their masters — mere phantoms and puppets. Ahmed-al-Gezzar, or “the Butcher,” a rude but wily Bosnian, who had been a private soldier, resisted all authority at Damascus and Acre, imposing incredible burdens upon the people he oppressed. In Kurdistan the authority of the Porte was merely nominal. Numerous tribes, headed by hardy and warlike chiefs, were in continual feud with one another, and maintained their liberty amidst inaccessible fastnesses. The fanatic Wahabees, the sectarian foes of both Sunites and Sheeahs, were masters of Arabia. The chiefs of the Lebanon fought, uncontrolled, among themselves. The Christians in Bosnia took up arms and revolted against the intolerable cruelties practised upon them. The Albanians—never quite subdued—robbed and rioted unmolested or sold their swords to the highest bidder. The Servians openly allied themselves with Russia ; the Pasha of Widin rebelled ; large hordes of Zebecks devastated the fair province of Carmania ; the Kleftai of Athos and Olympus infested the roads in organized bodies and sacked whole



towns and villages. In the Morea and the islands of the Archipelago, the Turkish governors were only safe in their citadels ; at Scio, no Turk could walk the streets without being insulted. Pirates roamed unchallenged over the Ægean Sea, and had their head-quarters at Cos and Samos ; Greek fire-ships burned the best vessels of the Turkish fleet at anchor. A few pashas held authority in the great towns near the capital, but a mile from the walls of Smyrna or Broussa no one was secure from being carried away to the hills and held to ransom. Impunity for the most enormous offences, honours for the most notorious rebel, could be readily purchased by a bribe to the Phanar. There was no public morality, no patriotism, no justice, no standard of right and wrong.

The Sultan's chief advisers murdered each other whenever they had an opportunity. Bairactar Pasha of Roostchook, having corrupted the priesthood and the janissaries, was powerful enough to murder one Sultan, to depose another, and to create himself Grand Vizier of the successor. But though a man of great energy and prudence, he had no sooner ventured upon the most moderate reforms than he was hurled from power by the same hands that had raised him ; and being besieged in the seraglio, fired a mass of gunpowder and blew himself up.

The European Powers seemed eager to take advantage of the distress of Turkey. A British

force, under Brigadier Oswald, seized three of the Ionian Islands. General Frazer was sent on a hostile expedition to Egypt, and sailed about in a menacing manner between Sicily and Marabout till he lost most of his transports and his troops. Wauchope and Meade, his subordinates, tarnished the British arms at Rosetta. Duckworth and Smith cannonaded the forts of the Dardanelles—the Turks replying with granite shot of 800 lbs. weight, which fell harmlessly into the water. The Russians, co-operating with England, sent Admiral Siniavin to the Sea of Marmora. General Michelson seized upon Bessarabia, and advanced with fire and sword towards the Danube.

The short intervals of actual hostilities brought no tranquillity to the Porte. The history of the time is filled by the relation of her bitter humiliations. Napoleon was perpetually intriguing with the refractory pashas of Yanina and Bagdad. Mr. Arbuthnot and Mr. Adair thought no terms too unreasonable for her acceptance. The French Ambassador, Sebastiani, and the Russian Ambassador, Italinski, quarrelled fiercely with each other and with everybody else; the Divan was helpless and confounded; the whole fabric of the Ottoman Empire seemed on the point of crumbling to utter ruin.

Nowhere, however, did there exist confusion and wretchedness, apparently more hopeless than on the banks of the Nile. Since Cambyses over-

threw the armies of Psammenitus, no native sovereign had filled the throne of the Saïtes. The prophecy of Ezekiel had been literally fulfilled: "There shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." The Persian and the Greek swept over her fertile provinces, and left desolation there. Then was long intestine strife; and the Roman followed to complete the work the Persian and the Greek had begun. The miserable country was given up to pillage. It was pawned and it was sold. Its rulers were obliged to fee dissolute senators and greedy knights. Their thorny crown was only the reward of treachery, incest, and murder. The transactions of that dismal period have left a deep stain even on the names of Cæsar, of Pompey, and of Cato.

In the year 642, Egypt was conquered by the Arabs, under Amru-Ebn-el-As, one of the lieutenants of the Khalif Omar. It was shortly afterwards visited by a pestilence which destroyed a third of its inhabitants, and then by a famine so terrible that the people, crazed by hunger, devoured the flesh of executed criminals and the carcasses of vermin. The first invasion of the Turks happened in 1067, but their chief, Abu-al-Hassan-Nasr-ed-Doula, consented to withdraw his army for a sum of money which quite emptied the treasury of the Arab Khalif. A dreary period followed. The only bright page in the annals of Egypt, for many centuries, was the reign

of Saladin, the chivalrous foe of the lion-hearted Plantagenet. But great men have no heirs, and the successors of the renowned Soldan were unworthy of his name. In 1250 the reigning monarch, Malek-el-Saleh, was dethroned and slain by his own guards.

Those guards were the famous Memlooks. They were a body of mercenary soldiers, first employed partly to defend the maritime cities, and partly to secure the personal safety of the Sovereign. The native Egyptians had become so cowardly, false and effeminate from ages of slavery that they were unfit for arms.

The Memlooks, who are first mentioned in the chronicles of the third Crusade, came originally from the Caucasus; and were distinguished by the flaxen colour of their hair. The expedition of the Tartars, in the year 1227, proved indirectly the means of bringing them into Egypt. The horrible followers of Ghenghiz Khan, and his grandsons, Batu and Houlakon, having slaughtered till they were weary, filled all the markets of Asia with an innumerable multitude of slaves. About twelve thousand were sold to the latter Ayyubid Sultans.

This strangely constituted militia was perpetuated and multiplied by the same means as those by which it had been first established. The Memlooks were all slaves brought from their original country, and without ties or kindred in Egypt. They were commonly purchased in

Circassia, where the people to this day make no scruple of selling their children. The Memlooks made themselves even an honour of their disgrace; and it was an established rule among them that no one could become a Bey unless he had been bought and sold. During 550 years in which there were Memlooks in Egypt, not one has left subsisting issue. All their children perished in the first or second descent.

These slaves, now masters of the country, appointed chiefs from their own body to reign over them as suited their caprice. They set up and pulled down their governors at pleasure. There were frequently half a dozen rival pretenders to the supreme authority at once. At last their disputes were settled for a time by the invasion of Selim I. in A.D. 1517. The Memlooks mustered gallantly under Tuman, whose authority they then acknowledged; but nothing could resist the impetuous tide of Turkish conquest; they were defeated with great slaughter, and their leader was slain.

Henceforth the Memlooks ceased to be the nominal masters of Egypt. But Selim did not attempt their total overthrow; he merely introduced a new form of government, and issued an edict declaring Egypt a tributary republic, under twenty-four Memlook *sangiaks* or governors of provinces. They were to be presided over by a lieutenant appointed by the Porte, and the country

was to be permanently occupied by an army of Azabs* and Janissaries. The wealth acquired by the Beys, however, through all sorts of exactions, soon enabled them to corrupt the once formidable corps placed as a check over them. It ultimately dwindled down into a disorderly rabble of vagabonds, without officers or arms, who dreaded the Sangiacs as much as did the meanest of the populace. None of the stories told of the paper armies of the last Stuarts, nothing related of Russia half a century ago, equalled the corruption practised by the Memlooks in this respect. Of the ninety thousand troops for whom pay was allowed by the Porte, only eighteen thousand really existed, and those were badly fed, ill paid, and almost destitute of equipments.

The motives which appear to have dictated the absurd policy of Selim, was a fear lest the ruler of so wealthy a Pashalik should become too powerful. He was therefore hemmed in by restrictions, and his authority was speedily lost altogether. About the year 1746 one Ibrahim Kiaya † rendered himself in reality master of Egypt, having managed matters so well that of the twenty-four Sangiacs, eight were of his own household.

His death was followed by long and bloody civil wars. Arab chiefs, who could trace their

* *Azabs*, *i.e.*, marines.


† Aly Beg ?—ED.

descent directly from Mahomed without losing a link in the chain, found themselves transferred to the authority of any soldier of fortune reckless enough of consequences to aspire to dominion; or withholding all allegiance to these truculent strangers, they poured down in arms upon the cultivated plains and swept away the cattle and the harvests.

The character of the Memlooks had become as bad as can be imagined. They slew the Pashas appointed by the Porte in open daylight. Poison was their favourite weapon against each other; to quote the forcible phrase of Volney, everything was managed by a series of cabals, treachery and murders. Without affection, tie, or connection with each other, or with the rest of mankind, the Memlooks gave themselves up to the most enormous vices, to habitual drunkenness, to unbridled lust, to that foul crime which brought down the anger of heaven upon the cities of the plain. Discipline was banished from their camps. They had no longer that hardy and warlike spirit which once distinguished them. They were no longer the dauntless horsemen whose impetuous onset had astonished the best troops in Europe, and which had wrung, even from the national pride of a French general, the acknowledgment that they were the finest cavalry in the world. The household of a Bey, once remarkable for the severe simplicity of its manners,

had become a den of uncleanness and debauch. Troops of *awalym*s and *ghawazys* sang and danced about their tents even upon the eve of battle. Thus degenerated and luxurious the provincial governors resided chiefly at Cairo; when they left the capital it was to wander about plundering and oppressing. Their pride was equal to their greed and cruelty; they reckoned it disgraceful to walk. They displayed extraordinary splendour in their horses and accoutrements, allowing the other inhabitants of the country only the use of mules or asses. Their dress was absurd and cumbrous; they were swathed and swaddled in fine clothes, stuck all over with gorgeous arms. The costume of a Bey cost no less than a sum equivalent to £600 of our money, an immense amount considering that the value of money was then at least three times greater than it is now, and that in Egypt money is infinitely more scarce and valuable than in England. Their horses cost about £300 of our money, and were carefully selected from the purest blood of the Nejd. Even slaves who had not yet attained the rank of Beys, rode in gilded stirrups and used housings of cloth of gold, with saddles and bridles richly plated.

Most of them affected to despise marriage, but their concubines were arrayed with reckless splendour. The most beautiful Georgians, from the bazaars of Stamboul and Smyrna, were purchased at enormous prices, and ministered to their pleasures decked in




the choicest produce of Lyons and Genoa. The hair of these women was adorned with an immense weight of jewels and sequins.

The people were ground to dust. All property but that of the Sangiacs and professors of the Law was insecure. There was neither right of succession nor inheritance for real estates. Everything belonged to the Government. The peasants were allowed nothing but what was barely sufficient to sustain life; they were not permitted to eat the rice and corn they had cultivated; their sole food was Indian millet, of which they made a kind of tasteless bread. This, with a little water and a few onions and lentils, was their fare throughout the year. They were almost naked, and they lived in mud huts of the most wretched description.

The only conversation heard in the ruined bazaars and caravanserais was concerning the civil wars and misery of the land. Persons were bastinadoed or executed without the least form of trial. Neither age nor sex was safe. Officers went their rounds in the streets, night and day, attended by wretches who carried leathern bags to receive the heads they cut off during their prowl. Even the appearance of guilt was not necessary to incur capital punishment. The supposed possession of wealth alone sufficed. The unfortunate Dives was summoned before some Bey, and money was demanded of him. If he denied that he possessed

any he was thrown on his back and received two hundred or three hundred blows on the soles of his feet, a punishment sufficient to cripple him for months. If he remained obstinate he was put to death without mercy. The only security for riches was the simulation of poverty. The prisoners taken in every feud and foray were butchered with horrible atrocities. Baskets, full of human heads and ears, were sent about by these miscreants in proof of their triumphs over each other. Fifty piastres were usually paid by the chiefs for a head or for two ears, and men fighting on the same side shot down each other stealthily for this ignoble blood-money. Elfy Bey, one of the most renowned of the Sangiacs, passed hooks through the chins of some Arabs and hung them up in rows to trees. At Damietta a monster named Dely Mohammed was so shameless in his extortions, that, not content with all that torture and chains could wring from his victims, he forced some miserable Jews to sell their own children, and was infamous enough to receive the price. Maho Bey, who commanded at Damanhour, arrested a merchant and imposed a fine upon him. All the man's property was insufficient to pay it, and he died in prison. When the family asked for his body, they were told it would only be given up if his son would go to prison in place of it. Persons were frequently beaten to death. The flags of foreign powers were insulted in a manner worse



than that which brought destruction on Algiers; strangers and ladies could not walk the streets in safety. M. Royer, a peaceable French gentleman, was maimed in mere wantonness while leaving his house; a daughter of the Swedish Consul-General was shot dead while going with her sister to the bath.


Commerce was interrupted. The merchants were obliged to send their goods by caravans so numerous that the one with which Volney travelled numbered six thousand persons. Even then it was scarcely numerous enough to escape being plundered. The silk trade, for which Egypt had so long been famous, was abandoned. Her richest lands remained untilled. Notorious robbers, and outlaws such as Abouleyleh, whose name still survives as a dreadful tradition, were employed in high military commands. The audacity and adroitness of the large band of thieves who infested the country was wonderful, and their professional devices astounding even to those familiar with the writings of Vidocq. They stole the horses and kit of the French officers in the midst of the troops. They stole the swords from those officers' sides. They concealed themselves among the forage and ammunition at the risk of being stifled, and rolled away barrels of gunpowder and sacks of corn unperceived. In Upper Egypt they pulled down the backs of houses to despoil the sleeping soldiers, acting with such speed and dexterity that before

the theft could be discovered they were far away. The water thieves were even still more expert. M. Mengin relates that an Arab swam for a long time behind his boat, and suddenly climbing up stole the turban of the pilot. Before an alarm could be given he had dived and reappeared far out of gunshot. Even the common wants of nature could not be satisfied with safety. Some of the stories told of these crafty robbers, though they would tell admirably in an Arabian tale, cannot be written here. The thieves formed a regular corporation.

Every species of learning had decayed. The wisest of the Beys believed in necromancy, judicial astrology, and white magic; they placed implicit faith in omens, dreams, and the predictions of pretended sorcerers; divination was a lucrative trade.

Such was the appalling state of affairs from which Mohammed Ali rescued Egypt. The effects of the French conquest had indeed for a time done something to check the enormities of the Beys, but their feuds and cruelties, their extortions and wild licence, had recommenced immediately after the death of Kleber.

For five years the Viceroy endured their rebellions and intrigues with unshaken firmness. It then became clear to him that before he could consider his power or his life secure the authority of the Memlook chiefs must be entirely crushed. He soon found an occasion favourable for striking



a decisive blow. By fortifying Alexandria and repairing the defences of the coast he had got rid of the interference and supervision of the Capitan Pasha. He was at the head of all the resources of the country, and of a large body of veteran troops. His success against General Frazer had gained him great credit at Constantinople, and raised his confidence in himself. He resolved, therefore, to commence the struggle at once and send an army against the Memlooks who had mustered in Upper Egypt. After various encounters a brief truce was declared. The Beys were admitted to the capital. For a time the Viceroy was still anxious to conciliate them, but this was impossible. A war of intrigue then began between them, each perseveringly plotting the ruin of the other. Mohammed Ali found that all his designs were thwarted by the resolute enmity of the Beys.

The deliverance of the Holy Land from the Wahabees was at this time the chief object of his ambition, but he dare not withdraw a single soldier from Egypt while the power of that fierce militia existed unbroken; and he knew that they looked with eager anxiety for the opportunity which the absence of the Turks would afford them of rising up again in rebellion. It was a question which should perform the first successful act of treachery. The failure of one led the way to the other. While at Suez superintending the preparations for the Arabian expedition, the Viceroy

received a letter from the Mohammed Laz, his Kiaya Bey, telling him that the Memlooks intended to waylay him on his return to Cairo. Instead therefore of remaining at Suez as long as he had intended, he left it that night on a swift dromedary, without letting anyone know whither he was going, and reached Cairo with only four attendants by daybreak next morning. This intended treachery, and another plot revealed to him about the same time, determined Mohammed Ali to be beforehand with them. He was indeed thoroughly alarmed, and he laid his plans for the destruction of his enemies with all the craft and determination of his character. The Arabian expedition was ordered to be hastened by every possible means, and the investiture of Toussoun Pasha, Mohammed Ali's second son, with the command of the army was assigned as the prelude to its immediate departure. An early day was fixed for this ceremony, and all the principal officers were commanded to attend at the Citadel to witness it. The Memlooks were also invited to be present.

It was on the morning of March 1st, 1811, the season when the hot south winds begin to blow, and the heat even in early morning becomes intolerable to Europeans, that the Memlook Beys rode for the last time prancing and glittering along the streets of Cairo. There were still some fine fellows among them, from an Oriental point of view. There were men in that magnificent throng

who would have galloped gaily up to certain death; who looked upon a battle as a sport, who possessed even rude virtues, generosity, hospitality, even friendship; who protected those they loved, and whose affection was easily gained. There were in that brilliant crowd men of gallant soldier natures, with open hands and frank tongues; men full of jests and sly humour; good mimics and hearty comrades. The fatal days of Shool-rakhyt and the Pyramids had decimated them. Their ranks were corrupted by the admission of three or four Frenchmen, and by the white-beard Ibrahim Bey who had not been bought. But they still numbered four or five thousand horsemen, and of these four hundred three score and ten of their best men now rode in state to witness the investiture of the Viceroy's son. Chahyn Bey was the first who appeared at the head of his household. The other Beys followed, and the Viceroy received them with great pomp and courtesy in his great hall of audience. Coffee and the conversation of the East beguiled the time during the ceremony. When it was over the signal for departure was given, and the Beys took horse to form part of a magnificent procession to the camp. A punctilious etiquette was enforced, and everyone was compelled to take place according to his rank. A corps of the famous Dehliis, whose reckless courage was the pride of Egypt, opened the march, commanded by

Ouzoun Ali. Then came the Agha of the Janissaries, the Odjaquelys, the Yoldaches, and Saleh Kock with his Albanians in their white *fustanellas*. In the centre rode the Memlooks, led by Solyman Bey el Baoub, renowned for his gigantic stature and for the inimitable address with which he managed his horse and sabre. The main body of the infantry, the cavalry, and the civil authorities followed. So the column moved towards the gate of El Azab opening upon the square of Roumeleh.

The road leading thither is now so changed that were a Memlook to return to life he would not recognize the spot where he was trapped. But a credible witness, who was present on that dreadful day, relates that it was a winding narrow pathway cut in the rock and flanked by high houses and fortifications. Sharp turns and angles made it impossible for two horsemen to ride abreast. The ground was broken and rugged.


No sooner had the Dehli and Janissaries passed the gate of El Azab than Saleh Kock ordered it to be closed, and communicated to his men the Viceroy's orders for the massacre of the Memlooks. The Albanians immediately faced about, and their light active figures were seen ascending the rock with the agility of goats. The suspicion of treachery immediately flashed across the minds of the Beys; but escape or resistance were alike impossible. A volley of musketry from above revealed the horror of their position. On this

preconcerted signal the troops in the rear, posting themselves in the neighbouring houses and behind walls, opened a murderous fire. Men and horses fell under a shower of balls; no courage could avail against an invisible enemy. In vain the Beys turned to fly, hoping at least to regain the citadel and sell their lives dearly; they could neither advance nor retire. Wherever they moved they were picked off by the sharp-sighted Albanians. Their horses, maddened by the shouts and firing, became unmanageable, slipping and falling at every plunge. Some of the Beys rolled themselves to the ground, and endeavoured to disentangle themselves of the mass of clothes in which they were enveloped; but the unseen enemy shot them as they lay tumbling about upon the ground. Chahyn Bey fell, pierced with balls, before the gates of Saladin's palace. His body was dragged through the streets with a cord round its neck. Solyman Bey el Baoub found his way, bleeding and half naked, to the Viceroy's palace. There, gaining the harem, he implored the immemorial right of sanctuary in words dear to many generations of fugitives and captives — *Fy ard el harem!*—under the protection of the women. But he was dragged away by the Prince's order, and beheaded with a ruthless ferocity such as only fear could have inspired. Of all who had ridden up to the citadel in the pride of health and strength, Emin Bey, who leapt his horse

over a gap in the wall, was the only one who escaped.

It is said that hardly had the *cortège* begun to defile when Mohammed Ali became unquiet. His uneasy movements betrayed his emotion. When he heard the first discharge of musketry his agitation increased to a degree quite uncontrollable. He grew pale and trembled; perhaps he feared that his orders would be executed by faltering hands, and that a bloody struggle might end in his own ruin and murder. Perhaps he repented. The sight of wounded prisoners and trunkless heads soon dispelled all apprehension for his own safety, but could not restore composure to his face nor to his mind. At length the Genoese, Mendrici, one of his physicians, entered the apartment where he sat, and approaching him said, with a gay air such as only an Italian could have assumed under such circumstances, "The affair is over; this is a happy day for your Highness." The Viceroy replied nothing; but his silence was expressive, and opening his parched lips he gasped out a call for water.

The houses of the Memlooks were given up to plunder and yielded immense spoils. Orders were given to exterminate all who could be found in the city. Punishment was denounced against any one known to harbour a Memlook, or to facilitate his escape. For two whole days the pillage went on unchecked. Then the Viceroy,



in his robes of ceremony, made a solemn procession through the city and put an end to the bloodshed; those who escaped the general massacre were permitted to retire where they pleased, or to remain unmolested. It is said that about four hundred and forty, with their chief, Ibrahim Bey, were murdered in the citadel. In the city and the country it is supposed that no less than twelve hundred more were sacrificed. The history of the survivors is soon told. Those who were in Upper Egypt emigrated into Ethiopia, and after having suffered from the treachery of Ibrahim Pasha at Esneh, took refuge with the Mek of Shendy. On the approach of the Turks in 1820 they retired from the valley of the Nile, and crossing over to the westward, passed through Darfour, whence they at length found their way through Africa to the sea coast of the Mediterranean. On reaching Tripoli their numbers were reduced to fourteen or fifteen, some of whom terminated their wanderings and their lives at Constantinople. A few who had remained in Egypt were afterwards employed by the Pasha, Osman Bey, and others even attained the rank of governors of provinces. Those who had the means of living independently were permitted to establish themselves at Cairo.

It is clear that Mohammed Ali had been guilty of an atrocious crime. His conduct cannot be vindicated. Yet in order that the censure may be justly

apportioned to the transgression, the circumstances of the criminal and of the time must be taken into consideration. The destruction of the power of the Memlooks was a necessary prelude to all subsequent reforms. Their rule was tainted with all the vices of Oriental despotism, and with all the cruelty inseparable from the dominion of race over race. The conflicting pretensions of the chiefs had produced a series of crimes and disasters such as can hardly be found elsewhere in the history of the world. A succession of dissolute Sangiacs, sunk in indolence and debauchery, rioted away life eating opium, fondling concubines, and listening to buffoons ; or they roused themselves only to indulge in wholesale murders. The wealth of all Egypt would not have purchased their allegiance to any government. No benefits could conciliate ; no compact could bind them.

Oriental politics are a fearful game. Mohammed Ali was not only struggling for empire, but for life and liberty. Fear is the most cruel of passions ; and he was beset by powerful, wily, and implacable enemies. He had been for some time at peace with them when they had twice tried to murder him, and had frustrated all his plans. He knew that to temporize with them was useless, and to punish them impossible.

Where there is no law there will always be violence. There must be some check on strong and reckless men. There was not one among the



Beys who, in a sound state of society, might not have been tried and executed as a traitorous disturber of the public peace. . . . They were more dangerous than the nobles of the League, who distracted the government of the last Valois. Their horses, their clothes, their strength, their fine arms have invested them with the same kind of romance which lingers round the splendid cavaliers who charged with Rupert at Edgehill; and the noble gentlemen whose harness shone at Ivry round Henry of Navarre. But they were in reality little better than a horde of savage and illiterate men-at-arms, who cared for nothing but booty, no matter whence it came. It was dangerous for the Viceroy to hold terms with them. It was still more so that he should be known to have been defied. The favour of the Porte always went to the strongest. In an instant the Albanians, who were ready to murder for him while prosperous, might be hired to slay him if good fortune deserted him for a single day. He could not eat without the dread of being poisoned.

Let those who have never been compelled to make a choice between innocence and greatness, crime and ruin, pass judgment upon him; while others are content to remember how far from the path of right the best natures have been hurried by the promptings of fear and the lust of dominion.

If judged wholly by our notions, the massacre

of the Beys was, indeed, an act of inhuman treachery. But it cannot be looked upon with the same feelings of horror that we attach to similar crimes which have been perpetrated by Christian princes—the butchery of the Swedish nobility by Christian II.; and the slaughter of the Templars by Philip the Fair. It more nearly resembles the destruction of the Janissaries which was effected some years later at Constantinople.

If judged, then, by the public opinion of his countrymen and co-religionists, the Viceroy would be at once absolved. It is not saying too much to assert that there was perhaps not a man in authority, from Bayazid to Candia, who would have hesitated for a moment to act as he did. Mohammedans are not educated in the same principles as we are. They are accustomed from infancy to bloodshed, and punishments such as make civilised natures shudder. They kill remorselessly, without passing among each other for ferocious or cruel. A man who will order his servant to jump into the sea to save a locust from drowning, would put out the eyes of a political rival, or maim and torture him to death without compunction. . . . Lastly, it is almost certain that the Viceroy acted by orders from the Porte. The first catastrophe of the Memlooks at Aboukir was notoriously planned at Constantinople; why should not their final ruin have been planned there also?

The fall of the Beys was an inestimable blessing to Egypt. It enabled Mohammed Ali to establish a government which, with all its faults and imperfections, differed as widely from that of the Sangiacs, as the government of Clive and Hastings in India differed from that of the native princes whom they overthrew. It enabled him to render great services to his country and to the world. It may be urged that this is no excuse. Nothing is more true than that the greatest merit cannot be pleaded against a charge of the slightest transgression. If a man is sued for debt, it is no defence to say he had spent his fortune in charity. If he has stolen a loaf of bread to appease his hunger, it is no defence to say that he is one of the few who have survived the agony of Delhi and Lucknow. The plea which Lord Macaulay urges for the murderer of Nuncomar, and the cruel despoiler of the Begums of Oude, may be put forth also for the slayer of the Memlooks. Men raised far above ordinary restraints, and tried by far more than ordinary temptations, are entitled to far more than ordinary indulgence. Such men should be judged by their contemporaries as they will be judged by posterity ; their bad actions ought not, indeed, to be called good, but their good and their bad actions ought to be fairly weighed. If on the whole the good predominate, the sentence ought to be one not merely of acquittal, but of approbation. Not a single great ruler in history can be

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absolved by a judge who fixes his eyes inexorably on one or two unjustifiable acts. With respect to the murder of the Memlooks, the charge against Mohammed Ali, when fairly considered, will amount to this—that he was neither better nor worse than other persons of his age and country—that the founder of a new dynasty in the East can hardly escape some cruel acts—that he formed no exception to the common rule. Whether it is right to found new dynasties at such a price is altogether a different question, and one with which this essay has nothing to do whatever. The Viceroy himself, when questioned on the subject by a French traveller, said pointedly that he would be content to be judged by those who could excuse the murder of the Duke D'Enghien ; an act which he maintained was very far the worse of the two. The strangest part of the tragedy is, perhaps, that the Memlooks, versed in all the tricks and artifices of the time, should have fallen into a trap similar to one which had been set a short time before for Mohammed Ali. Koorshid Pasha had invited him with great politeness to the Citadel that he might receive a pelisse of honour and the title of Pasha of Judda. The invitation had been with equal politeness refused.

Henceforth the Divan at Constantinople found itself compelled to treat Mohammed Ali rather as an independent ally than a powerful vassal. He

would, indeed, sometimes summon the high functionaries around him to read a firman from the Porte; and would press with mock gravity the Sultan's signet to his forehead: but in reality he did as he pleased; no one ever again venturing to dispute his will. The services he rendered, however, to the Turkish Government were inestimable. He restored the holy cities of Mecca and Medina to the dominions of the Sultan; he brought under subjection the warlike tribes of Arabia, the sands of whose desert fastnesses had never before been trodden by the foot of an invader. Even the dreaded Wahabees—the sectarian oppressors of the true Moslems, the terror of whose fanatic arms extended across the Arabian Peninsular from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulph, were unable to oppose any effectual resistance to his troops. Their great chief Soo'ood, was defeated and slain; his capital in the wildest recesses of the Nejd was taken and sacked; his son and successor Abdallah, with all his family, graced as captives the conqueror's triumph in Cairo.

Ibrahim Pasha, Mohammed's eldest son, would have completely suppressed the Greek war of independence but for the intervention of the allied fleets at Navarino. It is said that the Viceroy looked upon Syria and the Morea as two gates which both led to Constantinople. His ambitious designs were well known, and excited bitter

hatred in the breast of Mahmoud II., who made repeated attempts to destroy him. At length there came a trial of strength between them, and but for the opposition of the Western Powers it is more than probable that the heirs of an obscure peasant would have been now seated upon the ancient throne of the Eastern Cæsars.

Among the most important and useful of Mohammed Ali's military exploits was that which freed the valley of the Nile from the depredations of the Bedouins in the bordering deserts. The hurricane of Arab cavalry had passed annually over the rich alluvial plains of Egypt, for many generations. But even the boldest chief shrank from a contest with the best soldier in Islam. The haughtiest of the race of Ismael paused before they braved the veteran who had humbled so many mighty armies; and the immense harvests of the Nile were gathered in with safety under the protection of his sword. But the Viceroy was not content with a mere temporary cessation of Bedouin forays, and he was as astute as he was bold. He knew that the admirable discipline of his troops which had so often made him victorious, would be powerless to chastise the incursions of these flying squadrons. He adapted, therefore, the plan of sapping the relations of the Bedouin chiefs with each other; he cultivated the friendship of the more powerful tribes, and gained their leaders to his interest by timely donations of money, dresses

of honour, and land for the pasturage of their flocks. In return for these favours they were ready to pour forth their horsemen in pursuit of any predatory bands who ventured to make hostile inroads into his territory. Acting on the old principle of *divide et impera*, he succeeded in ultimately destroying their power almost entirely.

His internal administration was in many respects faulty, but the Egyptian standard of good government was not lofty. The system which he established, after all the improvements which have since been made in it, still needs amelioration. It was first far more defective than it is now. But whoever considers what it is to construct from the beginning, in a country which had been for centuries the scene of rapine, violence, and anarchy, the whole of a machine so vast and complicated as a government, will allow that what Mohammed Ali effected deserves great praise. No Mussulman sovereign since the brilliant domination of the Arabs in Spain can be compared with him. His justice and toleration were fully equal to that of Saladin. His enlightenment surpassed that of the most famous Caliphs of Bagdad. Defective as was the police, heavy as were the public burdens, the oldest man in Egypt could not recollect a time of equal security and general prosperity. For the first time since the reign of Amasis the province was placed under a Governor

strong enough to prevent others from robbing and not inclined to play the robber himself. The thanks of the traveller and the stranger are also surely due to him who has made Egypt almost as safe as Yorkshire ; and far safer than some of the counties of Ireland. To compare the most celebrated European statesmen with him is as unjust and absurd, as to compare a modern London printer with Wykyn de Worde, who, before he could issue a book had to make the press and the types, the blocks and the ink.

It is only surprising how one man could have left so many noble works behind him. He made canals and roads. He established manufactories, arsenals, public schools and colleges of medicine where the discoveries of Harvey and Jenner, of Cullen and Richeraud, were taught by competent professors from Europe. He founded hospitals, created large military and naval establishments, and held out the highest rewards to merit of all kinds. He had to contend against the most extraordinary difficulties, the prejudices of religion, and the prejudices of ignorance. His anatomical schools met with the fiercest opposition. The Doctors of the Mohammedan Law held that the dissection of a human body was against the tenets of their faith. Parents would not permit their children to be taught by Frank professors; languages and sciences were declared to be an abomination of the infidel. A mother cut off the

forefinger of a child's right hand to prevent his being able to write, rather than have him clothed, taught, fed, and paid in the Pasha's schools.

He called in all the clipped, sweated, and debased Turkish coins which circulated at a value perpetually fluctuating to the great injury of trade; and though this was done in rather a summary manner, it was a measure of immense permanent benefit to the country.

But Mohammed Ali was no hero of romance. He was a bold, rough, restless, unscrupulous man. He never hesitated at any means to attain a desired end. His early intercourse with the Frenchman at Cawala had left an indelible impression on his mind. His ideas were often of that character, which, without any offence to a noble and gifted people, may be called essentially French. They were frequently grand, promising and impracticable. There was a French sparkle and vivacity even in his conversation. He was fond of discoursing with any chance person he met upon the most complicated questions, and adopted his ideas without examination. His imagination took fire at every plausible suggestion, and he was thus often led into the gravest errors. An immense number of Ethiopians were sacrificed to a gigantic attempt to form a disciplined army. Mohammed could hardly have undertaken anything more unfortunate. It drained the population of a thinly peopled country, and diminished by many

thousands the number of hands required for the cultivation of the soil. These were also doomed to be still further reduced by an insane project which he long entertained to make one of the most fertile countries in the world a manufacturing State. The introduction of the cotton plant into Egypt gave the first impulse to this wild scheme. It required the experience of many years, immense expense, a decreasing population, the destruction of his machinery by the sand, and universal opinion, to convince him of its impracticability; for, unlike most men who adopt plans hastily, he held to his vagaries with remarkable tenacity, as though it were a point of honour with him to never to admit that he had failed.

A sugar refining manufactory and a distillery were established also, under a Mr. Brine, with less than questionable success, the sugar was dirty and insipid, the rum was bitter and bad. Silk looms and foundries shared a similar fate.

The culture of cotton, which is of very good quality, is certainly beneficial to the revenues of Egypt, as is that of indigo and many other kinds of produce introduced or increased by Mohammed Ali. Had he been satisfied with the manufacture of common stuffs for ordinary purposes he would have found them far more profitable in the end. The export of the raw produce, however, would have been still more beneficial to the country and more lucrative to himself.

His restlessness prompted him constantly to introduce all sorts of crude innovations. He interfered with deplorable ignorance in transfers of landed property, and the taxes he imposed on the agriculturists were far too high. Persons who could not pay them were obliged to give up their lands altogether. He obliged the villages to furnish both himself and all persons in authority with provisions at one half the market price, a cruel imposition which compelled a few to bear a weight which should be shared by all. He harassed and perplexed commerce by all sorts of silly restrictions. With a childish policy altogether unworthy of a Government he kept in his own hands many monopolies which would have been ten times more valuable in those of any other person. He sold his goods on credit to Greeks, Armenians, Syrians and Franks, and thereby, of course, lost much money. He fixed the prices of exports so high as nearly to destroy that trade altogether, and he afforded a striking example of the admitted fact that no man makes so bad a legislator for commerce as one who has been engaged in it.

While he injured the interests of his people, and impoverished the revenue by foolish schemes, his capricious liberality to merchants was equally unreasonable. He showed them favours as the whim moved him. He was fond of making absurd speculations in co-partnership with them. He squandered immense sums in this way. But

though he lost they gained. He would lend them money and advice together. They took the money and pleaded that they had followed the advice, as an excuse for never repaying it. If any merchant personally known to him asserted that he had been a loser by any contract or transaction in which the Pasha was concerned, the Viceroy thought nothing of presenting him with £4000 or £5000 to make up the balance. As he was uncontrolled master of the whole public revenue, which amounted to about £3,000,000 annually, he was able to indulge in almost any extravagance of this sort. But it made him bankrupt at last, and he died deeply in debt.

He had the same passion for collecting machinery of all kinds as some men evince for works of art. The pack of European harpies who surrounded him were perfectly aware of this weakness, and turned it to enormous profit. Immediately any new mechanical invention appeared great care was taken to bring it under the Viceroy's notice. He never failed to order a specimen of the best quality, and the complaisant gentleman who had puffed it did not scruple to pocket two or three hundred per cent. by the transaction, for the Pasha had no head for accounts. Shortly after he died an English engineer, who visited the arsenal at Boulak, declared that no less than £1,200,000 worth of the most costly machinery lay there rusting and useless. The energy with which he pursued his ideas,

and his puerile eagerness for their fulfilment were very Oriental. He required the genius of the ring and the genius of the lamp always at his command. There was one story illustrating these peculiarities that he used to relate himself with great glee.

Stopping once upon his way from Alexandria to Cairo, and having determined upon making a canal, he sent for the chief engineer of the province. Having given him the length, breadth, and depth of the canal required, he asked the engineer in what space of time he would undertake to make it. The man took out his pencil and paper, and having made his calculations, answered that if the Pasha gave him an order on the governor of the district for the labour required it might be finished in a year. The reply to this was a signal to the Pasha's servants to throw the engineer on his back and give him two hundred blows with a stick on the soles of his feet. This ceremony being concluded—"Here," said the Pasha, "is an order for the number of labourers you may require. I am going to Upper Egypt; I shall come back in four months. If the canal is not completed by the day of my return you shall have three hundred more." "The work," he would add with much self complacency, "was punctually executed."

He had despised and scoffed at all obstacles so long, he had overcome so many, that he at last found a pleasing excitement in them. He would sometimes undertake a thing, not because he cared

about it, not that it was of the smallest utility, but merely because it was troublesome. Thus on one occasion he asked the representative of a foreign power to purchase him a steamer to navigate the Nile above the cataracts. The diplomatist in astonishment pointed out to him that there was neither wood nor coal to be had there, nor would there be any passengers or traffic. He urged, therefore, that such a project would be as costly as worthless. Moreover, there was the difficulty of transporting the boilers and machinery over rocks and whirlpools. The despot, conscious of his absolute power over three millions of subjects, confidently replied that he would have them taken to pieces and carried by thousands of men. A warm discussion took place, and the diplomatist urged at last that the scheme would cost at least 100,000 francs. On this argument, however, being used, the Pasha lost all patience, and jumping up suddenly from the sofa (a way he had when much excited) he thundered out—"Pray, sir, what the devil is it to you if it costs me a million?"

Though not wantonly cruel, the fear his punishments excited was very great. An example in point is given on perfectly good authority. One of the Arab tribes had a prescriptive right to act as Ghafirs or watchmen about the palace of Shoobra. On some occasion therefore when a large quantity of silver plate had been stolen at one of those fêtes that the Viceroy was very fond of giving to the

Europeans, the sheikh was summoned, he being, according to local custom, responsible for the rest of his community. This notable, being cast into prison and threatened with death if he did not immediately reproduce the stolen property, demanded a few hours' freedom to make inquiries. As his goods and his family were pledges for his return this request was granted. Proceeding at once to Cairo the sheikh made the best of his way to the slave market, where he purchased two strapping negroes freshly arrived from Abyssinia or Sennar. Having carefully ascertained that they could not understand a single word of Arabic or any other language spoken in Egypt, he returned with them to his tents. The perpetrators of the robbery were soon discovered, and the sheikh persuaded them to deliver up the plate by a promise of impunity, which he religiously kept.


Dismissing the real culprits with much wholesome advice on the imprudence of bearding a lion in his den, the sheikh loaded his slaves with the silver and hastening to Shoobra presented himself before the Viceroy, receiving a liberal reward for the dexterity with which he had discovered the offenders and regained the property. Meanwhile there stood the poor negroes grinning under their glittering burden, and fully expecting to share in the smiles and rewards bestowed on their master. When the Pasha demanded the criminals, however, the sheikh indicated the wretched blackmen, who,

to their intense surprise, were at once cast on the ground and regaled with five hundred blows on the soles of their feet.

The stories of a like nature are too numerous to cite. All dreaded the old lion, but they paid him ready obedience; some even loved him, and looked upon him with that pride and devotion which it is the privilege of strong and bold men to inspire when in high authority. But it is time to bring this paper to a close.

The Viceroy resided during the summer months at the beautiful seaside palace of Ras-el-Tyn at Alexandria. In the winter he lived at Shoobra. His Court did not appear particularly splendid to those familiar with the endless galleries, the stately staircases, the paintings and the gilding of Europe. His houses were fitted up in the French style, and presented that curious mixture of splendour and unthrift so common in the East; fine rooms, with latchless doors and windows, made neither to shut nor open.

On state occasions the great Pasha delighted to appear with more than royal pomp. His household was composed of an enormous number of persons, including a corps of four hundred Memlooks magnificently arrayed and appointed. He had a high idea of his own dignity, and never abated an iota of the personal respect he considered due to him. To his own sons he was always particularly severe and stately. Ibrahim, the eldest,



when a Pasha of three tails, and past fifty years of age, was obliged to present himself before his father as humbly as any other Egyptian officer of rank. He would sit at the extreme edge of the sofa, according to Oriental usage, thereby showing extreme deference; and though entitled by his rank to receive a pipe, he never ventured to raise it to his lips, but laid it timidly across his knees. This jealous sense of his own position has been often supposed to have been assumed; but men who know from experience how rugged is the way to power, and who have climbed that steep ascent themselves, are not very much to be blamed if they appear to place a high value on the rank they have attained. The esteem in which they are held by others is perhaps often the only thing that consoles them for the loss of their own.

Though always rough and abrupt in manner, however, he could sometimes be very courteous. To the representatives of the European Powers he was especially civil, and fond of having them about him. On one occasion, during the ceremony of opening the barrage of the Nile, no chairs having been brought, by some accident, for the foreign diplomatists, he refused to be seated himself till the mistake was rectified. He was then, however, nearly eighty years of age.

In his private life Mohammed long preserved that simplicity which has frequently characterized great soldiers. His food was plain and he drank nothing

but water. Though fond of women he was not licentious. In later life, however, like Rienzi and Napoleon, he lived high and drank a good deal of wine. His table could not be distinguished from that of a European sovereign, except from the constant serving of jewelled pipes during and after dinner. He kept a French cook, his coffee cups were richly jewelled, and he dipped his fingers and his beard in rose water when he had done eating.

He slept little, and like all Orientals, was an early riser. He was fond of athletic sports, possessing no mean skill in throwing the djereed, and was an excellent horseman.

Though a poor scholar, he could decipher a plainly written letter, but he rarely did so; and disuse at last rendered it difficult. Notwithstanding his long residence in Egypt, he understood very little Arabic, and could not speak it. From his youth upwards, however, he had been accustomed to study the characters of men, and he valued himself especially on his discernment. He was usually happy in the choice of his public servants. Colonel Sève, whom he raised to the rank of Pasha, was a most distinguished soldier, Clot Bey a learned and expert physician. But the Viceroy was a great deal too fond of prying into the affairs of his own subjects. He was, moreover, naturally fond of intrigue. He had an ugly and dangerous trick of disgracing and humiliating men before he raised them to favour; an ungracious

exercise of authority, for which princes have often paid dearly, and which can never work well. It is imprudent, indeed, for every reason ; Slaves may be made by it—not servants. A man deprived of his personal honour and self esteem is not likely to have a very nice sense of public duty. One smarting under the remembrance of unmerited indignities will seldom possess that loyalty and fearlessness which would induce him to risk his master's displeasure rather than do him an injury.

One of the most noticeable points in the character of Mohammed Ali was his freedom from Oriental prejudices and superstitions. Though his life was said to have been often miraculously preserved (and there were many romantic incidents connected with his career), he was no fatalist, and he once seized with his own hands a pretended sorceress and detected her imposture. Of family affection he had little. There is a dark story connected with the death of his son Toussoun Pasha, and he was once with difficulty prevented from ordering another of his children to be publicly put to death.

Prompt in speech and action, fond of talking of himself and his exploits, yet secret and crafty enough to baffle the shrewdest; quick to wrath, when angry very headstrong and violent, yet clement and generous by fits and starts; he was made up of the same motley as most human beings. The veil which time is fast throwing over his virtues and his vices is raised here with no

unfriendly hand. But it is good to be often reminded of the inconsistencies of human nature, and to learn to look without wonder or disgust at the weaknesses which are found to exist in the strongest minds.

In person Mohammed Ali was below the average height, but his active and firmly knit form was well calculated for the fatigues and exertions which his restless mind imposed upon it. His forehead was high, bold, and square in its outline, his eyebrows large and prominent; he was accustomed to knit them often. His eyes were of that peculiar grey which seems especially to belong to remarkable men; they were bright, and set deep in the head. A strange wild fire gleamed in them at times, and they shot forth ireful glances, which few could withstand; but when in a mirthful mood they twinkled with a droll, malicious fun. Sometimes anger and humour were so quaintly blended in their expression that it was difficult to know which predominated. He had a straight nose with rather wide nostrils, his mouth was broad but well shaped; beneath it a massive chin, covered with a grizzly beard, completed a countenance on which the character of a firm determined will was indelibly stamped.

On his head he wore, during many years, a fez, round which was wound a fine Cashmere shawl in the shape of a turban. This in latter life

he exchanged for the tarboosh, which now forms the unsightly headdress both of Turks and Egyptians. He dressed in a pelisse lined with rich furs; in his Cashmere belt shone the jewelled hilt of a dagger; large loose trousers and red slippers finished the costume. On the little finger of his right hand, small and delicate as that of a woman, glittered a diamond of inestimable value.

He lived to a great age in the enjoyment of good health and spirits. He preserved his astonishing activity of mind and body almost till the last; for it is rust wears the blade more than use, and a long life and unclouded faculties are often Nature's own reward to labour. He went down to his grave in the fulness of years after so many perils; in peace after so many wars.

The last year of his existence only was clouded. He fell into complete imbecility and second childhood. When in this state his mind rambled constantly on war and fighting, wealth and jewels. He had visions of more than Eastern magnificence. He would declare that his agents had discovered mines where diamonds were more plentiful than coals, and where gold might be had in boundless profusion. Even then, however, his genius occasionally flashed through the gloom. After sitting silent and torpid for hours he would rouse himself at the mention of a familiar name, at the neigh of a horse, or at the sight of a sword, and would

then fancy once more that he was a great commander at the head of an army.

Mohammed Ali died on August 3rd, 1849.

Those who look upon his character without favour or malevolence must regard with admiration the fertility of his intellect and his rare talents for command. He created a new era for Egypt; he raised a state sunk in unexampled misery into one of comparative happiness and prosperity. No other Mohammedan country is now so enlightened or so well governed.* Like most men who are born with strong passions and tried by strong temptations, he committed great faults. But every one who is familiar with Oriental history must admit that Islam had produced few better men. The name of Mohammed Ali stands high on the roll of conquerors; but it is found in a still better list—among those who have done much for the happiness of a people. As a soldier—history will decree him a place in the same rank with Tarik and Saladin; as a reformer—she must award him a share of that respect with which England remembers Cromwell, and of that with which France regards the author of the noble Code.

* This was written about the year 1850.—Ed.

THE END

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