BOOK REVIEWS

Part Three (pp. 194-254) deals with social status of the scholars throwing light on the grades of the society, relationships of the scholars with the general public, with one another, and with the government, and the financial conditions of the scholars.

A few orthographic mistakes may be mentioned, by the way, just to avoid them at the time the work is revised and published a second time:

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(Also pp. 122.2; 125.6; 131.2).

Students of Islamic Culture and Muslim Education will, no doubt, hail this work as a very valuable contribution to the subject.

M. S. H. MAṢUMI

II


"Throughout the period in question one person dominated the Anglo-Egyptian scene: that was Sir Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer. More than anyone else Cromer was responsible for the turn that Anglo-Egyptian relations took." (p. xi).

With these words the author prefaces a judicious analysis of the varying political constellations in Egypt between 1882 and 1919. The "Prelude to the Occupation" is an account of how the ʿUrābī revolt and all that it stood for was wiped out by Lord Dufferin with a stroke of pen to be replaced by the prerevolutionary autocratic rule of the Khedive. Chapter II, "International Entanglements; 1882-1896", describes how the aftermath of the occupation of Egypt proved to be an unending source of troubles to England on three levels—with the Cabinet, on the international scene, and within Egypt itself. The author states that the book is an attempt to show the extent to which the strength and weakness of certain characters dominated the course of Anglo-Egyptian relations. In Chapter III, entitled "The Man on the Spot" she deftly depicts the character of the central figure in this book. Chapter IV gives an insight into the interwoven functions of the dual administration in Egypt: the official government and the British advisers. "Rumblings of Opposition" is a brilliant exposé of the trends in the incipient Egyptian press. The author consistently keeps her purpose in view, viz., emphasis on the personalities who shaped things. Whereas in the "Prelude" it were the military and the economists who dominated the scene in the following chapters, attention is focused on the politicians and bureaucrats and then on the writers. The strength of ʿAfāf Luṭfī al-Sayyid's study is that in spite of this design the book does not degenerate into a mere description of characters. Rather the
characters are so depicted that the reader acquires a deep insight into the multifarious
developments which shaped Egypt's destiny during those years. Much has been
written about Jamāl al-dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad ʿAbdūh by other authors, but
seldom so much to the point as in this book. From the story of Al-ʿUrwa Al-Wuthqā
and its editors she proceeds to that of Ali Yusif and his Al-Muʿayyad. Chapter VI is a
vivid narration of the conflict between “The Khedive (ʿAbbās) and the Lord (Cromer)”.

“The first nationalist movement arose in antagonism to the Khedive Tawfiq
and his method of government; the second nationalist movement was stimulated
by the Khedive Abbas and directed against the British occupation” (p. 137)

“The Rise of the Second Nationalist Movement” is the topic of Chapter VII.
ʿAfāf Luṭfīal-Sayyid reflects a high degree of scholarship that leaves hardly anything
to be desired. It is evidenced inter alia, by the critical, but unbiased use of both
Arabic and British sources as well as other materials abundantly available in French
and German. She combines this painstaking research with a writer's skill that truly
sways the reader. The result is a book that is not only highly informative and
instructive but also makes interesting reading. The pleasant effect of this masterpiece
is enhanced since she completely refrains from any polemics or even partisanship.
Commenting on the reforms introduced by the Britishers in Egypt she feels no qualms
to admit:

“The nationalists who had appeared on the stage pointed out the errors they
saw in Cromer’s policy, and often magnified them beyond measure—in Cromer’s
defence it must be said that he was a Free Trader, and could not conceive of
protective tariffs. He believed that if any industry could not thrive without
protection, then it must die” (p. 138)

Ultimately, this impartial attitude and the scrupulous handling of the source-materials
cannot fail to provide weighty arguments against the ‘protectorate’:

“The canker of dissatisfaction”, says the author, “lay in the civil service....
untrained men were being recruited from England, and trained in Egypt. Ronald
Storr, who was later to become Oriental Secretary at the Agency, gives a
humorous account of his first few months in Cairo, when he was shunted from
department to department, because none of them had a vacancy or needed him
for any purpose, until finally a position was found for him. This was no laughing
matter to the Egyptian. He resented this discrimination, and thought that if
anyone was to be trained on the job, then surely it should be the Egyptian, who
had been repeatedly told that the occupation was there only until he was taught
to rule himself, so that he could eventually take over the whole government of
Egypt. How could he learn when he was not even appointed to the administra-
tion?” (p. 140-1).

Although she stresses the point that this book is not intended to be a full history
of the British occupation of Egypt, yet it comes very close to being such a history.
This is perhaps a natural outcome of her critical approach as a trained historian
(ʿAfāf Luṭfīal-Sayyid is the first Egyptian woman who obtained a D. Phil. from Oxford
in Oriental Studies. She has taught in the American University of Cairo and is at
present Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of California). She brings about
a rare perspicuity not only into the analysis of character but withal into the intricacies
of power politics:
"As the occupation continued there was a perceptible shift in the reasons given for sustaining it. It had first taken place to restore the Khedive's authority over a rebellious army; then the occupation was pursued until it supervised administrative reforms that Dufferin suggested; then it was needed to defend Egypt from an invasion by the dervishes, and when that was no longer a valid excuse, Salisbury added that England would continue to occupy Egypt until the Sudan had been restored to it. Finally the British government announced that it would remain in occupation until it had taught the Egyptians self-rule, at a time when all its actions pointed to turning Egypt into a British colony. Such a procession of excuses could no longer be accepted by the thinking Egyptian. Although the real reason for the occupation, which had nothing to do with Egypt, was not revealed to the Egyptians, eventually those with any knowledge of world affairs came to realize that England's interests in Egypt as the key to India were permanent" (p. 144).

Conversely, it is not the ability to integrate the material culled from vast sources into a historical contribution and the absence of any pusillanimity and vindictiveness which make this astringent book so stimulating. This is first and foremost due to the author's refreshingly new angle which she brings to bear on the background to the emergence of 'Abd al-Nâsîr in Egypt. Naturally, the book is climaxed with the summary of Cromer's attitude toward the people he ruled:

"The Khedive's connections with the nationalist movement rendered it suspect to Cromer. He was convinced that Abbas had manufactured the whole movement for his own ends, and that it was spurious. To the very last he never admitted that there was a spontaneous nationalist movement in the country, with a desire to see the British occupation at an end. He persisted in ignoring it, claiming that no sensible Egyptian supported it. Egypt was not a nation, so how, he asked, could anyone advocate Egypt for the Egyptians? Who is a true Egyptian when people of so many different origins live in Egypt—Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, Copts, Bedouins, etc.? Today one can smile at such a remark, especially when we realize that the native Egyptians were over 9 million out of a total population of 9,734,000 but then it was accepted at face value by many people, including Egyptians themselves" (p. 148).

That the people who came to Egypt as "Turks" were a very much foreign element over there, and this in spite of their being fellow-Muslims, has been richly substantiated, albeit almost exclusively from British sources. The process of their subsequent merger into the emerging Egyptian nation has been rather neglected. We only learn that "one of the tasks the nationalists set themselves was to convince the Egyptians that they did in fact form a nation, and that they were capable and indeed deserving of self-rule" (p. 148). Were it not for this casual remark the reader would not come to know that the aristocratic class of 'imperialist exploiters' ever integrated into the political community of modern Egypt. This lacuna is regrettable in so far as many people from among those who were of Turkish origin started to assume a new role during the period under discussion and the character of Qâsim Amin, that pio eering champion of the emancipation of woman, stands out as a growing example to illustrate the absorbing effect of the rising nationalism. Otherwise the author's assessment of Qâsim Amin is as discerning as her characterization of Fâthî and Sa'd Zaghlûl.
While treating Islam with respect, Qasim claimed "the right for civilization to develop its own norms and act in the light of them." Here he differed from his master the Imam; for while Abdüh sought to reconcile civilization and Islam Qasim sought to separate them into two different spheres" (p. 153).

Chapter VIII is entitled "The Orator, the Pro-Consul, and the Intellectual". The Orator is Muṣṭafā Kāmil, founder of the Nationalist Party; the Pro-Consul is of course Cromer; the Intellectual is Ahmad Luṭfī al-Sayyid, editor of Al-Jarīda. With regard to Muṣṭafā Kāmil and his role it is hardly possible to make any new contribution since Fritz Steppat wrote his exhaustive and illuminating thesis "Nationalismus und Islam bei Muṣṭafā Kāmil" (Leiden 1956). But the author's keen perception of the essential has enabled her to highlight it with originality. While speaking about the Entente Cordiale of 1904 that almost threw the Khedive into the arms of Cromer she quotes a sentence of Muṣṭafā Kāmil that is not only highly significant but also a warning of lasting relevance:

"I would be an imbecile were I to believe for an instant that France can be the friend of Egypt or of Islam."

Here one is reminded of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Khaṭṭābī whose memoirs end with a similar conclusion. Like the Moroccan leader, Muṣṭafā Kāmil had for many years reposed his trust in the French leaders because he was lured by their verbose professions of the ideals of the French Revolution. It was only toward the end of his life that he fully realised the hypocrisy of that country's politicians.

The author dilates on the Pan-Islamist aspirations of Muṣṭafā Kāmil and the rejection of such ideas by Ahmad Luṭfī al-Sayyid. Like Fritz Steppat she alludes to the expediency of such tendencies in Muṣṭafā Kāmil, but her account of this clash of opinions leaves, on the whole, the impression that Kāmil's Pan-Islamism had also moorings in a positive conviction. Steppat explains it more as reaction to the conflict with European powers and the wholesale disillusionment with Western attitudes which this entailed. To us, this view seems to accord better with the character of Muṣṭafā Kāmil and his line of thought. 'Afāf Luṭfī al-Sayyid views it only as a contradiction.

The part dealing with Dr. Ahmad Luṭfī al-Sayyid is a welcome contribution to the historiography of modern Egypt in English. As the first rector of the National University and the "teacher of the generation" he has, we feel, so far not been given the attention which he deserves. As his relative, the author knows him intimately, and is therefore in a better position to do justice to him than probably any other historian. We may add that the importance she attaches to the ustādh in this book is by no means out of proportion. There is no attempt to give a twisting interpretation to his somewhat conservative approach, shaped by the moderation of 'Abduh, which was later superseded by the radicalism of a younger generation.

"But before a nation can progress it must rid itself of its social diseases, said Luṭfī. It must learn to put aside its feelings of inferiority vis-a-vis its rulers. It must learn to develop a sense of its own worth, and stop idealizing power. The nation must accustom itself to habits of independence; it must teach itself 'constitutional behaviour' before it can acquire a constitutional government, for an absolute government can exist only if the character of the nation is such as to encourage absolutism" (p. 192).

Whatever we may think about the political wisdom of this stand with its inherent failings, there can be no doubt that the moderation and erudition that is so typical—and now traditional of the Luṭfī al-Sayyid, proved to be helpful in making the book
under review a landmark in the struggle of the Egyptian intellectuals to overcome the past. An excerpt from the Epilogue will give further evidence of the headway made in this direction:

"Although Cromer had turned Egypt into a British dependency in all but name, yet materially and in the best colonial tradition, he had given the Egyptians much. The first ten years of his rule, those of the veiled protectorate, were the most congenial. These were years of reform, the effects of which had been palpable to the average Egyptian who, after years of chaos, of financial ruin and frustration, welcomed stability of any sort. During that period Cromer established a reformed administration that was orderly and fairly efficient; he introduced a certain measure of justice in both the government administration and the courts of law; and, lastly, he brought about financial equilibrium, the sine qua non of any attempts at reform. The years of the second decade, those of open manipulation of power, witnessed a slowdown in reforms, and an increase in the inevitable paraphernalia of colonization, which was sooner or later to stir the population into manifesting its nationalism. For these reasons the Egyptians respected Cromer for his reforms, but they also feared and disliked him for having usurped power and thwarted their leanings towards self-government" (p. 196).

There is little more to say about Cromer, for we even possess a monograph on "Lord Cromer" by the Marquis de Zetland (London 1932). But, is it not time to rewrite Lord Lloyd’s amorphous "Egypt since Cromer" (London 1933) or to canvass "Egypt before Cromer" with the same approach and perceptive mind that distinguishes the author of the book under review. But, alas, enough of Cromer!

Clarity of expression and a superb style are bound to enhance the reader’s appreciation of this study. The only instance where the reviewer was a bit perplexed was the following remark of the author about Riaz Pasha: "The religious hierarchy had great respect for him as a real non-European Muslim" (p. 75). Our guess is that by this she means either non-Europeanized or even anti-European. The skilfully selected and very well reproduced photos of the chief protagonists and a few cartoons of historic importance add to the documentary value of ‘Afāf Luṭfī al-Sayyid’s book.

DETLEV KHALID