

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE DWELLERS IN EGYPT

The Englishman's mission—Conditions under which it was undertaken—Population of Egypt—Its mixed character—Hostility to England—Main tenets of Islam—Its failure as a social system—Degradation of women—Immutability of the law—Slavery—Intolerance—Incidents of religious belief and ceremonial—Mental and moral attributes—Seclusion of women—Polygamy—Divorce—Coarseness of literature and conversation—Filial piety—Government—Conservatism—Spirit of the laws—Language—Art—Music—Customs—Obstacles to England's mission.

AT the conclusion of Chapter XVIII. of this work, the narrative was brought down to the time when Kinglake's Englishman had planted his foot on the banks of the Nile, and sat in the seats of the faithful. He came not as a conqueror, but in the familiar garb of a saviour of society. The mere assumption of this part, whether by a nation or by an individual, is calculated to arouse some degree of suspicion. The world is apt to think that the saviour is not improbably looking more to his own interests than to the salvation of society, and experience has proved that the suspicion is not unfrequently well founded. Yet assuredly the Englishman could in this case produce a valid title to justify his assumption of the part which had been thrust upon him. His advent was hailed with delight by the lawful rulers of Egypt and by the mass of the Egyptian people. The greater portion of Europe also looked upon his action without disfavour, if not with positive approval.

I say only the greater portion of Europe, for there were two notable exceptions. In the East of Europe, the Turk chafed under the reflection that the precious jewel of political opportunity had been offered to him, and that, like the "bird in the story" of Moore's song, he had "cast the fair gem far away." In the West of Europe, on the other hand, the Frenchman was looking on askance with a gradually awakening sense that he had made a mistake in allowing the Englishman to assume alone the part of the Egyptian saviour, and, when he once woke up to a sense of his error, he manifested his irritation in various ways.

With these two exceptions, which, however, for the moment hardly caused any discordant note to be sounded amidst the universal chorus of approbation, the Englishman was able to feel that none, whether in or out of Egypt, were inclined to gainsay the righteousness of his cause. More than this, one of the first qualifications necessary in order to play the part of a saviour of society is that the saviour should believe in himself and in his mission. This the Englishman did. He was convinced that his mission was to save Egyptian society, and, moreover, that he was able to save it.

How was he to accomplish his mission? Was he, in his energetic, brisk, northern fashion, to show the Egyptians what they had to do, and then to leave them to carry on the work by themselves? This is what he thought to do, but alas! he was soon to find that to fulminate against abuses, which were the growth of centuries, was like firing a cannonball into a mountain of mud. By the adoption of any such method, he could only produce a temporary ebullition. If he were to do any good, he must not only show what was to be done, but he must stay where he was and do it himself. Or was he, as some fiery spirits advised, to go to the other

extreme? Was he to hoist the British flag over the citadel of Cairo, and sweep Pashadom, Capitulations, Mixed Tribunals, and all the heterogeneous mass of international cobwebs to be found in Egypt into the political waste-paper basket? Prudence, which bade him think of the peace of Europe, and the qualms of his political conscience, which obliged him to be mindful of his plighted word, albeit it had perhaps been too lightly pledged, stopped the way.

Being debarred from the adoption of either extreme course, the Englishman fell back on the procedure, which is endeared to him by habits of thought and national tradition. He adopted a middle course. He compromised. Far be it from his Anglo-Saxon mind to ask for that "situation nette" which is so dear to the logical Frenchman. He would assert his native genius by working a system, which, according to every canon of political thought, was unworkable. He would not annex Egypt, but he would do as much good to the country as if he had annexed it. He would not interfere with the liberty of action of the Khedivial Government, but in practice he would insist on the Khedive and the Egyptian Ministers conforming to his views. He would in theory be one of many Powers exercising equal rights, but in practice he would wield a paramount influence. He would occupy a portion of the Ottoman dominions with British troops, and at the same time he would do nothing to infringe the legitimate rights of the Sultan. He would not break his promise to the Frenchman, but he would wrap it in a napkin to be produced on some more convenient occasion. In a word, he would act with all the practical common sense, the scorn for theory, and the total absence of any fixed plan based on logical reasoning, which are the distinguishing features of his race.

I propose eventually to answer the question of how the Englishman fulfilled the mission which, if it was not conferred on him by Europe, was at all events assumed without protest from Europe. Before, however, grappling with this portion of my task, it will be as well to say something of the conditions of the problem which had to be solved. What manner of men were these Egyptians over whom, by accident rather than by design, the Englishman was called upon to rule without having the appearance of ruling? To what influences were they subject? What were their national characteristics? What part must be assigned to the foreign, that is to say, the European, Asiatic, and non-Egyptian African races resident in Egypt? What political institutions and administrative systems existed when the English stepped upon the Egyptian scene? In a word, what was the chaotic material out of which the Englishman had to evolve something like order?

These are important questions. It is essential that they should be answered before the nature of the work accomplished by England in Egypt can be understood.

Modern Egypt measures about 1000 miles from Alexandria to Wadi Halfa. Its breadth from Port Said to Alexandria is about 200 miles. The apex of the Nile Delta lies a little north of Cairo. Southward from that point, the habitable country narrows rapidly, and is in places confined to a few yards on either bank of the river. This habitable area covers an extent of 33,607 square kilometres, or about 8,000,000 acres.

Who are the inhabitants of these eight millions of acres? Of what was the raw material composed with which the Englishman had to deal?

It might naturally be supposed that, as we are dealing with the country called Egypt, the inhabit-

ants of whom the statesman and the administrator would have almost exclusively to take account would be Egyptians. Any one who is inclined to rush to this conclusion should remember that Egypt, as Lord Milner has stated in his admirable work, is the Land of Paradox. If any one walks down one of the principal streets of London, Paris, or Berlin, nine out of ten of the people with whom he meets bear on their faces evidence, more or less palpable, that they are Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Germans. But let any one who has a general acquaintance with the appearance and physiognomy of the principal Eastern races try if he can give a fair ethnological description of the first ten people he meets in one of the streets of Cairo, that "maze of old ruin and modern café, that dying Mecca and still-born Rue de Rivoli," as it has been aptly termed by Sir William Butler.¹ He will find it no easy matter, and with all his experience he may not improbably make many mistakes.

The first passer-by is manifestly an Egyptian fellah who has come into the city to sell his garden produce. The headgear, dress, and aquiline nose of the second render it easy to recognise a Bedouin who is perhaps come to Cairo to buy ammunition for his flint-lock gun, but who is ill at ease amidst urban surroundings, and will hasten to return to the more congenial air of the desert. The small, thick-lipped man with dreamy eyes, who has a far-away look of one of the bas-reliefs on an ancient Egyptian tomb, but who Champollion and other *savants* tell us is not the lineal descendant of the ancient Egyptians,² is presumably a Coptic

¹ *The Campaign of the Cataracts*, p. 95.

² Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient*, p. 15. Champollion le Jeune's opinion, quoted by M. Maspero, is as follows: "Les Coptes sont le résultat du mélange confus de toutes les nations qui successivement ont dominé l'Égypte. On a tort de vouloir retrouver chez eux les traits de la vieille race." Mr. S. Lane-Poole, however, says

clerk in some Government office. The face, which peers somewhat loweringly over a heavy moustache from the window of a passing brougham, is probably that of some Turco-Egyptian Pasha. The man with a bold, handsome, cruel face, who swaggers by in long boots and baggy trousers, must surely be a Circassian. The Syrian money-lender, who comes next, will get out of his way, albeit he may be about to sell up the Circassian's property the next day to recover a loan of which the capital and interest, at any ordinary rate, have been already paid twenty times over. The green turban, dignified mien, and slow gait of the seventh passer-by denote some pious Sheikh, perhaps on his way to the famous University of El-Azhar. The eighth must be a Jew, who has just returned from a tour in Asia Minor with a stock of embroideries, which he is about to sell to the winter tourists. The ninth would seem to be some Levantine nondescript, whose ethnological status defies diagnosis; and the tenth, though not easily distinguishable from the latter class, is in reality one of the petty traders of whom Greece is so prolific, and who are to be found dotted all over the Ottoman dominions. Nor is the list yet exhausted. Armenians, Tunisians, Algerians, Soudanese, Maltese, half-breeds of every description, and pure-blooded Europeans pass by in procession, and all go to swell the mass, if not of Egyptians, at all events of dwellers in Egypt.

The compiler of the census of 1897 appears to have felt a difficulty which must surely have weighed still more heavily on those amateur politicians who, like Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, have from time to time advocated a policy of Egypt for the true Egyptians. Who, in fact, is a true Egyptian? The compiler

(Cairo, p. 205): "Copts, Gypts, Egyptians, they are, indeed, the true survivors of the people whom Pharaoh ruled, and who built the Pyramids of Giza."

of the census very wisely did not attempt to define the term; he must have been aware that precise definition was impossible. At the same time, the instincts of his craft appear to have rebelled at the idea of lumping the whole population of Egypt, exclusive of Europeans, into one seething statistical mass and calling them Egyptians. So he divided the Egyptians as well as he could into, first, natives; secondly, persons born in other parts of the Ottoman dominions, who, as a matter of fact, are for the most part Syrians and Armenians; thirdly, semi-sedentary Bedouins, that is to say, the hybrid between the fellah and the Bedouin, who has one foot on the cultivated land of the Nile Valley, and the other on the desert; and, fourthly, Nomad Bedouins, who are Bedouins pure and simple.

The census of 1897¹ informs us, therefore, that at that time there were, in round numbers, 9,621,000 Ottoman subjects dwelling in Egypt, who were divided into the following categories:—

Natives	9,008,000
Persons born, not in Egypt, but in other parts of the Ottoman Empire	40,000
Semi-sedentary Bedouins	485,000
Nomad Bedouins	88,000
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Total	9,621,000 ²

These, with 113,000 Europeans and protected subjects of European Powers, brought the dwellers

¹ I am obliged to use the 1897 figures, as those of the census of 1907 are not yet available. I am, however, informed that the provisional figures work out to a total of about 11,206,000.

² According to the census of 1882, the population was 6,814,000. There was, therefore, including Europeans, an increase of 43 per cent in fifteen years. It is, however, generally supposed that the census of 1882, which was conducted with very inadequate machinery, underestimated the population at the time.

in Egypt, male and female, up to a grand total of 9,734,000.

The Englishman, I have said, came to Egypt with the fixed idea that he had a mission to perform, and, with his views about individual justice, equal rights before the law, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and similar notions, he will not unnaturally interpret his mission in this sense, that he is to benefit the mass of the population. There lie those nine or ten million native Egyptians at the bottom of the social ladder, a poor, ignorant, credulous, but withal not unkindly race, being such as sixty centuries of misgovernment and oppression by various rulers, from Pharaohs to Pashas, have made them. It is for the civilised Englishman to extend to them the hand of fellowship and encouragement, and to raise them, morally and materially, from the abject state in which he finds them. And the Englishman looks towards the scene of other administrative triumphs of world-wide fame, which his progenitors have accomplished. He looks towards India, and he says to himself, with all the confidence of an imperial race,—I can perform this task; I have done it before now; I have poured numberless blessings on the heads of the ryots of Bengal and Madras, who are own cousins to the Egyptian fellaheen; these latter also shall have water for their fields, justice in their law-courts, and immunity from the tyranny under which they have for so long groaned; the reign of Pashadom shall cease.

But the Englishman will find, when he once applies himself to his task, that there is, as it were, a thick mist between him and the Egyptian, composed of religious prejudice, antique and semi-barbarous customs, international rivalry, vested interests, and aspirations of one sort or another, some sordid, others, it may be, not ignoble but

incapable of realisation. He will find, in the first place, that those 113,000 Europeans, although constituting only 1·16 per cent of the total population, represent the greater part of the wealth and intelligence, and no small proportion of the rascality and aggressive egotism of the country; further, that whether their views be right or wrong, just or unjust, these 113,000 elect often have the power to enforce their behests, for are they not the salt of the Egyptian earth, the Brahmins of Egypt, and have they not behind them the diplomatists, and it may even be, the soldiers and sailors of every State of Europe? In this respect, the Englishman will find that he has to deal with a problem for the solution of which his Indian experience will avail him but little. In the second place, he will find that a majority of the large landowners and all the most important officials are Turco-Egyptians in various stages of Egyptianisation, who enjoy privileges which are wholly inconsistent with Benthamite principles, notably the privilege of oppressing those 9,000,000 Egyptians whose woes wring the heart of their English would-be benefactor. Obviously, the Englishman is not likely to get much sympathy or support from this quarter. In the third place, he will find a host of minor officials, many of whom are of non-Egyptian origin, and who, for various reasons, are indisposed to co-operate loyally in the improvement of their country at the hand of the just, well-intentioned, but somewhat unsympathetic alien. In fact, the Englishman will soon find that the Egyptian, whom he wishes to mould into something really useful with a view to his becoming eventually autonomous, is merely the rawest of raw material, and that the principal tools, with which he will have to work, and on which the excellence of the finished article must largely depend, may be

British, French, Turkish, Syrian, Armenian, or of half-a-dozen other nationalities, but they will rarely be Egyptian.¹

This, therefore, is the central feature of the local situation which the English found in existence when they took in hand the solution of the Egyptian question. The Egyptians, properly so called, were numerous, but were, from the political and superior administrative point of view, little more than ciphers. The main difficulties of the English politician and of the English administrator will arise from the fact that the minority, consisting of non-Egyptians or of what, for want of a better term, may in some instances be called semi-Egyptians, were relatively powerful, and not unfrequently, for one reason or another, hostile.

I have said that religious prejudice constituted one of the barriers which were interposed between the Englishman and the Egyptian; for, on the one hand, besides being one of the European family in respect to general civilisation, the Englishman, amidst many deviations from the path, will strive, perhaps to a greater extent than any other member of that family, to attain to a high degree of eminently Christian civilisation; that is to say, although he will in his official capacity discard any attempt to proselytise, he will endeavour to inculcate a distinctly Christian code of morality as the basis for the relations between man and man. He is, indeed, guided in this direction by the lights, which have been handed down to him by his forefathers, and by the Puritan blood which still circulates in his veins.

The Egyptian, on the other hand, holds fast to the faith of Islam, that noble monotheism, belief in which takes to a great extent the place of patriotism

¹ I am, of course, speaking here of the state of things which existed in 1882. Since then, the proportion of Egyptian employés in the Government service has very largely increased.

in Eastern countries,¹ and which serves as a common bond of union to all Moslems from Delhi to Fez, from Stamboul to Zanzibar, as they turn to pray towards the cradle of their creed.²

And what are the main tenets of this creed, which has exercised so mighty an influence on the destinies of mankind? They are set forth in the Sacred Book of the Moslems. They have been explained in many languages by learned men of many nations. But their original grandeur and simplicity have never been more eloquently expounded than by those early followers of the Prophet, who threw themselves at the feet of the Christian King of Abyssinia to implore his protection against the persecution of the Koreish Arabs. "O King," they said, "we lived in ignorance, idolatry, and unchastity; the strong oppressed the weak; we spoke untruth; we violated the duties of hospitality. Then a Prophet arose, one whom we knew from our youth, with whose descent and conduct and good faith and truth we are all well acquainted. He told us to worship one God, to speak truth, to keep good faith, to assist our relations, to fulfil the rights of hospitality, and to abstain from all things impure, ungodly, unrighteous. And he ordered us to say prayers, give alms, and to fast. We believed in him; we followed him."³

These are the main tenets of the Moslem faith.⁴

¹ Some observers think that association with Europe has to some extent resulted in substituting the bond of nationality for that of religion in Moslem countries. Thus M. Le Chatelier, in a work published in 1888, and entitled *Islam au XIXème Siècle*, says (p. 186): "L'évolution contemporaine de l'Europe a introduit dans celle de l'Islam un facteur commun, le développement de l'esprit de nationalité, qu'elle a d'ailleurs propagé dans le monde entier." Recent events, not only in Egypt but elsewhere, tend rather to confirm M. Le Chatelier's view.

² See *Studies in a Mosque*, p. 96.

³ *Ibid.* p. 48, and Muir's *Life of Mahomet*, p. 89.

⁴ Mr. Badger, in his admirable article on Mohammed in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, says: "Surah CXII., the shortest chapter of

To the many hundreds of millions who have embraced Islam, and more especially to the poor amongst them, the adoption of these tenets has afforded not only spiritual consolation but material blessings in this world, as well as the hope of immortality in the world to come. It cannot be doubted that a primitive society benefits greatly by the adoption of the faith of Islam.¹ Sir John Seeley, speaking of what he aptly terms "the state-building power of religion," says: "Wherever a barbarous tribe has raised itself at all above the level of barbarism and taken any development, it has done so usually through conversion to Islam."²

Unfortunately, the great Arabian reformer of the seventh century was driven by the necessities of his position to do more than found a religion. He endeavoured to found a social system, with results which are thus stated by a close observer of the strong and weak parts of Islamism. "As a religion," Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole says, "Islam is great; it has taught men to worship one God with a pure worship who formerly worshipped many gods impurely. As a social system, it is a complete failure."³

The reasons why Islam as a social system has been a complete failure are manifold.

First and foremost, Islam keeps women in a position of marked inferiority.⁴ In the second place, Islam, speaking not so much through the Koran as

the Koran, is regarded by Moslems as containing the essence of the whole book: "Say, God is one; God the eternal; He begetteth not, neither is He begotten; neither is there any one like Him."

¹ "L'Islam est un progrès pour le nègre qui l'adopte."—Renan, *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, vol. i. p. 60.

² *Introduction to Political Science*, p. 63. Miss Kingsley (*West African Studies*, ch. v.) makes some very apposite remarks on the adaptability of Islamism to the present condition of African society.

³ *Studies in a Mosque*, p. 101.

⁴ "The degradation of women in the East is a canker that begins its destructive work early in childhood, and has eaten into the whole system of Islam."—Stanley Lane-Poole, *Islam, a Prelection delivered before the University of Dublin*.

through the traditions which cluster round the Koran, crystallises religion and law into one inseparable and immutable whole, with the result that all elasticity is taken away from the social system. If to this day an Egyptian goes to law over a question of testamentary succession, his case is decided according to the antique principles which were laid down as applicable to the primitive society of the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century. Only a few years ago (1890), the Grand Mufti of Cairo, who is the authoritative expounder of the law of Islam, explained how bands of robbers should be treated who were found guilty of making armed attacks on a village by night. The condemned criminal might be punished in six different ways. He might have his right hand and left foot cut off and then be decapitated; or he might be mutilated, as before, and then crucified; or he might be mutilated, decapitated, and eventually crucified; or he might be simply decapitated or simply crucified, or decapitated first and crucified afterwards. Full details were given in the Mufti's report of the mode of crucifixion which was to be adopted. The condemned person was to be attached to a cross in a certain manner, after which "il sera percé à la mamelle gauche par une lance, qui devra être remuée dans la blessure jusqu'à ce que la mort ait lieu."¹ These terrible penalties could not, however, for some reason, which at first sight appears incomprehensible,² be incurred if a dumb man were one of the band of robbers. In this latter case the *lex talionis* was to be applied. The next-of-kin of any one who might have been murdered could demand a life for a life, or could claim blood-money in lieu of expiation.

¹ The original was, of course, in Arabic, but the French translation, which is quoted above, was published in the Official Journal of the Egyptian Government.

² See p. 136, note.

The rigidity of the Sacred Law has been at times slightly tempered by well-meaning and learned Moslems who have tortured their brains in devising sophisms to show that the legal principles and social system of the seventh century can, by some strained and intricate process of reasoning, be consistently and logically made to conform with the civilised practices of the twentieth century.¹ But, as a rule, custom based on the religious law, coupled with exaggerated reverence for the original lawgiver, holds all those who cling to the faith of Islam with a grip of iron from which there is no escape. "During the Middle Ages," it has been truly said,² "man lived enveloped in a cowl." The true Moslem of the present day is even more tightly enveloped by the Sheriât.

In the third place, Islam does not, indeed, encourage, but it tolerates slavery. "Mohammed found the custom existing among the Pagan Arabs; he minimised the evil."³ But he was powerless to

¹ A curious instance of the processes of reasoning sometimes adopted in order to evade the rigidity of the Sacred Law is to be found in the provision, to which allusion is made above, that the barbarous punishments of mutilation and crucifixion cannot be inflicted on a band of brigands if a dumb man forms one of the band. The reason is rather abstruse. It appears that certain classes of offences, such as robbery, adultery, etc., are specially provided for by the Koran, the penalties being generally excessively severe, and, as no mitigation is permissible, those penalties have to be applied in their entirety. Thus, for brigandage the penalty is mutilation, crucifixion, etc., as described by the Mufti. But, in order, in some degree, to leave a loophole for escape from the compulsory infliction of these punishments in all cases, the law doctors discovered that it was only intended that they should be inflicted when all the parties were quite sound and in a state to speak in their own defence. For this reason, the presence of a child, an idiot, or a dumb man enables the Sacred Law to be put aside and a milder kind of punishment inflicted on the whole party under the ordinary law, i.e. the will of the Sovereign or of his delegate, the Kadi. If I understand rightly, the Mufti did not mean that the dumb man saved all his associates from punishment, but only that they were thereby transferred from the province of the Divine law to that of their human authorities.

² Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, p. 14.

³ Syed Ameer Ali, *Personal Law of the Mohammedans*, p. 38.

abolish it altogether. His followers have forgotten the discouragement, and have very generally made the permission to possess slaves the practical guide for their conduct. This is another fatal blot in Islam.

ἡμῖσιν γὰρ τ' ἀρετῆς ἀποαίνονται εὐρύσπα Ζεὺς
ἀνέρος, εὐτ' ἂν μιν κατὰ δούλιον ἡμᾶρ ἔλθῃσιν.

The Christian, to his shame be it said, has before now been not only a slave-owner, but, which is much worse, a slave-hunter. The Christian religion has, however, never sanctioned slavery.

Lastly, Islam has the reputation of being an intolerant religion, and the reputation is, from some points of view, well deserved, though the bald and sweeping accusation of intolerance requires qualification and explanation. The followers of the Prophet have, indeed, waged war against those whom they considered infidels. They are taught by their religious code that any unbelievers, who may be made prisoners of war, may rightly be enslaved.¹ Moreover, sectarian strife has not been uncommon. Sunni has fought against Shiah. The orthodox Moslem has mercilessly repressed the followers of Abdul Wahab. Further, apostasy from Islam is punishable with death, and it is not many years ago that the sentence used to be carried into effect.² On the other hand, the annals of Islam are

¹ The Hidayah, which is regarded by the Sunnis as the standard commentary on the Sheriât, or religious code, says: "The Imam, with respect to captives, has it in his choice to slay them, because the Prophet put captives to death, and also because slaying them terminates wickedness; or, if he chooses, he may make them slaves, because by enslaving them the wickedness of them is remedied, and at the same time the Moslems reap an advantage."

² Lane saw a woman stripped, strangled, and thrown into the Nile for apostasy (*Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 136). To the best of my belief, the last person executed for apostasy in virtue of a decision of an Ottoman law-court was an Armenian, who in 1843 adopted the faith of Islam, subsequently repented, and returned to the Christian Church. Lord Stratford, who was then Ambassador at Constantinople, rose in

not stained by the history of an Inquisition.¹ More than this, when he is not moved by any circumstances specially calculated to rouse his religious passions, the Moslem readily extends a half-contemptuous tolerance to the Jew and the Christian.² In the villages of Upper Egypt, the Crescent and the Cross, the Mosque and the Monastery, have stood peacefully side by side for many a long year. Nevertheless, the general tendency of Islam is to stimulate intolerance and to engender hatred and contempt not only for polytheists, but also, although in a modified form, for all monotheists who will not repeat the formula which acknowledges that

all his wrath, and, after some sharp diplomatic passages, extracted a declaration from the Porte that for the future no apostate should be put to death. The incident is related in Chapter XVIII. of the *Life of Stratford Canning*. Religious freedom was further assured by Articles X.-XII. of the Khatt-i-Humayoun of February 28, 1856, which was issued after the Crimean War.

I once asked a high Moslem authority in Cairo how he reconciled the fact that an apostate could now no longer be executed with the alleged immutability of the Sacred Law. The casuistry of his reply would have done honour to a Spanish Inquisitor. The Kadi, he said, does not recognise any change in the Law. He would, in the case of an apostate, pronounce sentence of death according to the Law, but it was for the secular authorities to carry out the sentence. If they failed in their duty, the sin of disobeying the Law would lie on their heads. Cases of apostasy are very rare, but during my tenure of office in Egypt, I had to interfere once or twice to protect from maltreatment Moslems who had been converted to Christianity by the American missionaries.

¹ Mr. Pickthall (*Folk-Lore of the Holy Land*, p. xv), speaking of the capture of Jerusalem by the Khalif Omar, says: "Omar's severity towards the Christians was so much below their anticipations that he figures in the popular memory almost as a benefactor of their religion. They were deprived of their church-bells, but kept their churches; and if large numbers of them embraced El Islâm, it was through self-interest (or conviction) and not at the point of the sword, as has been represented. Indeed, the toleration displayed by the Moslems towards the vanquished, though less than we should practise nowadays, is without a parallel in Europe till many centuries later. It was not emulated by the Crusaders, who, rushing to wrest the Holy Sepulchre from the clutch of the 'foul Paynim,' were astonished to find it in the hands of Christians, whom, to cloak their disconcertion, they denounced as heretics."

² Upon the toleration accorded to the Jews by Moslems, see Milman's *History of the Jews*, bk. xxiii.

Mohammed was indeed the Prophet of God. Neither can this be any matter for surprise. The faith of Islam admits of no compromise. The Moslem is the antithesis of the pantheistic Hindoo. His faith is essentially exclusive. Its founder launched fiery anathemas against all who would not accept the divinity of his inspiration, and his words fell on fertile ground, for a large number of those who have embraced Islam are semi-savages, and often warlike savages, whose minds are too untrained to receive the idea that an honest difference of opinion is no cause for bitter hatred. More than this, the Moslem has for centuries past been taught that the barbarous principles of the *lex talionis* are sanctioned, and even enjoined by his religion. He is told to revenge himself on his enemies, to strike them that strike him, to claim an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Islamism, therefore, unlike Christianity, tends to engender the idea that revenge and hatred, rather than love and charity,¹ should form the basis of the relations between man and man; and it inculcates a special degree of hatred against those who do not accept the Moslem faith. "When ye encounter the unbelievers," says the Koran, "strike off their heads until ye have made a great slaughter among them, and bind them in bonds. . . . O true believers, if ye assist God, by fighting for his religion, he will assist you against your enemies; and will set your feet fast; but as for the infidels, let them perish; and their works God shall render vain. . . . Verily, God will introduce those who believe and do good works into gardens beneath which rivers flow, but the unbelievers indulge themselves in pleasures, and eat as beasts eat; and their abode shall be hell

¹ "Le Christianisme a été intolérant, mais l'intolérance n'est pas un fait essentiellement chrétien. C'est un fait juif."—Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 425.

fire."¹ It is true that when Mohammed denounced unbelievers he was alluding more especially to the pagans who during his lifetime inhabited the Arabian Peninsula, but later commentators and interpreters of the Koran applied his denunciations to Christians and Jews, and it is in this sense that they are now understood by a large number of Mohammedans. Does not the word "Ghazi," which is the highest title attainable by an officer of the Sultan's army, signify "one who fights in the cause of Islam; a hero; a warrior; one who slays an infidel"?² Does not every Mollah, when he recites the Khutbeh at the Mosque, invoke Divine wrath on the heads of unbelievers in terms which are sufficiently pronounced at all times, and in which the diapason of invective swells still more loudly when any adventitious circumstances may have tended to fan the flame of fanaticism? Should not every non-Moslem land be considered in strict parlance a Dar-el-Harb, a land of warfare?³ When principles such as these have been dinned for centuries past into the ears of Moslems, it can be no matter for surprise that a spirit of intolerance has been generated.

The Englishman in Egypt will find that, in the

¹ On the other hand, Surah ii. 257, says: "Let there be no compulsion in religion." The numerous contradictory utterances and inconsistencies of the Koran cannot be reconciled. They are probably due to the fact that Mohammed's teaching was greatly influenced by passing events as well as by the personal episodes of his own career.

² Hughes's *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 139.

³ There is, however, considerable difference of opinion amongst Moslem authorities as to the precise definition of a Dar-el-Harb. The question is one of considerable importance to the rulers of India. It is discussed in Sir William Hunter's work entitled *Indian Muslims*. The highest Moslem authorities have expressed opinions that India is a Dar-el-Islam, and not a Dar-el-Harb. Hence, it is not incumbent on the Moslems of India to carry on a Jihad against the infidels. The truth is that when, twelve centuries ago, these words came into use, it was never contemplated that sixty millions of Moslems would be living peacefully under the rule of a Christian King or Queen. Hence, some *modus vivendi* had to be found, which would bring the facts of the

practical everyday work of administration, this intolerant spirit, though it may not always find expression in word or deed, is an obstacle to the reformer of which it is difficult to overrate the importance. He will find that he has not, as in India, to deal with a body of Moslems, numerically strong, but whose power of cohesion is enfeebled from their being scattered broadcast amongst a population five times as numerous as themselves, who hold to another and more tolerant creed. He will have to deal with a smaller but more compact body of Moslems, who are more subject to the influences of their spiritual leaders than their co-religionists in India. The Englishman will do his best under these circumstances. He will scrupulously abstain from interference in religious matters. He will be eager to explain that proselytism forms no part of his political programme. He will look the other way when greedy Sheikhs swallow up the endowments left by pious Moslems for charitable purposes. His Western mind may, indeed, revolt at the misappropriation of funds, but he would rather let these things be than incur the charge of tampering with any quasi-religious institution. For similar reasons, he will abstain from laying his reforming hand on the iniquities of the Kadi's courts. The hired perjurer will be allowed full immunity to exercise his profession,¹

present day into apparent conformity with the doctrines of Islam. The law doctors of Northern India wisely laid down the principle that no Jihad was justifiable unless it was likely to be successful. This view was conformable to the worldly interests both of the rulers of India and of their Moslem subjects, but there is a somewhat secular ring about an utterance of this sort. It commends itself to the politician rather than to the uncompromising divine. Even the exponents of unbending Islam seem, however, prepared at times to admit the principle *qu'il y a des accommodements avec le ciel*.

¹ A number of false witnesses ply, or, at all events, used to ply for hire about the precincts of the Kadi's court at Cairo. They are prepared, on payment, to swear to anything. I have been informed that when the British Government took over the administration of Cyprus

for the Englishman is informed that the criminal cannot be brought to justice without shaking one of the props which hold together the religious edifice founded twelve centuries ago by the Prophet of Arabia. He did not for many years allow a murderer, whose offence was clearly proved, to be hanged because Islam declared—or was supposed by many ill-informed Moslems to declare—that such an act is unlawful unless the murderer confesses his crime, or unless the act is committed in the presence of two witnesses; and he accepted this principle in deference to Moslem sentiment, with the full knowledge that, in accepting it, he was giving a direct encouragement to perjury and the use of torture to extract evidence.¹ In the work of civil juridical reform, he will bear with all the antiquated formalities of the Mehkemeh SHERAIEH. He will scrupulously respect all Moslem observances. He will generally, amidst some twinges of his Sabbatarian conscience, observe Friday as a holiday, and perform the work of the Egyptian Government on Sunday.² He will put on slippers over his boots when he enters a Mosque. He will pay his respects to Moslem notabilities during the fast of Ramazan and the feast of Bairam. He will, when an officer of the army, take part in

it was found that the profession of false witness had been officially recognised by the Turkish Government. Perjurers took out licenses for the exercise of their profession. A good account of the proceedings of these professional witnesses is given in Senior's *Journal in Turkey and Greece*, p. 80.

It ought in fairness to be added that hired perjurers existed at one time in England. The literature of the Elizabethan period abounds with allusions to "Knights of the Post," as they were then termed.

¹ The law on this subject was eventually changed. After prolonged inquiry, it was ascertained beyond doubt that the view commonly held in Egypt was not in conformity with Moslem law or tradition. In 1897, therefore, a law was passed in virtue of which the special provision as regards the evidence necessary in order to permit of a capital punishment being inflicted in a case of murder was abolished.

² Some British officials have declined to work on Sundays, and have made up the hours thus lost by working extra hours on week-days.

Moslem religious ceremonies, fire salutes at religious festivals, and sometimes expose his life under the burning rays of an African sun rather than substitute a Christian helmet for the tarboush, which is the distinctive mark of the Moslem soldier in the Ottoman dominions. And when he has done all these things and many more of a like nature, they will only avail him so far that they may perhaps tend to obviate any active eruption of the volcano of intolerance. They will acquire for him a grudging acknowledgment that he is content to let well alone, and that he does not endeavour to evangelise at the point of the bayonet. He will not be able to inspire any strong feeling of gratitude beyond this limit. The English engineer may give the Egyptian fellah water for his fields, and roads and railways to enable him to bring his produce to market; the English financier may afford him fiscal relief beyond his wildest hopes; the English jurist may prevent his being sent to death or exile for a crime of which he is innocent; the English schoolmaster may open to him the door of Western knowledge and science; in a word, his material comfort may be increased, his intellect may be developed, and his moral being elevated under British auspices, but the Egyptian Moslem, albeit he hates and fears the Turkish Pasha, that he recognises the benefits conferred on him by the Englishman and acknowledges his superior ability, can never forget the fact that the Englishman wears a hat whilst he, himself, wears a tarboush or a turban. Though he accepts the benefits willingly enough, he is always mindful that the hand which bestows them is not that of a co-religionist, and it is this which affects him far more than the thought that the Englishman is not his compatriot. Do what he will, through the combined channels of sympathy and

of reason, the Englishman will never be able to break down this barrier, that whereas both he and the Egyptian Moslems are prepared to aver that there is no God but God, the Egyptian is, and the Englishman is not prepared to subscribe to the latter part of the formula, which lays down that Mohammed was the Prophet of God. "Islam is all in all to the fellah; the unbelievers he looks on as a miserable minority; and it is only the unpleasant fact that they cannot be crushed at present that prevents his crushing them, and asserting the supremacy of Islam."¹

Neither is this the sole barrier which is interposed between the two races. Look, not only to the leading dogma, but to the incidents of Divine worship associated with Islamism as opposed to those of Christianity. Examine the consequences which the degradation of women brings in its train. Consider the mental and moral attributes, the customs, art, architecture,² language, dress, and tastes of the dark-skinned Eastern as compared with the fair-skinned Western. It will be found that on every point they are the poles asunder.³ It would seem, indeed, as if even in the most trivial acts of life some unfelt impulse, for which no special reason can be assigned, drives the Eastern to do the exact opposite to that which the Western would do under similar circumstances.⁴

¹ W. Flinders Petrie, *Ten Years' Digging in Egypt*, p. 180.

² Dean Milman says: "The East, having once wrought out its architectural type and model, settled down in unprogressive, uncreative acquiescence, and went on copying that type with servile and almost undeviating uniformity. In the West, within certain limits, with certain principles, and with a fixed aim, there was freedom, progression, invention."—*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. ix. 270.

³ Sir George Cornewall Lewis (*On the Method of Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, vol. ii. ch. xvi.) has some interesting remarks on this subject.

⁴ An Englishman, who was a keen observer of Egyptian manners and customs, told me that, as a test of intelligence, he once asked a fellah to point to his left ear. A European would certainly have taken hold

It will be interesting to dwell on this point at somewhat greater length.

Consider first differences, some of great, some of trifling importance, which hinge on religious belief and ceremonial.

The Christian clings to the hope that, in the spiritual heaven to which he looks forward, he will meet with those with whom he has been associated in this world. This hope is, indeed, one of the most beautiful and consolatory features of his faith. The Moslem's belief in immortality is dissociated from any ideas of this nature. The Houris, who people the Paradise which he hopes to gain, were never inhabitants of this world.

The Christian prays for certain qualities to be granted to him, or for certain specific objects to be accomplished. The Moslem generally utters certain set formulæ of adoration; he rarely prays for specific objects. ^{BECAUSE HE KNOWS GOD CANNOT BE COINED OR REBISED FROM HIS WILL.}

The Christian will say his daily prayers in private. The Moslem will say them in public. He has no false shame about bearing public testimony to the fact that, in every act he performs, he is in the hands of God. "God," said an English divine who had made a study of Eastern religions, "is present to Mohammedans in a sense in which He is rarely present to us amidst the hurry and confusion of the West."¹

The Christian, when he fasts at all, fasts moderately by day and sleeps at night. The Moslem, during his fast, neither eats, nor drinks, nor smokes by day, but indulges without restraint at night.

The Christian religion encourages the fine arts,

of the lobe of his left ear with his left hand. ^{ἄνωγνισμ} The Egyptian passed his right hand over the top of his head and with that hand grasped the upper part of his left ear.

¹ Dean Stanley's *Lectures on the Eastern Church*, p. 334.

and draws a potent influence from them. The Mohammedan religion is iconoclastic. Painting and sculpture, when they represent any living creature, are condemned. Music is never heard in a Mosque.

The Christian will sometimes be cleanly because he thinks that it conduces to his health and comfort. He puts cleanliness next to godliness, but does not associate the two ideas together. The Moslem will be cleanly after a fashion because his religion enjoins him to be so. ^{HE IS MUCH CLEANER IF NEAR WATER, THAN THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN}

Turn now to the mental and moral attributes of the two races. It will be found that the antitheses are striking.

Sir Alfred Lyall once said to me: "Accuracy is abhorrent to the Oriental mind. Every Anglo-Indian official should always remember that maxim." Want of accuracy, which easily degenerates into untruthfulness,¹ is, in fact, the main characteristic of the Oriental mind. ^{VERY TRUE, BUT NOT IN EXCESS OF OTHER COUNTRIES}

The European is a close reasoner; his statements of fact are devoid of ambiguity; he is a natural logician, albeit he may not have studied logic; he loves symmetry in all things; he is by nature sceptical and requires proof before he can accept the truth of any proposition; his trained intelligence works like a piece of mechanism. The mind of the Oriental, on the other hand, like his picturesque streets, is eminently wanting in symmetry. His reasoning is of the most slipshod description. Although the ancient Arabs acquired in a somewhat high degree the science of

¹ "Pour nous, races profondément sérieuses, la conviction signifie la sincérité avec soi-même. Mais la sincérité avec soi-même n'a pas beaucoup de sens chez les peuples Orientaux, peu habitués aux délicatesses de l'esprit critique. Bonne foi et imposture sont des mots qui, dans notre conscience rigide, s'opposent comme deux termes inconciliables. En Orient, il y a de l'un à l'autre mille fuites et mille détours. . . La vérité matérielle a très peu de prix pour l'Oriental; il voit tout à travers ses préjugés, ses intérêts, ses passions."—Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 263.

dialectics,¹ their descendants are singularly deficient in the logical faculty. They are often incapable of drawing the most obvious conclusions from any simple premises of which they may admit the truth. Endeavour to elicit a plain statement of facts from an ordinary Egyptian. His explanation will generally be lengthy, and wanting in lucidity. He will probably contradict himself half-a-dozen times ^{NO MORE SO THAN THE EUROPEAN OF THE SAME DEGREE OF EDUCATION} before he has finished his story. He will often break down under the mildest process of cross-examination. The Egyptian is also eminently unsceptical. He readily becomes the dupe of the magician and the astrologer. Even highly educated Egyptians are prone to refer the common occurrences of life to the intervention of some supernatural agency. In political matters, as well as in the affairs of everyday life, the Egyptian will, without inquiry, accept as true

¹ It is well known that the Arabs of the eleventh and twelfth centuries exercised a considerable influence on European thought by their teaching of the Aristotelian philosophy. See, *inter alia*, Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. ix. ciii. Also Symonds' *Renaissance in Italy*, p. 68. Dante (*Inf.* c. iv. 143) speaks of Avicenna and of "Avverroès, che 'l gran commento feo."

Renan (*Averroès et l'Averroïsme*, pp. ii. and iii.) makes the following remarks:—"Les Arabes ne firent qu'adopter l'ensemble de l'encyclopédie grecque telle que le monde entier l'avait acceptée vers le VII^e et le VIII^e siècle. . . . La philosophie Arabe offre l'exemple à peu près unique d'une très haute culture supprimée presque instantanément sans laisser de traces, et à peu près oubliée du peuple qui l'a créée. L'Islamisme dévoila en cette circonstance ce qu'il y a d'irréremédiablement étroit dans son génie. Le Christianisme, lui aussi, a été peu favorable au développement de la science positive; il a réussi à l'arrêter en Espagne et à l'entraver beaucoup en Italie, mais il ne l'a pas étouffée, et même les branches les plus élevées de la famille chrétienne ont fini par se réconcilier avec elle. Incapable de se transformer et d'admettre aucun élément de vie civile et profane, l'Islamisme arracha de son sein tout genre de culture rationnelle. Cette tendance fatale fut combattue tandis que l'hégémonie de l'Islamisme resta entre les mains des Arabes, race si fine et si spirituelle, ou des Persans, race très portée à la spéculation; mais elle régna sans contrepoids depuis que des barbares (Turcs, Berbers, etc.) prirent la direction de l'Islam. Le monde Musulman entra dès lors dans cette période d'ignorante brutalité, d'où il n'est sorti que pour tomber dans la morne agonie où il se débat sous nos yeux."

Averroès is, of course, a Spanish corruption of Ibn-Rushd.

the most absurd rumours.¹ He will, indeed, do more than this. He will often accept or reject such rumours in the inverse ratio of their probability, for, true to his natural inconsistency and want of rational discrimination, he will occasionally develop a flash of hardy scepticism when he is asked to believe the truth.

Contrast again the talkative European, bursting with superfluous energy, active in mind, inquisitive about everything he sees and hears, chafing under delay, and impatient of suffering, with the grave and silent Eastern, devoid of energy and initiative, stagnant in mind, wanting in curiosity about matters which are new to him, careless of waste of time and patient under suffering.

Or, again, look at the fulsome flattery, which the Oriental will offer to his superior and expect to receive from his inferior, and compare the general approval of such practices with the European frame of mind, which spurns both the flatterer and the person who invites flattery. This contemptible flattery, "the nurse of crime," as it was called by the poet Gay, is, indeed, a thorn in the side of the Englishman in Egypt, for it prevents Khedives and Pashas from hearing the truth from their own countrymen.²

¹ "The note of the primitive mind is amazing inaccuracy, coupled with wonderful receptivity."—Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, Second Series, p. 193.

² The extent to which servile flattery may be carried at an Oriental court is well illustrated by the account given by Creasy (*Ottoman Turks*, p. 261) of the relations between Sultan Ibrahim (A.D. 1640-48) and his Grand Viziers. His first Vizier was Kara-Mustapha, an honest and courageous man, who dared to tell the truth to his Sovereign. After a short career, he was dismissed from office and strangled. His successor, Sultanzade Pasha, determined not to err on the side of frankness. Even Ibrahim, who was one of the worst of the degenerate Sultans, could not help noticing his servility. "How is it," he said, "that thou art able always to approve of my actions, whether good or evil?" "My Padishah!" replied the Minister, "thou art Khalif; thou art God's shadow upon earth. Every idea which thy spirit entertains is a revelation from Heaven. Thy orders, even when they appear

Perhaps there is no point as to which the difference between Eastern and Western habits of thought comes out into stronger relief than in the views which are respectively entertained by the Oriental and the European as regards provision for the future in this world. The European, especially if he be a Frenchman, is usually economical, and his economy will not unfrequently degenerate into meanness. He will pause before he gives pledges which, whilst providing for his immediate wants, may embarrass him or even reduce him to penury at no distant date. He will usually make provision for his old age, for the wife, who may, and for the children, who probably will survive him. The Egyptian generally cares for none of these things. He takes little heed for the morrow which will dawn on himself, and none for the days which are in store for those whom he will leave behind him. He is, perhaps, unconsciously influenced by the frame of mind engendered in himself and his progenitors from having lived for centuries under a succession of Governments, which afforded no security to the rights of property.¹ Whether he occupies the palace or the mud hut, he will often pledge his future with scarcely a thought of how his pledges may be redeemed. His life is in the past and in the present. The morrow must take care of the things of itself.

unreasonable, have an innate reasonableness, which thy slave ever reveres, though he may not always understand."

Ibrahim, Creasy adds, "accepted these assurances of infallibility and impeccability; and thenceforth spoke of himself as divinely inspired, in the midst of the most disgraceful scenes of folly, vice, and crime." He was eventually deposed and murdered.

¹ Indications are not wanting that, under the influence of good government, the improvident habits of the Egyptian population are being sensibly modified. I have alluded to this subject several times in successive Annual Reports in connection with the scheme which has been introduced with a view to lending small sums to the fellahen, and thus liberating them from the grip of the village usurers.

But these same habits of improvidence tend perhaps to develop a quality which is worthy of praise. The Oriental may often be blamed for prodigality, but he rarely incurs the charge of meanness. He is charitable to his neighbours, and the fact may be recorded to his advantage without stopping to inquire whether his charity is due to kindness of heart, or to the self-interest, which impels him, at the dictates of his religion, to lay up riches in the world to come. Moreover, the Oriental is proverbially hospitable. Indeed, his hospitality often errs on the side of being too lavish.

It may be added, whilst on the subject of kindness of heart, that the cruelty to animals, which so often shocks visitors to Egypt, is no worse than that which may be witnessed amongst Christian nations in the south of Europe, and is probably, as Lane observed in 1835, not a plant of indigenous growth, but is rather due to association with low-class Europeans. The Moslem religion enjoins kindness to animals. "There is no religion which has taken a higher view in its authoritative documents of animal life. 'There is no beast on earth,' says the Koran, 'nor bird which flieth with wings, but the same is a people like unto you,—unto the Lord shall they return.'"¹

Passing on to the consideration of another difference between the Oriental and the European, which will prove a perpetual stumbling-block to the Englishman in Egypt, it is to be observed that the ways of the Oriental are tortuous; his love of intrigue is inveterate; centuries of despotic government, during which his race has been exposed to the unbridled violence of capricious and headstrong Governors, have led him to fall back on the natural defence of the weak against the strong. He reposes unlimited faith in his own cunning, and

¹ Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p. 255.

to some extent his chosen weapon will stand him in good stead. But its employment will widen the breach between him and his protectors, for fate has willed that the Egyptians should be more especially associated with those members of the European family who, perhaps more than any others, loathe and despise intrigue; who, in their dealings with their fellow-men, are frank and blunt, even at times to brutality; and who, though not difficult to beguile, are apt unexpectedly to turn round and smite those who have beguiled them so hardly as to crush them to the dust. From this point of view, one of the more subtle Latin races, had it occupied the predominant position held by the English in Egypt, would probably have had more sympathy with the weaknesses of Egyptian character than the Anglo-Saxon.

Look, again, to the high powers of organisation displayed by the European, to his constant endeavours to bend circumstances to suit his will, and to his tendency to question the acts of his superiors unless he happens to agree with them, a tendency which is especially marked in Englishmen, and which is only kept in subjection by the trained and intelligent discipline resulting from education. Compare these attributes with the feeble organising powers of the Oriental, with his fatalism which accepts the inevitable, and with his submissiveness to all constituted authority.

And if it be held that powers of organisation are only required amongst the educated classes, look to what, for want of a more appropriate term to express the idea, may be called the general muddle-headedness of the ordinary uneducated Egyptian, of which a few instances may be given.

On more than one occasion, a pointsman in the Egyptian railway service has been known to turn his points when the passing train had been *half*

transferred from one line to the other, with the natural result that the train was upset. An Egyptian engine-driver has been known to forget which handle to turn in order to stop his locomotive. On several occasions, railway employés have been killed owing to their having gone to sleep with their heads on the rail, that special position having been adopted in order to ensure their being awakened by the noise of an approaching train. A European would think that, where a road and a paved side-walk existed, it required no great effort of the reasoning faculty to perceive that human beings were intended to pass along the side-walk, and animals along the road. The point is not always so clear to the Egyptian. He will not unfrequently walk in the middle of the road, and will send his donkey along the side-path. Instances of this sort might be multiplied. Compare the habits of thought which can lead to actions of this nature with the promptitude with which the European seizes on an idea when it is presented to him, and acts as occasion may demand.

Then, again, side by side with the European's appreciation of arithmetic, consider that in all matters connected with number or quantity, the ordinary Egyptian goes hopelessly astray. Few uneducated Egyptians know their own age. The usual reply of an Egyptian, if asked the age of some old man, is that he is a hundred years old. What importance, he thinks, can be attached to precision about a matter of this sort, or, indeed, to any scientific or quasi-scientific subject? I once asked a former head of the El-Azhar University whether his professors taught that the sun went round the earth or the earth round the sun. He replied that he was not sure, that one nation thought one way, and another another way,—his natural politeness possibly forbidding him to

express to me what he really thought of the infidels Kepler and Copernicus and their doctrines,—that his general impression was that the sun went round the earth, but that he had never paid much attention to the matter, and that the subject was too unimportant to merit serious discussion. Tell an Egyptian cook that he puts too much salt into the soup. He will abstain altogether from the use of salt. Or, on the other hand, tell him that he does not use salt enough; he will throw in a bucketful. He cannot hit the happy mean; moderation in the use of salt, or in anything else, is foreign to his nature; he cannot grasp the idea of quantity. Again, ask an Arab from the Soudan how many men were killed at one of the numerous battles which have taken place in that country. The only thing which is certain is that he will not state the precise truth, or anything near it, except by accident. Neither will he reply that he cannot answer the question addressed to him. He will, without hesitation, blurt out the first conjecture, which flashes across his brain, as a fact coming within his personal knowledge. He may say 100, or he may say 2000. He has a very faint conception of what either figure represents, and he will be prepared to bring the original 100 up to 2000, or the original 2000 down to 100, according to the views which, by the light of subsequent conversation, would appear gratifying to his interrogator.

Again, consider the manners of the Oriental as contrasted with those of the European. We hear a great deal in praise of Oriental courtesy, and the praise is in some respects well deserved. A high-class European will be charmed with the manners of a high-class Oriental, albeit he is aware that the exaggerated compliments common in the East are merely figurative, and cannot be taken to represent the real sentiments of the speaker. But look a

little deeper and examine the ground on which these outward forms of courtesy are based. The examination will bring out a somewhat unpleasant feature of the Egyptian character. For one of the main reasons why an Egyptian, if he is in any position of authority, is courteous is that he thinks it his interest to be so. In spite of this outside courtesy to his superiors, he will not unfrequently be harsh and tyrannical to his inferiors, to whose feelings and interests he is often indifferent. There are, however, exceptions. Slaves are more often treated with kindness than severity, although in this case motives of self-interest may perhaps be traced. Amongst the middle and lower classes of Egyptians a spirit of real courtesy, not based on self-interest, is often to be found in their hospitality towards strangers. Moreover, among equals of all classes, the outward forms of courtesy are preserved.

These points have been indicated at some length because the differences between Eastern and Western habits of thought constitute a barrier interposed between the Egyptian and the Englishman almost as great as that resulting from differences of religion, ideas of government, and social customs. Indeed, this difference of mental attributes constitutes perhaps the greatest of all barriers. It prevents the Englishman and the Egyptian from understanding each other. Nevertheless, there is one saving clause, which serves in some respects as a bond of union between the two races. Once explain to an Egyptian what he is to do, and he will assimilate the idea rapidly. He is a good imitator, and will make a faithful, even sometimes a too servile copy of the work of his European teacher. His civilisation may be a veneer, yet he will readily adopt the letter, the catchwords and jargon, if not the spirit of

European administrative systems. His movements will, it is true, be not unfrequently those of an automaton, but a skilfully constructed automaton may do a great deal of useful work. This feature in the Egyptian character is of great importance in connection with the administration of the country. It is a source of strength, and also a source of weakness; for, so long as British supervision is maintained, the Egyptian will readily copy the practices and procedures of his English teachers. No necessity will, therefore, arise for employing any large number of English subordinates. On the other hand, inasmuch as the Egyptian has but little power of initiation, and often does not thoroughly grasp the reasons why his teachers have impelled him in certain directions, a relapse will ensue if English supervision be withdrawn.

Look now to the consequences which result from the degradation of women in Mohammedan countries. In respect to two points, both of which are of vital importance, there is a radical difference between the position of Moslem women and that of their European sisters. In the first place, the face of the Moslem woman is veiled when she appears in public. She lives a life of seclusion. The face of the European woman is exposed to view in public. The only restraints placed on her movements are those dictated by her own sense of propriety. In the second place, the East is polygamous, the West is monogamous.

It cannot be doubted that the seclusion of women exercises a baneful effect on Eastern society. The arguments on this subject are, indeed, so commonplace that it is unnecessary to dwell on them. It will be sufficient to say that seclusion, by confining the sphere of woman's interest to a very limited horizon, cramps the intellect and withers the mental development of

one-half of the population in Moslem countries. "An Englishwoman asked an Egyptian lady how she passed her time. 'I sit on this sofa,' she answered, 'and when I am tired, I cross over and sit on that.'" ¹ Moreover, inasmuch as women, in their capacities as wives and mothers, exercise a great influence over the characters of their husbands and sons, it is obvious that the seclusion of women must produce a deteriorating effect on the male population, in whose presumed interests the custom was originally established, and is still maintained.

When an Egyptian woman interferes in politics, her interference is almost always mischievous. The information she obtains is necessarily communicated to her through a variety of distorted media. The fact of her seclusion renders it well-nigh impossible for her to hear both sides of a question. The most trumpety gossip will be sufficient to set her suspicions ablaze, and to convince her that some danger, which is often imaginary, hangs over the head of herself or her relatives. Ignorance of any world beyond that of the harem renders it impossible for her to discriminate between truth and falsehood, between what is within the bounds of possibility and what is so manifestly absurd as to be impossible.

I need not dwell on the causes which, in Egypt, as in other Oriental countries, have led to the seclusion of women, nor on the extent to which this practice is due to the prevalence of the Mohammedan religion. ² From the point of view of the politician and administrator, the consideration of these questions, interesting though they be, is

¹ *Cairo*, p. 140.

² "The system of the harem is, in its origin, not Moslem, but simply Oriental. The only reproach that can be made against the Prophet is that, by too definite legislation, he rendered subsequent development and reform impossible."—*Turkey in Europe*, p. 190.

of little more than academic interest. I am not endeavouring in this work to discuss the effects of Islamism upon progress and civilisation in general. My task is of a more humble nature. I am merely attempting to describe the state of things which the English found in existence when they took in hand the rehabilitation of Egypt. Amongst other social difficulties it has, therefore, to be noted that Moslem women in Egypt are secluded, and that their influence, partly by reason of their seclusion, is, in all political and administrative matters, generally bad.

The effects of polygamy are more baneful and far-reaching than those of seclusion. The whole fabric of European society rests upon the preservation of family life. Monogamy fosters family life, polygamy destroys it. The monogamous Christian respects women; the teaching of his religion and the incidents of his religious worship tend to elevate them. He sees in the Virgin Mary an ideal of womanhood, which would be incomprehensible in a Moslem country. ¹ The Moslem, on the other hand, despises women; both his religion and the example of his Prophet, the history of whose private life has been handed down to him, tend to lower them in his eyes. Save in exceptional cases, the Christian fulfils the vow which he has made at the altar to cleave to his wedded wife for life. The Moslem, when his passion is sated, can if he likes throw off his wife like an old glove. According to the Sunnis, whose

¹ See Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii. p. 367. No Moslem could appreciate the beauty of Wordsworth's sonnet on the Virgin:—

Thy image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend
As to a visible Power, in which did blend
All that was mixed and reconciled in thee,
Of Mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with low, celestial with terrene.

doctrines are quoted because the Egyptians are Sunnis, "A husband may divorce his wife without any misbehaviour on her part, or without assigning any cause. The divorce of every husband is effective if he be of sound understanding and of mature age."¹ There is, however, a good deal of difference of opinion amongst legal authorities as to the law of divorce.² The general principle inculcated by Mohammed on this subject is thus explained in the *Traditions*: "The thing which is lawful, but disliked by God, is divorce."³ The practice of monogamy has of late years been gaining ground amongst the more enlightened Egyptians. The late and the present Khedive, the late Chérif Pasha, and Riaz Pasha may be cited as monogamous notabilities. The movement in this direction may be attributed to several causes. In the first place, education and association with Europeans may have induced the conviction that it is more respectable, and generally more conducive to domestic happiness, to marry one wife rather than to take advantage of the permission granted by Mohammed to "marry what seems good to you of women, by twos, or threes, or fours, or what your right hand possesses" (Surah iv. 3). In the second place, polygamy is expensive. Lane said, so long ago as 1835, "I believe that not more than one husband among twenty has two wives,"⁴ and since Lane's time, the practice of polygamy has certainly diminished. Nevertheless, the movement in favour of monogamy cannot be as yet called general. The first thing an Egyptian of the lower classes will do when he gets a little money is to marry a second wife. A groom in

¹ *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 88.

² This question is fully discussed by Syed Ameer Ali in his *Personal Law of the Mohammedans*, chapters xi.-xiii.

³ *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 87.

⁴ *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 231.

my stables was divorced and re-married eleven times in the course of a year or two. I remember hearing of an old Pasha who complained peevishly that he had to go to the funeral of his first wife, to whom he had been married forty years previously, and whose very existence he had forgotten. The great facility given to divorce necessarily weakens the strength of the family tie. Further, in the West, a wife, whose personal attractions have disappeared under the hand of time, can often, in default of other influences, maintain her hold over her husband's affections through the children which she has borne to him.

Femina quum senuit, retinet connubia partu,
Uxorisque decus matris reverentia pensat.

The hold which the discarded or neglected Moslem wife might maintain on grounds such as these is weakened by the presence of younger and more attractive rivals, who have perhaps borne other children to her husband.

Amongst other consequences resulting from polygamy and the customs which cluster round polygamy, it may be noted that, whereas in the West the elevation of women has tended towards the refinement both of literature and of conversation, in the East their degradation has encouraged literary and conversational coarseness. This coarseness has attracted the attention of all who have written on Egyptian manners and customs.¹ It is true that the Moslem may fairly argue that he started 600 years later than the Christian in the race to attain civilisation, and that, apart from the English dramatists of the seventeenth century, the writings of Boccaccio and of Rabelais denote a state of society no more refined than that which at present exists in Egypt; and

¹ Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. pp. 260 and 273.

he may use this argument with all the greater reason inasmuch as the class of humour which finds most favour in Egyptian society is very much akin to that which we may now read in the *Decameron*. But, in the first place, it is to be observed that the *Decameron* is a model of refinement as compared with many works in Arabic; and, in the second place, it may be doubted whether, even in the Middle Ages, the general coarseness of European society was ever on a par with that of the modern Egyptians.

There is, however, one feature in connection with family life in the East, where the Oriental contrasts very favourably with the European. "Paradise," the Prophet finely said, "lies under the feet of mothers." Greater outward respect is, in fact, shown to parents, and to old age in general, by Eastern than by Western races. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of the old man and fear thy God." Egyptians have from time immemorial acted on this Levitical principle. Herodotus says: "Their (the Egyptian) young men when they meet their elders in the streets, give way to them and step aside; and if an elder man comes in where young men are present, these latter rise from their seats."¹ Young Egyptians generally respect and obey their parents and are well treated by them, unless, indeed, both parents and children occupy very high positions, in which case, the principle laid down by the Prophet Micah rather than that prescribed by Moses forms the basis of the family connection: "A man's enemies are the men of his own house."

Consider also the different standpoints from which the European and the Oriental approach the subject of government.

¹ Book ii. chapter 132.

The point of view of the Eastern is wholly different from that of the Western. I speak, of course, of the true Eastern, free from European alloy; for when once the Eastern, and notably the Egyptian, has been semi-Europeanised, he will often develop with amazing rapidity into a root-and-branch reformer. He will not understand moderation in reform any more than the Egyptian cook, who was recently mentioned, will understand moderation in the use of salt. The true Eastern is a staunch conservative. He would probably look upon an Oriental Lord Eldon as a rash innovator. European affairs appear to him to be in a constant state of flux; his frame of mind is fitly represented by Matthew Arnold's fine lines:—

The East bowed low before the blast
In patient deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

The mind of the true Eastern is at once lethargic and suspicious; he does not want to be reformed, and he is convinced that, if the European wishes to reform him, the desire springs from sentiments which bode him no good. Moreover, his conservatism is due to an instinct of self-preservation, and to a dim perception that, if he allows himself to be even slightly reformed, all the things to which he attaches importance will be not merely changed in this or that particular, but will rather be swept off the face of the earth. Perhaps he is not far wrong. Although there are many highly educated gentlemen who profess the Moslem religion, it has yet to be proved that Islam can assimilate civilisation without succumbing in the process. It is, indeed, not improbable that, in its passage through the European crucible, many of the distinctive features

of Islam, the good alike with the bad, will be volatilised, and that it will eventually issue forth in a form scarcely capable of recognition. "The Egyptians," Moses said, "whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever."¹ The prophecy may be approaching fulfilment in a sense different to that in which it was addressed to the Israelites.

Look, moreover, not only to the spirit of the lawgivers, but to the general principles on which the laws are based. The tendency in all civilised European States is to separate religious from civil laws. In Moslem States, on the other hand, religious and civil laws are inextricably interwoven.

In the West, the law recognises and encourages the use of credit,² and protects the creditor. It may be remarked incidentally that, in respect to this point perhaps more than any other, the ignorant and improvident Egyptian suffered when the Code Napoléon, like a Juggernaut's car, passed over his back. On the other hand, the Moslem law condemns usury, and thus discourages the outlay of capital.³ The lax Egyptian Moslem is obliged to have recourse to all sorts of subterfuges in order to lend money without violating the letter of the law. The presence of the Christian usurer, with whom it is at times possible for the Moslem to form an unnatural alliance based on a community of interest, facilitates subterfuges of this sort.

Again, in the East the theory and practice that the Government is the sole proprietor of the soil survives to a certain extent. In the West, on

¹ Exodus xiv. 13.

² It should, however, be remembered that, during the Middle Ages, the Christian Church exerted its influence against usury, with the result that the money-lending business fell into the hands of the Jews.

³ The Moslem depositors in the Government Savings Banks often decline to accept interest on their deposits.

the other hand, the theory has been well-nigh forgotten, and the practice no longer survives. Save in the least civilised portions of Europe,¹ land is held to be the private property of individuals.

So also as regards criminal laws, the differences are striking. The Moslem code is based upon the principle, long since abandoned in the West, that it is the business of the State to oblige its citizens to be religious and moral. A sentence of death for blasphemy could not, of course, at present be carried out, but a case occurred in Egypt, since the British occupation, of a man who received eighty blows with a courbash, under sentence from the Kadi, for smoking a cigarette in the streets during the Ramazan fast. In general also, Oriental punishments are cruel,² whilst European punishments are mild. This fact tends towards brutalising the population and rendering them cruel to each other.

Compare, again, the languages, art, architecture, and music of the Oriental with those of the European. It will be found that on almost every point the practices and the tastes of the one are opposed to those of the other.

Oriental alphabets are intricate. The Turk, the Arab, and the Persian begin to write on the right side of the page; the short vowels are almost always omitted. European alphabets, on the other hand, are simple. The European begins to write on the left-hand side of the page.

Oriental art continues to copy from one style of art. European art is various and constantly develops new forms.

Oriental music, which is much the same in all parts of the East, is wanting in harmony and

¹ See Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace's *Russia*.

² Moltke, who wrote in 1836, says (*Briefe, etc., in der Türkei*, p. 36) that he had been a personal witness of the barbarous punishment inflicted in Turkey on unfaithful wives.

monotonous to the ears of most Europeans.¹ European music, on the other hand, generally fails to please Orientals.

Turn, again, to the most ordinary customs and expressions, the dress, etc., of the Oriental as compared with the European. It will be found that, even in the most trivial matters, the Oriental will generally do or say the opposite to what the European would do or say under similar circumstances. Numerous instances in point will readily occur to any one who has even a slight acquaintance with Eastern social life.

The ethnologist, the comparative philologist, and the sociologist would possibly be able to give explanations as regards many of the differences which exist between the East and the West. As I am only a diplomatist and an administrator, whose proper study is also man, but from the point of view of governing him rather than from that of scientific research into how he comes to be what he is, I content myself with noting the fact that somehow or other the Oriental generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European. "Tout, chez ce peuple, porte l'empreinte d'un contraste frappant avec les habitudes des nations Européennes. Cette différence est l'ouvrage du climat, des institutions civiles et des préjugés religieux."²

Many of the observations contained in this chapter may be considered commonplace. Nothing, indeed, has been stated which will be new to those who have paid attention to Eastern affairs, or who are in any degree familiar with the social life of the East. I have, however, thought it desirable to make a catalogue—and, I may add, a very incom-

¹ There can be no doubt that from the earliest times the Arabs have taken extreme delight in their own music. See Kremer's *Culturgeschichte des Orients*, vol. i. p. 149.

² *Description de l'Égypte*, p. 83.

plete catalogue—of the main points as to which Egyptian and European habits of thought and customs diverge, for, although each detail taken by itself may be well known, it may be doubted whether even those Englishmen who have been actively engaged in the work of Egyptian administration have always recognised to the full that, in taking in hand Egyptian reform, they had to deal with a society which was not only in a backward state of civilisation, but which was also, from their point of view, well-nigh incomprehensible. They were brought face to face with a population which, in the eyes of the European, was, morally and politically speaking, walking on its head. Lord Dalling, at one time Ambassador at Constantinople, is credited with saying: "When you wish to know what a Turkish official is likely to do, first consider what it would be his interest to do; next, what any other man would do in similar circumstances; and thirdly, what every one expects him to do. When you have ascertained these, you are so far advanced on your road that you may be perfectly certain he will not adopt any of these courses." Often have I thought that an Egyptian would take a certain view of a question based on my idea of the manner in which he would interpret either his own or Egyptian interests. And often have I found that he interpreted those interests in some strange and fanciful manner, which would never have entered into the head of any European.

All these considerations, however, affected the Englishman but slightly when, in 1882, he undertook the regeneration of Egypt. When it is remembered that, in addition to the difficulties arising from the causes to which allusion is made in this chapter, the country had, for at least a century previous to 1882, been governed under a system which exhibited the extremes of savage cruelty and

barbarity;¹ that the impulse towards civilisation first imparted, and not unintelligently imparted by the rough men of genius who founded the Khedivial dynasty, was continued on principles, which may almost be characterised as insane, by the incapable Said, and the spendthrift Ismail; that under their auspices all that was least creditable to European civilisation was attracted to Egypt, on whose carcase swarms of needy adventurers preyed at will; that, as a consequence of these proceedings, the very name of European stank in the nostrils of the Egyptian population; that whatever European ideas had taken root in the country had been imported from France; that the French Government and French public opinion were at the outset bitterly opposed to the action of England in Egypt; that, through the medium of an unscrupulous press, Englishmen were vilified and their actions systematically misrepresented; that, under the pressure of Europe and the European creditors of Egypt, a variety of complicated institutions had been created which were in advance of the requirements and state of civilisation of the country; that the Treasury was well-nigh bankrupt; that the army had been disbanded; that no law-courts worthy of the name existed;

¹ Bruce, writing of his visit to Cairo in 1768, says: "The Government of Cairo is much praised by some. It may perhaps have merit when explained, but I never could understand it, and therefore cannot explain it. But a more brutal, unjust, tyrannical, oppressive, avaricious set of infernal miscreants there is not on earth than are the members of the Government of Cairo" (*Travels to discover the Source of the Nile*, vol. i. p. 26). Volney, who visited Egypt in 1783-5, wrote: "Tout ce que l'on voit, ou que l'on entend, annonce que l'on est dans le pays de l'esclavage et de la tyrannie. On ne parle que de troubles civils, que de misère publique, que d'extorsions d'argent, que de bastonnades et de meurtres. Nulle sûreté pour la vie ou la propriété. On verse le sang d'un homme comme celui d'un bœuf. La justice même le verse sans formalité. L'officier de nuit dans ses rondes, l'officier de jour dans ses tournées, jugent, condamnent et font exécuter en un clin d'œil et sans appel. Des bourreaux les accompagnent, et au premier ordre la tête d'un malheureux tombe dans le sac de cuir, où on la reçoit de peur de souiller la place."—*Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte*, p. 162.

that the Englishman's own countrymen, who, according to their custom, judged mainly by results, expected that at the touch of his administrative wand all abuses would forthwith disappear; that the fellah expected immediate relief from taxation and oppression; that the Levantine contractor expected to dip his itching palm into the till of the British Treasury; that the Englishman's position was undefined, and that he was unable to satisfy all these expectations at once; that, having just quelled a rebellion in Egypt, he was confronted with a still more formidable rebellion in the Soudan; and, lastly, that before he had seriously begun the work of reform, he was constantly pressed by Frenchmen, and by some of his own countrymen, to declare his conviction that the work was accomplished,—when all these points are remembered, the difficulty of the task which England undertook may be appreciated in its true light. But the task was ennobled by its difficulty. It was one worthy of the past history, the might, the resources, and the sterling national qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race. I shall presently endeavour to show how it was accomplished. Before, however, dealing with this portion of my task, the component parts of the population of Egypt require some further analysis.