

and not distant consummation. The general loyalty with which the Porte's requisition for a contingent has recently been responded to argues nothing against this view of the *set* of national feeling, nor will it retard by a day the shuffling off of the tributary yoke. It would as yet be premature to forecast the outcome of the present war to any of the interests concerned; but nothing can be more certain in unaccomplished events than that, suffer who may, Egypt will be a gainer in the result. If the Porte escape heavy loss and humiliation, the Khedive will have earned the right to new concessions, tending to sever the few remaining fibres of the thread that still binds him to Stamboul; while in the worst event of Turkish dismemberment, he may safely count on emerging from the general wreck, piloted by British friendship, it may be into complete independence, or at worst—or best—exchanging the costly suzerainty of the Porte for the fostering and disinterested protection of Great Britain.

## CHAPTER V.

### ADMINISTRATION.

*L'État, c'est le Khédive*—Council and Ministers merely Executants of his Will—His Early Life—After his Accession—Abdeen—Routine of his Highness's Daily Life—His Personal Character—The Ministries—The Late Moufettish—His Inordinate Power—The Present Ministry of Finance—of Foreign Affairs—of the Interior—of War and Marine—of Commerce—of Public Works and Agriculture—of Public Instruction and the Wakfs—The Custom House and Post Office—Provincial Administration—Mudirs, Mâmours, Nazirs, and Sheikhs-el-Beled—The Chamber of Delegates—Character of Egyptian Officials.

BASED on the treaties, firmans, and accomplished facts noticed in the previous chapter, the present Government of Egypt consists of—the Khedive. The formal work of administration is carried on through a Privy Council and eight Ministers, nearly as originally organised by Mehemet Ali, who in the machinery of government as in most else revolutionised everything, and introduced a system of Ministers—as of infantry and artillery—fashioned chiefly after European models. But in the hands of the present sovereign, as in those of his grandfather, councils and ministers are the mere agents of his personal will, without responsibility—except to himself—as without power.\* From the negotiation of a treaty or a loan, to the approval of a contract for coals or machinery, he is cognisant of every detail of public business, and nothing above the importance of mere departmental routine is done without having first passed under his eye. His relation to and ac-

\* To this rule the gradually usurped semi-independence of the late Ismail Pasha Sadyk, in the Ministry of Finance, has been the only exception.

tion upon the whole administration are, in fact, as direct as those of an English cabinet minister to and upon his own special branch of the public service, with the difference that, while the latter is responsible to Parliament and is largely dependent on a staff of permanent subordinates, the Khedive—barring only in what concerns foreigners—is simply absolute. In a word, from Alexandria to Wady-Halfa, beyond which he has delegated his authority to Gordon Pasha, his Highness not only reigns but governs.

The Prince who thus holds the whole reins of Egyptian administration in his own hands is, after Mehemet Ali, the most striking individuality in the modern history of the country. Born at Cairo in 1830, he inherited all the inexhaustible energy of his grandfather, without the sterner qualities of his father Ibrahim; but at an early age this was moderated by an excellent European education into an intellectual activity which, combined with real ability, soon after his return from Paris in 1849, made him the most prominent figure in Egyptian society, and quickly excited the jealousy of Abbas Pasha, who had then recently succeeded to the viceroyalty. As chief of the *parti des princes*—a sort of family “opposition” formed against Abbas—he became especially obnoxious to that indolent but vicious bigot, who accordingly endeavored to crush him by fabricating against him a charge of murder, the failure of which only reacted on its author, and rendered Ismail more influential than ever. On the accession of Saïd Pasha, in 1854, he at once received a portfolio, and after having been sent to Paris and Rome on special missions, he acted as Regent during his uncle’s pilgrimage to Mecca in 1861 and his subsequent visit to Europe later in the same year. Early in 1862 he went to the Soudan as commander of an expedition sent to suppress an insur-

rection in the Upper Nubian provinces, and by a combination of tact, energy, and mercy, he completely succeeded with hardly any bloodshed. Saïd Pasha died on January 18th, 1863, and the destinies of Egypt passed into the hands of the Prince who had thus so well earned his spurs, and has since so enormously increased both her trade and her debt.

He had already a definite policy of government, and in replying, on the morrow of his accession, to the congratulations of the foreign diplomatic agents, he indicated its chief lines by promising an improved and liberalised administration, and the energetic promotion of the material interests of the country. If, in the one important matter of finance, “the ample proposition that hope made” has, till lately, “failed in its promised largeness,” it will be seen how substantially, in nearly all else, the pledge then given has been redeemed. Indefatigable energy, sound judgment, and administrative ability, applied to the management of his private estates, had already made his Highness the wealthiest landowner in Egypt, and the same qualities now exerted in the higher work of governing the country speedily bore corresponding fruit in the extension of public works, the growth of the revenue, and the rapid expansion of both the inland and foreign trade. Saïd Pasha had irretrievably committed the Government to the Suez Canal, but the new Viceroy promptly repudiated one most mischievous obligation imposed by that—for Egypt—disastrous concession, by stopping the monthly conscription of 20,000 men, which, at ruinous cost to the country, supplied M. Lesseps with *corvée* labour for his work. He had, indeed, to make heavy compensation for this act, equally of humanity and sound economy; but the relief to the Fellahs was immense, and its effects were soon visible in extended and more productive cultivation

in all the districts from which this army of forced labourers had been drawn. His zeal, however, for material progress carried him farther and faster than the resources of the country could profitably bear, concurrently with other heavy drains. Commerce and revenue developed rapidly, but canals and railroads outstripped both, and continued expenditure for the same purpose—supplemented by further large disbursements for the Suez Canal, by blackmail to Stamboul, and usurious interest on every borrowed pound—gradually swelled the small debt-legacy left by Saïd Pasha into the bloated total that now half smothers Egyptian credit. But, personally, the Khedive has been much less to blame for this result than it has been the fashion to assume, and succeeding chapters will show how entirely he is to be credited with the enormous material development that can, in any case, be set against it. The bad inheritance of the Canal, which preponderant French influence rendered so costly, was no fault of his; and as little could he resist, or be held responsible for, the forced donatives to Constantinople which annually exceeded the treaty tribute. It may be said that with these inevitable drains on the Treasury he should have spent less on public works; but if he had done so, Egypt would be still pretty much where Saïd Pasha left her; whereas she now possesses railways, new canals, docks, harbours, and telegraphs, which, in respect of these potent aids to national progress, place her abreast of most second-class European States, and which, at all events, have cost more than the net proceeds of her whole foreign debt. The shortest sketch of his Highness's personal share in the administration, and of the average measure of official work he labours through almost every day of the year, will dispose of another common fallacy—that his life is that of a modern Sardanapalus.

The various Ministries are scattered within a radius of less than a mile from the palace of Abdeen, where the Khedive now generally resides, except during the hottest weeks of summer, when he crosses to Ghizereh, on the western bank of the Nile. Abdeen itself is a spacious but architecturally modest building, one wing of which is wholly devoted to Government offices, and to the reception-rooms in which his Highness gives occasional dinners and concerts to the official and other foreign society of Cairo and Alexandria. In this, too, is the small suite of apartments on the first floor, in one of which his Highness transacts business and receives his visitors, within call of his private secretary in an adjoining cabinet, and of a couple of Arab *chasseurs* on the stair-landing outside. The chamber has no pretension whatever to splendour of furniture or decoration, a thick Persian carpet, a damask-covered divan, a few chairs upholstered to match, with window-curtains of the same material, half a dozen crystal sconces round the arabesqued walls, and a small gilt table behind which the Prince himself sits, forming the *ensemble*. Here his Highness takes his place every morning about eight o'clock, and receives first his sons—who are now respectively President of the Privy Council and Ministers of Finance, War, and Public Works—and, after them, such of the other Ministers and chief functionaries as may have occasion to consult him or have been summoned to an audience. Then, on till noon, follow receptions of the Consuls-General and such other foreigners as have, or have not, received Consular introduction, and desire to see the great man either to gratify a traveller's curiosity or to propose a contract. At noon—which is announced by gun-fire from the Citadel—his Highness retires for an hour to breakfast, and thence afterwards, except on the rare afternoons when he takes a couple of

hours' drive in a modest two-horse brougham or barouche down the Shoobra or Abbasieh road, he is again at his post, giving more audiences and transacting every sort of miscellaneous business till 7 p.m., when another hour is given to dinner, after which, if the day's work has been got through, he spends two or three hours, either back in the same room or on the balcony in the balmy Cairene night, smoking and chatting affably with such of the Ministers or others who have the *libre entrée* as may drop in, and then to bed about eleven o'clock—or, if there be still business to be done, he again works at it from after dinner till midnight, or even later, with the whole staff of secretaries, chamberlains, and other officials kept at their posts till he finally retires for the night. During the twelve or fourteen hours thus given to positive work for certainly more than 300 days a year, there is, as has been said, hardly a detail of public business above the merest routine on which he is not consulted, and that he does not personally direct. He is, in fact, both sovereign and Minister in one—seeing everything, knowing everything, and ordering everything, for himself; the titular heads of departments being merely so many *chefs de cabinet*, who do little more than register and execute his will.\*

The readiness with which his Highness receives almost everybody is one of the incidents of a visit to Cairo that most surprises and gratifies a stranger. You inscribe your name in a visitor's book in the room of the Assistant-Master of the Ceremonies down-stairs, and if you have the shadow of a fair pretext for an audience you are either

\* Besides the Ministers, there are also the members of his Highness's official household:—Khairi Pasha, Keeper of the Seals; Zecchi Pasha, Grand Master of the Ceremonies; Tonino Bey, assistant do.; Murad Pasha, first Aide-de-camp; Abduljelil Bey, chief of the Private Cabinet; Barrot Bey, Secretary for the European Correspondence; and Dr. Burguières Bey, private physician.

ushered up after a short delay, or a time is fixed for your reception later. His Highness speaks French like a Parisian, and receives his visitor with a courtesy and affability that at once set him at his ease, rising as he approaches, and motioning him either to a seat on the divan or to a chair near his own, according to the measure of consideration intended to be shown. Be you engineer, merchant, journalist, politician, practical agriculturist, or almost no matter what else, you will soon feel that you have met your match in special intelligence and information; while as regards Egypt itself, you will find that his Highness understands absolutely everything, from the niceties of its relation to the Porte to the best rotation of crops or the latest Liverpool price of "Fair Middling." How he has found time to acquire this encyclopædic information is a marvel; but there it is on almost every subject, as if he were a specialist in each. The audience over, you retire with the compelled conviction that if an "intelligent despotism" be under any circumstances the best form of government, Egypt could not well have a better autocrat than her present Khedive. You carry away, too, the feeling, that practically acute as he may be in all the details of business, the man is essentially a *grand seigneur*, full of a high personal pride, and animated by a dynastic ambition which is but thinly veiled by the tone of loyal respect in which he always speaks of the Porte. His Highness is now in his forty-seventh year, below the middle height, stout though not at all unwieldy, and with nothing of an Eastern but the native dignity, in his easy and polished manners. "But (quite accurately wrote a recent interviewer) the eye is still clear and bright, and the mouth and jaw are those of a strong and determined character." There is essentially nothing weak about the man himself, and, whatever may be its other

defects, weakness is also assuredly the last term that can be applied to his administration.

The rule thus exercised is obviously much more personal and autocratic than that of either Sultan or Czar. It would be easy to indicate its disadvantages; but on the whole it is suited to the country, and it may be doubted if ever in modern times Egypt has been so well governed as at present. The central machinery through which his Highness works comprises, as has been said, a Privy Council (*mejlis khossoussi*) and eight different Ministries. The first of these, over which Prince Mehemet Tewfik Pasha, the heir-apparent, presides, consists of the Ministers and eight or nine other high functionaries, including the Sheikh-ul-Islam, who is now no longer sent from Constantinople but, like the chief Cadi, is named direct by the Khedive from amongst the native Ulema. The functions of the Council are to examine and report to his Highness on the budgets and other measures of the various departments, and to act generally as a court of administrative review, whose decisions, when confirmed by the Khedive, are final. Its duties and powers are closely analogous to those which in Russia are divided between the "Council of the Empire" and the "Directing Senate," the ultimate executive authority centring at Cairo, as at St. Petersburg, in the sovereign—with the personal difference only that in the latter the "Private Cabinet" relieves the Czar of the work which in Egypt is done by the Khedive himself.

Of the Ministries, that of Finance acquired an altogether preponderant rank and power under the late Ismaïl Pasha Sadyk. For four or five years preceding his fall, the "Moufettish" had been virtual Grand Vizier of Egypt, the one exception among his colleagues who—so great was his personal influence with the Khedive—acted in his

own department almost independently of his master, and usurped a right of interference in almost every other. Although the provincial administration is properly under the Minister of the Interior—then and still Prince Mehemet Tewfik Pasha—Ismaïl Sadyk virtually named every governor and sub-governor and most of even the lower officials throughout the country, levying blackmail from each on his appointment, and exercising nearly absolute authority over the whole up to the day before his fall.\* In every despotic Government, the Minister who holds the national purse-strings must necessarily wield an exceptional influence; but in this case influence had grown into almost independent power, and, as Sadyk wished, so his master permitted it to be in nearly the whole financial administration of the country. Originally a fellah himself, his knowledge of the class enabled him to squeeze revenue out of them when every one else failed, and from Alexandria to Khartoum his name had become feared hardly less than that of the Khedive himself. The financial mal-administration of recent years was, therefore, almost entirely his personal work; and more than one loan-monger could testify to bribes offered and accepted which would sufficiently explain the onerous terms on which their successive operations were carried through. So intelligent and autocratic a ruler as the Khedive cannot escape all share of blame for the result; since he must have either directly or tacitly approved the action of his Minister, and in either case must be held ultimately responsible for it. In Alexandria and Cairo, however, it was none the less notorious that the prime author of and

\* So paramount indeed had this gradually usurped authority become that, a few months previously, the harbour-master of Rosetta, who owed his appointment to the Moufettish, refused to obey an order of the Khedive removing him from his post for misconduct, and was only ousted by a guard of marines under M'Killop Pasha, acting under his Highness's sign-manual.

profiter by the system of financing which so disastrously affected Egyptian credit was the Moufettish himself; and his sudden fall in November last was, therefore, interpreted as a break with that vicious policy, and has since in fact been followed by a radical change in the character as in the *personnel* of the Treasury administration. This last now consists of Prince Hussein Pasha, the second son of the Khedive, as Minister, assisted by a *wakil*, Omer Pasha, for the routine work of the department; of a Finance Committee, comprising the Minister and two English and French Controllers-general\* (whose functions will be described in detail in a subsequent chapter); and of a Public Debt Commission—composed of foreigners† recommended by their respective Governments—which receives and applies the revenue assigned for payment of the debt annuities. The Minister himself, though only in his twenty-fifth year, has already had considerable official experience, and, to a large share of his father's energy and ability, adds the advantages of a very complete European education. Thus organised, the department is practically administered by high-class European functionaries, and it is hardly too much to say that, if these do their duty, it offers nearly as effective guarantees for the control of the national revenue as our own English Exchequer.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs ranks next, rather in accordance with the grade of this department in other Governments than, as yet, from the importance of its particular functions. As Egypt does not yet enjoy the *jus legationis*, she maintains no political agents abroad,

\* At present Mr. Romaine, C.B. (with Mr. Gerald Fitzgerald, an ex-Indian official, as his deputy), and Baron de Maloret.

† Major Baring (English), M. Bligorière (French), Herr Cremer (Austrian), and Sig. Baravelli (Italian).

and the foreign Powers are represented in Cairo only by Diplomatic Agents and Consuls-General, whose chief duties relate to trade and the "protection" of their resident countrymen under the still technically surviving Capitulations.\* But here again, although all purely formal business of this kind passes through the Ministry, every matter of the least importance is discussed and settled by the Agents directly with the Khedive himself. With this department has recently been associated the Ministry of Justice, to which the opening of the new international courts has given increased importance. It also exercises administrative control over the native tribunals, the machinery and procedure of which have been greatly improved during the past two or three years. The use of the new European code compiled for, and now followed by, the international courts is being gradually introduced, Christian evidence is everywhere received, and altogether the work of native judicial reform is making real progress. The actual Minister of the joint departments is Sherif Pasha—by birth a Circassian—who last year replaced Nubar Pasha, after having previously held several other high posts. Like most of his present colleagues he was educated in Europe, and in language, manners, and religious liberality, is a Parisian *jusqu'au bout des ongles*. His wife is the daughter of the famous French Colonel Séve, who entered the service of Mehemet Ali, and, as Soliman Pasha, Europeanised his army, and afterwards played a prominent part in his campaigns against the Porte.

The Ministry of the Interior—of which the heir-ap-

\* Besides the Hon. H. C. Vivian, H.M. Diplomatic Agent and Consul-General at Cairo, we have a Consul and Judge (Mr. Cookson) and two Vice-Consuls (Messrs. Calvert and Arpa) at Alexandria; a Legal Vice-Consul (Mr. Wallis) at Cairo; a Consul (Mr. West) at Suez; a Vice-Consul (Mr. Percival) at Port Saïd; and a Consular Agent at Mansourah.