

## EGYPT FOR THE EGYPTIANS.

THE Egyptian question has been so much discussed in all newspapers and reviews, during the last six months, that I should not now approach it again, were it not to defend an idea I think favourable to progress, peace, and justice, but which is nevertheless rejected by both parties in England. I am convinced that if England leave Egypt completely to herself it will not only be a great misfortune for the true Egyptians—I mean by this term the Fellahs, *i.e.* the workers and producers of all wealth—but it will also retard the progress of civilisation in Africa, and imperil the future peace of Europe. At the present moment the English Government can settle the question with regard to Egypt as it thinks fit. It has received a tacit mandate from Europe, so to speak. The "European Concert," that is to say, Germany, has long urged England to establish a footing on the banks of the Nile, to be able the better to impede the advance of Russia in the event of a possible invasion of Asia Minor. The Mediterranean States, in spite of a certain instinctive repugnance, are on the whole reconciled to the idea of seeing Egypt under the English protection, and every friend of humanity, of whatever nationality he may be, ought to be grateful to England if she would accept this uninviting mission. If this latter then do not take advantage of the present favourable situation, she will one day have to undertake a second expedition to Egypt under circumstances in all probability far less propitious, and which might result in complications and conflicts.

I know that the Government and public opinion in England are agreed in wishing that we should retire completely from Egypt, both in the interests of peace and for the purpose of maintaining a good understanding with foreign nations. There cannot exist a higher or worthier aim for an enlightened people to aspire to, but, in the interests of this very international harmony, foresight obliges us to desire that England should definitely guarantee order in Egypt, so as to prevent a repetition of such incidents as occurred in the course of last summer.

When an end is to be attained it is necessary to take the road which leads to it. For the principle of peace and non-intervention to triumph, it does not suffice to enforce its immediate application at any cost; above all it is necessary to avoid any circumstances likely to induce a war. This is a point which ought not to be forgotten by those who have to settle the final resolutions concerning the Egyptian question. Those who wish England to retain no power whatever in Egypt should be at least logical, and cease to state that

the security of the Suez Canal is a British interest of the highest order—a necessity which the preservation of the Indian Empire exacts. They must go so far as to admit that England need not interest herself in what goes on in Egypt and Suez, and say that, after all, the worst that can happen is for vessels and troops bound for India to have to go round by the Cape, thus losing ten days or a fortnight, but taking a route which, in time of war, would be far less dangerous than the Canal. These are the arguments of men who, like Messrs. Bright and Richard, are absolute partizans of the non-intervention principle, and from their point of view they are perfectly logical. But this is not at all the language of the Liberals now in office, or even of those of a more radical tendency who support them. The following is a quotation from Mr. Goschen's speech at a banquet given recently by the Mayor of Ripon (Oct. 25th):—"On the other hand, I trust that the objects of her Majesty's Government will be so secured that it will not be necessary again to undertake an expedition such as that which has now redounded to our honour, but which has cost valuable life and will inflict some burden upon this country. The work must be done once for all, and that work is the security of our highway to India. That is the first and paramount object, and the next is to secure such good government in Egypt as will prevent anarchy and the imperilling of that highway. The Government have a stupendously difficult task before them in determining the best means of obtaining these objects, and, for my part, I think no man in a public position should at a time like this say anything which would tend to enhance the difficulty of the task."

In the time when Sir Charles Dilke could express his true opinions without any governmental responsibility, he spoke as Mr. Goschen does to-day, but with still greater precision. At Chelsea in 1877, he says, "As for Egypt, there was much to be said for the view that our route to India should not be in the hands of a Power so exposed to frequent wars as Turkey. The alternatives are the independence of the Khedive or annexation to Great Britain; for it was clear that we had passed the point of tolerating its annexation by any other European Power. The independence of Egypt meant the continuation of the present infamous government of that country."

The other alternative, that is to say, "annexation," enforced itself, therefore, even at that time, according to the orator's views, and we must remember that when Sir Charles Dilke spoke thus, no event had occurred which could give a foresight of the necessity of this alternative. But his knowledge of the general state of affairs in the East led him, even then, to foresee future complications, and the part England would be called upon to act.

At about the same period, contending against the bellicose spirit

exhibited by the English people following up the hostile attitude of Lord Beaconsfield towards Russia, I maintained in this Review, (July 1877 and February 1878), that, rather than declare war with Russia, it would be better, as a precautionary measure, to occupy Egypt and Cyprus.

“I am, for my part, thoroughly convinced that in our days the possession of colonies is a source of weakness rather than of strength to the mother-country. I think that Mr. Lowe is right in maintaining that even the loss of India would nowise diminish the power and greatness of England. I have always considered the voluntary cession of the Ionian Isles to Greece as one of the wisest as well as one of the most honourable acts of English policy. But, in the case of Egypt, there is, unfortunately for England, a logical and humanitarian necessity to which she will have sooner or later to submit. Fortunate are small countries such as Switzerland and Belgium, which, like worthy middle-class citizens, have nothing to do but to let their life flow on in peaceful obscurity. But great nations, like great men, have a mission to fulfil which they must accept as a duty. If they refuse it they are punished. It is not for nothing that England has set the world the example of constitutional liberty, has scattered over the four quarters of the globe her swarms of Anglo-Saxon descent, and has undertaken in India to govern two hundred millions of subjects. Greatness has its obligations—*Honores onera*. The country which has done so much for the civilisation of the whole human race cannot satisfy herself with growing rich, with heaping up gold in the hands of her magnates, and slumbering on the pillows of contented opulence. From the humanitarian point of view what a benefit, what a conquest, it would be if Egypt could be directly submitted to the civilising influence of England. . . . At the same time, if Russia annexes Armenia, then there is a measure of precaution imposed upon England, and that measure is the occupation of Egypt and Cyprus and not Crete. Crete ought to go to Greece, because the national sentiment there is too much awake to be restrained. In Cyprus this is not the case; and, moreover, this island, transformed into a Gibraltar, will be a better and more commanding point for the shores of Syria and the entrance to the Suez Canal.”<sup>1</sup>

I venture to state that the events of this year have but confirmed me in the opinions I expressed here in 1877 and 1878. It is, therefore, I request the permission to continue to hold them and to explain my motives for so doing.

Do we recognise, with Sir Charles Dilke, that the time is passed when England could admit of the rule of another power in Egypt, and with Mr. Goschen, that the work must be done once for all and that this work is the security of your highway to India; if so, it becomes clearly evident that England cannot entirely abandon Egypt to herself. Only those who are willing to sacrifice even the Canal, like

(1) The suggestion of the annexation of Cyprus, which I first mooted in 1877, was most warmly protested against by my friends the English liberals.—Recollecting the immense progress that has taken place in the Ionian Isles since the English occupation, I remain persuaded that if England keeps Cyprus, she will gradually restore to her the prosperity of former times, which rendered her in antiquity the pearl of the Mediterranean. Every time that a civilised state raises a province from the brutalising Turkish yoke, humanity in general can but applaud.

Messrs. Bright, Richard, and Sir Wilfred Lawson, can logically hold a contrary opinion.

How often the consequences of men's actions are directly opposed to the end they aim at! When the bellicose "interventionist" Lord Palmerston opposed the making of the Suez Canal, he was acting in accordance with the views of his adversaries, the "friends of peace," for he opposed the creation of what would evidently become a subject of intervention for England. When the "great Frenchman," M. de Lesseps, joined the Red Sea to the Mediterranean by means of French capital, he created an English interest, which was bound sooner or later entirely to withdraw Egypt from French hands. The Canal, this is what henceforth rivets England to Egypt, in spite of all that illogical Liberals may say to the contrary. Do you wish to preserve the safety of the Canal? If you reply in the affirmative, the deduction follows that you must maintain order, and a government not hostile to you at Cairo, and this you cannot effect without establishing your influence there as preponderating. It is this latter point which we must now demonstrate.

The Turkish Empire, like all other Mussulman States, is foundering, under the action of an inexorable law, which was very clearly explained in this Review by Mr. Leonard Courtney (May, 1877) in an article of which I will quote but the last sentence. "I have sought to show that, on grounds of policy, we should cease to pursue the labour, foredoomed to failure, of maintaining the Ottoman Empire in Europe, and upon that issue I desire to be judged." This same law is producing its effects in Egypt. Just as contact with Europeans is destruction to the Redskins, because they contract the white man's vices and complaints, without learning how to cure, or at least how to combat them, so the pretended civilisation, with which we endeavour to inoculate Orientals, is for them a cause of certain decadence. We give them our "lights" which completely destroy their faith, their traditions, and their special virtues. The Turk formerly was sober, honest, true to his word, and a water drinker. The Turk of to-day, who has not been formed by the upper circles of Western society, such as diplomatists, is often a drunkard, a thief, and a deceiver, ready to do anything for money. We introduced into the East the European system of finance and credit. This merely served to increase senseless expenditure, ruining at the same time borrowers and creditors, and enriching only the bankers who issued the loans. There is a question now of introducing into Turkey and Egypt Western administration, with the perfected machinery of our fiscal system. If this be done, the tiller of the land will retain for himself a still smaller share of his produce than he has been allowed hitherto, while to the provinces it will be ruination, transforming them into mere deserts.

Formerly Eastern governments were despotic, violent, barbarous, and prodigal, as detestable, in fact, as it is possible to imagine them, but they lacked an organization permitting them to attain all families in a regular and infallible manner. The Egyptians have been at times more hardly treated, but never since the time of the Pharaohs, more thoroughly crushed than during the reign of Ismail, who brought them civilisation. "The Khedive," says Sir Charles Dilke, "had abolished the slave trade near the Mountains of the Moon at the very moment when he was converting the whole population of the fertile Delta into slaves." It would be just the same if a representative system were to be established, and this is what the English Liberals are now claiming for Egypt. If this ever really took place and functioned properly, it would be simply a more refined instrument of oppression in the hands of the well-to-do class, as the lower hard-working orders would not be represented. Look at Italy: there parliamentarism and "grand policy" combine to so burden the poor cultivators of the soil with taxes, that they are forced to adopt maize as their sole nourishment, and suffer in consequence from the pellagra. As an example of this, take Ouida's novel, *A Village Commune*, which draws rather an exaggerated picture certainly, but which nevertheless describes a misery only too real. Self-government is excellent in lands where the people possess sufficient energy to be able to regulate their own affairs, as, for instance, in Switzerland and the United States. In Egypt it would be only an occasion of bribery and corruption.

People say: what we wish is Egypt for the Egyptians.—Exactly so, but there are in Egypt two sorts of Egyptians—the Egyptian of the country, laborious, sober, docile, resigned, intelligent, but fearful, without strength to resist tyranny, completely crushed by an oppression which has lasted six or seven thousand years. This is the Fellah, who is abused, ill-treated, despoiled, and whose labour nourishes every one. Above him is the Egyptian of the towns, Turk, Arab, or Syrian; the beys, effendis, pashas, colonels, or captains, all those who live on the spoils of the Fellahs. If England now retire completely, she will deliver Egypt over to blood-suckers, native and foreign, with unlimited right of pillage. She would, in point of fact, re-establish that "infamous system of government" which Sir Charles Dilke stigmatized not long since in such eloquent terms, at Chelsea.

It will be argued that the English cannot accept the mission of establishing justice and order everywhere. This is perfectly true for countries in which she does not interfere; but in Egypt she has occupied the country, thus provoking the burning of Alexandria; she has suppressed a "would-be-called" National Government, and restored the Khedive his power; she has undertaken the

task of reorganizing the country; she is, therefore, responsible for the present and the future on the banks of the Nile. It cannot be denied that the European control greatly ameliorated the condition of the cultivators. The country was prosperous, and the rate of interest fell to half what it had been. For the first time the poor Fellah was able to breathe, and more extraordinary still, it was said that he began even to amass some small savings. England will not admit of the double control being re-established. She is, therefore, bound morally to establish a government as good, if not a better, otherwise she could be justly blamed for the sufferings of this interesting population; she would feel the remorse of her fault, and, may be, have to undergo the penalty of it. It is her duty to protect them, but it is also to her own interest to do so; for if the country become disorganized and impoverished, and fall a prey to disorder and anarchy, England, instigated by her present motives, would inevitably interfere again as she has now done.

If she retire, this contingency will, indeed, arise, it may be predicted with certainty. The causes of disorder and complications are both numerous and undeniable. The first which touches the very core of the question is this. More intimate contact with Europe, the infusion of European ideas, and the imitation of European institutions have undoubtedly led the Egyptian Government into a very grave and perilous transformation crisis, which may, sooner or later, occasion a revolution, or lead to its overthrow.

The great number of foreigners settled at Alexandria and Cairo, all under the protection of their respective consuls, is also a subject of difficulty and contest, capable of being further increased by protests and complaints with regard to the payment of interest on the loans. At any moment one country or another could, if it thought well, make this an excuse for intervention. Further, the departure of the English would be the signal for a recommencement of the former intrigues and struggles for influence, which would now be far more dangerous as the prize is higher and seems nearer being the reward of the most audacious. Others will seize upon the place left vacant, and will do their utmost to annihilate English influence, feeling the more desperate that it had so nearly obtained a complete triumph.

It may be supposed that Tewfik is just now grateful to England for having restored him his power; but will these sentiments last, and who can say how long he will retain the position he now holds, if he be left entirely to himself? It must be remembered that a word from Germany sufficed to overthrow Ismail, although Berlin is very far removed from the Mediterranean and possesses no direct means of acting on Cairo. May we not foresee the case, for instance, of a Khedive hostile to England, and does not such an eventuality

become a probability when we reflect on the jealousies and resentment the English interference has called forth? Now if it be granted that, as Mr. Goschen says, "The security of the highway to India must be absolutely assured," and, I think, general opinion at the present time accepts this doctrine, then England cannot possibly tolerate a hostile Government at Cairo. Were she to do so she would be obliged to interfere again a little later, and under what circumstances? Who would she have to combat? Would Egypt be again without an ally? This is a question which it is, of course, impossible to answer at once, but sufficient may be seen to occasion a feeling of uneasiness with regard to such a position of affairs. The case may be compared to that of a vessel approaching rocks at night who hears the ominous roar of the breakers, without realising their exact portent.

It will not do to be dazzled by the marvellous military successes of the recent campaign. True, we cannot sufficiently admire the bravery of the soldiers who stormed the intrenchments of Tel-el-Kebir, thus terminating the campaign in twenty-five minutes; but this heroic action is a precedent as dangerous as it is admirable, for it must be recollected that the easy victories the French obtained in Algeria prepared their defeat in the Franco-German War. Just as a good chess-player, who plays constantly with a beginner, falls to his level; so an army, accustomed to fight against inferior enemies, adopts tactics and a manner of fighting which are death to it when face to face with an enemy versed in the present system of scientific warfare. If, then, corps of solid troops were to be formed in Egypt, like those they are endeavouring now to recruit, and especially if these were joined by an ally, England could not hope to terminate another campaign by a lightning stroke, as she has just done.

All the arrangement now being carried out in Egypt under England's direction, which might be a cause of progress and prosperity for the country, would be the means of engendering oppression and pillage. Take, for example, the corps that Baker Pasha is now forming, composed of mercenary foreigners, chiefly Albanians; is it not exactly the ancient Mameluke corps, which was only destroyed by one of the most atrocious and bloody executions of modern times? The colonels commanding this army will be the true masters of Egypt, which they will oppress and turn to their own account. The Khedive will be the humble servant of the Commander-in-Chief of the military forces; to-day, Baker Pasha; to-morrow, a second Arabi. Who will limit the war budget, the number of officers, and their stipend? They themselves, for no one will possess the power to oppose them. The friends of peace have already indignantly protested against the creation of a corps of all-powerful janissaries, and they were more than right in so doing. If England abandon

all right of control, in this instance, leaving Egypt in the hands of this soldiery, she will be guilty of a crime to humanity which she will one day have to pay dearly for. Although Sir Charles Dilke states in the House that the Khedive made his own arrangements with Baker Pasha, and that he was a perfectly free agent in the matter, still it is perfectly certain that nothing can, just now, take place at Cairo without the consent of the English Government. England will be, therefore, responsible if, later on, the present re-organization becomes a cause for ruin and disorder in Egypt.

In a book, entitled *Belgium of the East*,<sup>1</sup> full of noble sentiments, but also of delusions with regard to Egypt, the author proposes to establish a neutral State on the banks of the Nile under the guarantee of the great Powers, and this State, like Belgium, to enjoy self-government and constitutional institutions. But between the situation of Egypt and that of Belgium no comparison can be made. Since the Middle Ages, Belgium has possessed Communes proud and free, who held their own against tyranny and oppression, and vanquished France at Courtrai, and it needed, indeed, all the power of Spain and the gold of the two hemispheres to subdue them. Egypt, on the other hand, is peopled by a race as incapable of resistance as sheep being led to the slaughter-house. What Mr. Dicey says of them is absolutely true: "The Fellaheen are the easiest people in the world to govern. They, and their fathers before them, have been so ground down by one set of taskmasters after another, that the possibility of resisting the orders of their ruler, be he who he may, hardly enters their minds." No nation has ever retained its freedom unless it has shown itself capable of defending it if need be.

A constitutional administration, then, would benefit only the "vampires." The author of *Belgium of the East* quotes a passage of Sir W. H. Gregory, and it shows what may be expected from the sheikhs and the mudirs, to whose exclusive profit this sham European parliamentarism would work. If it be desired that free institutions should one day be developed in Egypt, the work must be begun in the communes. The simplest and most illiterate peasants, like the Germans in the time of Tacitus, are capable of regulating the affairs of a village or of a tribe, because it is just under their eyes, and they understand the subject. They can elect their chiefs, their mayors; and a complete local autonomy is thus established. Europe presented this spectacle in the Middle Ages, everywhere where despotism had not crushed out primitive liberty. Mr. Freeman very clearly demonstrates this. From communal institutions spring provincial ones, and this leads gradually to national representative institutions; but, at

(1) *Belgium of the East*, by the author of *Egypt under Ismail Pasha*, edited by Blanchard Jerrold. London: Allen & Co. 1882.



the present moment, in Egypt a constitution would but occasion disorder, anarchy, oppression, and concussion.

I may cite another example of the intervention of England, which may either amend the condition of the population or prove to be a fresh iniquity. It is suggested to pay the indemnities to those burnt out of Alexandria by means of a fresh loan. That is to say that the poor Fellahs will pay for the ravages committed by the English or provoked by the English bombardment. It is a case of *quidquid delirant Reges plectuntur Achivi*. The tillers of the soil would be despoiled of the fruit of their labour, and their miseries increased, for the benefit of the European proprietors of Alexandria. England has it in her power greatly to diminish the odious injustice of this measure by engaging the Egyptian Government to stipulate, as a condition of the payment of the indemnities, that the Europeans henceforth renounce the exorbitant privileges, assured to them by the capitulations, of being exempt from taxation.

I will now quote from *Belgium of the East*, p. 196, a passage of Sir W. Gregory's where this iniquity is stigmatized as it deserves to be:—

“ I will venture to say that ninety out of every hundred of my countrymen are not aware of the injustice under which the Egyptians are labouring—the stately palaces, built by Europeans and by those who have obtained European nationality, in many instances by very questionable means, are untaxed; the humble dwelling of the Egyptian, by the side of these mansions, is taxed at the rate of 12 per cent. on the valuation. But this is done through the capitulations with Turkey, it will be said—that is true enough; but it is perfectly easy for England to take the lead, and to let the Egyptians know we are taking the lead, in endeavouring to relax, under proper safeguards, this portion of the capitulations. Again, let a Maltese, or a Greek, or an Italian, practise a trade, or mount the box of an hackney-coach as driver, he is exempt from the tax on professions as being under European protection; but an Egyptian, striving to earn his bread in a similar manner, is taxed in doing so.”

France partly suppresses capitulations at Tunis, and she is quite right in so doing, but England can and ought to obtain the same advantage for Egypt with regard to the exemption from taxation. There may formerly have been some excuse for such a regulation, but to-day it can but be qualified as odious.

It results from these various considerations, that England, as I stated at the commencement of this article, ought either to permit everything in Egypt, which would be quite contrary to her recent policy, or preserve there a preponderating influence. It is a self-evident axiom that he who wishes security at Suez must keep order at Cairo. This preponderance could be preserved by maintaining a rigid hold of the armed forces. This point is all-important, for in the East—and in the West also, with the exception, perhaps, of England and the United States—he who can dispose of the army is master of all.

Of course there would be no question of granting exclusive privileges to the English to the detriment of other states, for England's colonies accept goods from all countries and receive citizens of every nationality on a footing of perfect equality. All civilised nations have an interest in order and a good administration being definitely established on the banks of the Nile, both for the maintenance of peace and for the development of their own commerce; but England alone can carry out this task without an absolute veto being opposed to it. She ought also to call upon the other nations to assist her in this humane work of pacification, and this step would be of advantage to herself. The safety of the Canal, and consequently a just and stable administration in Egypt, is not only an English but an international interest. It would be necessary to institute an international committee of supervision, but of course not only charged with extorting the entire payment of interest like the ancient control. The international law courts in Egypt where the small states are represented gave general satisfaction, proving that the plan I suggest would be by no means impracticable. As it is universally recognised that England possesses a greater interest in Egypt and Suez than the other states, the presidency and chief influence could not be refused to her.

In point of fact it would not be to the interest of any Power, not even of those on the Mediterranean, to dispute this. That France's present situation does not admit of her thinking an instant of setting foot in Egypt, is clearly proved by the vote of the Chamber, which preferred overthrowing Freycinet's Ministry to granting him the five thousand men he requested to occupy Ismailia. What are France's true interests in this question? That the Egyptian people should be happy and prosperous; that Egypt should be well governed and free to trade with her, and to receive the produce of her industries. English preponderance would insure this to her, and without her having to fear any European complications, while, at the same time, it would be an increased security for Algeria and Tunis. France has almost invariably defended the cause of true civilisation in the East, as Mr. F. T. Scudamore has recently shown;<sup>1</sup> and it must not be forgotten that it was she who took the initiative and gave her capital for the making of the Canal, which is the principal interest now at stake. It would, therefore, be but justice to accord her a certain amount of influence.

Italy would perhaps be a still greater gainer than France by the establishment of this international committee under English presidency. The more English influence is established the greater will be the security of Egypt, and consequently the development both as regards number and riches of the Italian colony on the banks of the

(2) *France in the East*, by Frank Ives Scudamore, C.B. London: Allen & Co. 1882.

Nile, already the most important there. It is true England's success caused some little resentment in Italy. Several men of note there remarked recently to me, "With France in Algeria and Tunis, Austria at Salonica, and England at Alexandria, Italy could no longer breathe in the Mediterranean; she would suffocate." To which I replied, "These are mere metaphors borrowed from old ideas. Italy can but gain by civilisation being introduced into countries now ruined by the detestable government of Turkey. We Belgians are quite in the vicinity, not only of a small English army, but of London, Chatham, and England itself, with all her forts and her ironclads. This proximity, far from 'preventing our breathing,' enriches us, and we are now, at great cost, improving the port of Antwerp, so as to draw thither as many English vessels as possible. In my opinion the best thing you can do is unreservedly to support England in Egypt, claiming of course for yourselves a share of influence." General Cadorna, late Ambassador to England, has just published a pamphlet on the Egyptian Question, which has elicited a complimentary letter from Mr. Gladstone, and he therein fully approves the initiative taken by England, and condemns the attitude adopted towards it by the Italian press. It is not likely that Germany and Austria would raise any objection to an arrangement quite within the limits of the general sketches already given in their recent diplomatic communications. Would Russia protest? It is not probable, if her two powerful neighbours expressed themselves satisfied. Spain, Portugal, and Holland, as maritime States possessing colonies in the extreme east ought also to be represented in the international committee. The first resolution should be to sanction the neutrality of the Canal, that all ships of commerce and of war would be allowed to pass from Port Said to Suez without committing any act of hostility within its waters.

It is quite impossible here for me to give any sketch of the new administration which should be introduced into Egypt. To do this it would be necessary to be perfectly acquainted, not only with the elements of the present Egyptian Government, but also with the views entertained on the subject by the great European Powers. I will only repeat the conclusion I cannot help arriving at, that if England retire completely from Egypt, she will have to return to the policy Mr. Gladstone foresaw not long since, which consists in maintaining that the security of the Suez Canal is not of sufficient importance to England for her to undertake the responsibility and the chances of complications which might have to end in a permanent intervention at either Cairo or Suez, while after all the route round the Cape is always open to her. But if this argument be accepted, Alexandria ought not to have been bombarded or Egypt occupied. If, on the contrary, you maintain that the Suez Canal

being the highway to India must be always open to the English, it follows that England must preserve a preponderating influence in Egypt; otherwise from one moment to the next a palace revolution, the hostile attitude of a Khedive or the chief of the army, or an intrigue menacing English interests, would oblige a fresh intervention, which would probably be attended with many more difficulties than would arise now, and might terminate in war. In the interest of future peace, therefore, it would be well very carefully to weigh all considerations before arriving at a definite decision with respect to this important question.

When, in 1878, I expressed a hope that England, instead of declaring war against Russia, and sacrificing the liberty of the Turkish Christians, would, in the interests of peace and humanity, take precautionary measures in Egypt, it was to me a sort of dream, a Utopia, in which I saw the English in Egypt commencing a great work of civilisation in Africa, and thus aiding the generous enterprise patronised by the King of the Belgians. I said (Fortnightly Review, July, 1877)—

“Thus they had come to that worst of all possible combinations—oriental disorder served by European financing. The lot of the slave in the Southern States of the American Union was paradise compared with that of the Egyptian Fellah. As I looked at these poor creatures, working all day long, and often half the night as well, to satisfy the insensate and prodigal rapacity of Cairo, I said to myself, ‘Why does not Europe, that sends cruisers to suppress the slave-trade, send hither a few good regiments to put an end to these barbarities?’ Egypt, in the hands of the English, would recover the splendour of her antiquity. With public works such as those which Mr. W. F. Thornton has described in his excellent book on *The Public Works of India*, the extent of arable land, the numbers of the population, and the revenue, would all enormously augment. Thanks to the annexations conducted by Colonel Gordon, Egypt now extends to the great lakes of Central Africa, and she has thus become, in point of territorial extension, one of the largest countries in the world. Only let her pass under the protection of England, instantly the slave-trade is suppressed, steam navigation connects the interior of the continent with the Mediterranean, and civilisation and commerce penetrate into an immense region of admirable fertility, and, by reason of its altitude, habitable by Europeans. By the Cape, by Natal, by the Transvaal, the English are advancing towards the Zambesi. Already they have a station on Lake Nyassa; soon they will have others on Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria. The International Exploration Society, formed under the auspices of the King of the Belgians, will send into the country travellers, emigrants, artisans of every kind. It has been shown by Lieutenant Cameron that a telegraphic line could easily be established from Cairo to Natal and the Cape, and he thinks that railways, uniting the centre of Africa to the coast, would not be long in paying their expenses. If, therefore, England consented to fix her attention in this direction, an unbroken current of civilisation would speedily cross Africa from Alexandria to the Cape along the line of the high table-lands. The Anglo-Saxon race, mistress of Africa, mistress of America, mistress of Australia, would thus reach the fulfilment of its high destinies.”

This idea was, I frankly confess, rejected on all sides, and Mr. Gladstone condemned it most severely in the *Nineteenth Century*, where he writes as follows:—

“Our first site in Egypt, be it by larceny or be it by emption, will be the almost certain egg of a North African Empire, that will grow and grow until another Victoria and another Albert, titles of the lake sources of the White Nile, come within our borders; and till we finally join hands across the equator with Natal and Cape Town, to say nothing of the Transvaal and the Orange River on the south, or of Abyssinia and Zanzibar, to be swallowed by way of viaticum, on our journey.”—*Nineteenth Century*, August, 1877.

One of your leading Liberals wrote to me recently to the same effect.

“With our utter inability to govern either Ireland or India except by force, who can desire that we should undertake another similar task in many respects of far greater difficulty; and for what? Take away India and the bondholders, and what remains except abstract philanthropy, which has stronger claims upon us nearer home. As to India, read Rathbone’s article in the *Fortnightly* for August, 1882. Those who call upon us to make those sacrifices never think of our position twenty years hence. The plain truth is that England will then be living under the protection of the United States, with their 100,000,000 people and their immense resources—this must infallibly be so—and our business is to prepare for our humble destiny in the world of material force, and take our stand on our morality, our intellectual culture, and our manners.”

In spite of these hard criticisms, my Utopian scheme is still dear to me, because I believe it may be realised, and were it to be so, I am convinced it would be an immense advantage for humanity. It is only a new edition, somewhat enlarged and completed, of Sir Charles Dilke’s *Greater Britain*.

In the recent campaign the Indian regiments were of great service. Hindoos of the military and civil services could penetrate to central Africa, to the great lakes, the Zambesi, as they would not suffer from the climate. Thus the Oriental world itself would furnish the means for carrying Western civilisation through to the great “Dark Continent.” Old Indian civilisation, guided by Christianity, would spread over the neighbouring African coasts, and a new world would become subject to European influences. At the present moment even events are occurring on the Upper Nile which render a more energetic intervention of Egyptian forces desirable. The False Prophet is advancing on Khartoum and threatens to crush Egyptian domination in this province. Sir Charles Dilke was, perhaps, right in speaking with irony of the Khedive, who had abolished slavery in the Mountains of the Moon, but it is not less certain that a current of relative civilisation had followed the banks of the Nile as far as the Victoria and Albert lakes. Must all this be allowed to disappear, driven back by a return of barbarism? If a humane and just government were to be established in Egypt, if the inhabitants were no longer pitilessly despoiled for the profit of the bondholders, and more cruelly still, for their native masters, the country might gain sufficient strength to be able to spread to Central Africa. Let Europe, let England especially, endeavour to procure for Egypt the

inestimable benefit of a good government, and all the friends of pacific progress will bless them. I recollect that at the hotel at Suez we were served by Indians dressed in white; we were lodged in apartments furnished as in India, and lighted by candles protected by glass globes from the wind which might enter by the windows, which were always open. One might have imagined one's self on the banks of the Ganges. I saw there, so to speak, the commencement of the realisation of this bright dream of the "Dark Continent" being civilised by India, and of slavery everywhere abolished.

If England draw back before the long and difficult mission of being instrumental in carrying civilisation into Africa, and if she will not even guarantee to protect the true Egyptians against their foreign and native spoilers, and insure to them the enjoyment of the soil they cultivate, it would have been better for her never to have interfered in Egyptian affairs at all. Then her purchase of shares will be absolute folly, the sending of the ironclads a mistake, the bombardment of Alexandria worse than a mistake, Tel-el-Kebir a useless act of heroism, and all the present interference at Cairo a mere series of issueless contradictions,—and Mr. Bright is right.

EMILE DE LAVELEYE.