



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

to modern ideas and opinions. There is no bibliography, authorities being quoted only somewhat sparingly in foot-notes. While a freer use of the memoirs and letters which have recently appeared would probably have modified some of Mr. Benn's opinions, for example his admiration of Lord Palmerston, it would also have prevented him from continuing some old errors, such as the assertion that Charles Buller wrote the report of the Earl of Durham on Canada.

Modern Egypt. By the Earl of CROMER. In two volumes. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1908. Pp. xviii, 594; xiv, 600.)

Books written by men who have played a great part in the world, recording what they have themselves seen and done, are so valuable a source for the historian that this REVIEW is glad to welcome another. The important ones that belong to this class are few. The *Commentaries* of Julius Caesar and those of the Emperor Baber are the most familiar instances. There are also, however, works in which some eminent person, generally at the close of his career, explains and justifies his policy. This was done by Napoleon Bonaparte indirectly and by Bismarck directly. A third class includes histories of their own time composed by men who have more or less influenced the events they describe. Under this head we may put the treatises of Thucydides, Procopius, Otto of Freysing, Philip of Commines, John Knox, Clarendon, Burnet. Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt* stands partly in one, partly in another, of these latter classes. Although to some extent a narrative of what the author did himself, it has also a wider scope, and covers the politics and administration of the Nile valley generally during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For dealing with this theme, Lord Cromer had several conspicuous advantages. One is that of a thorough and exact knowledge. He took part in most of the important decisions of policy here recorded, and knows the grounds of them. He is himself a source as well as a historian.

It is a second advantage that the subject has a unity and simplicity which corresponds to the country. Egypt is of all the lands in the Eastern Hemisphere that which is most detached from other lands, least affected by what happens on its borders. In this narrative the influences of three foreign powers are of course constantly felt. But though Turkey (or rather the Sultan of Turkey), England and France are constant factors, their action can be described without much reference to the general politics of Europe and still less reference to the internal politics of those three countries. And, thirdly, Egypt is a land whose fortunes are of perpetual interest to all educated men. No country has had so long a history. Its records begin almost twice as far behind us as do the records of Greece or Rome. They set before us fortunes strangely varying from century to century; and it is a

singular fact that a country which nature might seem to have done her best to isolate should have not only been frequently (like Italy) conquered by invaders from without but have been, conversely, a centre of influence radiating forth upon other countries. In art and in religion she told powerfully on other Mediterranean lands.

These characteristics of his theme are, however, small in comparison with the advantages that are personal to the author. He has a vigorous mind which goes to the root of things which fasten on essentials, and which, though it recognizes the complexity of a question, does not fear to reach and pronounce a positive and definite conclusion. We find in him a solid judgment, not prejudiced in favor of any set of political dogmas, nor (so far as appears) of any particular person or party. His criticisms are by the nature of the case passed chiefly on his own countrymen; and they are passed, whether one agrees with them or not, with an evident freedom from partizan bias. The spirit of the book deserves the more praise because when one writes of contemporaries with whom or against whom a man has contended, it is hard to get rid of the impressions formed under the impulse of the moment.

This judicial temper is fitly reflected in a calm and weighty style. There is little rhetoric. Opportunities for literary effect which many a writer would have seized and overdone are either passed by with Thucydidean austerity or used with a restrained strength which leaves the reader to add the color and emotion for himself.

The book falls into seven divisions. The first traces the history of joint French and English intervention, then of English action in Egypt, from the establishment of financial control in 1876 in Ismail Pasha's days down to the English occupation in 1882. The second narrates the troubles in the Soudan which began with the destruction of Hicks's army by the Mahdi in 1883 and ended with the battle of Omdurman and reconquest of the Soudan in 1898 by General Kitchener. The third traces the administrative policy of Britain in Egypt from the occupation in 1882 down till the agreement with France in 1904 which settled many of the questions that had till then hindered the course of reform. The fourth describes the various elements of population in Egypt and the social classes which make up the country. The fifth sketches the several lines of British policy in Egypt. The sixth sets forth the reforms recently introduced; and the seventh contains some reflections on the future of the country.

Of these visions the first three are the more distinctly historical parts, though the others are at least equally valuable, because they contain an account not only of the institutions established by the British government but also of the motives which led to their establishment and the purposes they were meant to serve. To examine these and estimate their value would require so long a preliminary account of the conditions of Egypt that the few observations I propose to make must be confined to the narrative portions of the two volumes.

The most interesting episode is that in which General C. G. Gordon is the central figure. Few passages in recent history have been more frequently and passionately debated. Gordon's striking character, his adventures, his chivalric attitude, the loneliness of his position in the last months of his life had roused in an extraordinary measure the admiration and sympathy of the English people. The failure to relieve him in time was charged as a crime against the ministry of the day. Indeed this failure did much to hasten the fall of the cabinet and to damage the Liberal party at the momentous general election of 1885. Lord Cromer's account, which seems to leave comparatively little to be added by any later historian, would have greatly affected English opinion and mitigated English censure could it have been made public soon after the events and before judgment had been passed on them. He does not acquit the Liberal cabinet of a grave error in sending such a man as Gordon on such an errand. Neither does he fail to censure them for the delay in sending an expedition up the Nile after it had become plain that Gordon either could not or would not retire, and that British opinion demanded his relief. But he brings out the defects of Gordon's own character and his disobedience to the orders he had received with a clearness which if it does not relieve the ministry from blame sets Gordon's conduct in a light very different from that in which the English saw it in 1885. They would have condemned the ministry less if they had understood Gordon better. Gordon was a hero, but a hero who could not run in harness. Heroes seldom can. Lord Cromer's account of him is one of the best things in the book and a real contribution to the comprehension of one of the most romantic events of our times.

Next to his portrait of Gordon the best character studies which Lord Cromer gives us are those of Nubar and of Riaz. Nubar, whom I knew well, was a most remarkable man whose abilities would have brought him to the front in any country. He was Armenian by race and genuinely interested in trying to help his nation. With some of those faults which we call Oriental such as a certain shiftiness (though indeed these "Oriental defects" are to be found in every country), he had many intellectual gifts that are rare in the East; and one could talk to him just as one would have talked to a statesman of continental Europe. Riaz, with less brilliancy, had a firmness and an integrity which deserve Lord Cromer's praise. He is still living in Egypt, much respected and worthy of respect.

English politics and English opinion are but slightly referred to in these volumes. In a treatise describing things as they appeared from the point of view of the actors on the spot, this is natural and fitting. I may however add from my own recollection of those exciting times some remarks which it did not fall within Lord Cromer's province to make but which need to be made in order that the British position may be understood in all its aspects.

The attitude of the Liberal majority in the English House of Commons, which was the power ultimately controlling politics, from 1880-1885, was much affected by three factors scarcely referred to in these volumes. One was the repugnance which English Liberals felt to doing anything in the interest of the European holders of Egyptian bonds. The idea that British intervention was to help these bondholders to make gains was so distasteful to most of these Liberal members as to lead them to hang back and desire to minimize intervention. A second factor was their indignation at the character and tone of the party opposition against which Mr. Gladstone's cabinet had to defend itself. This opposition, though it perhaps did not go beyond the rules of the game as played in domestic matters, seemed to them so injurious where national interests abroad were involved that it made the Liberal majority rally to the ministry even when they distrusted the policy which the ministry was for the moment pursuing. Possibly they might have done better to follow their own opinions, even if the result had been to turn out the ministry. Upon this I express no opinion. But they recoiled from this course through their irritation at the tactics adopted by the opposition. The third factor was the position of the cabinet. Never had England seen an administration containing a larger number of able men. Never was an administration more unlucky. It was unlucky chiefly owing to its internal divisions. It lived by a series of compromises and hand-to-mouth expedients because it was never able to reconcile and bring into one consistent line the divergent views of its members. Perhaps also, occupied as it was by a long series of Parliamentary troubles, it never as a whole gave a thorough study to the Egyptian problem.

Here I must add a word as to the person on whom Lord Cromer seems to throw nearly all the blame for the delays and vacillation of the cabinet. Mr. Gladstone, being Prime Minister, may of course be in a certain sense treated as responsible for the faults of a ministry of which he was the head and whose existence he could have terminated by resignation. But he was only one in a cabinet of nearly twenty members, less directly responsible for foreign affairs than was the Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, and for military affairs than was the War Secretary, Lord Hartington. It was surmised at the time, and has subsequently become better known, that some of the most important cabinet decisions on Egyptian questions were taken against his judgment. Ought he to have broken up the cabinet because he disagreed with those decisions? The vacillations and delays laid to his charge were largely due to the constant efforts made by the cabinet to hold together through a series of compromises and middle courses. Is Mr. Gladstone to be held solely to blame for what was as much (and in some instances more) the fault of his colleagues as his own, merely because he could have cut the knot by resigning? That question could not be determined without examining the whole political situation as it

stood in 1882-1885, a situation in which the fortunes of the cabinet involved many other grave issues. Lord Cromer's censure of Mr. Gladstone, possibly deserved as respects the delay in sending out the Nile expedition, ought in the four great errors of failing to recall Hicks, of sending out Gordon, of refusing to send Zobeir when Gordon asked for him, and of the Tokar expedition, to fall much less on Mr. Gladstone than on the cabinet as a whole.

I cannot do more than advert in the briefest way to the many morals for the student of political history which the book contains. One touches the difficulties with which the cabinet system of government surrounds the conduct of foreign policy. What these were to the British cabinet of 1880-1885 has already been indicated. In France Gambetta during his brief tenure of power brusquely changed the lines which his predecessor had followed in dealing with Egypt. Having led the British into a course which precipitated a crisis at Cairo, he presently lost office, and made way for a new cabinet which reversed his policy and became the cause of the ultimate supersession of the Dual Control by the sole control of England. An autocrat, or an oligarchy like the Roman senate, might have made mistakes as bad as those made by the French and English governments, but hardly the same mistakes of a frequently shifting or wavering action.

History shows few better instances than we find here of the law by which a strong state that begins to intervene in the affairs of a weak one is forced to go on intervening till it has taken over control. For a long time after 1882 the British government honestly desired to get out of Egypt. Few believed their assurances; but those assurances were made in all good faith. I had myself the best reason to know Mr. Gladstone's wishes in 1886; and still later Lord Salisbury actually conducted negotiations with the Turks for the retirement of the British which nothing but the amazing shortsightedness of the Turkish government prevented from being completed. As years went on, the difficulty of retiring became more obvious, yet hardly until the resolve taken in 1896 to reconquer the Soudan was the conviction forced upon statesmen that England could not quit the Nile valley.

That foreign nations must not expect affection and gratitude from a country which they rule, however beneficent and disinterested their rule may be, is a lesson which the experience of the English in Egypt enforces. They have done many things to improve its condition. The country is far richer, far more populous (if indeed that be an improvement); the people are more secure in life and property and the pursuit of happiness. British administration is more honest and lenient than Egypt has seen since the conquest of Cambyses in the sixth century B. C. But these benefits have not rendered British rule beloved. To the native population it is still foreign rule.

Whatever the future of Egypt may be, the twenty-six years of British control will remain memorable in the annals of the East. So

this account of the methods which Western administrators used in dealing with this ancient country will deserve to be long read, not only because it is a truthful contemporary record of facts but also because it sets forth the motives and the maxims of policy which directed the statesman chiefly responsible for the conduct of affairs. What should we not give for a similar account of his Caledonian campaign by Cn. Julius Agricola, or for such a description of his plans for ruling Mexico as Hernando Cortes might have dictated in the quiet days he spent in that beautiful palace which still stands to commemorate him in the valley of Cuernavaca!

JAMES BRYCE.

BOOKS OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Letters of Cortes. In two volumes. Translated and Edited, with a Biographical Introduction and Notes compiled from Original Sources, by FRANCIS AUGUSTUS MACNUTT. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1908. Pp. xi, 354; vii, 374.)

A NEW English translation of the letters of Cortes is by no means superfluous especially when, as in the present instance, it is fairly commendable and adheres as closely to the text as possible, without becoming too literal. We would remark here that the Jesuit priest is never addressed or designated by the title of *Fray*, hence, Father Andres Cavo is not *Fray*. Neither was Luis Ponce de Leon who died with such suspicious swiftness at Mexico sent to Cortes merely to take his *residencia*, but properly as *visitador*. We shall refer to this point later on.

Mr. MacNutt gives us the second, third, fourth and fifth letters, the first which is lost being replaced in his book by the report of the municipality of Veracruz dated July 10, 1519, which as Mr. MacNutt observes, is not improbably a fair substitute for the lost report by the conqueror.

The bibliography given by Mr. MacNutt in the first volume is copious and reasonably complete. In the text of his introduction and of the notes to each letter translated he makes some critical comparisons of the relative value of authorities and several of these short dissertations can be recommended for their justness and impartiality, *e. g.*, references to the late Don Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta and to the Reverend Augustin Fischer, who, however, was not chaplain to Maximilian of Mexico but, towards the end of that unfortunate ruler's career, his private secretary.

Mr. MacNutt's introduction in four chapters (followed by a translation of Cortes's last will and testament) contains a partial summary of the principal events of the life of the conqueror. Several important occurrences are either omitted or barely touched upon and the tone is that of an almost unconditional eulogy of the hero. We are