Patriotism . . .

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Talk of it has grown so thick these days in the official government newspapers, and in the papers loyal to the government, that it has become something resembling an insistence upon a point that needs no insisting upon at all. For Egyptian patriotism, praise be to God, is far too strong, far too plain, far too self-evident for Egyptians to need anyone reminding them of it, pointing them toward it, or urging them to acquire more of it. We would not have troubled ourselves at all with this abundant talk certain government newspapers keep indulging in regarding Egyptian patriotism, and the strength, dignity, pride, and self-respect it supposedly requires, were it not for something that is, in truth, laughable, and, in truth, cause for genuine sorrow: that patriotism should be turned into a mere trade, resorted to by certain people only when difficulty grows severe and crises crowd in thickly — only for them, once the storms around them have calmed and the wind has settled fair again, to forget all talk of patriotism entirely, and to claim instead that those who do speak of it, and call for it, are in truth speaking of revolt, and calling for insurrection.

These very supporters of the present government now remind the Egyptian people of their own dignity and patriotism, and denounce the opposition newspapers for demanding the government's resignation instead of uniting behind it in its dispute with the English. We would very much like to know, then, where exactly these government newspapers were, and where their masters the ministers were, and where the good-natured Foreign Minister himself was, when the Deputy High Commissioner flew to Cairo, and when he stormed into the barracks and stations of the police to inspect them and investigate matters that neither patriotism nor independence could ever permit a government to allow any foreigner, whoever he might be, to search into, learn of, or investigate.

In those very recent days when the High Commissioner himself was inspecting the police in Alexandria, and his deputy was inspecting the police in Alexandria and Cairo alike, the patriotism of these very people lay fast asleep, snoring away with abandon. It felt nothing, uttered not a single word, made not a single move. And these same people's love of independence, and their supposed concern for national dignity, were off

somewhere far away, strolling at their leisure, playing with the breeze and the sea's waves, or climbing to the mountain peaks, or descending into the valleys. It was the opposition alone who felt anything, who sensed anything, who suffered and objected, who alone stirred the patriotism of the ministers and the government's own supporters, awakening in the ministers and their supporters some love of dignity and independence. We would very much like to know, then, where the patriotism of the ministers and their supporters actually was, where their love of independence actually was, where their concern for dignity actually was, where their defense of Egypt's rights actually was, at the moment British soldiers were toying with people's property, bodies, and blood in the city of Cairo — sometimes by night, sometimes by day; sometimes out in the desert, sometimes right in the city itself. At that very moment, the ministers and the government's supporters fell silent with a silence that was neither gold, nor silver, nor even copper — but some baser metal entirely, worth nothing, weighing nothing. It was the opposition, at that very moment, who spoke out, and then pressed the matter further still; the opposition who rose up in protest, and then pressed the ministers still further, demanding to know what they had done, and what they intended to do. Where was the memorandum sent from the Foreign Ministry to the High Commissioner's residence? Where was the reply that came back from the High Commissioner's residence to the Foreign Ministry? And after all this back and forth, after lengthy words from the opposition and lengthy silence from the ministers and their supporters, an official communiqué finally appeared, acknowledging the very incidents the opposition had denounced, placing them on the record, and reporting that the British military authorities were investigating the guilty soldiers.

So what news is there of this investigation? Where, exactly, did it end? Were those who suffered the assault ever satisfied, and how, precisely, were they satisfied? Was Egyptian patriotism itself ever satisfied — Egyptian patriotism, humiliated on its own soil, held in contempt within its own homeland? And how, precisely, was it satisfied? Where is the British government's apology to the Egyptian government? And where were Mr. Patterson's own efforts on this matter, conveyed to the good-natured Abdel Fattah Yehia Pasha?

You may certainly put all of this to these very government gentlemen, who have in these days become such ardent advocates of patriotism, such champions of independence, such guardians of national

dignity.

You may certainly put it to them, and await their answer — and do not despair if the wait grows long, for these people are far too preoccupied, by an entirely different grave matter, to attend to these grave events at all: namely, that their own government may soon resign, or be forced to resign.

Those who delegate to the High Commissioner's residence the resolution of the public debt question, even after independence has been declared, even after a Foreign Ministry has been established in Egypt, even after ambassadors and consuls have been dispatched to every corner of the earth — such men have no business invoking patriotism, nor independence. Those who delegate to the English the resolution of the Mixed Courts question, who dare not confront it themselves, nor speak of it to foreign powers without first securing English permission — such men have no business invoking patriotism, nor independence. Those who delegate to the English the handling of the Capitulations and their attendant problems, who make no effort of their own toward it, and pursue it only once English backing shelters them, or English permission has gone before them — such men have no business invoking patriotism, nor independence. Those who favor English officials over Egyptian officials; those who exile a professor of engineering to Assiut and put an Englishman in his place; those who find themselves fully capable of dismissing an Egyptian professor of law, yet utterly incapable of removing a single language instructor from that very same faculty, for the sole reason that he happens to be a foreigner, and nothing more — such men have no business invoking patriotism, nor independence. Those who oppress their own fellow citizens, and permit themselves to humiliate them and subject them to every variety of torment, seizing taxes from them by violence and injustice, collecting from them on the very day payment is due, or even before that day has arrived — such men have no business invoking patriotism, nor independence.

Rather, the only men entitled to invoke patriotism and independence in good faith, and to fill their mouths with these words in earnest rather than in idle jest, are precisely those who accept no injury from foreigners, who tolerate no interference from the English in the affairs of the police or of irrigation, who never favor the foreigner over the Egyptian, who fear no foreigner any more than they would fear a fellow Egyptian, who never permit themselves to torment their own fellow citizens merely to present the English with an image of weak and humiliated subjects, and

who never delegate to the English the resolution of Egypt's problems — because dignity itself demands of them, because justice itself demands of them, because independence itself demands of them, that they resolve their own problems by themselves.

These, and these alone, are the men entitled to invoke patriotism, to call others to it, to invoke independence and defend it, to speak and be believed by the people, to call and have the people answer their call, to act in ways the English themselves must reckon with seriously. And the government's own supporters are welcome to go searching for these true, sincere advocates of patriotism, these true, sincere champions of independence — but they will not find them within the government's own offices, for such men are not, at present, to be found frequenting any ministry or bureau at all.