

Son of the Revolution...

Al-Wadi (Hadith al-Wadi), November 17, 1934

It is not decreed that a son must be dutiful. Among sons are those who choose undutifulness, and among sons are those who are driven headlong into it and become entangled in it despite themselves — yet in every case they bear its heavy sin. They do harm as though people expected of them only kindness; they corrupt as though people expected of them only reform; and they disappoint hopes that had been placed in them without limit, without bound. These sons who commit the sin, or are drawn into it, are not, alas, few — they are many, and mothers suffer through them a bitter, aching suffering, and they set before people examples of the very worst kind, and of the very greatest use. Worst, because they tempt the weak, make light of the impatient, and seduce those who lust after arrival; and of use, because they admonish the strong, and stir the lesson in the hearts of those who wish to take heed, and furnish people with proof that God's victory is near, that God's justice is nearer still than His victory, that the end of wrongdoing is always evil whatever the circumstances, and that the outcome of good is always fair however long the waiting.

This son of the Revolution of whom we wish to speak was a young man when the Revolution overtook him, and it did not fully discover him until it kindled within him, and stirred his soul to its depths, and made him nothing but motion and energy, and made his tongue a flame of fire that moved for nothing but the Revolution and spoke of nothing but the Revolution — until at last it drew him out of prose into verse, and carried him from oratory to poetry, or gathered for him something of oratory and something of the attempt at poetry. Then the Revolution went on its way in triumph, forcing through whatever obstacles stood in it, victorious, undaunted by trials, unswayed by hardships, and he went with the Revolution, following it, moved by it — crying out when the Revolution wished him to cry out, orating when the Revolution wished him to orate, straining after verse when it seemed to him the Revolution wished him toward verse. Then God granted the Revolution to triumph, and God decreed that the men of the Revolution should assume power, and God committed the affairs of Egypt to Egypt's great man, so that His Majesty the King had scarcely entrusted the leadership of the first popular ministry to Saad, when Saad chose, among his colleagues and supporters, Mr. Naguib Effendi al-Gharabli, the lawyer. The people rejoiced that day

at democracy's triumph, and trusted that day in the Leader and in the Leader's choice; and some people were indignant that day at this democracy which had turned affairs in Egypt upside down, and had changed the order of government, and had raised to ministerial rank a man whom some middling post would have contented and satisfied; and some people recalled, on that day, an ancient Greek poet who so hated democracy's triumph in his city that he exiled himself from the land, and mourned the age of aristocracy, and condemned the age of democracy, in fine verse some of which remains preserved to this day:

Then some people recalled the Prophet's migration with his companions to Medina, and the harm that befell the Prophet and his companions, and the victory God afterward decreed for Islam; and they recalled what some of the Prophet's companions used to tell, once the land was opened to them, of the death of a company of Muslims who strove and struggled and endured and bore hardship with patience, and planted the blessed tree, and then fell on the field of struggle before they had tasted anything of that tree's fruit — and of another company who lived on to gather the sweetest and finest of that same fruit. And these people counted Naguib al-Gharabli among those granted such triumph, decreed to eat of the tree's fruit in health and ease. Then events came to pass, and trials arose, and the man met these events alongside his companions, and stood firm against the trials alongside his leader and his friends. Then God provided him a support, one who reproached the man, yet did not reproach him for much; and the man went on, after the Leader's death, striving alongside the Leader's successor, loyal to the Revolution and to the men of the Revolution and to the Revolution's hopes — or so it appeared, in a loyalty that stirred in men's souls neither doubt nor suspicion. The man shared with his friends in power when power came to them, and shared with them in hardship when hardship was poured upon them, and returned with them to power when they returned to it. And all that was outwardly known of his conduct in this was clear and upright, confirmed by the oaths he had sworn, the pledges he had made, and the efforts he had exerted.

Then one day the people awoke to find the son of the Revolution disobeying the Revolution; to find Saad's own ward disowning Saad; to find Mustafa's own friend turning against Mustafa; to find him doing wrong even to those who had stood in solidarity with him and championed him, so that they exposed themselves, for his sake, to public indignation, and placed themselves, alongside him, under a cloud of

suspicion, and forfeited, for his sake, the trust of the people and the people's love which they had once enjoyed, and took upon themselves, for his sake, heavy burdens — for what burden is heavier than the burden of discord and division?

The man denied all of this, and set all of this beneath his foot and behind his ear; he ran to office when he was called to office, and hastened to power when Ibrashi Pasha beckoned him toward power. And the people looked, and behold, Gharabli Pasha was a minister. And the people inquired, and behold, Gharabli Pasha had been scheming for himself all along, seeking some post of state from the tyrant Sidqi Pasha, pursuing the means to it, and employing intermediaries toward it. And the people looked, and behold, the covenant of the Revolution had been broken, and the man had forsworn every one of his oaths, and had stretched out his hand to the enemies of the Revolution, to the adversaries of the Constitution, to the assailants of the people — God forgive me — nay, he had worked with these very people and shared in the sins they were committing. Then the people looked, and behold, Gharabli Pasha was appointed a member of the Senate. Then the people looked, and behold, Gharabli Pasha's tongue could move to swear yet another oath, pledging to be faithful and loyal to the new Constitution — and behold, the man's heart, mind, and conscience stood ready to compound oaths, to change opinion, to disown the past, to disregard the future, and to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of the passing hour. Then the people looked, and behold, Gharabli Pasha permitted what he had once forbidden, and acknowledged what he had once denied, and took part in pouring torment upon the innocent people. Then the people looked, and behold, Gharabli Pasha joined with Qaisi Pasha in seizing his old leader and his old friends with violence and brutality, preventing them from moving if they wished to move, preventing them from speaking if they wished to speak, and preventing them from resigning if they wished to resign, and loosing upon them every grievance he had once nursed against them — from the time when they had been his friends, or when they had shown him affection and loyalty.

Then the days pass and the year draws to its close, and behold, God has ordained that the reign of falsehood should end, that the dominion of evil should end, that the night of devils should be dispelled, and that it should at last be time for the wrongdoers to return, driven back, to their own dens. Then the people look, and behold, the ministers have fallen from power, and behold, Gharabli Pasha has returned to his house, every

tie between himself and the ministry severed, and he has become as he was the summer before — save that he has lost every one of his friends, has lost the people's affection, and has earned for himself the people's hatred, or say rather the people's aversion toward him, and the people's contempt for men of his kind, and the people's disdain for them and for him.

Was he restored to his house rich after poverty? At ease after hardship? God knows what we do not. But what is beyond doubt is that he was not restored to his house honoured, nor esteemed, nor enjoying what an honoured, esteemed man enjoys of trust, love, and support. The people were indignant at him when he took office, and no one gave him a thought when he was removed from it; he forgot himself, and so the people forgot him; he neglected himself, and so the people neglected him. For the Revolution had returned to resume its course after being interrupted, and to advance once more after the road before it had been blocked; and the men of the Revolution looked, and found among themselves stragglers — some who had stood aside in a tainted neutrality, and some who had waged a sinful war against it — yet they found, too, that the long ordeal, the sustained strife, the emergence of truth, and the collapse of falsehood had together brought back to their ranks people who had once opposed them, and restored to them people who had once disowned them; so that the army of the Revolution grew to a strength beyond measure, and love of the Revolution took root in the people's hearts beyond all bound, and the people's certainty in their revolution grew great, and the people were set on seeing it through to its noble end. And along the way there fell those whose feet had slipped, and those whose morals had slipped, and those whose consciences had fallen short even of loyalty to their friends.

In the story of this one son among the sons of the Revolution there lies a lesson for Egypt's youth, which they must ponder, and reflect upon at length. For if they look to Gharabli Pasha's history, to his early strength, to the weakness that then overtook him, to the abasement that then befell him, and to the reckoning he now meets, they will be fit to be true men, and to know that the deadliest enemy of man is this hasty gratification which ruins his affairs, squanders his past, and turns his future into a dark fate, full of doubt and suspicion.

Let the youth reflect, then, on the story of Gharabli Pasha — for in this story the days have cast before them a lesson steeped in reproach, eloquent, and worthy of thought.