

Rejoicing ...

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1 The good man ought to be happy and delighted, content and glad, now that this grave piece of legislation has issued, proving to lawyers and non-lawyers alike that our ministry can warn and carry out its warning, can threaten and make good on its threat, and that those who describe it as weak, who charge it with incapacity, who accuse it of falling short, never gave it its due measure, and never knew it as it truly is. It was only the good man's gentleness that tempted them against it, only the forbearance of its forbearing members that made them covet its weakness. But now the proof stands that good men can be skilled in anger and excel at punishment, and that the forbearance of the forbearing ought to tempt and embolden none but the rash, who cannot properly weigh the consequences of things.

2 For these Egyptians now see that there is no difference between the good man and the strongman. Both can strike hard when they wish, both excel at displaying force and intimidating their rivals, both can win from the parliamentary majority whatever they want, both can will and have their will accomplished, both can say to the laws "be," and they are, both can alter and amend, erase and confirm, and both can rule, even where ruling means forbidding by judicial decree.

3 And this proof had to be made, this case had to be established, so that people might come back to their senses, and their senses come back to them! For the good man had borne with them until they thought him weak, and the good man had given them latitude until they coveted him, and the time had come for the good man to show them that he possesses a measure of strength and solid cunning no less than that of his predecessor, the strongman, Sidqi Pasha.

4 And this proof had to be made, this case had to be established, so that Sidqi Pasha himself might learn that he alone is not capable of upholding the present order and enforcing the policy that must be enforced upon Egyptians, and that the quiver still holds arrows no less hard, no less sharp, no less piercing than his own, and that if he amended the constitution, dissolved parliament, and barred certain men from the Chamber of Deputies, his friend of yesterday and rival of today has

amended the laws of advocacy, dissolved — or nearly dissolved — the lawyers' syndicate, and barred certain men from that syndicate just as he barred other men from parliament.

5 And this proof had to be made, this case had to be established, so that doubt might be erased, suspicion dispelled, confusion cleared away, and the English and others besides the English might know that if Sidqi Pasha is gone, Egypt still has Abd al-Fattah, and that Egypt, praise God, remains rich in strong men who know what resolve and determination are, who know what force and might are, who know what will and resolve are.

6 So if Egyptians feared Sidqi Pasha, they must fear Abd al-Fattah Pasha. And if the English trusted Sidqi Pasha, they must trust Abd al-Fattah Pasha; for there is no difference, small or great, between the two men — both know how to fight their rivals, and both know how to defeat them.

7 And if Sidqi Pasha's ministry relied on Egyptians' fear and the English's trust, and so remained in power more than three years, then Abd al-Fattah Pasha's ministry may well be able to rely on Egyptians' fear, for they will fear it — God forgive us, what manner of talk is this? Where has it come from, and where is it heading? For Egyptians already fear the ministry in deed, and need not wait, with this fear, for any near or distant future.

8 And Abd al-Fattah Pasha's ministry may well be able to rely on the English's trust, for they will trust it — God forgive us, rather, they have trusted it since the day it rose to the seats of power. So it can lean with its right hand on the fear that shakes Egyptians' hearts, and with its left hand on the trust that fills the English's hearts, and proceed along its path secure and reassured, for this path is a very long one, no shorter than Sidqi Pasha's path, and perhaps longer still, and perhaps the ministry will not reach its end before ten years have passed. So what, then, keeps the good man, now that the lawyers' legislation has issued, from being happy and delighted, content and glad? For as of yesterday — and only as of yesterday — he has been reassured that his ministry is fit for a long survival.

9 Sidqi Pasha used to parry and maneuver; but Sidqi Pasha has now lost the power to parry and maneuver, and has come to advance only to retreat, to charge only to flee, and to withdraw his resignation only to request leave!

10 Sidqi Pasha used to contest him for the parliamentary majority; but the parliamentary majority has now yielded to him entirely — and what majority was Sidqi Pasha ever contesting him for within the party? The party has yielded to him, and the path before him lies clear.

11 Sidqi Pasha used to accuse him of naivety; but it has now become plain that he is the least naive of men, the most skilled in politics, and the most capable of handling affairs with a firm hand — as of yesterday, and only as of yesterday, the ministry has set up, for itself, for Egyptians, and for the English, the clearest proof that it is not a ministry of days, nor of weeks, nor of months, but a ministry of years upon years.

12 For it has proven to Egyptians and to the English that it is, like Sidqi Pasha's ministry, cut from precisely the same cloth — fearing nothing, dreading nothing, flinching from nothing, hesitating over nothing, all sharpness whatever the circumstances, all strength whoever the rivals.

13 It dislikes a group of lawyers and wishes to bar them from the lawyers' syndicate, and nothing restrains it, nothing holds it back, from legislating for the lawyers a law without precedent among men, and dragging its provisions backward over the past! Then parliament convenes, and considers this law at a speed matched only by the speed of light, and passes this law by a majority resembling unanimity, and postpones, for the sake of this law, the gravest matters, the ones of greatest consequence for people's lives — it does not hurry to think about politics, nor hurry to think about finance, nor hurry to think about the economy, nor hurry to study the speech from the throne, which is the government's own program, nor hurry to reply to it; it convenes only for this legislation, thinks only of this legislation, considers it and finishes considering it, then disperses so its members may spend their days of rest in peace, until the week is over and they return, at peace, to take up whatever business remains before them.

14 What strength resembles this strength? What resolve resembles this resolve? What zeal for the public good resembles this zeal? Do not mention the financial crisis — had it existed, the ministry would have thought of it, and parliament would have thought of it. Do not mention the question of the debt — had it still stood, the ministry would have thought of it, and parliament would have thought of it. Do not mention those shameful scandals that have filled the Egyptian air for weeks now — the ministry has forgotten them, and parliament has forgotten them,

and people have forgotten them.

15 There is nothing in Egypt worthy of the ministry's and parliament's attention except the lawyers' syndicate. It was a perpetual danger graver than the danger of war, graver than the danger of ravaging famine, graver than the danger of scorching drought, graver than the danger of sweeping epidemics; and so the ministry and parliament devoted two weeks to it, until they were finished with it, and had rescued Egypt from its looming harm and its manifest calamity!

16 The strange thing is that the imams of the mosques were not ordered, and the priests of the churches were not ordered, to hold a prayer of thanksgiving for Egypt's deliverance from this great danger! And the strange thing is that the men of the provincial administration did not come up from the provinces at the head of vast delegations to offer the good man and his heroic colleagues the people's thanks and praise for having saved Egypt from this great danger. The strange thing is that the cities were not decorated, that celebrations were not held, that the newspapers were not filled with telegrams overflowing with thanks to God and to the ministers for Egypt's deliverance from this great evil.

17 Truly the hearts of Egyptians are hard, truly the souls of Egyptians are ingrates, and truly the Egyptians' denial of this blessing is a thing that fills hearts with rage and disgust. And yet the ministry serves Egyptians for the sake of God alone, expecting from them neither thanks nor praise, nor even expecting their contentment or fearing their displeasure; it serves them in spite of themselves, for it knows their interests better than they do, and sees their own advantage more clearly than they can.

18 And the strange thing, after all this, is that today's newspapers, which appeared this morning, are all gloomy and sorrowful, because the lawyers will not take part in the official celebration to be held on the judiciary's feast day, and because it is the ministry's own policy that brought about this division, and that stood between the judicial family and its taking part in celebrating its own feast, just as it takes part in bearing the burdens that justice lays upon it.

19 Have you ever seen newspapers more undutiful, more ingrate, more given to pettiness, more averse to great matters, than these? What is this? A law issues yesterday that rescues the legal profession from Makram and his companions, that rescues the country from this dangerous syndicate, that wards off from Egypt the ugliest calamities and

the most hideous misfortunes, that makes it truly a part of Europe and raises it to the rank of civilized, advanced nations — and these newspapers find nothing to carry to their readers but this division the ministry has caused within the judicial family!

20 Where are these newspapers? How do they think? Which would Egypt prefer and hold dearer: that this division should arise within the judicial family, so that there should be a celebration at the Opera the lawyers do not attend, followed, once night falls, by a celebration at the Semiramis and another at Heliopolis — or that Makram should deliver a speech at the Opera before His Majesty the King, in the presence of the good man and his heroic colleagues?

21 Had these newspapers thought it through and weighed it properly, they would not have needed such a question put to them, and would have known that anything is lighter to bear than letting Makram enter the Opera with His Majesty the King present, and the ministers present, let alone having him stand there as an orator speaking in the name of the legal profession — anything but that the ministry should resign. And is there any good in the ministry's resignation? Have you ever seen a ministry striving toward resignation? Is the ministry's resignation anything but the gravest calamity, the greatest catastrophe, the danger Egyptians cannot withstand?

22 All is well! Egypt has been delivered from the lawyers' syndicate, the ministry has been delivered from Makram's speech, and everything has been set right for everyone, so that nothing remains but for us to rejoice and exult — let all of Egypt rejoice at the deliverance granted to it, let the judicial family rejoice, divided, at its own happy feast, and let the ministry rejoice, for it has brought Egyptian politics to the utmost that Egyptians could hope for — and do Egyptians hope for anything as they hope for this concord, this harmony, this union to which the ministry has led them?