

Remedy

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And at last the ministry deliberated, and deliberated at length, and probed, and probed deeply, and God guided it, after long effort, heavy toil, and dread of a bad outcome — dread of the affair unravelling and of the bond between the Egyptians and foreigners in general, and between the Egyptians and the missionaries in particular, growing corrupt — to a small measure of courage with which it rose to deal with the problem of proselytism: it expelled a foreign missionary woman from the country. And God alone knows whether it expelled her with a temporary expulsion, after which a near return awaits, or whether it expelled her with a permanent expulsion, after which there is no return and no coming back.

But at any rate it expelled her, and stopped where it now stands with the missionaries — at this limit which it appears unable to move beyond to anything further. Then it deliberated and deliberated at length and probed and probed deeply, and God guided it to a small measure of generosity and munificence toward the Egyptians, after its extravagance of generosity and munificence toward the foreigners; and it resolved to rescue the Muslim girls from the missionary school in Port Said and add them to its own schools and shelters, and to the schools and shelters of the Muslims. This is good, without any doubt, on condition that it be not one of the distractions of idle talk, nor of those promises that are designed to beguile and divert, to calm anxieties and numb the nerves as they say. It is beyond doubt that people expect the ministry's fulfilment of this promise to be sincere, with no evasion in it, and swift, with no delay in it. And they would wish that the appropriation of this sum which the government promised yesterday not be deferred to the next parliamentary session, for the intensity of the summer heat is liable to melt this promise if it is left to wait too long. The proof of this is that the English grew alarmed lest the summer melt the appropriation of the *Jabal al-Awliya'* treaty, so they hurried the government to pass it through and snatch it from the two chambers. The proof of this too is that the American company laying the groundwork for the Asna Dam grew alarmed lest the summer melt the fifty thousand, so it hurried the government to sign and pay. And the government hurries to pass this sum as fast as it can — and it is said, though perhaps what is said is a lie, yet it is said nonetheless, that the government advanced the signature over

every other procedure, and paid fifty thousand before Parliament had authorized this payment. People these days hasten to obtain financial appropriations for fear lest the summer heat melt them or injustice befall them; and it is the Egyptians' right to hasten these seventy thousand which the Minister of the Interior promised yesterday, and to see the business of this appropriation proceeding swiftly along its legal path — or whichever ministries may be willing to found the promised schools, so that the matter be deed rather than word, earnest rather than jest, and so that from the missionaries and their enticements a number be rescued, however small — for each one is an Egyptian who ought to belong to Egypt and to Islam.

We continue to wait before we believe, until fulfilment comes — for the promise is plentiful and words are easy, and praise is more plentiful still and laudation easier still; but it is fulfilment and execution that we must seek, and we will not believe until we secure them.

And after all this we beg the ministry's leave to draw its attention to the fact that whatever it has done by way of measure up to this point, however good and productive, is far indeed from being a genuine, effective remedy for this grave problem — the problem of proselytism and the missionaries. For however many missionaries, men and women, the government may expel, it will not be able to go far in this, and there will remain a grave danger. There is, moreover, a free education spread by foreign men of religion of various creeds and denominations, who ostensibly aim at instruction and culture — and in this respect it is truly beneficial, truly useful — yet it does not stop at instruction and culture; rather, it shares with foreign education in weakening Egyptian national identity and extending foreign influence, and stands alone in a religious propaganda, overt or covert, intended or unintended, that has a far-reaching effect upon the religious sensibilities of children. The state must therefore rise to supervising these various kinds of education to guard morals, national identity, and religion from this corruption which strains toward them with a powerful, insistent, unrelenting exertion. The present ministry actually intended to issue legislation that would enable it to supervise free education, and exerted itself in this until it had prepared a draft law and published it among the people to learn their opinion; but then it fell suddenly silent on the matter, and turned away from proceeding with it for reasons that are not apparent. And the strongest probability is that when it drafted this legislation, or found itself eager to issue it, it had in mind only a single political aim: to extend

its authority over Egyptian free schools. And so God provided someone to point out to it that the authority of this law ought to extend over Egyptian and foreign schools alike — and at that it desisted from it and abandoned it entirely, and preferred to leave this law rather than take a position toward the foreigners that would displease them. And you know how much our present ministry has shown of its eagerness to please the foreigners since it took up the burdens of rule.

Be that as it may, the true remedy for the matter of the missionaries lies precisely in subjecting their schools and the schools of other foreigners to rigorous Egyptian supervision, such that Egyptian inspectors may visit them and listen to what is taught in them, examine their pupils and question them about what they hear and what they do; and if they find that any of these schools is departing in its teaching from what befits Egypt's benefit, its need, its dignity, and its religion, they shall inform the Ministry of Education of this departure, and the Ministry of Education shall enforce the law in those schools.

In this way, and in this way alone, can Egypt be secure on one of the most dangerous fronts along which foreigners — missionaries and non-missionaries alike — find their way to the souls of pupils and students. Let the government take courage, or let Parliament take courage, or let the government and Parliament together take courage, and let this law be issued; for if it is issued it will relieve the Egyptians and relieve the foreigners too. It will relieve the Egyptians because it will keep much harm from them; and it will relieve the foreigners because it will protect them from the Egyptians' ill opinion of them, and place the bond between them and the Egyptians in education on a foundation of goodwill, candour, and wholesome cooperation about which there is no suspicion.

But do you suppose the present ministry will dare to issue this law? Do you suppose it is able to approach the foreigners who hold the privileges and ask them to submit their schools to its supervision and inspection? This is justice, beyond any doubt; this is among the first requirements of national sovereignty and natural independence — but justice is one thing, and establishing justice is another. And if a ministry is incapable of establishing justice among the Egyptians themselves, who are not distinguished one from another before the law, what do you suppose it would do in relation to foreigners who entrench themselves behind privileges and take shelter behind their countries' force and authority?

God knows, every attempt to remove the missionaries is worthless and serves no purpose, so long as their institutes remain free and unfettered and the government is unable to enter them, or supervise them, or reach them, except after evil has occurred within them and become a thing that can neither be remedied nor prevented from occurring.