

Contentment ...

Al-Wadi (Hadith al-Wadi), 6 June 1934.

As for the Chamber of Deputies, it approved yesterday the Ministry's policy in the Mixed Courts crisis, after that long and extensive interpellation — meaning, if we still have minds capable of understanding, that it does not consider itself entitled to take up this crisis at all, except when the Ministry itself asks it to do so; so the matter, then, is confined entirely to the executive authority, and the Chamber ought to propose nothing whatsoever toward its resolution.

And do not tell the deputies that the Mixed Courts question is a purely Egyptian matter, so long as they themselves have said that Egypt has the right to abolish these courts by a law of its own issuing, over whose drafting or abandonment there is no room for negotiation. And so long as the matter rests on the exercise of every Egyptian's right, it is the right of the Chamber of Deputies, or the right of Parliament, to propose the issuing of this law — indeed, to draft this law itself, and to follow whatever course is needed for its issuance.

Do not say this to the deputies; for it has already been said to them, and they turned away from it and paid it no heed, and you need not be more of a deputy than the deputies themselves, nor more jealous of Parliament's rights than the members of Parliament, even though Parliament holds its rights only because they are the rights of the people, who deputized it to protect and preserve them — indeed, to broaden and increase them, as far as it is able within the bounds of the Constitution.

But this was talk fit to be spoken yesterday; as for speaking it today, it is neither fitting nor possible, for it would be branded as excess and extravagance, as a leaning toward defiance and the overstepping of bounds. And so long as the deputies are content and at ease, then all is well, and everything proceeds in the best possible manner. As for the Senate, it has grown so content that it has wearied of contentment, so at ease that it has tired of ease, and has lost all appetite for meeting — the proof being that its majority stayed away from yesterday's session, and only a small number attended, who waited with the president and the bureau for more than half an hour, until the waiting grew too long for them, and they dispersed after the president announced that the Senate had not convened for lack of a legal quorum, and after he announced that the next session would be held on Monday.

God alone knows whether that session will be held on Monday, or whether the majority that stayed away yesterday will stay away again! The Senate has met so often that it has had its fill of meeting, and has turned away from it; and summer has come, which loves rest, outings, travel, and the enjoyment of fresh air and a gentle breeze. Were it not that the Senate feels assured that the nation's interests are exposed to no danger, and that nothing is to be feared for them, neither a majority nor a minority of its members would have stayed away, nor would it have hesitated to meet every single day, at every hour of the night and every edge of the day, to safeguard rights, protect interests, and keep benefits from being lost. But since Egypt's affairs rest in the hands of a resolute, determined Ministry, there is no harm in the Senate meeting or not meeting, and no blame on it whether it tires itself or rests.

The deputies, then, are content and at ease, and the senators are likewise at ease and content; and the foreigners, who had been angry, were pacified; who had been enraged, found their rage fall silent; who had been afraid, found safety; who had been despairing, found hope smile upon them, and found themselves flooded with expectation. They are content in Egypt, and content in Europe, after the Prime Minister delivered his reply to the interpellation two days ago, making clear to the deputies that they ought not to take up the Mixed Courts crisis, except when the government wishes them to do so. And he presented the foreigners with a bouquet of beautiful flowers, most elegantly arranged. And why should they not be content, when the president of the Mixed Court of Appeal had denounced the Chamber of Deputies for taking up these courts at all, and the Minister of Justice had opposed the president on this view, permitting the deputies to take up whatever they wished of Egypt's affairs, and the foreigners had dreaded that all the ministers might stand united with the Minister of Justice on this view — until it appeared, two days ago, that the ministers held a view other than the Minister of Justice's own, and agreed with the president of the Court of Appeal that Parliament ought not to involve itself in the Mixed Courts affair, except when the government asks it to do so, because it is an international matter touching the executive authority alone!

And man errs and gets things right by turns; it is most likely that the Minister of Justice came to see that he had erred, and so turned back from his error to what was correct, and stood united with the ministers, after the ministers had refused to stand united with him. And the deputies accepted the ministers' view, and the view of the president of

the Mixed Court of Appeal, and the view of the foreigners; so it is indeed the foreigners' right to be content, and content they have been — they have proclaimed their contentment in Egypt, and their newspapers have published a great deal, full of greetings to the Prime Minister, thanks to him, admiration for him, and praise of him; you may read it in the *Bourse Égyptienne* published yesterday evening. And they have proclaimed it in Europe too; *Le Temps* was pleased and delighted, praised and gave thanks — you may read that in *al-Ahram's* telegraphic dispatches published this morning.

Everything, then, is well: the deputies are content, the senators are content, the foreigners are content, the English are content — are the ministers not to lunch at the High Commissioner's table this very noon?! Is this not a sign of contentment and concord? We must, then, thank God, since everything is well, and since our masters and patrons among the Egyptians and the foreigners alike are content and delighted.

You will say: but the Egyptian people are neither content nor delighted, neither safe nor at ease, but utterly discontented, utterly despondent, utterly afraid, most intensely anxious — and this may well be true. But the Egyptian people are free; if they wish, they may submit and resign themselves, and so find rest and repose, and if they wish, they may grow angry and discontented; and in that case, let the Egyptian people look about them — the water of the Nile is plentiful, and the sea's water is yet more plentiful than the Nile's; let them drink of the one or the other, and perhaps they will find in the one or the other something to ease their discontent and anger, and restore them to safety and ease!

There is no harm to Egypt, so long as the ministers, the senators, the deputies, the foreigners, and the English are all content.