

# Leisure ...

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1 The ministry ought to be congratulated on the ease of mind, the peace of heart, and the quiet of conscience it enjoys; for this is a blessing not granted to many people, nor granted to any ministry in these days so crowded with events and troubles. But our ministry, praise God, lives content, its eye at rest, its mind at ease, with nothing of great moment to occupy it, or trouble it, or compel it to any seriousness or reflection.

2 Egypt has no economic crisis for the ministry to labor over resolving, and Egypt has no political problems for the ministry to ponder removing. It used to be said that some disagreement existed between Egypt and Europe over the matter of the public debt, but God has provided Egypt with the English, who spare it the harm of this disagreement, and act in its stead in devising a solution to it — a solution they may achieve, or may not achieve, but which they address in any case; so it is the ministry's right to spare itself the trouble of pursuing it or thinking about it. And it used to be told that the foreign banks wanted to collect their debt, that people were unable to pay off this debt, and that their land and wealth were exposed to danger on account of this inability — but the finance minister is vigilant, studies the matter, and seeks a remedy for it, never letting a day pass without speaking of it or taking it up with inquiry and study; and for this reason he asks certain foreign countries in Europe and America to inform him what course they have taken toward resolving these problems. He receives the reply of some countries, awaits the reply of others, studies what replies have reached him, and prepares to study what has not yet reached him — and all the while the ministry can rest, and enjoy what ministries in the various lands of the earth do not enjoy, of peace of heart and ease of mind.

3 And it used to be reported that something was happening on some of the Sudanese borders, but God inspired the English — who love Egypt with the greatest love, and show it the kindest compassion — to spare Egypt the trouble of the Sudanese borders, just as they had spared it the whole of the Sudan; for they negotiate with the Italians, and send troops and arms to the border to back up this negotiation and guarantee it success, and all the while the ministry can rest, and enjoy what other ministries do not enjoy, of contentment of the eye and ease of mind. And

it used to be rumored that a set of scandals touching the administration and touching finances had appeared in the Egyptian air, clouding it when it was not clear, and poisoning it when it was not wholesome; but God inspired the ministry to turn away from most of these scandals and to suppose them dreams and delusions, and to form a committee to investigate one of them, as it is able and as circumstances allow. And while the committee investigates, and while the other scandals dissolve into the sea of forgetfulness, the ministry can rest, and enjoy what other ministries do not enjoy, of a quiet conscience and ease of mind.

4 Then it was broadcast that many other matters had arisen, and that many other matters wished to arise, and that it was the nature of these and those to occupy the ministry and burden it, and to cost it the effort and hardship that watchful, weary ministries are made to bear. But our ministry was inspired to turn away from the matters that had arisen, and not to hasten to prepare for what might yet arise from them, and to enjoy what other ministries do not enjoy, of calm circumstance and ease of mind.

5 Nor is it necessary that the ministry's repose be a mirror of the people's repose; that is a thing only the wretched consider, those who look upon life with a serious eye. As for the indulgent philosophers, they merely seize life's opportunities, enjoy whatever of it presents itself, delight in rest whenever rest is granted them, and do not burden themselves with the trouble of seeking out the weary and the afflicted, in order to lighten for them what weariness befalls them, and what misfortunes beset them.

6 And when the ministry has found rest and its mind is at ease, it must have some amusement, it must have some diversion; for if it does not, weariness overtakes it and tedium presses upon it, and nothing weighs more heavily on the souls of the indulgent than tedium. The ministry must have something to talk of when it meets, and its members must have something to say to their companions when they meet them or sit alone with them, and it is unlikely that emptiness alone could fill a conversation; there must be some business on which to spend the time, with which to while away care, and with which to fill conversation. And what could suit the life of the indulgent, and their need for diversion and sport, better than gathering troops and dispersing them, distributing police across the land, sending them up to Upper Egypt and bringing them down to the seacoast, straitening people's already straitened lives, and toying with people over what weighs seriously upon them?

7 And why were troops created? And why was the police created, if the ministries cannot subject them to the same kinds of massing and dispersal, the same arts of movement and transfer, to which the chessboard's pieces are subjected? And so long as God has not prepared for Egypt a war in which to employ the army, the least Egypt can do is prepare for itself an occasion to show that it has an army, and that this army is capable and skilled, able to advance, to circle round the enemy and draw back from him, and to perform such maneuvers as will persuade people that the arts of war are not unknown in the Nile Valley, even if war has not been decreed for the people of the Nile Valley.

8 And who indeed could claim that God has not decreed war for Egypt, when everything shows that God has decreed for Egypt a war unlike other wars, and has established in Egypt a struggle the like of which people have never known? When have you seen a state make war on a single person, massing against him and rousing itself against him, occupying itself with him through the hours of the day and watches of the night?

9 When have you seen a state endure such kinds of toil and labor, take on such sorts of hardship and difficulty, spend of its intelligence more than it was granted and more than it was not granted, and spend of its money what can be borne and what cannot be borne, in order to make war on a lady traveling from one part of the land to another? No, God has decreed for no state what He has decreed for the Egyptian state, of war and struggle, of conflict and contention. The mother of the Egyptians in Upper Egypt, and the head of the Wafd in Alexandria at once — that is much; and more than that, the span between the two journeys was short, allowing no time for preparation, readiness, and provision against emergencies. As for me, I testify that our ministry is truly skilled, that our interior minister is truly a genius, and that circumstances have provided our protection with men who cannot be caught off guard, nor surprised by the enemy while they sleep.

10 Did you see how Lower Egypt turned, yesterday, into a field of war? Did you see how Alexandria turned, yesterday, into an impregnable, fortified citadel? Did you see how our ministry flew with tremendous force from the highest part of the land to its lowest? Did you see how horsemen surrounded the car of the head of the Wafd in Alexandria — a band in front, a band behind, a band to the right, and a band to the left? Did you see how foot soldiers surrounded the head of the bar association as he walked about in Luxor some days ago: twenty ahead of him, twenty

walking on his right, twenty walking on his left, and behind him as many of them as you please?

11 Did you see how the banks of the Nile were guarded when the mother of the Egyptians crossed the Nile? Did you see how the state's boats surrounded her vessel, to cut off any link between her and her supporters and helpers? Can you still doubt, after this, that our ministry does not spend the ease of mind granted to it to no purpose, but spends it on what is useful and beneficial — spends it on protecting Upper Egypt from the mother of the Egyptians, and on protecting Alexandria from the head of the Wafd? You will say: but it did not protect Upper Egypt from the mother of the Egyptians, nor did it protect Alexandria from the head of the Wafd; for the mother of the Egyptians visited Upper Egypt and accomplished of her visit what she wished, and the head of the Wafd visited Alexandria, and accomplished of his visit what he wished.

12 But you know full well that what matters is that the ministry should believe it has done something and accomplished something; for what matters is that the ministry be content with itself, that the ministry take pleasure in its life, and that the ministry take pride in its strength, its intelligence, and its energy. And so long as the ministry is content, we are content; and so long as the ministry is happy, we are happy.

13 And what matters, after this and before this and above this, is that the English should see in the ministry's skill and ability at carrying the war from one end of Egypt to the other, and at straitening the Wafd and the Wafdists, enough to persuade them that it is fit to endure, suited to it, and well-disposed toward what they love of diversion and amusement at Egypt's expense; for the English too need to laugh, and to amuse themselves, and to enjoy what others do not enjoy, of ease of mind. And it is certain that the new High Commissioner will witness something of this he never witnessed while he was in China, and it is certain he will be pleased by what he sees; for he grew weary there over the difficult matters he had to handle, and it is his right to rest here after what weariness he has borne, and I am confident that he will rest, and will spend sweet days between duck hunting and watching the pursuit of the Wafd and the Wafdists.