PURIFICATION OF ALEXANDRIA.

(To the Editor, "Egyptian Gazette.")

Sir,—Human nature may be fundamentally immoral, but this article is not concerning itself with the argument. The tide of moral consciousness may ebb and flow by no other inspiration than the very tides of social custom. The fact remains that it does flow. During the past hundred and fifty years it has overwhelmed innumerable habits and institutions which our forefathers were accustomed to regard with tolerance. However temporary or weakly founded may be the change, it cannot be denied that the modern man is far in advance of his Georgian progenitors. Social ideas regarding behaviour, language and sobriety have undergone a revolution. The "gentleman" is dead, and other types of the Georgian era, are creatures in whose existence we find it difficult to believe. We need only compare, for a moment, our literary and historical knowledge of the Georgian era with the social life around us to-day to be astonished at the strides that have been made. We are impressed, at first, by our immense social progress, but the contrast emphasises the fact that in one direction our advance has been curiously retarded.

The brothel may, or may not be, a permanent institution in the history of mankind. It is certain that its extensive patronage by the flower of the country's youth, at the present day, is remediable. It is a common belief that the brothel is the haunt of the morally depraved only. The majority of its frequenters, in England, are men, who, if they do, thinkingly or unthinkingly, are driven there against their better consciousness. The "necessity" argument, applies to them no more than the eighteenth century argument regarding the necessity for a gentleman to go to bed drunk. That the former argument is not dead and buried like the latter is due to the fact that sexual desire is more deeply rooted in human nature than the instinct for alcohol. Social demands may, at the one, but something deeper and more dynamic is required for control of the other. Will-power and reason may assist a few, but there will still remain a vast multitude who, in their helplessness to save themselves, kill consciousness of requiring aid.

The average Englishman receives in youth a thorough religious training. The teachings of Christianity are the foundation of his education, but, along with anything that can help him in after years, he assimilates an immense amount of indigestible dogma and misinterpretation of Christ's original doctrine. There are a few cases where the result is successful, but the forced consumption of unpalatable religious food leaves, in the majority of cases, an unavoidable mass in the mind of youth which is discarded soon after years bring escape from the restraints of school. When problems arise later, the healthy-minded turn to Reason for solution. Some become frankly atheistical and cynical. Some find refuge in a rational optimism. A working philosophy, serviceable but inconsistent, is the achievement of a few only. The vast majority of men kill thought by a moderate use of tobacco and alcohol. While they are unconscious of mental stagnation they exist in a comatose state of irreligious peace and complacency. At one time or another comes unrest, and consciousness of discord, and a desire to be able to live in harmony with the fresh promptings of better instincts. To what are they to turn? This consciousness of discord and clean desire has never been more universal than it is to-day, when war suffering has shaken the minds of men no less than it has shaken kingdoms. The wide gulf between men and the churches may be bridged by a fragile gangway in places by social usage, influence, church-going, but Christianity has no real place in the conflict between the vast majority of men and their massive, rational moral code, argument or power of will can bring them to anything but a temporary victory. Unclean desire remains the master; it is to be accepted cheerfully or despairingly.

It is a truth as old as history that passion cannot be subdued except by a spark of the fire of religious inspiration. Any one who has a firm view of Christ's philosophy of unselfishness gleams that may guide upward, but to a great many men the bright light of Christianity has been obscured for ever by the teaching received in boyhood. The later dogmas and misinterpretations of Christianity have made it a dead letter to the healthily thoughtful. The churches have robbed the world of the blessings they are charged to bestow. There is so much in the churches' teachings that merely obscures man's view of what is ennobling and inspiring in the life and teaching of Christ. What have we to do with the crosiers and Machiavellianism of the early Christian bishops? If it is only fear of schism which prevents the Church of England leading the reformation for which the world is crying, then, in the name of humanity, let us have schism. It will reveal the Rock of an inspiring religion, and afford at least a foothold in the morass of controversy and bestiality in which the world is now struggling.

Yours, etc.,
M.M.

Alexandria, Feb. 1.

(To the Editor of the Egyptian Gazette.)

Sir,—The controversy at present raging in your paper under the headings of "Purification of Alexandria," and "Alexandria's reredos," besides being highly edifying, is also immensely amusing. In your issue of the 28th, the question is asked, "How the women piled their venal trade with customary success at a bal masqué in a public place?" Well, Sir, when I retired to my chamber at the public place in question on the night of the bal masqué, I found a considerable quantity of confetti strewn about! I understood from that some revellers had gone into my room to brush his hair, or complete or readjust some part of his toilet, and had, being covered with confetti, he had strewn the little bits of coloured paper about, and in his hurry had omitted to sweep them up. For the word "he," substitute "she" and a similar sequence of events may be imagined. Cynically-minded persons might suggest that both "he" and "she" had entered my chamber, from which other inferences might be drawn, but I do not myself favour that suggestion, being a confirmed optimist and believer in the goodness of human nature, as is proved by the part that I daily endeavour to persuade my more timid acquaintances that the Peace will be signed, the League of Nation working, Alexandria purified and President Wilson made the chief of a world-wide cult to replace all present religions, by April 1, 1921.

Yours, etc.,
L. C. Legge-Wilkinson.

Alexandria, Feb. 1.

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BENI-SUEF NOTES.

A STRANGE SWINDLER.

(From our own Correspondent.)

Beni Suef, Feb. 7.

On Saturday last (February 1) a remarkably intelligent foreigner came to Beni-Suef. In a very short period of time, of three hours, he made many new acquaintances, native and European. He said that he was an American engineer who had been employed in the gold mines in the Sudan, and lately in connection with gold ores with Mr. Merton somewhere near Assuan. To all those to whom Mr. Charles Mills (as he called himself) had been introduced, he seemed to be a most refined gentleman of high culture and elevated university education—and so the man really is. In a course of conversation with him, I found him to be versed in English prose and poetry and to have a full knowledge of literature. He has so charming a tongue and so fascinating a mode of relating long curious interesting tales and adventures, that to a casual observer he seems to be a prominent scientist of some sort or a great adventurer. He can quote from memory hundreds of choice phrases, anecdotes, epigrams and varieties of master-pieces from history, politics, science and literature. He consults his memory and in a second he recalls whole pieces, poetic and prosaic, from Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Addison, Steel, Bacon, Goethe, Dickens, Benette, Kipling, Haggard, Rousseau, etc. He can talk fluently and enthusiastically on all subjects. He takes the keenest interest in comparing nations and explaining the high economic enterprises that are most wonderfully carried out in America on a scale of incredible magnitude. Those who are interested in engineering, notably mechanical engineering, testify that Mills is extra-ordinarily dexterous and sharp along that line. In fact he is a man of almost superhuman gifts and finesse and who is hard to describe. With his wiliness and clever humour, together with the charm of his speech he can "pull the leg" of the wisest and most cautious, and very straight too. His age is very little above 35, he is of medium height, somewhat slenderly built, but apparently strong. From his face, his blue eyes, short, yellow moustaches and his black hat and his figure the observer cannot tell whether he is an American or German or any other nationality.

He has a special style of his own. Two thirds of the upper part of his head is bold, which gives him the appearance of a philosopher, without any sarcasm or exaggeration.

To show the enchanting power the man has displayed upon the people, it is sufficient to note that all his acquaintances pitied him considerably, when he told them he was short of money. They wondered now such a head could be hard up. So all agreed to give him a helping hand and consequently a job was soon found. He was to work on a mill-engine, which needed some care and reparation, for some hours a day for L.E. 12 a month. Furthermore, six private English lessons were offered him by six pupils who could give him £9 a month. But he did not give a single lesson. He asked for money in advance and took from many of his friends money which he promised to give back. He lived in a hotel at their expense, ate his meals in a European restaurant without paying and the day before yesterday he offered a splendidly furnished room gratis, until he could get settled. Yesterday, it was time to commence his job. It was the day when his pupils expected him to give their lessons. At 10.30 a.m. he was asking anxiously for the "Egyptian Gazette" which he read from beginning to end. He borrowed three pounds from a friend, a pound each from three others and at 3 p.m. he was sought everywhere but in vain. Everybody could then see the trick which had been so skilfully played upon so many people. He had been asked whether he had anything to take to his new furnished room, but he replied that he had nothing except a box containing very delicate engineering instruments which he kept at the railway stores. But this was a lie—he had nothing. Moreover he showed such a strange propensity to book reading and complained bitterly of the absence of reading matter. Consequently he was given several books which he took with him when he left, probably at 2 p.m., Tuesday. This is the story of a clever swindler. He is now at large probably drawing up other plans of getting money from the air, just as he used to dig out gold ores extensively in the Sudan. Who knows what kind of bluff he is now engaged in, or where and upon whom? He is practising his deceit. And the end of a long narration to a friend, he takes that friend aside and tells him in the most touching tone: "I am suffering in silence from pecuniary difficulties." Who could have taken him to be a swindler?

The Shiakhat of the Sharkish Province met last week under the presidency of the Mudir of Sharkieh, and appointed 35 omdehs, 80 district Sheikhs and 300 Ezbet Sheikhs. The committee also investigated the cases of ten omdehs and sheikhs charged with irregularity in conducting the affairs entrusted to them.

Since the armistice, owing to the termination of the contract with the Imperial Government, copper stock have depreciated to the extent of £1,000,000 on the Sydney Stock Exchange.

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EGYPT'S LAW REFORMS.

SOME RADICAL CHANGES.

ANGLO-EGYPTIAN LAWYERS' VIEWS.

We have been requested to publish the following:—

TO THE PRESIDENT, CAPITULATIONS COMMISSION.

Sir,— We the undersigned English lawyers practising in the Egyptian Mixed Tribunals and the British Consular Courts in Egypt have the honour to refer to the communication dated the 25th April 1917 addressed to Mr. J. F. Foster, now Sir William Brunyate, K.C.M.G. Judicial Adviser on behalf of the Commission. By this letter our assistance is sought by the Commission in the task before it with particular reference to certain matters of Substantive Law of which a note is annexed to the letter. We need hardly say that both collectively (so far as possible) and individually we shall be glad to do anything within our power to help the work of the Commission and to aid particularly in the radical reforms which the judicial system of Egypt seems to call for at this important juncture.

We gather from the terms of the decree appointing the Commission and from the composition of the Commission that it is designed primarily to enunciate the broad lines on which reforms should be introduced and not itself to draw up the detailed reforms to be taken. We consider therefore that before entering on any detailed consideration of any special subject it is desirable to ascertain and the British Community in Egypt and to the British financial and commercial interests which we represent to lay before the Commission our views as to the general lines on which the reforms which the Commission is called upon to consider should proceed. We feel that no excuse is needed for our desire to put these views before the Commission seeing that we constitute the only body in or out of Egypt who combine considerable practical knowledge and experience of the law and procedure of the Mixed Tribunals with a trained knowledge from actual practice of the law and procedure of the English Courts, which are admittedly looked to by the Commission as the source from which reforms are to be drawn.

The whole question of judicial reform in Egypt may most conveniently be considered in the following order: (I) Language (II) Civil Procedure (III) Substantive Civil Law (IV) Criminal Law and Procedure. Before dealing with each of these heads we wish to make it clear that in our opinion the reforms should have as basis the introduction of English ideals and methods and should go into the adoption of procedure and law which will owe their interpretation to English jurisprudence and English precedents. Throughout the British Empire in those colonies where French influence, law and habits were most strong (e.g. Canada especially Quebec, Mauritius, Seychelles, St. Lucia, etc.) changed conditions and the constant pressure at all points of an atmosphere of English law have combined to substitute English for French law, the main changes being the introduction more or less completely of the English language in the Courts, the almost universal adoption of English law and procedure, and the adoption largely of the English law of evidence and the growing tendency to adopt the rules of the law merchant as defined by the English Courts. In other colonies (e.g. Malta, Cyprus, etc.) there has not been any practical difficulty in substituting largely English ideals and methods for foreign systems of law formerly in vogue.

A fortiori this can and should be done in Egypt. Here there is no French tradition to be combated. The French population is a very small fraction of the foreign community. It is not indeed very long since the larger part of the work of the Mixed Tribunals was conducted not in French but in Italian. It is difficult to find any sufficient reason for perpetuating the French principles of law and above all of procedure in an English Protectorate where it may fairly be assumed any further change which might come about would be in the way of still closer association with the British Rule.

LANGUAGE.

It may, we think, be taken for certain that no substitution of English for French ideals such as we are pressing for could or would take place unless the European language of the Courts became sooner or later definitely English. Codes might be drawn embodying English law and procedure as fully as its most determined partisan could ask for but so long as such codes are drawn in French employing necessarily the particular terminology of French law and cases are pleaded in French it is inevitable that the interpretation of such codes should continue to be inspired by French precedents and methods. We do not ignore the fact that any attempt to precipitate matters and to make such a change immediately would in the existing state of the Courts and the Bar be impossible and lead to confusion. But we submit that the new Codes should be drawn officially in English and for immediate use translations issued in French as well as in Arabic. The English language should after a given interval which we suggest would be five years or even perhaps sooner be made the language compulsory for oral and written pleadings in the Courts except in those Courts where Arabic is or must be, admitted and principally used. The effect of this would be to impose on all new elements on the Bench and on the Bar the necessity of having a sound knowledge of English and gradually, after a transition period which would do away with the hardships which an abrupt change might entail, the Courts would settle down to administer English law in the English language. We venture to think that no insuperable difficulty would present itself. The rising generation of lawyers either know or would have no difficulty in mastering during the transition period the English language and we do not hesitate to affirm that no serious local opposition to the change, which has been largely anticipated, would make itself heard. The question of language is all important, because, in our opinion, whatever be the system of procedure or groundwork of substantive law that may be adopted, unless the whole thing be in English the English language, the bed-rock foundation of compulsion towards practical internationalism will have been laid. Thus if French be the language used to build up the system, however much the latter may be inspired by the "precedents provided by the legislation of the British Empire," it will become impossible to turn to the original English sources for interpretation of a text set out in French terminology. In this connection we would strongly insist that if certain fundamental reforms now to be introduced should be to uproot everything in the nature of internationalism.

CIVIL PROCEDURE.

We do not suggest that it would be practicable to introduce on the bloc the English law of civil procedure into Egypt. Inherent difficulties would arise from the present composition of Bench and Bar which probably could never be done away with. The relations between Bench and Bar in England and between the two branches of the profession inspired by mutual confidence would not be easy to realise in Egypt, though the adoption of English ideals and language would undoubtedly tend in this direction. At the same time there are many features of English procedure which cry for adoption on account of their practical advantages. The clear defining of the issues before the Court by pleadings and the consequent elimination in the subsequent proceedings of extraneous matter and surprise tactics; the rules as to discovery and compelling the parties to disclose their documentary evidence in full and before the hearing of the case, the speedy methods of obtaining judgment in cases where the defendants has no real defence thus eliminating obstruction and delay; the simpler and surer methods of serving the defendant with the length notifications required by the French procedure; the remedies by way of injunction mandamus and prohibition; the English system of interrogatories, etc., etc. We mention the above as examples only and not with a view of discussing at the moment their applicability in Egypt and we would only now add to these the question of the admission of the English system of witness actions. We are not unmindful of the fact that under the present English system witnesses sometimes have to be called to prove documents or self evident facts; hence delay. But we maintain that in a large majority of actions involving substantial interests the proper elucidation of the questions raised can only be obtained by the examination of witnesses and above all by the right of cross-examination. No doubt the above and other matters correspond to the "defects" and "lacunae" referred to in Sir William Brunyate's communication to the Commission but emphasise that these reforms should be introduced not as aforesaid on a body of French procedure but as part of a Code of English procedure which, while maintaining the essential and practical character of approved English methods would equally draw from other legislation forms of procedure which seemed suitable in Egypt.

SUBSTANTIVE CIVIL LAW.

We do not propose to deal with this subject now at any length. The substantive Civil Law of all countries is essentially and in the main similar and no doubt in drawing new codes it will be found desirable to consult and closely consider precedents in the various Codes of civilised nations. The English Civil Law has only been part codified; there is no royal road to introducing a wide code even if it were desirable but on many subjects where the conditions has been settled (e.g. Bills of Exchange, Act, Sales of Goods Act, Bankruptcy Acts, Companies Acts etc.) the English precedents are of great value and might be incorporated wholly or in part. We do not however press for anything yet but fullest justice being done under this head to English precedents and law and we reaffirm our opinion that however the particular details of civil law reform are settled it is imperative that this law should be interpreted in the spirit of English jurisprudence which will only be possible if it is incorporated in English drawn Codes and the courts administering it are guided by an English Code of procedure with the result that English precedents and case law are invoked to govern and decide the principles on which the law is administered.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE.

On this point we are disposed to press with greater insistence for the introduction more completely of the English system of procedure. We do not of course suggest the constitution of lower Courts such as exist in England (e.g. Petty sessions, Quarter Sessions) but we consider that the general principles guiding English criminal procedure both before and after the trial of a case as distinguished from the French system should be adopted and applied in Egypt. In Canada notwithstanding the French proclivities and training of the local elements the substantive and adjective criminal law of England has been introduced en bloc. In St. Lucia the criminal code and Code of criminal procedure are French in form and in part English law and in Mauritius, where probably of all English colonies French law has most hold, the criminal procedure is based in accordance with that of English law since 1853. There is, we believe, no reason why Egypt should not having permanently maintained itself in a British possession. We see no reason to suppose that the introduction of English criminal law and procedure framed on English lines should not be entirely successful and would at once remove a good deal of the existing evils of the system actually administered. It has been successfully adopted in other Eastern conditions are very similar to Egypt. We speak of course with the greatest reservation on the subject of criminal law as administered by the native Courts but it seems clear that the present extraordinary relations between the police and the parquet leading often to miscarriages of justice need radical reformation and this can be done, it would seem only reasonable to remodel on English lines the complete procedure leading up to trial and the trial itself. The French procedure with its clumsy "instruction criminelle" its interrogation of prisoners is a violation of witnesses and leading questions etc. The substantive law of crime is much the same in Egypt and we feel that the English criminal code would not involve any radical changes from the existing native penal code. We understand that the Egyptian judges of the native Court highly appreciate the assistance their claim to derive from a perusal of the "dossier" in a case but we venture to think that their opinion on this point, however sound under existing circumstances cannot be an argument for rather than against the complete change of the system and the introduction of the English system with its full and fair preliminary examination leading to committal and an absolutely impartial trial. We cannot leave the subject of criminal procedure without saying that we do not consider trial by jury is or ever could be regarded as a method of criminal trial in Egypt. This however does not seem to prejudice the question of the procedure would be the same before a Bench of Judges who would be a thoroughly efficient substitute.

GENERALLY.

We do not propose to discuss now the subject which constitutes a fundamental element in the scheme of judicial reforms viz: the composition of the new National Courts which will supersede the present International and native Courts. It would seem probable that it will be found necessary to have Bench and native side to the Courts distinct in civil matters and no doubt, whatever the tribunal action one too the decisions of appeals to be judged by a majority of European Judges would, especially in criminal matters, be gratefully welcomed. We think we may fairly assume that even though it would not be contemplated to together to exclude the nomination to the Bench of other European magistrates than English the judges appointed would in the main be English and, if the broad lines of revision follow the ideas which we have outlined, there can be no question that all Judges of the reformed tribunals appointed would have to be thoroughly conversant with the English Law and English law and procedure. So far as English judges are concerned the scope of choice would be wide instead of being narrowed as at present by the necessity of finding English lawyers with a good knowledge of the civil law and procedure. With regard to the Bar we consider that its members will easily accomodate themselves to the changes proposed by the legislation of the British Empire," it will become impossible to turn to the original English sources for interpretation of a text set out in French terminology. In this connection we would strongly insist that if certain fundamental reforms now to be introduced should be to uproot everything in the nature of internationalism.

We have the honour to be
Sir,
J. P. Foster, Arthur S. Preston, Charles Halford, R.T. Proleau, C.H. Perrott, Reginald Allen, Alexander, Robert L. Devonshire, Frederick Leveaux, George E. Jeffes.

INDIAN MAGIC.

PERFORMANCE IN VIEW OF THOUSANDS.

One of the most amazing pieces of Indian magic I have witnessed writes Edgar Wallace in the "Daily Mail," (and in this case the trick was performed before thousands) occurred quite recently.

The company of fakirs who gave this manifestation produced a picture which was so terrible that spectators recoiled in horror. It was a picture of gaunt soldiers dying like flies in a filth-festooned river boat through the muddle and incompetence of Indian bureaucrats.

The fakirs covered the picture with a cloth for a second, and on its removal we saw these high officials disappearing from office chased by an outraged public. Again the picture was covered, and the fakirs uttered an incantation which sound like "Trust the peopl'," and the cloth was whisked away, showing the bureaucrats back in even better jobs than they had occupied before!

All this was done in broad day-light. Were we hypnotised?

SOUVENIR TO THE TROOPS.

(To the Editor, "Egyptian Gazette.")

Sir,— Will you kindly convey to the British Community of Alexandria the sincere thanks of the British Officers, Indian Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of the 2nd 15th Bifles, for their special card of New Year's wishes, which is highly appreciated by all ranks.

Yours, &c.,
P.O. Wilkinson, Major,
Comdg. 2/15 Rifles.

Alexandria, February 7.

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RACING ENTHUSIASTS.
Those who cannot attend the Races can yet have a big interest by taking chances in the "Gazette" weekly competition. All entrance fees less ten per cent given to the winner.