

It was not till some four hundred years before the birth of Christ that Egypt began to link its story with that of other civilized lands. Then for a time it fell under the sway of Persia, Greece, and Rome in turn, and afterwards came under the dark shadow of the Mohammedan power. During the "Middle Ages" of Europe, Egypt was thus of little importance in Western eyes. But in modern history it has once more assumed a place of some prominence. From the time when Napoleon Bonaparte seized upon Egypt as a stepping-stone towards British India, and when the fleet that carried his army thither was blown to fragments by Nelson at the battle of the Nile, both France and Britain held firmly to the land of the Pyramids, though it was nominally under the rule of the Turk. The cutting of the Suez Canal by the French engineer Lesseps gave to Britain a shorter route to India, and increased greatly the importance of Egypt.

Some thirty-five years ago a rebellion arose in Lower Egypt, and France left to British soldiers and sailors the task of restoring order and protecting the foreign residents. Since that time the country has been really under British control, though the nominal rule is left in the hands of the Khedive and the country is a part of the Turkish Empire.

Since that time also a new Egypt has arisen. It has been said that Egypt requires two things for her prosperity—water and justice. Egypt as a home for men and women means just as much of the desert as can be flooded or irrigated with Nile water. To extend and improve the irrigation of the valley is to make new land habitable and the old land more fertile. This, then, was the first duty of the ruling power. Huge dams or barrages have been built at various points on the river, and great lakes created, so that after the floods have subsided there may be water to irrigate the land during the rest of the year. In this way two or three crops can be grown on land which formerly produced only one, while an extended system of canals leads the water to land which was formerly beyond its reach.

No less important was the duty of establishing justice in