

upon the conscience of another a pressure which injures liberty, and tends constantly to change it." If the presentation of truth, as that truth is contained in the Old and New Testaments, which are admitted by both Copts and Moslems to be divinely inspired, be to exercise such a pressure on the conscience as destroys liberty, then are we verily guilty; for our single aim has ever been to disseminate the Word of God throughout the whole land, to preach it in our pulpits, and to teach it in our schools, carefully shunning all controversy which engenders strife, and stirs up evil passion which blind the mind and prejudice the heart and thus prevent the calm and candid consideration of the sovereign claims of the truth. Not only have we never attacked the Mahomedan religion in any of our publications, or by holding public discussions, but in all the seventy thousand volumes, besides the tracts which we have disseminated throughout Egypt, there is no direct mention made of the peculiar errors of the Coptic church, nor *exposé* given of the nameless immoralities of the leading members of the Coptic clergy. although for the past five years the latter have done little else in their public discourses than curse the Protestants while the present Patriarch has done the utmost in his power to prejudice the Viceroy and other high officials of the Government against us.

Third.—The success with which the Lord has crowned the labours of the American missionaries in Egypt, the doubling of our mission staff in 1865, and the opening in one year of several new stations, in different parts of the country, as if with the intention of ultimately occupying the whole land,—such I believe to have been the principal if not the sole reasons of the recent change of feeling on the part of the Egyptian government. This success has chiefly been amongst the Copts, or native Christian population, who, amid all their darkness and ignorance, have retained such a veneration for the Bible, that in scores of villages the simple perusal of the Word of God in their mother tongue has convinced many of the degraded state of their church and clergy. I believe that I am within the mark when I state that while we count the members of our native Evangelical church by tens, we might count by thousands those who are Protestants at heart but who are waiting, and many of them working, for a reformation of the church of their fathers, rather than, by joining the Evangelical church, expose themselves to the taunts of their friends and the persecution of their religious and civil rulers.

This state of matters could not come directly under the cognisance of the Government, but it was fully reported, with Oriental exaggerations, by the Coptic Patriarch, who, knowing how sensitive the present Viceroy is on the point of foreign influence, scrupled not to ... .. ical and sinister designs to us and our agents. Instead of proceeding to overt measures of persecution at once, the Viceroy began by aiding the Patriarch to open opposition schools at the various stations occupied by us, and sent a firman to the governors of the provinces in Upper Egypt to be read at a public meeting of the Sheykhs of the villages, which was to the

effect that the Copts were the loyal subjects of the Government, equally with their Moslem brethren, and, whereas many of the former were changing their religion, because of the oppressive exactions of the Sheykhs of the villages, orders were hereby given to the latter to treat them henceforth on a perfect equality with the Moslems, for such was the sovereign will of his Highness the Viceroy. This was understood by those who heard it read at Osioot, as a significant warning to the Copts of Upper Egypt to beware of "changing their religion," and thus attracting the notice of the Government as malcontents. To become a Protestant was henceforth to rebel against the Government.

These measures failed, however, to effect the object aimed at. Whether they were intended from the first as merely preliminary to something more decisive, we cannot tell. If so, then the event which I am about to mention merely hastened its adoption. At our annual meeting of Presbytery in March, a paper was laid on the table, signed by twenty six persons in the town of Ghous (about twenty miles below Luxor) who, during a recent visit made there by the Rev. Dr. Lansing, had at their urgent request, and after a careful examination, been admitted into the communion of the Evangelical church. The paper referred to contained a petition from them to the Presbytery, requesting us to ordain one of our native agents—Mikhail formerly a Coptic monk—and establish him among them as their settled pastor. After hearing his trial discourses, etc., we ordained Mikhail to the pastorate of the infant church of Ghous, and when he left I accompanied him as far as Osioot—my own station—where he was joined by the Rev. Ebenezer Currie, who had been labouring in Osioot during my absence in Scotland, who now went with him to introduce him to his flock.

This event filled the Patriarch with alarm. Hitherto he had only heard of single individuals joining the Evangelical church—and these, too, few and far between—now he learns that a full grown Protestant church has sprung up as it were in a day, and that too away in the Southern extremity of Egypt, where the intercourse of the people with the American missionaries must have been very limited. We do not know what representations were made by him to the Government on the subject. He probably mentioned the common report that "the whole people of the town of Ghous, had become Protestants, and the Coptic bishop had been obliged to take up his quarters in the neighbouring town of Negadeh."

Be that as it may, it seems that now, it not before, the Government of his Highness the Viceroy "quite decided to take all proper measures to repress the religious propagandism" which had created this Evangelical church in Ghous, and which threatened, if not checked with a strong hand, soon to fill the country with similar institutions.

I shall send you in a further communication a fuller detail of the persecuting measures adopted by the Government, than would now be compatible with your limited space.

JOHN HOGG.