

conspicuous among these ; but neither their numbers nor their traditional relations with their neighbours qualify them to form the nucleus of a free united Syria. The ' Arab Movement ' up to the present has consisted in little more than talk and journalese. It has never developed any considerable organization to meet that stable efficient organization which the Committee of Union and Progress directs throughout the Ottoman dominions.

At the present moment this Committee has concentrated in Southern Syria a very considerable force of second-line troops stiffened with German officers, and has secured the co-operation of a majority of the Bedawin tribes of the Syrian and North Arabian deserts by gifts of arms and money. Whatever demonstrations this force may be bidden attempt against the Suez Canal and the Delta, it has, quite possibly, in reality, been collected and concentrated just where it is—at a half-way point between the Syrian and Arabian areas—rather to overawe and keep quiet the Arab-speaking Ottomans than in the hope of achieving a reconquest of Egypt. In any case, so long as it remains effective where it is, it makes a rising either in Syria or the Hejaz very unlikely to happen, and even less likely to succeed.

Whether that force will be able seriously to attack Egypt and what would happen if it did, a layman may be excused from prophesying. It has often been pointed out that the stretch of desert between Gaza and the Nile Delta has never availed by itself to save Egypt from invasion by land ; but, on the other hand, no invader has tried to pass it since parts of its most practicable track and the western ends of all its paths can be reached by naval guns with high-explosive shells. An advance on Egypt from El-Arish, without free use of the coast-track, would have to be made with none but