

## Cairo

court, and men of the same origin officered the army. The talents which had raised the first sovereign to the first place were rarely, if ever, handed on to his offspring; the natural heir to the throne could seldom maintain himself on it for more than a few months or years. To have passed through the slave-dealer's hands seemed to be a necessary qualification for royalty.

In the country which gave them their title these rulers housed as strangers. To its religion they indeed conformed, but with its language they were usually unfamiliar. The life of the nation was affected by their justice or injustice, and the wisdom or unwisdom of their policy internal and external; but in the nation they took no root. Hence one battle displaced them for the Ottomans, just as one battle in our day put the country under the power of Great Britain.

Cairo then eclipsed Baghdad, to be eclipsed after two-and-a-half centuries by Constantinople; but to the dynasty under which it reached the zenith of its fame and power it did not owe its foundation. That took place in the tenth century A.D., when an army was sent to invade Egypt by the descendant of a successful adventurer, who, claiming to be of the Prophet Mohammed's line, had founded a dynasty in North Africa. The place where this army had encamped, after capturing the older metropolis, was chosen to be the site of the new one. And it was called Victoria (Kâhirah) in commemoration of the conquest already achieved, and as an augury of others to be won.

Those who found cities to inaugurate new dynasties ordinarily keep near the beaten track. Cairo is but two miles to the north of Fostat, which had been the capital of the country from the time of the Mohammedan conquest. Its name is the Latin word *Fossatum* "an entrenchment"—and it was the camp of the conquering army which, under Amr son of al-As, had wrested Egypt from the Byzantine empire, and