

Kitchener's Coup

Revelations of An Ambassador-at-Large

Transcribed by H. M. Egbert from the private papers of an Englishman who for a time was an unofficial diplomat in the most secret service of the British Government.

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Just how much the Turkish-Italian war had to do with the great world conflict it is impossible to say, but the author of this story declares that England had a hand in that war and her quid pro quo was the assurance that Italy would draw out of the triple alliance when war with Germany came, as come it must, according to English statesmen. The story throws light on England's part in the notorious Tripoli invasion, and is taken from the private papers of an English diplomat who, because of an indiscretion while he was in the diplomatic service at the time Lord Salisbury was prime minister, was retired from the service. At a period slightly prior to the beginning of the general European war he was given the unofficial post of ambassador-at-large. Access to his papers was recently obtained with permission to transcribe the more important and interesting of his diplomatic adventures, and as a result, this astonishing story is now presented.

I believe I am the only man who has ever browbeaten Kitchener to his face. It is this circumstance that I propose now to relate.

In the summer of the year 1911, Europe was astounded by the news that Italy, which had long coveted Tripoli, was massing an army with the object of seizing that Turkish province with a bare pretense of justification. As she held command of the sea, and there were only ten thousand Turkish troops in Tripoli, the success of the proposed act of spoliation appeared a foregone conclusion unless Turkey could move a force through Egypt for the purpose of defending her last African possession.

Now Egypt, although occupied by Great Britain, was nominally a Turkish province. She paid a tribute to Turkey of \$2,500,000 annually. The khedive was a vassal of the sultan; Turkey has always claimed the right to use Egypt as a base for warlike operations. The very army which overthrew the khedive at Khartoum moved under the Turkish flag.

With a large force in Syria and another on the east littoral of the Red sea, it seemed only a matter of time before Turkey could throw enough men into Tripoli to drive the Italians into the sea.

Therefore the moment I heard of Italy's coup I began to wonder what part Great Britain was playing in the crisis.

Three weeks previously Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign minister, for whom I was engaged in the unofficial task of investigating certain influences which were making for war in Europe, had written me a very friendly letter, suggesting that the recently constructed dam at Assuan, on the Nile, was one of the world's marvels, and that a sight of it would well be worth my while as soon as my affairs permitted me to leave Vienna, where I was then staying.

I had taken the hint and gone to Cairo, where, being acquainted with many members of the English government staff, I spent a very pleasant fortnight, not, however, too much engrossed in social pleasures to prevent me from keeping my ear to the ground, to listen for sounds and rumors.

Lord Kitchener had just been appointed to the supreme command in Egypt. Nominally the khedive's adviser, he was to be actually the ruler of the province. British prestige, which had sunk to a low ebb during the period of his predecessor, was expected to reach the heights which it occupied when Lord Cromer's nod was law all through the valley of the Nile.

We had known that Lord Kitchener's appointment, coming unexpectedly as it did, was of high significance. He had been summoned hastily to Downing street; something was in the air, and we had all felt it; his movements, as always, were veiled in mystery, and none knew whether he had already sailed or was still lingering in England. Means were taken to get him in charge at Cairo with power and authority to issue commands in England's name.

They knew it, that polyglot crew of Germans, Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Levantines; and Cairo buzzed like a beehive with intrigues. So that if ever the khedive was tempted to defy his British masters and display his notorious pro-Turkish sympathies, now was the time.

So when I descended to the dining room of Shepheard's on a certain morning and read in a newspaper that Italy had addressed an ultimatum to Turkey, I knew that I had not been summoned for nothing.

I had hardly finished breakfast when Atterbury, who was in charge, came into the dining room. There was a

have the courage to refuse a peremptory demand made in England's name? Why, if I were twenty years older, I would play the role myself, although I do not bear the slightest resemblance to Kitchener, and you do."

"The resemblance is not a striking one," I protested.

"No, X, but you must remember that just as most negroes look alike to us Europeans, so most Europeans look alike to Orientals. I am confident that if you go boldly into the audience chamber and hold out the proclamation of neutrality, and demand that Abbas affix his signature, you will simply hypnotize him into doing so. You must remember that the thought of anyone impersonating Lord Kitchener would be perfectly inconceivable to him. Besides, it is sixteen years since Kitchener was in Egypt, and he has greatly changed since then."

"But his highness must know Lord Kitchener well," I began.

"On the contrary," answered Atterbury, "he has only been face to face with him on one occasion, and then for a bare five minutes. That was when the khedive went up the Nile to bestow his benediction upon our arms after the capture of Khartoum. Kitchener never went near the palace in the old days; he was always training his men in camp or fighting on the frontier. Besides, Abbas hated Kitchener so much, as the fist of the British raj that he wouldn't go within a mile of him."

And, as I hesitated, Atterbury drove home his thrust.

"X," he said, "I hear that the khedive returned to the palace suddenly last night, after his journey in the delta, and that he has not had his flag hoisted because he means to give a secret audience today to Essad Pasha, commanding the Eighth army corps, who has arrived in town. I have ordered a special train from Alexandria. I will stop at Bitter Wells, to which I shall take you in my machine; we will climb aboard there, and you, in the guise of Kitchener, will return to Cairo with me and seek your audience with his highness."

So I assented. It seemed a desperate situation; and yet, with so much at stake and my commission to serve the empire to the best of my ability, I could not refuse.

We motored out into the desert an hour later, and, about half past three, the special train, consisting of an engine and a single coach, appeared. We climbed aboard, sending back the automobile with the chauffeur. A scream, a few loud puffs, and we were flying back toward Cairo across the mud flats of the Nile valley.

During the hour's run I changed into the khaki uniform which Atterbury

handed in salutation. We passed between two oceans of humanity. Then we were in an automobile, and rolling toward the palace, with a running, screaming mob behind us.

In the cool courtyard a half troop of soldiers presented arms to us. A gorgeously dressed flunky opened the automobile doors, and an ancient Egyptian, wrinkled as a mummy, in a frock coat, striped trousers, and patent-leather shoes, saluted before us.

"Your excellency, permit me to present Hilmi Pasha, the chief minister," said Atterbury.

I nodded curtly, as befitted my reputation. I knew the real Kitchener by reputation as a man of courteous kindness; but I was sure that the Kitchener of legend was the only one they knew.

"I had the pleasure of being presented to your excellency seventeen years ago," piped the old man, in French.

I turned my back on him, and, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a transient look of hate come upon his wrinkled face. Truly, if ever Kitchener arrived, he would find one enemy ready-made for him. But I anticipated that the news of Hilmi Pasha's reception would reach—and intimidate—the khedive before I did.

"Your excellency, the members of the cabinet are awaiting to present their address," piped Hilmi again.

"My dear Atterbury," I said, "will you make this old fool understand that I have not come to be received by his cabinet but by his highness?"

This time the old fellow made no attempt to disguise his look of hatred. He bowed in a jerky way and tottered inside the palace precincts. I saw, as we were ushered in, a large apartment at the left side of the great marble hall, containing about a dozen Egyptian gentlemen, each in a frock coat, striped trousers and patent-leather shoes. I heard the high, cracked, chattering tones of the old chief minister. The story of my insulting conduct was not being lost in the telling. I felt sure for none of them ventured out with the address.

A suave Oriental in evening dress, with orders like small saucers scattered promiscuously about his breast, came forward, smiling, between two lines of powdered footmen.

"Your excellency—" he began.

"That will do!" I said sharply. "Inform his highness that I request immediate audience with him."

"But his highness—"

"Returned to the palace last night," interposed Atterbury.

The little man, who was evidently one of the khedive's secretaries, seemed quite flustered by Atterbury's remark. I believe he had intended to

the khedive's court before, for I caught the smug, smiling little man by the throat with my left hand and drew my sword. I saw the complacency upon his face turn to terror. The beggars looked up from their meditations and cackled.

"Now, you blackguard, run and tell his highness that unless he receives me instantly I shall slit his throat!" I roared, in indignation which required very little affectation to produce its effect. Such is the vanity of man that fact that moment I felt like Kitchener, I acted as the Kitchener of legend would have acted.

The little man flung himself upon his knees.

"Pardon—pardon, your excellency, for Allah's sake, put away your sword!" he pleaded. "I am at my wits' end. I don't know what to do. I haven't seen his highness since last night. He told me to admit nobody but—"

"But Essad Pasha!" cried Atterbury. "How long has he been cloistered with him?"

"Half an hour," stammered the little secretary, terribly frightened.

I swung the little man to his feet and whipped him across the shoulders with the flat of my blade.

"I will speak to his highness!" I cried. "Walk and show me the way to his apartments! At once, or I will spit you like the Nile crocodile!"

The little secretary preceded me, shaking like an aspen leaf. Behind us the flunkies, terror-stricken, had gathered, and stood chattering like a flock of daws. I heard a buzz of excited speech upon the stairs. As I half turned at the entrance to the second anteroom, I saw the frock-coated Hilmi Pasha peer around the jamb of the outer door. He caught my eye and disappeared in a twinkling.

It occurred to me then for the first time that the Egyptian cabinet had assembled to read me a proclamation of Egyptian independence, but that my warlike attitude toward their leader had decided them to let me hear it from the khedive's own lips. Doubtless some coup was on the point of execution. But I was at the source of the plot.

The flunkies who guarded the approaches to the several rooms fled in abject terror as I advanced, my threatening sword point at the back of the little secretary. Now we were in a wing of the palace. An immense open space, carpeted with costly rugs, the walls concealed behind a multitude of sweet-scented flowering plants, gave upon a number of doors. Black Nubian slaves, on guard, sprang to their feet and stared at us in consternation, rolling their expressive eyes. Their terror was not less than that of the flunkies behind us. And all through the palace there resounded that buzzing murmur, as though my every act had already become known everywhere.

There was no need to ask which were the khedive's apartments. The look upon each slave told me. I flung the little secretary from me and strode to the high doors bearing the khedive's monogram in Arabic upon each panel. And in my eagerness to complete my task, I lost all fear.

"Open!" I shouted, hammering with my sword hilt.

I hammered and shouted; and suddenly the door was flung open, and two figures stood before me. One was that of a young man of military bearing, but now looking anything but martial as he stood humbly before the other, a tall figure with a turban round his head and attired in the loose, flowing garments which his highness affects at home. Instantly every slave was on his face.

I knew his highness at once. I thrust past the other figure, and, pulling the document from its silken case, pushed it beneath the khedive's nose.

"You have put an insult upon Great Britain's representative in Egypt!" I cried, in French. "You shall put your signature to this pledge of neutrality immediately, or a protectorate will be proclaimed in Cairo!"

The khedive looked at me, and seemed to wilt away.

"Come in, your excellency!" he muttered, in apologetic tones. "You will not humiliate me before my servants!"

I followed him inside the room, a spacious library with a desk at which he had evidently been seated with the general, for two half-consumed cigars still smoked upon his trays. At a door at the farther end I saw the spectacled face of a pale young Egyptian secretary.

"Go!" shouted the khedive, in Arabic and the man disappeared noiselessly. The khedive motioned to me to be seated. But I stood up before him. I laid the document upon his desk.

"I must have your highness' signature immediately," I said.

"Your excellency—" "I will not discuss the matter with your highness. The sirdar has instructions to take possession of the palace within half an hour unless I appear with the proclamation signed."

"But, your excellency, I have already informed Gen. Essad Pasha that I—"

"Your highness must rescind your promise."

"That Egypt remains neutral," replied the khedive. And, looking me full in the face, he smiled.

He touched the black mustache, and it turned brown. He pulled the turban from his head. He straightened himself. His being seemed transformed. Suddenly I realized that I was looking into the face of Viscount Kitchener himself, of whom the Arabs say that he can assume as many disguises as the devil himself.

All the courage went out of me. I trembled before him. I did not know what to do; if the door had been open, I believe I should have run. This man



"You Have Put an Insult Upon Great Britain's Representative in Egypt," I Cried in French.

had provided for me. There was a long line of colored ribbons on the left breast, souvenirs of my victorious campaigns. In my pith helmet, with the sword clanking at my side, I flattered myself that I did begin to feel something like Kitchener, and the illusion was complete when Atterbury handed me the proclamation in its silk roll, to which I was to obtain the signature of the nominal ruler of Egypt.

Atterbury continued to prime me with instructions during the run. We must insist upon admittance to the palace; I was to refuse to be put off with evasions. I was to get the khedive's signature at any cost and under any difficulties.

I confess my heart was beating fast and heavily when we drew into the dusty station at Cairo. News of my advent had evidently leaked out somewhere along the route, probably through some newspaper correspondent at Alexandria who had seen the special train and guessed its purport, for a huge throng was pressing forward against the rope barriers which surrounded the strip of oriental rug on which I was to set my viceregal feet. Coptic policemen kept the way clear for me. It was insufferably hot and dusty, and the cheers of the crowd were ear-splitting.

As I stepped out with Atterbury, the hands of the police went up to their

deny that the khedive was in the palace. "I will see, your excellency," he murmured. "Will your excellency ascend to the anteroom?"

We went up the heavily carpeted stairs, past more flunkies dressed in the khedive's colors, standing like wooden statues outside tobacconists' shops. I found myself in the first of a series of magnificent reception rooms, with waxed floors, and the gilt mirrors and plush upholstery that appeals to the oriental taste. Upon the walls were large, execrably painted pictures, in violation of the Mohammedan prohibition of representations of living things. In the first room, where we stood, two aged beggars were waiting with petitions.

"I will see his highness at once and ask whether he will receive your excellency when he has finished giving audience—" began the little secretary.

It needed no knowledge of Oriental courts to understand the meaning of this insult. It could mean nothing less than that the khedive was meditating a coup against Great Britain. He would never have dared flout the representative of England otherwise. It did not need Atterbury's exclamation of indignation to make me understand the situation.

But I think the method I adopted was one that had never been used in

had come to Cairo secretly, as was his wont; he had deceived not only the palace slaves, who had probably never dared look their lord in the face, but the khedive's personal attendants. How had he managed it?

He put his hand on my shoulder and smiled at me.

"You have done the right thing, X," he said quietly. And that is the highest praise Kitchener knows.

But what had he done with the khedive?

He solved that problem at last by clapping his hands. The pale-faced secretary appeared.

"Tell his highness that there is no reason why he should deny himself to his friends any longer," he said.

THINK WITH THEIR LUNGS

Too Many People of That Type Will Be Found Infesting Almost Every Community.

A new expression has been invented—and like a great many other modern expressions, it conveys a meaning that nothing else could convey. "Lung thinker"—that's the newest. A fellow who thinks with his lungs rather than with his head; the loud-mouthed, rattle-brained, irresponsible chap with a good voice—he's a "lung thinker." And the worst of it is we have a good many of them with us always.

Usually you can tell just about how much a man knows by the tone of his voice. Certainly when you hear a man talking upon a street car, in a tone of voice that can be heard from one end of it to the other, you know that he is a "lung thinker." When a man tries to win an argument by voice rather than by reason, he has nothing else but his voice to depend upon.

We predict that the term "lung thinker" has come to stay. It means so much, it so aptly expresses the character of some people, it can be so easily applied without danger of making a mistake in applying it, that we predict we shall eventually incorporate it into the language and print it in the dictionaries.—Dayton News.

LET BOY CHOOSE HIS CAREER

Sons Should Not Take Up Work Simply to Please Parents, Says Noted Writer.

Given a basis of good character, good health and thoroughness, the choice of life work is the next great inducement to a boy. Many foredoom their son to failure by trying to force him to gratify their ambitions in a calling for which he has neither interest nor ability, instead of helping him to develop his own individuality.

The false idea that there is social distinction in certain professions is the basis of many failures that might have been successes in other callings.

Wherever we look we see failures, many of whom were men of undoubted ability, whose talents were misdirected. You, whose sons have their future all before them, can guard against shipwreck by studying their taste, directing their abilities and discussing with them the problem of their future. If you cannot afford to see them through a long term of training for some profession, discuss the matter freely so that they will appreciate the necessity of turning their interest into other channels—unless they can work their way through their training without impairment of health.—Isaac Dedham in Mother's Magazine.

Wondered Why He Laughed.

A sweet young thing who knew all about the latest fashions, for she wore them, but apparently nothing about nature, was attracted by a crowd of youngsters who were watching a young sparrow on the sidewalk. The bird was too young to fly and too badly frightened even to hop. The young woman tried to keep the boys who had gathered around it from harming it. Presently a big boy pushed through the group, looked at the bird kindly, then stooped and took it up. She was much relieved. "Will you take care of it?" she asked him. "Sure," he responded with inelegant emphasis. She was anxious that it should have the best of care, so she suggested helpfully, "better give it a little milk." The boy stared, then he grinned. Then he yelled, "Milk," he roared, "milk, ha, milk." Then he stalked up the street, carrying the bird carefully in his hands and derisively ejaculating, "milk." Her face flushed as she went on her way, and she was heard to murmur to herself, "Now I wonder why he laughed? Very unmanly, I'm sure."

It Was All Arranged.

"How much for a magpie?" he asked as he stepped quietly into a hardware store.

"A magpie? My dear sir, do you take this for a bird store?" was the reply.

"Then you haven't any magpies for sale?"

"Of course not. This is a hardware store, as you will see if you cast your eyes around you."

"Yes, I see it is," said the man, after gazing around for a minute. "Being it's a hardware store I suppose I could not buy a magpie here?"

"No, sir. You might as well go into a drug store and ask for a ton of coal."

"I see. You keep crowbars, however."

"We do."

"Well, I'll take one. Being as you don't keep magpies, but do keep crowbars, I'll take along a crowbar to kill a magpie which I'll buy somewhere else."

HE KNEW

Teacher—What about "People who live in glass houses?"

Bright Pupil—They'd better get on good terms with the militant suffragette.

SAVING LABOR



Lady—Why didn't you dust the chairs?
Maid—I didn't think they'd need it. The dust will all come off as soon as they've been sat in.

BRAINS



"She will be a clever woman that I marry."
"Thought you didn't like clever women?"
"I don't, but if ever I marry it'll be a clever woman who does it."

WANTED HER MONEY BACK



Conductor—You should wait until the car stops, madam.
Fair Passenger—That's all you know about it; I have an accident policy that hasn't paid me a cent yet.

HIS HOPEFUL DISPOSITION



"De Bliff is a financial optimist."
"How is that?"
"He always tells you he is going to pay interest on the little sums he borrows and forgets."



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