



**THE HISTORY
OF MEDICAL EDUCATION
IN EGYPT**

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THE HISTORY
OF MEDICAL EDUCATION
IN EGYPT

BY

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MOHAMMED ALY PASHA
Viceroy of Egypt (1805-1848)
Founder of the School of Medicine.

“ We have no reason to apprehend that our successors will look back to our first proceedings..... with any feelings but those of respect ; they will see that our regards, not narrowed to our own little day, were extended forwards to their days ; and to the hidden days beyond them. Animated by the same pure ambition as the founders, I trust they will carry on Medical Knowledge beyond the point at which they themselves became engaged in its pursuit, and in their turn will cheerfully transmit it, by them increased, to other generations by whom, with the permission of Providence, it may be more cultivated to the end of time.”

Quoted from “Retrospective Address” by Dr. JOHN CONOLLY at Birmingham. July 18, 1834.

(History of the British Medical Association).

PREFACE

For several thousand years the Schools of Memphis, Heliopolis and Alexandria kept the torch of medical knowledge alight. Invasion of the Country by different nations and the revolutions that followed had their effect in stifling the national spirit of the Country. Decline of the Sciences and Arts followed as a consequence.

Under the enlightened rule of the Caliphs, a revival of learning occurred and medicine and surgery were taught with much distinction in the Bimaristans or hospitals they founded for that purpose.

During the government, or more correctly misgovernment of the Turks, and the reign of terror of the Mamelouks, knowledge and learning fell to their lowest ebb, and for a long time the Egyptians appeared to have lost all connection with their glorious past.

The superior genius of that great and enlightened monarch Mohammed Aly Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt, was instrumental in raising the Country from the depths to which it had fallen. During his reign all its resources moral and material were developed.

The foundation of the School of Medicine was not the least of his great achievements.

For over a hundred years the school he founded continued struggling to keep itself on its feet.

I have attempted in the following pages to recount the story of this gallant struggle.

For the early part of the history, I am indebted to the Authors of the articles and publications mentioned at the

end, and to information obtained years ago from elder members of the Staff, some of whom have passed away.

I am particularly indebted to His Majesty King Fouad I for His gracious permission to me to get access to the Archives of Abdin Palace and to obtain an Arabic version of the Turkish documents connected with the early history of the School of Medicine.

From 1898 onwards I recite the facts as they happened in the course of my association with the school as a student, and a member of the staff, except for a break of ten months during which I served as M.O. to the Hospital of Suez.

December 1935.

NAGUIB MAHFOUZ

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CHAPTER I

IN ANCIENT EGYPT

THE current opinion regarding the mind of the Ancient Egyptian has been, that he was interested in scientific principles, solely because of the unavoidable necessity of applying them in practical life—that, if he discussed a purely geometrical theorem such as the cubic content of a hemisphere, it was because he was obliged to compute the contents of granaries. The surviving mathematical papyri, however, clearly prove that he had had a scientific interest in pure mathematics for their own sake. Even so in Medicine, he had the same interest from the same point of view.

Medicine is one of the oldest sciences. It arose in the remotest ages, clouded by the darkest superstitions, and in closest association with magic and religion; indeed it has formed a part of them at the beginning. The complete dissociation of medicine from magic was the